

# **Induction of Women in the Central Police Forces – Their impact on the Forces**

By Shri S. Banerjee, IPS (Retd),  
Former DGP (Anti-Corruption Bureau), Gujarat State

The Police in India are like other police forces in the world. The police forces are dominated by male and hardly there is space for women police. While this is a reality on the one hand, on the other it is a fact that the Indian society is undergoing fundamental changes. In this changing scenario, women are participating in all types of social activities including demonstrations and even in riots. Participation by women in such activities, which sometimes lead to violence, call for a whole new system of policing to be put in place. One of the most important components in this context, amongst others, would be the need to have more police women to deal with women demonstrators. Otherwise if only men were to deal with this work, then it would lead to widespread allegations which would have undesirable effects.

Are women interested in joining the police force? As people know, police job is very tough. It entails long hours of work and often entails very hazardous and arduous tasks. In these days when the police force has to frequently deal with terrorism, the risks faced by the force are very serious and sometimes it leads to loss of lives. Life is especially hard for the para-military forces as they are deployed in the border areas and are often moved from place to place at short notice.

In view of the need to take care of the new social needs, there is a requirement to recruit more women in the force. But before recruiting women, certain issues need to be considered. Some studies carried out in India have shown that the working women's problems could be categorized into two parts, namely, socio-psychological and practical which they experience at two places – the home and the workplace. They are also faced with the problem of accommodating the old and new patterns of behaviour. A number of studies have indicated that the situations of employed women, as one homogenous group, have similarity of problems and conflicts. The conflicts arise due to the shortage of time

for their role as care-takers of families as they have to devote time for their careers. In many cases women choose careers from the limited number of options that are largely determined by their social and cultural backgrounds as against men who can make their career choices as their full time occupation. Women's career choices are made in the social context that views careers as secondary to the family responsibilities. In a comparative study of working women and men, it was seen that insofar as the women were concerned, the interface between family and work was greater for them than men.

In 1996, a study carried out amongst the Slovenian women police, it was seen that the women joined the police, firstly, as they perceived that policing provided them opportunities for interacting and helping people and secondly for their personality development. Typical attributes of police organizations such as wearing uniforms, carrying fire arms and opportunity to use force, did not assume significance for them. In addition, the general attitudes towards the police and its public image had minimal contribution to their decisions to become police officers.

A sample carried out in 1988 from a sample of 257 women police revealed reasons for the police women to remain in law enforcement at various stages of their careers. The study noted that 39% of the respondents with less than three years of service ranked career advancement as the most important factor for staying in the police service, while 7% of the respondents between 3 and 12 years of service, selected career advancement as their priority. Salary and benefits of the job were identified as the most important considerations for staying in the police force for at least one fourth of the respondents.

### **Need for women to join the police**

The need for the presence of the women in the police force arises in view of their different methods of functioning as well as the social requirements. A study by the National Centre for Women Policing (2008) found that the women police officers in the USA utilized a method of policing that relied less on physical force and more on communication skills that defused potentially violent situations. Women police officers were much more likely to effectively respond to calls regarding violence against women. Yet despite this compelling research, women were under-represented in the police departments, accounting for only 13% of the police officers across the country. It was

found that the numbers were artificially kept low by discriminatory hiring and selection practices.

Male prejudices against usefulness of women in police work have also been a very important factor in keeping women away from joining the force. A study carried out in 1975 noted that while policemen over-protected the policewomen, they also complained that women were handicapped. Women have expressed annoyance at over-protection and have considered professionalism as an important part of their behaviour that included relating to male colleagues in the most appropriate manner and taking their own share of responsibilities.

Another study carried out in 1988 showed that policemen felt that their masculinity was threatened by policewomen. A study conducted in Germany showed that men gained a positive impression of policewomen after they had worked with them. They, however, held on to the prejudices about working with policewomen as partners in violent situations. Thus, women officers faced considerable opposition to overcome the belief that women were not capable of carrying out the full range of police work.

A study of 183 policewomen in India in 1996 indicated that 50 per cent of the respondents believed that the women were less competent than men in patrolling duties, surveillance, foot patrolling, dealing with crowds and dealing with situations when someone had a lethal weapon and interviewing male suspects. It also showed that majority of women police believed that they were more competent at desk work, writing reports, interviewing female suspects, dealing with domestic disputes and with juvenile offenders than with patrolling duties.

The history of induction of women into the police force has had to pass through a number of hurdles. A major hurdle was the male prejudice against induction of women into the force. This factor has continued to be a major problem even now. Another hurdle was the mindset of men that women could not work equally as men. Although it is true that women could not undertake the kind of arduous and hazardous duties that men could do, it is a fact that they were better in communication skills, used less force during agitations and generally had a more sobering effect on the force. In short, women are no less competent in performing their tasks than men. The fact that representation of women in the forces was less than 20% in the world clearly indicated that women are highly

under-represented in the forces. In the civil police women were more effective in dealing with juvenile delinquents, victims of rape, child protection and in dealing with women prisoners and suspects. In this area men are far less effective than women. This clearly indicates the need for greater women's participation in the force and thus the need for more recruitment of women personnel into the police.

### **Women police in India**

Recruitment of women in the police force in India started on a regular basis only after Independence. The need for women in the police force was prompted by the following factors: -

1. Partition of the country resulted in a large scale influx refugees from Pakistan to India who suffered heavily due to the communal frenzy. There was a rush of grief-stricken and distressed women who were constantly approaching the higher officials to take care of their difficulties. Therefore, purely for security reasons the need was felt to have more women in the police force.
2. The newly acquired Independence, large scale movements of population in search of shelter and work and the rapidly changing socio-economic conditions created a new dimension of policing in India. In several States political agitations, *bandhs*, strikes, linguistic and communal riots were becoming a regular feature. Participation of women in these agitations was increasing daily which created new problems for the law enforcement agencies, particularly in view of the delicacy of the problem in handling the women agitators.
3. In the post-Independence period, the Government of India enacted a number of social laws such as Suppression of Women and Girls Trafficking Act 1956, Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000, and had also taken various other measures for the protection of weaker sections of society, including women and children. These steps exposed the law enforcement agencies to new types of roles for which they were not prepared. To meet the challenges of new situations, particularly to deal with women and children, there was a growing realization amongst the police administrators of the necessity to have women in the force.

4. The process of industrialization and urbanization in India resulted in increased social crimes due to the competition among migrant labour force which crowded the cities from various parts of the country. This also led to greater political consciousness among women resulting in greater participation by women in political demonstrations and agitations. This made the Government feel the need to recruit more women into the Police force.

In spite of the prevalent male prejudices which have hindered induction of women police, their usefulness cannot be denied. State governments are now increasingly recruiting women police in their forces. The Indian Police Service has been appointing women in the IPS cadre since 1972. They have the same qualifications and training as their male counterparts. Similarly, other police services, such as the Border Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force, Central Industrial Security Force, Railway Protection Force, Sashastra Seema Bal and the Indo-Tibetan Boarder Police have all recruited women in various capacities.

A study was conducted into the problems of 'Induction of Women in the Central Police Forces' at the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi. It explored women's impact on the Forces and the Early Retirement Scheme. The study was sponsored by the Bureau of Police Research & Development, and conceived by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The study collected samples from amongst the personnel of various ranks of the Central Police Forces, totaling 412. Discussions were also held with the senior officers up to the rank of Directors General of Police so as to elicit their views on various issues in this regard. A panel of doctors comprising gynaecologists, physicians and psychologists was also set up to look into the medical problems faced by the women personnel. Sociologists were also consulted to understand the women's point of view from the gender angle. On the basis of these parameters, the sample study, the report of the panel of doctors as well as the discussions with sociologists revealed that the women personnel faced a number of problems during the course of their work. In order to make a detailed analysis of these problems the service cycle of women personnel was divided into four periods, i.e. from zero to five years of service (i.e. 18 to 25 years of age); 6 to 10 years of service (i.e. 26 to 30 years of age); 11 to 15 years of service (i.e. 31 to 35 years of age) and 16 to 20 years

of service (i.e. 36 to 40 and above years of age). After 20 years of service, all Government servants are entitled to take voluntary retirement.

### **Zero to 5 years of service (18 to 25 years of age)**

At the stage of induction women personnel are young. Their physical and mental capabilities are no different from their male counterparts. They are also mostly unmarried and face no family pressures. They are therefore able to undergo the arduous training programmes without any problem. They can also be easily posted at distant places away from their families and can even undertake the hazardous and arduous duties as their male counterparts.

During the course of the study it was revealed that there was no difference between the training programmes of men and women personnel in the Central Police Forces. The training programmes are primarily divided between the outdoor and the indoor. The outdoor programmes comprise physical training, parades, arms drill, etc., with the aim of toughening the trainees physically and mentally, preparing them for facing the various challenges, particularly during riots, long hours of duty, etc. The indoor training is conducted primarily to equip the trainees with the requisite knowledge of law, forensic science, methods of investigation, information technology, etc., so that the trainees are equipped with enough theoretical knowledge to enable them to face the practical situation in their respective fields of duty. During the course of the study it was revealed that women trainees faced more problems during the outdoor training than during indoor classes. This is understandable because during the outdoor training there is emphasis on hard physical training and the inculcation of strict discipline amongst the trainees. The atmosphere during the indoor training however is much more relaxed and is held in the indoor classes where amenities like fans, desks, etc., are available and the trainees do not face physical hardship. They are also given ample scope for discussions and the emphasis is on learning and broadening their knowledge on theoretical matters. As such, the atmosphere is much more relaxed during the indoor training.

The problem arises mainly during the outdoor trainings. The study revealed that the biggest hindrance is caused by the lack of toilet facilities and other amenities like changing rooms, etc. The next problem is caused by the tough physical training

itself. There are also other issues like the rude behaviour of the male instructors who sometimes use abusive language and have a lack of understanding of their physical problems like the monthly periods. The absence of female instructors is another factor that causes problems for the women trainees. These problems faced by the women trainees are real and are needed to be addressed.

Indoor training however does not cause any major problems to the female trainees, because as we have already mentioned, the atmosphere in the class rooms is relaxed and other amenities like toilet facilities, etc., are easily available.

Women personnel however face one major problem which pervades almost all through their careers. This primarily pertains to the inter-personal issues like the attitudinal problems of their male colleagues which include display of ego, jealousy and other negative behavioural problems and to an extent the absence of women friendly office environment, leading to mental and sexual harassment. There is therefore a need to recognize these all pervasive issues and take care of the problems. During discussions with the respondents, the overwhelming majority felt that conducting gender sensitization programmes would be a very good way to deal with this basic problem. Such gender sensitization programmes would include open or group discussions, counseling, training on psychological matters, cooperation, coordination, training on morality and ethnics as well as personality development programmes.

The doctors' panel set up during the course of the study indicated that the girls who have not participated in group activities like the NCC or sports meets, and go to join the training programmes of the various police forces which may be far away from their homes, often suffer from '**separation anxiety**'. This is genetically programmed and biologically determined. They feel great tension and adjustment disorder resulting in anxiety, depression and at times fear psychosis. Women personnel would be able to cope with such problems if there is proper psychological counseling and the management shows an understanding of their peculiar problems and makes adequate arrangements to deal with these issues. It would also be helpful if familiarization courses are conducted during the initial periods of their training

programmes and adequate assistance is given to help them to communicate with their near and dear ones.

Another major issue that came up from the respondents was that of finding proper match for these girls. The new entrants are mostly unmarried and find themselves placed in units and training centres where no outsiders are allowed to come. While this is a requirement of the force for various security and disciplinary reasons, it also shuts out the possibility of the young women of finding a suitable match for themselves. Some of them marry within the force which may not always be acceptable to their family members. Sometimes non-cooperative attitude of the husbands, particularly if they are civilians and their families put various types of pressures on the women personnel. Another issue that needs to be taken into consideration is the monthly cycle of the young women personnel. Some of them suffer great physical pain at these times and as such it is important that their male superiors should be sensitized to these problems and be sympathetic to the women personnel. At these times they should be excused from attending the P.T. classes and doing the regular workouts.

It is important to understand that the psychological state of women differs significantly from their male counterparts. It is therefore important to take care of the various issues – medical, psychological and physical so that the induction of women into the forces can be done effectively and they are in a position to give their best once they feel that they are in a caring environment and that their interests are adequately protected.

### **6 to 10 years of service (26 to 30 years of age)**

As soon as the women enter this service cycle, most of them tend to get married. A large number of women personnel face personal and family problems including those related to the pregnancy issues and responsibilities of their families like the care of their young children and the elders in the family and making adjustments with their new families. In view of their new responsibilities they face difficulties if they are posted at distant places and are transferred from place to place.



The biggest problem that comes up during the course of pregnancy is that of wearing the tight uniforms and the belts that are prescribed for all. The study revealed that there are no formal orders in any of the Central Police Forces (CPFs) for women personnel to wear any other uniform during the pre-natal and post-natal periods. Some of the CPFs have, however, issued administrative orders locally permitting the women to wear sarees or salwar-kameez as these are far more suitable to wear. But to wear these, women personnel have to get exemption from the doctors as also their Commandants. This is not a very satisfactory arrangement. It is important that formal orders should be issued prescribing a particular kind of uniform that is to be worn by women during the pre-natal and post-natal periods. Keeping in view these issues, the Bureau of Police Research & Development had conducted a study entitled, 'Alternative Uniform for Officers in Advanced Stages of Pregnancy'. The recommendations of the DG, BPR&D were sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs, in which an alternative uniform has been suggested. The recommendations of the BPR&D are as follow:

**UNIFORM RULES FOR WOMEN DURING PREGNANCY**

<b>Rule No.</b>	<b>Existing Rules</b>	<b>Suggested change</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
39	<p><b>Alternative uniform for lady officers in advanced stage of pregnancy –</b> Lady officers with about 16 weeks of pregnancy may switch over to the following dress:</p>	<p><u>Early stage of pregnancy –</u> Lady officers may switch over to the alternative working dress as prescribed below from the day the pregnant lady requests.</p> <p><u>Post delivery –</u> During post delivery period the lady can remain in the alternative working dress up to a maximum of 8 months, or more on the recommendations of Doctor based on post-delivery complications.</p>	<p>Wearing Belt with normal uniform is not desirable for the pregnant lady from medical point of view.</p> <p>Normal uniform is not suitable during lactation period.</p>
39 (a)	<p><i>Khaki Saree</i> – Khaki silk saree in winter and khaki cotton or khaki terricot saree in summer; to be draped over the left shoulder passing under the shoulder straps with Indian Police Service badge.</p>	<p>Alternative dress prescribed is: Khaki terricot Salwar Kameez.</p>	<p>Saree is not comfortable during pregnancy and post delivery period.</p>
39 (b)	<p><i>Khaki blouse</i> – Khaki cotton blouse of waist length worn up to the elbow; buttoned up all the way down in the front</p>	<p>Khaki jacket – short sleeveless jacket – for summer (terricot) and long jacket full sleeves (angora) – for winter.</p>	<p>Khaki jacket will be more convenient.</p>

	with front buttons or concealed hooks; stand and fall collar; shoulder straps to be sewn at the outer end and fixed up a single button at the inner end; two breast pockets; and back plain without pleats;		
39 (c)	<i>Badges of ranks</i> – To be worn on the shoulder straps of the blouse.	To be worn on the shoulder strap of Kameez.	Alternative dress for blouse is Kameez and hence badge of the rank to be worn on strap of Kameez.
39 (d)	<i>Footwear</i> Brown leather sandals/shoes with straps; toes not visible; heels not exceeding 2”.	Breathing shoe black/brown with rubber sole.	Shoes with rubber sole will be comfortable for a pregnant lady.
39 (e)	Khaki socks	Khaki socks	No change.
39 (f)	<i>Head-gear (optional)</i> – Same as worn in normal times.	Head gear (optional)	No change.

The recommendations made by the BPR&D are worth considering and need to be implemented. This would take care of a very important difficulty faced by women during the course of the service.

Another problem that is faced by women during the pre-natal period pertains to the duties allotted to them. The Doctors’ panel, referred to earlier, has made the following recommendations: -

1. As soon as pregnancy is diagnosed, they should be given light duties. Duties involving prolonged periods of standing are considered hazardous for the pregnant person. Other duties involving running, jumping, lifting heavyweights and hazardous duties like rock climbing, patrolling, high altitude duties, riot control duties, etc., are also not recommended.
2. They should be excused from wearing belts.
3. In normal pregnancies the duty distribution should be as follows:

- 0-12 weeks –4 hours duty with 2 hours of rest;
  - 13 to 28 weeks—2 hours duty with one hour rest;
  - Belt to be excused after 12 weeks of pregnancies with permission to wear Salwar-Kameez;
  - 29 to 34 weeks— one hour duty and then one hour rest;
  - After 34 weeks’ pregnancy — go on maternity leave
4. Pregnant women must be provided medicines, like iron, calcium and amino acid preparations beside other required medicines.
  5. To provide good diet enhancement in the ration money. This may be done by giving special ration money during pregnancy. There are, however, no rules and no provision to provide good diet for the pregnant women in the CPFs at present.

During the course of study majority of women respondents revealed that hazardous duties were physically stressful. They also indicated that wearing uniform for long hours was not possible for them. It was also seen during the course of study that CPFs did not have any specific rules to cater for these contingencies. Therefore, there is need for the CPFs to re-consider the nature of duties for women personnel during the pre-natal and post-natal periods. It would be advisable that the recommendations of the Doctors’ panel, as indicated above, should be kept in mind while framing rules in this regard.

An important issue that needs to be considered while dealing with the Companies which deploy women is that it is possible that at a point of time a number of the women personnel maybe in the family way and therefore would not be fit to undertake any of the hard physical duties that the Company may be called upon to undertake. It is therefore possible that the number of personnel available for deployment in the field maybe actually less than what should normally be given. In order to deal with this situation we may consider the following alternatives: -

- (a) Increase the strength of the Mahila Companies by the average number of women who may be in the family way and as such would not be available for deployment.
- (b) We may reduce the actual available strength of the Mahila Companies for deployment. Thus, if, under normal circumstances, a Company should have 90

personnel for deployment, we may accept that only 75 would be available in view of women who maybe in the family way.

### **Medico-psychological factors**

According to the Doctors' panel young women personnel who get married during the six to ten years of service cycle normally use birth control measures for avoiding pregnancies. These have side effects like headaches, increased blood pressure and subliminal depression which decrease their efficiency in work. In cases of infertility, women personnel may suffer from significant psychiatric and psychological symptoms including loss of self-esteem and feminity. Women who postpone pregnancies due to service conditions may experience a significant feeling of guilt and self-blame. The panel has reported that such symptoms are seen in cases of abortion also. Apart from this, if the husband is a civilian and stays away from her, then there are long periods of separation from husband and children. This usually has a telling effect on her psyche and she may suffer from anxiety, depression and at times suspicion of infidelity against her husband.

### **Leave**

Another important issue that needs to be considered is the fact that women need more leave than men. During the course of the study it was discovered that women needed leave every month on a regular basis in view of their monthly cycles. It was also discovered that the married women, and particularly those who had children had to attend to the family needs, for example, for the illness of their children and other family members. It was pointed out that it was natural for the children to be near their mothers when they were ill. It also applied to other members of the family particularly the elders who are looked after by women in the Indian society.

Adequate maternity leave is another important issue. Government has now increased the period of maternity leave to 180 days from the earlier 135 days. They have also liberalized other leave rules so that women could remain with their infants say up to one year. In fact, women respondents had also strongly suggested that maternity leave should be given up to one year.

**11 to 15 years of service (31 to 35 years of age)**

During this service cycle the issues that women faced in the previous service cycle, become more accentuated. In the work front, they become more senior and as a result there is greater demand on their performance at their work place. This results in their ability to devote less time to family matters. At the home front, children become grown up and the women have to take additional responsibilities for their higher education, etc. At the same time elders in the family become more aged and require more attention from them.

**Psycho-medical problems**

According to the Doctors' panel, separation anxiety becomes less pronounced in the females after ten years of service. Tension and anxiety related to the up-bringing of children, fidelity issues and inter-personal relations in the service matters assume more significance. At the same time, there is significant reduction in their physical efficiency after they attain the age of 30 years. Psychologically too, their inability to perform their duties as care-givers to the family, may result in psychological problems. This may be aggravated when there is marital conflict and lack of spousal support. In view of the physical and other problems most of women respondents preferred light or desk duties during this period of their service cycle.

**16 to 20 years of service (36 to 40 years of age)**

According to the Doctors' Panel, women in this service group were usually in their peri-menopausal stage. They suffered physical and psychological changes and stress due to family responsibilities. In view of the physical, psychological and mental stress, the efficiency of this group decreases significantly, and is not fit for arduous outdoor duties.

To tackle such problems, the Doctors' panel recommended the following:

1. The age of voluntary retirement of the women personnel should be reduced from 20 to 15 years.
2. If women police personnel do not go on voluntary retirement after 15 years of service, they should be assessed for their medical, psychological, and emotional

performance thoroughly and the records of their active combat duties and if found fit only then they should be allowed to continue in the police force.

The study also indicated that at the time of menopause a significant percentage of female respondents found that they experienced mental and physical problems and were unable to perform hard duties because of irritation, lack of concentration, feeling of depression, etc.

In short, we find from discussions with the social scientists and the doctors panel that women police personnel face social, physical and psychological problems. More precisely, they face problems relating to separation from their families, pre-menstrual tensions, marital problems, child bearing and other family problems. From the viewpoints of social scientists, the women police personnel mainly face problems at the three levels, namely, entry, survival after entry and advancement. At this point, there is need to provide counseling to women and to their family at all stages of their service cycles so that they are encouraged to enter into the police forces. From the doctors' viewpoint, women police personnel face problems at the time of pregnancy. At this phase, it recommends the following: (1) Women police personnel should not be given hazardous duties during pregnancy and uniform should be loose fitting like saree or salwar-kameez; (2) Pregnant women personnel and women during menstrual cycles may only mark attendance in PT and parade; (3) Pregnant women may be allowed to take rest periodically during duties involving prolonged standing. It also recommended: (1) establishment of Crèches, residential schools and working women's hostels in the units/group centres; (2) After 15 years of service, they may be allowed to opt for voluntary retirement; (3) To improve working efficiency and performance of women personnel in the police forces, it is essential to give them medical, psychological, emotional, social and health supports, especially in the case of lower cadres who are employed in active combat duties.

An interesting point that emerged from the study was that while a very large number of police women felt that they could perform different types of duties efficiently, almost an equal number of men also shared this view. In other words, if

in the given circumstances, where men and women worked together, the men had a positive view of the working capabilities of their female counterparts. The study also revealed that while there were problems with women performing tough physical jobs as well as performing duties on the borders and in the operational areas, the overall positive thinking among both men and women was that women could perform various types of duties in an efficient way, they were honest and dedicated in their work and that a mixed work force led to better efficiency. This is an encouraging finding because such positive outlook could eventually help in dealing with male prejudices about the capabilities of their female counterparts.

### **Conclusions & Recommendations**

Our study revealed that the total number of males in the six CPFs, viz. CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, SSB and the RPF was 6,97,159 while the strength of the female personnel was 10,893. Thus, the current strength of the female personnel in all the CPFs is only 1.81% of the total personnel. In fact, in India the total strength of the women personnel in all the police forces is only 3.23% of the total strength. Since we are currently only dealing with the CPFs, we shall consider the strength of the females in the CPFs only. Thus, at present the strength of the female personnel is woefully inadequate in the CPFs. There is therefore a need to consider an increase in the strength of such personnel. At the same time, we must also take into account the fact at the outset that the women have some peculiar physical, medical and psychological needs which need to be addressed when we undertake the task of induction of women into the forces. The various issues maybe summarized as follows: -

**1. (a) Training** – At the initial stage when women personnel are inducted, they suffer from a feeling of separation anxiety, particularly those who have come away from the protection of their homes for the first time. It is therefore necessary that they should be given counseling at the very beginning regarding the training programmes so as to prepare them mentally for the hard training that they are to face.



In fact, it would be advisable to brief the prospective candidates even before they join the force so that they come in with their eyes and ears open.

(b) **Outdoor Training** – We have already seen that women trainees have problems with the rough language that is used at the parade grounds as well as the insensitiveness of the male instructors.

(c) The lack of separate toilet facilities and changing rooms at the parade grounds also add to their stress. It is necessary to have separate toilet blocks and changing rooms for the female personnel so that their privacy is adequately protected.

(d) Lack of female instructors is another issue. It is also necessary that the concerned authorities should address this problem and induct well-trained and suitable female instructors who could give adequate outdoor training.

(e) As we have seen, the police force is a predominantly male force with the accompanying male prejudices against the capabilities of women personnel. In order to bring about an attitudinal change we need to undertake the following measures: -

(i) Introduce gender sensitization courses in the curricula of the trainees at the stage of induction and other in-service training courses so that both the men and women can understand each other properly which would enable the force to become more cohesive and thus become more efficient.

(ii) Introduce programmes like the Springboard Training Programme for the women trainees. This programme is a self-development programme designed specifically for women to enable them to develop their full potential. It is targeted at the women who are in the supervisory as well as non-managerial positions to move up to the managerial cadres. This includes skills in understanding self, balancing home and work, managerial ways, improving their image, becoming assertive, developing better inter-personal relations, communication skills, managing stress and time better, achieving the set goals, and so on. These will facilitate in improving the self-esteem of women and help them to better face the challenges of survival.

**2. Uniform** – Another important issue that bothers women personnel is the uniform during the pre-natal and post-natal periods. We have already given the details of the recommendations of the BPR&D regarding the proposed uniform as well as the recommendations of the Doctors' panel regarding the precautions and types of duties

that require to be assigned at this stage. It is important for the forces to consider these recommendations and implement them for the welfare of female personnel.

**3. Duties** – Another major issue is regarding the kind of duties that women can perform from time to time. As we have seen, women personnel are able to perform all types of duties including the arduous and hazardous duties as their male counterparts in the initial stages of their career. The problems start when they get married and start raising their families. The problems relate to not only adjusting with their new families but also looking after and bringing up their children. These new relationships require a lot of basic inter-personal understanding not only on the part of their husbands but also on the part of their in-laws. They have to accept the fact that the women personnel in the CPFs are likely to be posted out of their home bases and may remain away for long periods of time. They therefore have to give a lot of family support to the women personnel so that they can perform their duties with ease. Counseling at this stage becomes necessary not only to the husbands but also to their in-laws so that they are able to understand the position of women better.

The kind of duties that women can perform in the pre-natal and post-natal periods is also a matter which requires to be considered and formal orders issued in this regard. In this connection the recommendations of the Doctors' panel, as discussed earlier, would need to be very closely examined and orders issued by the individual CPFs so that women personnel can perform their task with ease.

**4. Leave** – It is also necessary to take cognizance of the fact that women personnel would need more leave than their male counterparts. Not only that young women, particularly the unmarried ones, require leave during their menstruation but also need more leave from time to time to take care of their families. The natural role of women as care-takers has to be recognized and their leaves adjusted accordingly. As we have already seen the authorities would have to consider either accepting that the Mahila Companies would have less strength for bandobast duties or alternatively they will have to increase the strength of the women companies so as to cater to the needs of women personnel for more leave. This would ensure that the companies have as much strength for bandobast as the other male Companies.

**5. Welfare activities** – We have earlier discussed the need to provide separate toilet and changing rooms at static points like parade grounds and other places. It is equally important to provide mobile toilets and changing rooms to women personnel during periods of prolonged bandobast at those places where such facilities are not easily available. It is also important that such facilities be provided when the battalions move in caravans from one place to the other. This is essential as the women find it impossible to use public conveniences or the open fields which the men are sometimes compelled to do.

Another important welfare measure that was conceived during the course of the study was the need for the provision of crèches or childcare centres at convenient places to take care of the infants and children when the women personnel are at work. The provision of these facilities will greatly help women to feel secure about the children when they are at work.

Another important suggestion that was made was the need for the residential schools for the children of police personnel. There was an overwhelming support amongst the respondents both male and female for these facilities. These schools can be set up by all the CPFs as common facilities in various important and central places spread all over the country where children of the police personnel could be admitted. These schools could be upto class 12 and should have as many disciplines as are available in other schools. It is also recommended that the task of running of schools be given over to professional bodies which run other public schools. This would ensure proper standards of teaching and would ensure that the children who pass out from these schools could easily get admissions for higher studies including the professional institutions.

**6. Voluntary Retirement Scheme** – According to the Doctors' panel, women progressively lose their physical efficiency after the age of 30 years. We have also seen that women feel the pressure from their families intensively for taking care of their needs and for taking care of the children and of the elders and at the same time find it difficult to meet the physical challenges of the arduous and hazardous tasks that the service requires them to perform as they progressively become more senior and at the same time gain in age. Women personnel feel a lot of stress in view of the

opposing pressures that they experience in taking care of their families as well as meeting the growing demands of their jobs as they become senior. At the same time, their physical efficiency also goes down after the age of 30 years as has been seen from the Doctors' report. Keeping in mind all these factors, an overwhelming majority of the respondents during the project study felt that they needed to opt for voluntary retirement after 15 years of service. According to them, it would be difficult to go up to 20 years of service when the voluntary retirement scheme automatically becomes applicable to all government servants. This was also the recommendation of the Doctors' panel.

The above recommendations have been made after due consideration and after taking the viewpoint of the respondents as well as other expert groups who have come to similar conclusions regarding the ways and means of tackling various issues in connection with induction of women in the CPFs. If proper care and caution is taken to deal with these basic and important issues then it would go a long way in making women personnel feel well-cared for and induce them to serve for long periods in the police force and make their valuable contributions. It is equally important for the Government that women should not feel compelled to leave at an early stage for reasons other than personal ones as these would adversely affect the building up of a proper cadre of women personnel including senior officers who would be able to provide the requisite leadership to the force.

## Appendix

### **Summary of discussions held after presentation by Shri S. Banerjee, IPS (Retd), Project Director on 03.03.2009 at the BPR&D, New Delhi**

A presentation regarding the project was given by the Project Director, Shri S. Banerjee, IPS (Retd.), in the presence of Shri Prasun Mukherjee, IPS, DG, BPR&D, Shri Sankar Sen, IPS (Retd.), Chief Coordinator, Shri R. C. Arora, IPS, ADG, BPR&D, and the representatives of the Central Police Forces. The following is the summary of discussion:

1. A point was raised whether the problem of **separation anxiety** existed in male police personnel as well at the time of induction. It was mentioned that the study was confined to female personnel only and, as such, this matter was not considered. It was, however, recommended that the matter was also required to be studied.
2. On the suggestion that softer duties should be given to women personnel during their advanced stages of pregnancies and in pre-and post-natal periods as well as at the time of menopause, depending on their physical and mental state, it was mentioned during the meeting that there were deserving cases where men should also be given such softer duties. The consensus evolved that women personnel under particular circumstances and men, especially those who had been disabled on duty, should be given lighter and softer jobs. The CPFs should, therefore, identify such jobs and post the personnel, as described earlier.
3. The suggestion for residential schools was received very well. In this connection, participants expressed the view that a separate corporation should be formed for running these residential schools on the line of police housing corporations which already existed in some states. It was also emphasized that running of schools should be given over to professional bodies. It was also suggested that a tie up could be established between Central School Boards and CPFs so that running of these residential institutions could be done in the best possible manner.

4. A concern was expressed in connection with reduction of age for women personnel to 15 years of service, in that it would be a loss for the CPFs if such experienced personnel leave service. After keen discussions, it was agreed that alternate jobs in other branches like Information Technology, other technical branches, control room duties, etc., could be thought of so that these experienced women personnel do not have to leave service.
5. It was also mentioned that attempts at increasing percentage of women personnel would have limitations because of limited areas in which they could be deployed. In reply to this, it was emphasized that increase in percentage of women personnel was possible in view of the fact that they were needed for deployment in various areas as well as types of jobs.
6. In connection with counseling for prospective women candidates who wanted to join police force, a consensus emerged that the nature of duties of each post could be detailed at the stage of advertisement for the jobs. This would leave very little chance for any misconceptions regarding the jobs and the kind of life that they would be expected to lead in police force.
7. A point was raised whether caste, class, language and regional background had any bearing on the willingness of women to join the Force and their effective performance of the duties. During the course of the study all these parameters were taken into account in the questionnaire prepared for the sample study. It was found that women from different castes, religions, languages and regional backgrounds joined the Force irrespective of these differences. Once they joined the Force, these factors hardly mattered because they performed the same kind of duties. The duties are aimed at achieving certain targets or the purpose for which they are being performed. For instance, if a riotous mob is to be quelled, then deployment of the personnel is not made on the basis of their different religions, backgrounds, etc., but on the basis of their functional requirements. The Force is

- a unifying factor and once the uniform is donned then all other differences are ignored.
8. The study revealed many important and varied characteristics of women which indicated their mindset and more importantly, the conflicts and the difficulties they faced in resolving the opposing pulls of pursuing their career and looking after their families. I had the occasion to interview a number of women officers who had reached the level of commandants. I shall give some live examples after changing the names of actual personalities. Deepika, who joined as a Deputy Superintendent of Police, and was one of the first to command a full Battalion, felt that it was impossible for her to carry on beyond twenty years of services as her children were growing up and they needed her attention. Another factor that propelled her towards this decision was the fact that she had lost her husband quite early in life and being alone wanted to devote more time to her children. In another case, Manisha, who was the Deputy Commandant of a Battalion in an important location, felt that it was becoming increasingly difficult for her to stay away from the family for long periods of time. She felt that the children must stay with both the parents so that they could have a proper up-bringing. This is a view no one can dispute. Kiran, who was commanding an all-male Battalion in a crucial sector, was very successful because she had the ability to lead and command her Battalion like any of her male peers. She had an interesting tale to tell. She had always taught her little children that whenever they heard loud bangs they should run and hide under the bed. This was so because she had been continuously posted in sensitive locations where bombings were common occurrence. Once when she had come to Delhi with her family on a holiday during Diwali, firecrackers were burst and the children automatically ran and hid under the beds and it was almost impossible for her to bring them out. Such was the impact of her postings on the psyche of the children. Monika, a girl from the Commando Unit, who was posted in an important and sensitive location, came out with a different problem. She said that she was from Kerala and was posted in the North. The restrictions in her camp prevented her from socializing with anyone. She, therefore, asked me as to how she could get married if she was unable to find

a boy from the South in that region. Her frustration in this regard became more accentuated because she was also getting on in years. Seema, who was actually a ranker in the University, felt frustrated because temperamentally she was not able to adjust to the rigours of the work. When I asked her as to why, in spite of being a ranker in the University, she had joined the Police Force, she frankly admitted that she had not bargained for such a life.

The live examples given above illustrate the real problems that women face while trying to cope with the extremely rigorous life in the Police Force. There is no doubt that the Force needs women to deal with women particularly during riots and other agitations. At the same time, however, the Force must also cater to their special needs as has been detailed in the body of the main report, so that they feel motivated to stay on in the Force. The physical and the psycho-sociological problems they face must also be adequately addressed. It is also important to explain to them the nature of the police job as well as the difficult conditions in which they have to function so that they are aware of what they are in for when they decide to join the force. If this is done then it is possible that the women will feel motivated to work beyond twenty years of service and would also make contributions towards the betterment of the Force by making use of their experience during the course of their career.

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The article is based on a research study entitled ‘Induction of women in Central Police Forces – Their impact on the Forces, and the Early Retirement Scheme’ undertaken by Shri S. Banerjee, IPS (Retd), former DGP (Anti-Corruption Bureau), Gujarat State under the aegis of the Bureau of Police Research & Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. The final report was submitted to the BPR&D on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2009.