

CHRI 2015

ROUGH ROADS TO EQUALITY

Women Police in Bangladesh



CHRI
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

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Rough Roads To Equality

WOMEN POLICE IN BANGLADESH

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This report has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.



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Foreword

CHRI has been working on better policing for more than two decades in India, East Africa, and most importantly, in South Asia. In South Asia, CHRI has sought to develop an increased demand for improved policing through reports, conferences and regional dialogues that offer opportunities to learn from each other in addressing common challenges.

Policing in the Commonwealth, including South Asia, has much in common – both good and bad. On the positive side, there is considerable policing that offers good practice and easy sharing. On the other hand, too many states cling to outdated structures and the colonial style of policing that are at odds with the aspirations of modern democracies. One of the negatives of this kind of policing is the great gender imbalance within police organisations that may not be fit for purpose in the twenty-first century.

In the first study of its kind, this Bangladesh-specific report titled *Rough Roads to Equality: Women Police in Bangladesh* concentrates on the situation of women in policing in Bangladesh. It highlights the value of diversity in policing in Bangladesh, points out the diversity deficit as regards gender and recommends measures to repair it. The report, which provides survey findings and documents experiences and challenges faced by women police, along with recommendations, will be of utility to the Bangladesh government, the Bangladesh Police and civil society to inform the current debates around improving the gender balance within the police.

CHRI believes that sincere efforts to address gender discrimination and further gender equity will be the harbinger for broader reforms in policing that can fulfil modern mandates.

CHRI is thankful to the Bangladesh Ministry of Home Affairs and the Bangladesh Police for giving the permission to conduct interviews and surveys. Our special thanks go to the Bangladesh Police Women's Network (BPWN), headed by Mily Biswas, who rendered enormous support and help to ensure our research was accurate. Special thanks also go to Shamima Begum, Vice President of BPWN for providing all information as and when needed. We are grateful to the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) for providing support during the course of our research. CHRI would also like to thank Fawzia Khondker of the Police Reforms Programme for her valuable suggestions and guidance.

Maja Daruwala

Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

Aim and Methodology

i. The Aim of this Report

This report critically examines the situation of women in policing in Bangladesh. It is based on the premise that gender equality, besides being a value to be upheld in and of itself, is a vital attribute for effective and genuinely impartial law enforcement. At its core, the report champions the inclusion of women in policing on the utilitarian ground that in today's policing the maximum police functions can be performed by either gender and there is little to support the myth that policing is a 'man's work' alone.

This country-specific report has grown out of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative's (CHRI) regional study on women police in South Asia and builds on that pioneering research.¹ Through the support of the Bangladesh Police and partnering with the Bangladesh Women's Police Network² (BPWN) for that study, CHRI was able to access more than 200 women police personnel across ranks. This gave us rich material for a stand-alone study on Bangladesh.

A survey and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with women police across ranks in Bangladesh and this report presents and analyses the findings. Our intent is to add the perspective of women's own experiences, perceptions, voices and priorities to the legal and policy discussion surrounding gender equality within the police department. We also highlight institutional measures being taken by the government, the Bangladesh Police and other relevant stakeholders; identify persisting challenges; and provide practical recommendations.

ii. Methodology

In late 2013, CHRI received permission from the Bangladesh Ministry of Home Affairs as well as from the Bangladesh Police Headquarters to conduct research on women in police. We were given access to conduct interviews, surveys and focus group discussions with women police from the ranks of Constable up to Deputy Inspector General (DIG) in three police ranges – Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. Specifically, we spoke to Constables, Assistant Sub-Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and Inspectors among the junior and mid-level ranks,³ and we conducted one-on-one interviews with a small number of senior women officers. The Bangladesh Police Women's Network (BPWN) provided crucial assistance by bringing the women police personnel together for our sessions with them.

The methodology also included the following:

Literature Review: This involved compiling information on: police structure, ranks, recruitment, training and promotion; the relevant constitutional and legal provisions particularly around women's rights and equality; reservation policies; review of police department manuals and regulations to assess provisions relating to or affecting women police; any relevant international reports; and media articles. Due to the lack of publicly available statistics on the number of women, the Bangladesh Police kindly provided the latest statistics on the number of women in the police department.

Survey: Based on the identified research topics, a list of questions was prepared from which a survey was designed that contained a range of closed and open-ended questions targeted at obtaining a statistical picture from women police of their views and experiences. CHRI partnered with BPWN to arrange sessions for focus

1 CHRI's regional report, entitled *Rough Roads to Equality: Women Police in South Asia*, assesses the situation of women police in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and the Maldives. It provides the first systematic assessment of the barriers women police face on the ground in South Asia, and recommends ways to strengthen gender equality within police departments. It was published in August 2015, and can be found at this link: http://humanrightsinitiative.org/tenders/CHRI_Women%20Police%20in%20South%20Asia_2015.pdf

2 The Bangladesh Police Women's Network was launched in 2008. It is a forum of women police personnel across ranks and acts as a dedicated network to promote and advance the role of women police in Bangladesh. Additional information is provided in this report, but to learn more, visit: <http://www.bpwn.org.bd/>.

3 Of the junior and mid-level ranks, we were given access to these ranks. Please note that women were not being recruited to the rank of Sergeant at the time our survey was conducted. There were no women police personnel at this rank at that time.

groups and surveys in April 2014. These sessions were conducted in three out of the seven⁴ administrative districts of the Bangladesh Police – Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet.⁵ A small number of participants from the ranges of Khulna, Rajshahi and Rangpur also attended.

Face-to-Face Interviews: In connection with these sessions, CHRI interviewed⁶ 12 senior women police officers to gather details on broader policy issues and how circumstances have changed for women police over the course of their careers.

Focus Group Discussions: The focus groups and surveys were conducted with police personnel in two separate groups – one for Inspectors/ Sub-Inspectors (SIs)/ Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs) as a category,⁷ and one for Constables as a category.⁸ This was done as these ranks have differing duties and job responsibilities. The survey was customised slightly to be relevant to the ranks covered.

The table below shows the total number of participants in the focus groups, by range:

Ranks	Dhaka	Chittagong	Sylhet	Total
Inspectors/ Sub-Inspectors/ Assistant Sub-Inspectors	23	25	25	73 ⁹
Constables	65	33 ¹⁰	56	154
Total Respondents	88	58	81	227¹¹

This report keeps all the respondents anonymous. As with any survey, this one faced limitations that should be noted at the outset. Due to space constraints, the surveys and focus group discussions were part of a larger session conducted in a meeting hall. Across South Asia, the rigid internal hierarchy of police organisations prevents free airing of opinions by junior ranks in the presence of seniors. Many senior women police were present in the same space as the respondents, although best efforts were made to conduct the discussions and surveys at separate ends of the meeting hall.¹² This may have impacted the participants' level of openness and thereby the quality and honesty of their responses. Additionally, in Chittagong, BPWN organised a workshop for the participants before the survey was administered, which may have already discussed many of the issues addressed in the survey and influenced their responses.

Nevertheless, to our knowledge no other surveys have been conducted to gain a comprehensive view of the experiences and perspectives of women police in Bangladesh. As such, the findings presented in this report lay the groundwork for additional research, interventions and recommendations on unearthing gender bias, lack of infrastructure and other barriers that women face in the Bangladesh Police.

- 4 When CHRI's research was conducted, there were seven administrative districts in Bangladesh, with one police unit operating within each (in addition to other non-geographical units such as the Railway Police). Please see: <http://www.police.gov.bd/BdpoliceOrgr.php?id=287>. As of September 2015, there are eight administrative divisions with more being planned, reportedly.
- 5 Respondents from Chittagong represented all 11 districts within the range, as well as the Chittagong Metropolitan Police. Sylhet had participants from all four districts and the Sylhet Metropolitan Police, while Dhaka sent women personnel from seven districts out of a total of 17, along with personnel from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police. While Range and Metropolitan police operate as distinct units under the umbrella of the Bangladesh Police, BPWN invited personnel from both groups to participate so that, to the extent possible, we could get a holistic sense of women's experiences.
- 6 Interviews were conducted in Bangla.
- 7 The questionnaire for Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors contained 32 questions. Of these, 28 were close-ended while four were open-ended.
- 8 The questionnaire for Constables contained 31 questions, of which four were open-ended while rest were closed.
- 9 Out of this total of 73, 6 were Inspectors, 37 were SIs and 30 were ASIs.
- 10 In the group of Constables from Chittagong, eight respondents submitted two surveys, perhaps to correct their original answers. Because we were unable to determine which survey the respondents wished to submit, these eight individuals were omitted from the analysis.
- 11 In the findings below, the total number of respondents for some questions will be less than the totals presented here. This is because any blank answers were excluded from the calculation of results, and percentages were determined from the number of completed responses. Specifics will be noted in the discussion below. Blank answers were quite rare, however.
- 12 In Chittagong, seniors made a particular effort to encourage their junior colleagues to share their thoughts freely and honestly.

Demographics Snapshot: Age and Marital Status

The survey gathered some basic demographic information about each respondent. In terms of age, the women Constables were largely a young group with the vast majority in their 20s. Of the 154 Constables, 148 were 20-30 years, four were 31-40 years and two were 51-60 years. Of the ASIs, four were 25-30 years, 23 were 31-40 years, while one was between 41-50 years and one was 51-61 years. One respondent left this section blank. In the category of SIs, 22 were between 31 and 40 years, ten between 41 and 50 years, three between 51 and 60 years, while only one woman was 60 plus and one respondent left this section blank. Of the Inspectors, four were 31-40 years, while 1 was 31-40 years and another 41-50 years. In the South Asian context, marriage hugely impacts a woman's professional career. Knowing the marital status of working women is important in any study that attempts to better understand how working women are faring in their jobs and within the institutions they are working in. Of the Constables, also the youngest, the vast majority (113) were single and 38 were married. Of the ASIs, 29 were married and one was single. 36 SIs were married; and five Inspectors were married and one was single.

Background

i. Basic Information on Police Organisation

The Bangladesh Police is a centralised police force which works under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs. It was established as a national service headquartered in Dhaka in 1971. Currently, the Bangladesh Police has a total strength of 1,55,891, for a population of around 168,957,745.¹³

Structurally, the Bangladesh Police is divided into several units: eight range police,¹⁴ six metropolitan police,¹⁵ Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department, Battalions, Railway, Industrial, Highway, Police Bureau of Investigation, Training Institutes, Telecom and Information Management, Tourist Police, Special Security, Protection Battalion and Naval Police.

The rank structure comprises 14 ranks starting with Constable, Nayek, Assistant Sub-Inspector, Sergeant, Sub-Inspector, Inspector, Assistant Superintendent, Senior Assistant Superintendent, Additional Superintendent, Superintendent, Additional Deputy Inspector General, Deputy Inspector General, Additional Inspector General and Inspector General.

Recruitment into the Bangladesh Police is done at four levels: Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), Sub-Inspector, Sergeant and Constable.¹⁶ All ranks, other than Constable, require at least a Bachelor's degree.¹⁷

- 1) Assistant Superintendent of Police is the highest rank at which external candidates are recruited into the Bangladesh Police; it is the lowest rank in the officer cadre. Two-thirds of ASPs are recruited directly and one-third of positions are filled through the promotion of Inspectors. Recruitment is conducted by the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC) through the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examination, which has an overall 10% quota for women.
- 2) Sub-Inspector is the highest non-cadre (or subordinate) rank at which candidates are recruited to the Bangladesh Police. Fifty per cent are recruited directly and the remaining posts are filled through the promotion of Assistant Sub-Inspectors. Direct recruitment is conducted by Police Headquarters.
- 3) Sergeant is the next mid-level entry position. All Sergeants are directly recruited by Police Headquarters. Until 2014, only men were allowed to apply. In May of that year, entry to this rank was opened to women.
- 4) Constable is the lowest rank in the Bangladesh Police, and as such, is the primary entry-level position. The Superintendent of Police of the concerned district oversees recruitment for this position.

Reservation policies are in place at several levels of the Bangladesh Police to retain a set quota of posts for women. Following independence in 1972, the government's interim recruitment policy provided 10% reservation in the Bangladesh Civil Service for "war-affected" women. Very few women came forward to avail of this, so in 1985, the war-affected women's category was abolished and reclassified as a general 10% quota for women in the civil service.¹⁸ This remains in place up to the present. In addition, there are quotas of 15% for women in two non-gazetted ranks: Sub-Inspectors and Constables.¹⁹

ii. The History of Women's Entry into the Police

The Bangladesh Police remains governed by legislation enacted over 100 years ago – the colonial-era Police Act of 1861. It was among the first efforts of the British Raj to secure its empire using a hierarchical and militaristic police force. Provisions for women in police are entirely absent from the 1861 legislation, which

13 Central Intelligence Agency website, The World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html#People> as on 25 November 2015.

14 Staff Correspondent (2015), "Govt gives final approval for Mymensingh as country's eighth administrative division", Bdnews24.com, 14 September: <http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2015/09/14/govt-gives-final-approval-for-mymensingh-as-country-s-eighth-administrative-division> as on 25 November 2015.

15 These are Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet, please see: <http://www.police.gov.bd/content.php?id=282> as on 25 November 2015

16 Bangladesh Police Website, http://www.police.gov.bd/career_child.php?id=247 as on 25 November 2015

17 Bangladesh Police Website: http://www.police.gov.bd/career_child.php?id=247 as on 1 December 2015.

18 Yasmin, S. (2010), *Quota System in Bangladesh Civil Service: An Appraisal*, Institute of Governance Studies, BRAC University, January 2010: <http://dspace.bracu.ac.bd/bitstream/handle/10361/2085/Quota%20System%20in%20Bangladesh%20Civil%20Service%20An.pdf?sequence=1> as on 25 November 2015.

19 The information that there is a 15% quota for women at the entry points of Sub-Inspector and Constable was provided to CHRI by the Bangladesh Police in an email in November 2015.

is unsurprising given its heritage. In spite of this legacy, there has been no significant structural reform of the police since independence. The perception of policing as masculine also endures. Policing is still seen as a man's job.

Bangladesh Needs a New Police Act in Tune with the Constitutional Framework

Although there is increased acceptance of the need to include women in policing and that policy measures are required to realise this, the core legislation on policing has to be modernised and overhauled. The most recent effort to redraft police legislation is the draft Policing Ordinance of 2007, which now stands lapsed. Nevertheless, it was a first step towards more democratic police legislation. It contained provisions to tackle political interference in policing and would establish a National Police Commission to provide non-partisan oversight, as well as a public Police Complaints Commission.²⁰ Unfortunately, however, even the Ordinance failed to include provisions to promote and facilitate women's full inclusion in the police.²¹ Any new draft legislation should at minimum contain a provision on proportional representation of women in the police, if not enshrine a quota for women.

Indeed, this male domination in policing is not unique to Bangladesh. Internationally, professional police organisations failed to meaningfully include women until the latter half of the twentieth century. Where small numbers of women served in the police force before then, they primarily supported male officers or served in units with limited duties related to social welfare, such as those dedicated to schools, juvenile aid and related areas.²²

Women first joined the ranks of the Bangladesh Police in 1974 when 14 police officers in the Special Branch were appointed to the non-cadre²³ rank. These early recruits primarily served in VIP or ceremonial duties.²⁴ In 1976, women joined the Metropolitan Police.²⁵

In 1986, Ms Fatema Begum was appointed Assistant Superintendent of Police, the first time a woman was recruited to the cadre level in the Bangladesh Police.²⁶ In 1988, another four women were recruited at the cadre level. At this time, while the police was recruiting women, they were not being welcomed into the organisation. Senior male officers openly questioned the ability of the new women recruits. Although they had passed the Bangladesh civil services exam with the aim of joining the police, some of these women were asked to opt for another department in the civil service other than the police.²⁷

Inevitably, even this minimal early recruitment of women soon faced a strong backlash. In 1989, Major General Mahmudul Hasan, the Minister of Home Affairs for Bangladesh's then-military government, recommended suspending recruitment of women into the police at the cadre level on the ground that women were incapable of serving in these supervisory positions.²⁸ This was accepted by the military government and women were no longer recruited at the cadre level. Even though the military regime led by General Ershad²⁹ ended one year after cadre-level recruitment was suspended for women, this freeze persisted for a full ten years.

20 International Crisis Group (2009), *Bangladesh: Getting Police Reform on Track*, p. 4: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/-/media/Files/asia/south-asia/bangladesh/182%20Bangladesh%20Getting%20Police%20Reform%20on%20Track.pdf> as on 25 November 2015

21 Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (2007), *Bangladesh Police Ordinance, 2007 (Draft), Analysis, Critique and Recommendations for Amendments*: http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/programs/aj/police/Police_Ordinance_2007-Critique-FINAL.pdf as on 25 November 2015

22 Prenzler, T. & Sinclair, G. (2013), "The status of women police officers: An international review", *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 41(2), pp. 115–131: <http://oro.open.ac.uk/36665/1/Status%20of%20women%20police%20an%20international%20review.pdf> as on 25 November 2015.

23 The term "cadre" refers to personnel who join the Bangladesh Police through the national civil services. "Non-cadre" refers to personnel who are recruited directly by the police department.

24 Interview with a woman cadre officer, April 2014.

25 Presentation made by Shamima Begum at the International Women in Law Enforcement Conference – Leadership, Collaboration & Security, 2015 in Hyderabad, India, 6-8 October 2015 .

26 At present, Fatema Begum is serving as Rector, Police Staff College, Bangladesh. Please find her biography at: <http://www.psc.gov.bd/index.php/biography-of-rector/>.

27 Interview with a woman cadre officer who was recruited in 1988, April 2014.

28 Razzak, R. (2008), "Women in the Police Service", *The New Nation*, 21 February 2008: <http://www.prp.org.bd/Media/21feb2008.pdf> as on 25 November 2015.

29 Staff Correspondent (2015), "PM's Special Envoy HM Ershad says Women Leaders are Only 'Showpieces'", *Bdnews24.com*, 29 June 2015: <http://bdnews24.com/politics/2015/06/29/pms-special-envoy-hm-ershada-says-women-leaders-are-only-showpieces>. Given former General Ershad's recent sexist commentary in Parliament describing women, including the Prime Minister and other senior government officials, as "show pieces", it is not a stretch to imagine that gender bias lay at the heart of his decision to suspend the recruitment of women at the cadre level.

Only after Sheikh Hasina became Prime Minister in 1998 were women again recruited at the officer level into the Bangladesh Police. Since then, there has been a steady rise of women officers at the cadre rank. Still, those ten lost years left their mark by severely stunting women's professional growth within the police and entrenching a subculture of male domination.

Lingering History

This history still embodies an essential element of senior cadre women's perception of women in policing in Bangladesh – specifically, the root of the continuing structural barriers they face. Unfortunately, the lack of English language materials on this subject posed an obstacle to adding additional depth on this topic. Identifying more about this history, particularly the report that froze the hiring of women at the cadre level for a decade, is an important area for future research.

iii. Representation of Women in the Bangladesh Police

At present, the total strength of the Bangladesh Police is 155,891 and of this, as of September 2015, women numbered 8,827 which is 6.03% of the police.³⁰ Encouragingly, the percentage of women in the force increased by roughly 1.5% since April 2014 when women numbered 6,853. This is a significant increase within a short period. This builds on the steady rise from 2007-2013 when the percentage of women in the police in Bangladesh more than doubled from 1.87% to 4.63%.

The table below shows the breakdown of the number of women police at each rank as of September 2015.

Women Police by Rank	Total
Additional Inspector General of Police (Addl. IGP)	1
Deputy Inspector General (DIG)	2
Additional Deputy Inspector General (Addl. DIG)	2
Superintendent of Police (SP)	19
Additional Superintendent of Police (Addl. SP)	66
Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police (Sr. Asst. SP)	7
Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP)	161
Inspector	83
Sub-Inspector (SI)	476
Sergeant	28
Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI)	446
Constable	7,536
Total	8,827

Of the 8,827 women currently serving in the Bangladesh Police, 258 are cadre level. 1,033 serve at the mid-level ranks of Inspector, Sub-Inspector, Sergeant and Assistant Sub-Inspector, while the majority (7,536; roughly 85%) are at the Constable rank.³¹ While women remain concentrated at the lower ranks, the increase in the total number of women from 2013 to 2015 demonstrates a commitment to bring more women into the police force. While most recruitment took place at the constabulary level, certainly the number of women at the supervisory level also increased. The Bangladesh Police has taken strides to not only ensure women's representation in the lower ranks, but also in mid-level and senior management positions. Lifting the ban on women to apply to the rank of Sergeant in May 2014 is another indication of the efforts being made to propel

30 These statistics were provided by Shamima Begum in her presentation at the International Women in Law Enforcement Conference – Leadership, Collaboration & Security 2015, in Hyderabad, India, 6-8 October 2015.

31 Between the ranks of Constables and Assistant Sub-Inspector is the rank of Nayek. However, there are no women police serving in this rank in Bangladesh.

women into the police – in this relatively short period, as the table above indicates, 28 women are serving as Sergeants.

A driving force behind the priority given to the recruitment and inclusion of women in the police is the partnership between the Bangladesh Police and the Police Reform Programme (PRP), an initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that began in 2006 in Bangladesh. In addition to efforts to integrate women into the force, the Bangladesh Police worked closely with PRP to implement recommendations and new programmes related to access to justice, crime prevention, investigations, police training, strategic capacity building and more.³²

Concrete efforts began in earnest under the Bangladesh Police's Strategic Plan for 2008-2010, which articulated "gender neutrality" as a core value. The Plan set out a number of objectives to foster gender equality in policing. Among these were setting targets to increase the number of women on the force; drafting an internal policy on gender equality; and developing gender sensitisation training. Additionally, the Plan identified the need for a feasibility assessment and implementation of institutionalised support mechanisms for women such as the BPWN. Subsequently, an action plan was developed to identify specific objectives and activities to achieve each of these.³³

The BPWN: A Great Initiative Born Out of Collaboration

In 2008, the Bangladesh Police launched the Bangladesh Police Women's Network with the support of the PRP. The BPWN is an organised and dedicated network for all women police in Bangladesh to promote and advance their role. On joining the Bangladesh Police, a woman automatically becomes a member of BPWN. It provides women police an active, organised and extensive source of support, information and professional training. BPWN's vision is to develop leadership among women through skill-building and capacity enhancement. Further, it organises national and international conferences for women police to engage with each other for support and exchange. To encourage representative decision-making, the 23 members of BPWN's central governing committee are drawn from all ranks and regions. The BPWN is currently funded by the PRP.

In terms of policies, the PRP's efforts have led to two ground-breaking initiatives to support women's rights and women police: Gender Guidelines and a draft Gender and Anti-Discrimination Policy. The Gender Guidelines are outward facing, and address how the police interact with vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. For example, these guidelines address body language and word choice when police personnel are dealing with female victims of crime. These guidelines have been disseminated to all police stations.³⁴

The draft Gender and Anti-Discrimination Policy is inward facing and addresses gender equality within the Bangladesh Police. At the time of this writing, a draft policy was under review by the BPWN. After BPWN's review, the draft will be forwarded to the Bangladesh Police for approval and subsequent implementation. This draft policy is one of the most comprehensive attempts to institutionalise a gender policy in the South Asian region and is certainly a trailblazer among police in the region. It is hoped the Gender Policy will be adopted soon.

Highlights of the Draft Gender and Anti-Discrimination Policy

Once implemented, the Gender Policy will address institutional gaps affecting women's service and working conditions. The draft specifies priorities, policies and action items to support women police in relation to:

- Recruitment, promotion, leave, transfer, posting, and termination;
- Suitable restrooms and accommodation;
- Capacity-building and in-house training;
- Gender sensitivity awareness and training;

32 United Nations Police Reform Programme website: www.prp.org.bd as on 25 November 2015.

33 Bangladesh Police, *Strategic Plan Bangladesh Police (2008-2010)*, PART III, Action Plan: Goals/Objectives Strategy and Timeline, pp. 9-16: <http://www.prp.org.bd/downloads/strategic%20plan.pdf>.

34 Police Reforms Programme, UNDP Bangladesh (2007), *Gender Guidelines for Model Police Stations*: <http://prp.org.bd/downloads/GG.pdf> (available in Bangla only) as on 25 November 2015.

- Deployment in peace-keeping missions, and across police stations;
- A zero tolerance sexual harassment policy; and
- Provision of day care services.

It also outlines mechanisms for monitoring and implementing these directives.³⁵

Although work remains to be done to achieve gender equality, the extent of efforts undertaken to recruit and support women in the Bangladesh Police show great promise. Indeed, the jump in the number of women recruits, from 1.87% in 2007, before the first Strategic Plan was implemented, to 4.63% in 2013 and 6.03% in 2015, demonstrates the success that can come from a commitment of resources and political will.

Prohibition of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

Another sign of incremental progress to better protect women is the prohibition of sexual harassment at the workplace. Bangladesh does not have legislation prohibiting sexual harassment, but there are certainly robust standards in place. The National Women's Development Policy in Bangladesh contains provisions for zero tolerance on harassment at the national level. The High Court has passed an Order which defines sexual harassment, makes it a punishable offence and directs all employers (including the police department) to evolve "an appropriate and effective mechanism" for redress of complaints.³⁶ Each employer is to establish a Complaint Committee to receive and inquire into complaints, with a minimum of five members of which the majority are to be women, with at least two from an external body preferably with gender justice expertise. The High Court has directed employers and managements of all workplaces to give importance to publicity on sexual harassment by preparing and publishing booklets containing its guidelines.

In light of this plus all the recent progress, it is particularly concerning that the Bangladesh Police's Strategic Plan, 2012-2014³⁷ reduced the emphasis on women in policing. Its sole references to gender relate to how the police should engage with victims of gender-based violence.³⁸ It is imperative that the police department avoids signalling that recruitment and integration of women in the force is no longer a priority. Fortunately so far, this does not seem to be the case. Future plans must continue to highlight recruitment initiatives, as well as outline further objectives to achieve gender equality in policing.

Ultimately, the issue of gender equality, whether within the police department or any other state institution, must be seen in light of the constitutional guarantees of fundamental rights, equality before the law and equality of opportunity. The Constitution of Bangladesh protects the rights to equality before the law and equality of opportunity for women, as well as guards against discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.³⁹ The legitimacy of state institutions lies in being representative of the diversity of its people and in service of them. Continuing male domination in the police indicates that gender diversity is a slow road, but vital to traverse, if policing is to be impartial and effective.

Bangladesh ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1984, although it maintains a reservation on Article 2.⁴⁰ There are also a number of national policies that are directed at or contain provisions on gender development and equality, such as the National Women's Development Policy, 2011⁴¹ and Vision 2021.⁴²

35 Presentation by Ms Fawzia Khondker representing the Police Reform Programme, UNDP Bangladesh, at the *International Women in Law Enforcement Conference – Leadership, Collaboration & Security 2015* in Hyderabad, India, on 6-8 October 2015.

36 *Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association v Bangladesh and others* 14 BLC (2009) 694.

37 There was no new Strategic Plan for 2010-2012, making the 2012-2014 Plan the immediate successor of the 2008-2010 Plan.

38 Bangladesh Police (2012), *Strategic Plan Bangladesh Police (2012-14)*: http://www.police.gov.bd/userfiles/file/Strategic_Plan_14-11-12_color_print.pdf.

39 See Articles 10, 19, 28 and 29 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, 1972.

40 CEDAW South Asia website, Ratification Status: <http://cedawsouthasia.org/regional-overview/ratification-status-in-south-asia>.

41 Bangladesh National Portal of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (2011), *National Women Development Policy 2011*: http://mowca.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/mowca.portal.gov.bd/policies/64238d39_0ecd_4a56_b00c_b834cc54f88d/National-Women-Policy-2011English.pdf as on 25 November 2015.

42 Centre for Policy Dialogue (2007), *Bangladesh Vision 2021: Prepared under the initiative of NAGORIK Committee 2006*: <http://saber.eaber.org/sites/default/files/documents/Bangladesh%20Vision%202021.pdf> as on 25 November, 2015.

Survey Findings

Our main aim in presenting the findings laid out below is to provide an overview of the experiences and perspectives of women police from different ranks, as well as the barriers women continue to face within the Bangladesh Police. It is our hope that this lays the groundwork for further study and policy development by the police to embed gender equality.

i. Personal Motivation and Attitude of Family and Society

To understand the personal motivations of women police, as well as the attitudes of their families and society at large, we addressed these issues in our focus group discussions and surveys. When asked why they joined the police force, Constables, Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors across the country cited both diverse and common themes.

Women's personal reasons for joining the police were diverse. These included economic reasons, such as the need to provide for oneself and family. One respondent stated, *"I had desire to have a government job. As an eldest child of family and to undertake responsibility towards younger brother and sisters and to serve people and my family."* Others were encouraged to join the police by family members, one poignant example included, *"I am daughter of freedom fighter. He was killed in the freedom fight before my birth when he was ranked as S.I. To show respect to him, I joined in police"*.

Other participants cited national and civic pride and a sense of duty as reasons for becoming police personnel. According to one participant,

"I always thought that police department make a huge contribution to ensuring peace in the country. I thought I can present something to my country and myself by joining police department."

Another woman stated that she *"had desire from my childhood that I will serve people by doing job in police department."* Additional statements on the nature of the policing profession included: *"Police force is a well-disciplined force. They have to do lot of work with people. There are opportunities to produce case investigation report before honourable court by discovering the truth."*

Others highlighted the ability of the police to prevent crime and protect vulnerable populations, including women and children. One woman said, *"In our country women are neglected and oppressed by men so that to be with women and to ensure women's rights and also this is a different and respectful profession."*

Finally, several respondents shared that they wanted to expand opportunities for women by joining the police. As one participant stated: *"Women have to pass their life within a limited circle, like to be born in her father's home, then marry. I wish to get out from this so I joined in police job."* Such sentiments were closely tied with personal desires to demonstrate aptitude and professionalism. One woman said she joined the police to *"arouse my own will power, to serve people, to prove my own qualification and prove I can also do it"*. Another said she joined to *"prove my courage and skill"*.

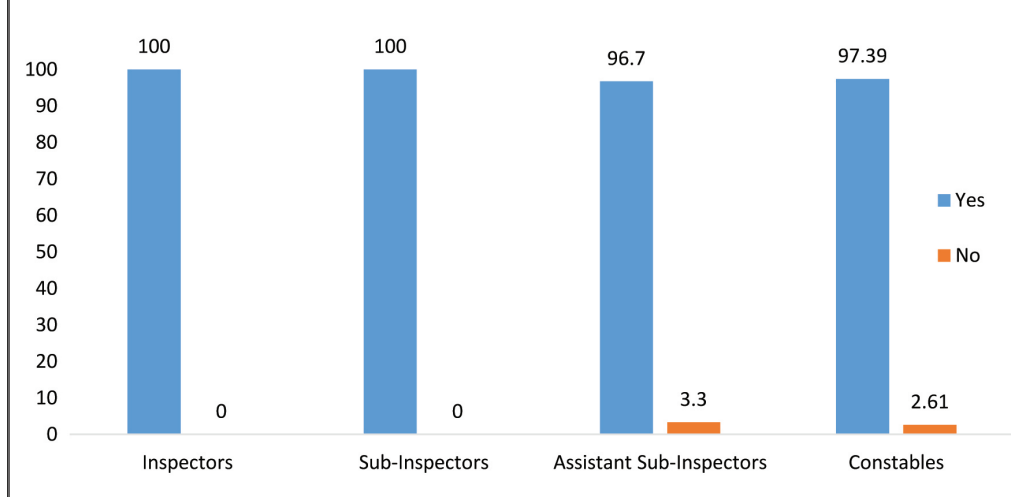
Clearly, women have diverse, poignant reasons for joining the police. They are motivated to ensure security and law and order in the country. Many expressed a desire to see justice done. Significantly, several emphasised justice for themselves and other women, both in terms of their profession, as well as for women as vulnerable members of society.

But even the most motivated women can be negatively impacted without support from her family, especially if she has children. To hone in on the level of familial support women have, we asked the survey respondents: 1) whether their families supported their decision to join the police and 2) if they were in favour of their being in the police service.

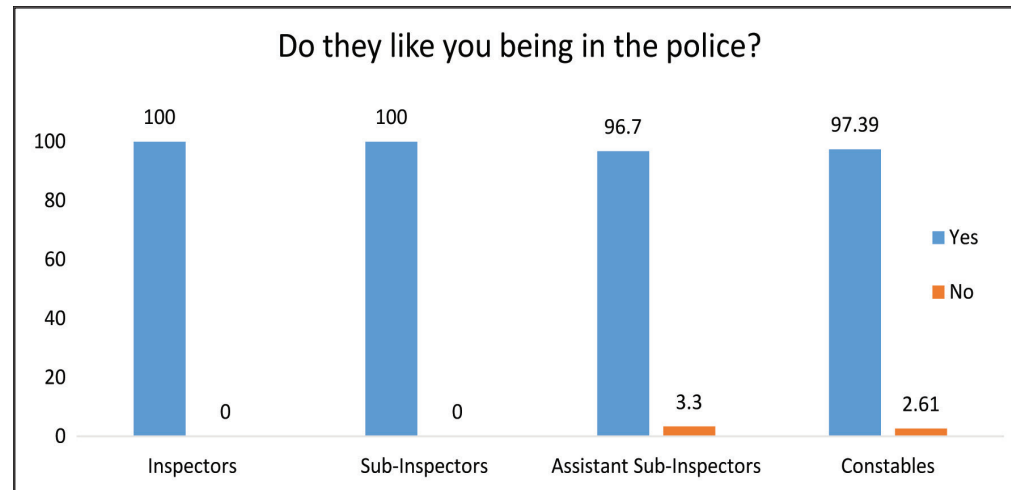
In the ranks of Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors, the vast majority said their families supported them in joining the police and liked them being in the police. Only one ASI responded that her family did not support her joining the police, or liked her being in the service.

Similarly, an overwhelming majority of the Constables said that their families supported them when they joined the police and liked them being in the police service. Three constables answered "no" to both questions.

Did your family support your joining the police?



Do they like you being in the police?



Interestingly, one Constable stated that her family supported her joining the police but did not like her being in the force now; another said the reverse – her family did not support her joining, but now liked her being in the police.

This data positively demonstrates that most women personnel do have family support to join the police. It also shows that some women face barriers at home and need support from the department to maintain work/ life balance. Indeed, our interviews revealed how essential family support is for women to balance life and work in such a demanding job. According to one cadre-level officer, *“Family support is needed, so we say [to entry-level recruits] do not join [the] police if your family does not support you.”*

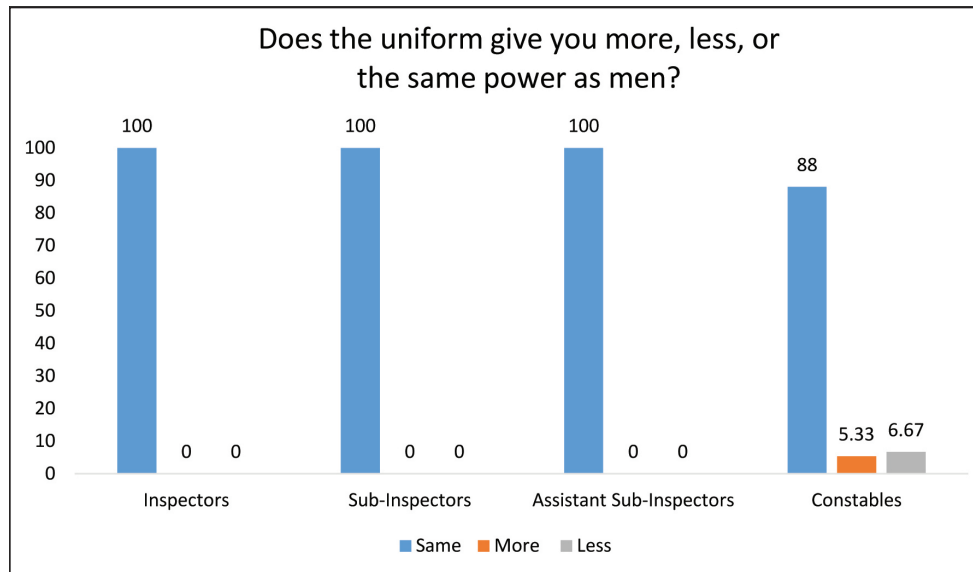
The data reinforces that the police department must make institutional efforts to help support women police maintain a realistic work/ life balance. For those women who have the internal motivation to join the police but lack family support, more social awareness is needed to persuade families. As outlined in the draft Gender Policy, the government can expand its recruitment efforts to target non-urban areas and use traditional media and local institutions such as Union Parishads⁴³ and Polli Shomaj.⁴⁴ A positive feature that emerges from these data trends is that women in Bangladesh would come forward to join the police and their families would support them. This makes better and wider advertising of posts for recruitment – through a variety of means such as radio, television, and through local institutions – all the more important.

43 Union Parishads, also known as Union Councils or Town Unions, are “the smallest rural administrative” units in Bangladesh. For more information, please see: http://www.kabirhat.com/union_parishad.html.

44 Polli Shomaj are community-based organisations instituted by BRAC, which aim to provide a forum for empowerment for the rural poor, particularly women. For more information, please see: <http://cep.brac.net/community-institution-building>.

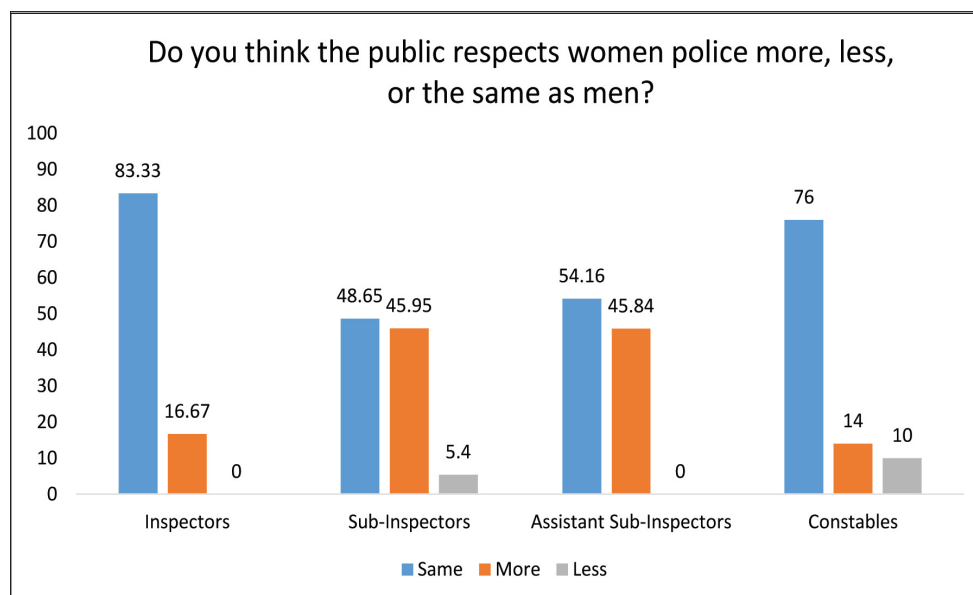
The opinions of family members impact individual women personnel directly, but larger social attitudes impact women in policing overall. To examine this more closely, we asked a series of questions on how women police felt they were perceived, both in terms of the power they have as women police officers as compared to men, and the level of respect they are given by the public.

First, Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, Assistant Sub-Inspectors and Constables were asked whether they felt that their uniform gives them equal, more, or less power compared to male officers.



Of the mid-level personnel, every respondent who answered this survey question⁴⁵ felt that their uniform gave them equal power to male officers. The Constables' answers were slightly more mixed. Out of 154 constables who participated in the survey, four left the question blank. Thus, 132 (88%) answered that the uniform gave them equal power as men, whereas ten (6.67%) said it gave them less power and eight (5.33%) said it gave them more power. This reveals that for the overwhelming majority of women police surveyed, the uniform makes them feel as powerful as men, and women do not feel any less than their male counterparts while serving in the police.

Next, both categories were asked "Do you think the public respects women police: more, less, or the same as men"?



⁴⁵ Six out of the 73 respondents left the question blank.

In answer to this question,⁴⁶ 36 (53.74%) women police from the mid-level personnel category felt that the public treats them equal to men and 29 (43.28%) felt that they were respected more by the public. Only two (2.98%) felt that they were respected less than a man. The breakdown by specific rank is shown above.

On the same question about public respect, of a total of 150 Constables who answered the question, 114 (76%) responded that the public respects them equally with their male colleagues. However, 15 (14%) responded that they felt the public respected them less and 21 (14%) answered that they felt the public respected them more. One interesting comparison is that, although only 6.67% of Constables felt the uniform gave them less power than their male colleagues, 10% of Constables felt the public respected them less than men.

According to this, a greater proportion of Constables felt the public respected them less than their male peers, compared to their senior women colleagues. One possible explanation could be that Constables are the most junior rank and many of these respondents may not have the confidence that comes with longer policing experience. Further, members of the public may demonstrate different levels of respect based on a combination of the police officer's gender and rank. Clearly, the variation in the responses could also be reflective of different individual experiences on the part of the participants. But it is telling that women Constables, as the most junior and arguably the most vulnerable as women police, feel the least respected by the public.

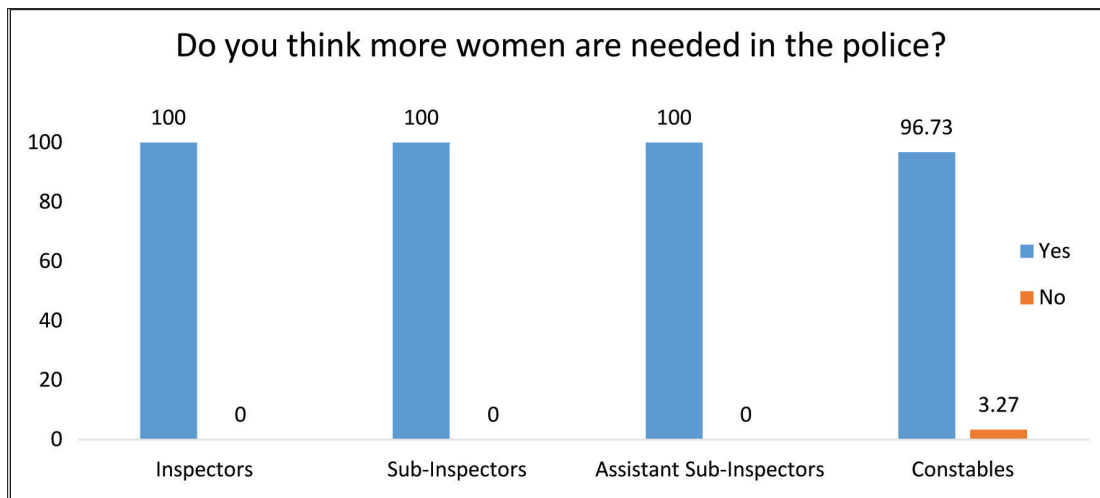
Interviews with senior policewomen revealed additional information on public perception. In particular, they indicated that the public sees men as more aggressive and corrupt compared to women police personnel.

“The public respect us more than men. The image of the police is bad because of men.”

“The public respects us as we do not take bribes like men do”⁴⁷

This view was especially reinforced in Sylhet. Respondents specifically stated that the public respects them more than their male counterparts because they do not solicit bribes. These views echo perspectives from other countries where women police officers have been shown to impact a reduction in corruption levels in the police. This is an indication that women are seen as less tainted by the image of corruption, further affirming the importance of recruiting more women into the police service to improve the image of the police and the public's confidence in the service.

Finally, we sought information on women personnel's views relating to women in the police overall and in the future.



⁴⁶ Six out of 73 mid-level personnel left the question blank, for a total of 67 responses.

⁴⁷ It was also expressed that *“the public respects us as much as they do male police officers, but the public is not afraid of us”* during the focus group discussions with the researchers in April 2014.

100% of respondents⁴⁸ from the mid-level ranks agreed that more women were needed in the police department. 96.73 % of Constables thought that more women are needed in the police department – out of 153 who answered the question, only five answered “no”. Encouragingly, these results are paralleled by findings of public attitude surveys conducted by the PRP. In the first of these, conducted in 2009, 90% of households expressed support for women in the police service, while 42% felt that women should comprise half of the police service.⁴⁹ A 2011 survey found that the vast majority of the public (93.6%) believed that women were under-represented in the police.

During our focus group discussions, practical reasons dominated for increasing the recruitment of women, including that this would lift the pressure and enable them to work flexible hours. Notably, some took this opportunity to point out that women who are serving currently need to be promoted. In that sense, recruiting more women, without providing opportunities for professional advancement, seemed to be of little benefit. These are very useful observations as they point to institutional gaps that can get neglected owing to an overwhelming focus on recruitment of women and getting the numbers up at intake, while not addressing other areas of concern. This is a reminder that genuine inclusion of women in the police must be approached systemically.

ii. Women’s General Job Experiences and Satisfaction

To get a detailed picture of women’s day-to-day experiences working in the police, we asked the respondents to describe their main duties, as well as what they liked most about their jobs and what changes would most improve their working situation.

Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, and Assistant Sub-Inspectors described their duties as:

- Serving the people and country; maintaining law and order, peace and security
- Guarding life, property and human rights
- Serving vulnerable populations, including the poor, women and children
- Behaving professionally in dealings with the public and avoiding corruption
- Investigating cases, aiding victims of crime and bringing perpetrators to justice
- Escorting VIPs
- Following legal orders of superior officers
- Dealing with situations of political unrest and dispersing illegal gatherings.

Constables repeated many of the duties described above. Others that were expressed included:

- In the police station: writing up the General Diary,⁵⁰ taking statements of victims, maintaining registers and summoning accused persons
- Field duty during elections, strikes, festivals and sporting events
- Guarding accused individuals and escorting them to court
- Guarding victims of crime and escorting them for medical examinations and treatment
- Assisting rape victims at the One Stop Crisis Centres⁵¹ located at medical college hospitals and assisting victims of domestic violence, abduction, sexual assault, trafficking and other crimes affecting women and children at Victim Support Centres at police stations.⁵²

48 Four out of the 73 participants left the question blank, resulting in 69 total responses to this question.

49 Police Reform Programme (2009), “*Police Reforms Programme-Public Attitude-Follow-up Survey Final Report*”, p. 53: <http://www.prp.org.bd/downloads/FollowupSurvey.pdf> as on 25 November 2015.

50 The General Diary (GD) is one of the most important registers in a police station. It is a record of all incidents and suspected incidents occurring within and in the jurisdiction of a police station in a 24-hour period.

51 One Stop Crisis Centres (OSCC) are designed to deliver medical, legal, psychological and other needed care to victims of sexual crimes at one location to reduce the burdens, barriers and trauma they face: http://mspvaw.gov.bd/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=188&cmp=1&adfile=1&Itemid=143.

52 Victim Support Centres operate within police stations and draw on support from established NGOs to deliver gender sensitive, effective service for victims of crimes disproportionately affecting women and children, such as sexual crimes, abduction, trafficking, domestic violence, abuse of domestic helpers and missing children: <http://www.prp.org.bd/menusc.htm> as on 25 November 2015.

Inspectors, SIs, ASIs and Constables were asked what three things they liked most about their jobs. To this question, some of the most common things mid-level personnel mentioned were: investigating cases, serving people and helping victims, the uniform and discipline of the police, the challenging nature of the job, travelling throughout the country and for UN missions and being motivated by a sense of duty.

Other specifics included:

- Attractive salary (non-discriminatory)
- Providing necessary legal aid to victims and oppressed women
- Being treated equally to men
- Returning lost children to their families
- Opportunity to work independently.

These details reaffirm the commitment to duty, justice, and security exposed throughout the report. Women are dedicated to serving society as police. Moreover, they are steadfast in their pursuit of equality and establishing their own independence and professionalism.

Results from the Constables reflect the same values. Among professional duties, these women embraced the opportunity to be responsible for launching investigations; one respondent specified *“seizing illegal drugs and combating crime”*. Others emphasised service to the community. One highlighted the importance of *“be[ing] with people in their crucial time”*, while another woman shared that *“police are able to see reality [of people’s lives] from very close”*. A clear commitment to good policing was evident from those who shared their desire to *“enforc[e] law equally”* and *“[be] accountab[le] to people”*.

The participants also shared their aspirations in regards to career advancement, such as *“learning from senior officers”* and having the *“opportunity to study”*. Others mentioned the opportunity to travel as one of the things they like about being in the police, because they gain exposure to people throughout Bangladesh and the world. Finally, several women again shared that equal treatment and power among men and women is important to them.

Having highlighted women’s duties and asking them to reflect on what draws them to policing, we next asked both rank categories to identify three things that would make them more comfortable and effective in their work.

From the category of Inspectors, Sub-inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors, women identified several high-level as well as specific recommendations that would facilitate their effectiveness.

Among the broad goals identified by women, many were aimed at better integration of women into the police leadership. Participants identified political interference as a problem for promotion and expressed the need for promotions to be based on published rules and criteria.⁵³ One woman suggested that 30% of Officers-in-Charge of police stations be women. Another respondent recommended that there should be at least one female Sub-Inspector and Assistant Sub-Inspector and three female constables in each police station.

Suggestions were made on supporting women’s career development. These included additional meetings and trainings for capacity-building. One participant suggested that networks be established in each district for women to share knowledge and opinions. Other women emphasised the importance of women police being assigned to sensitive and complex cases, in order to build their skills on par with their male colleagues.

A number of other recommendations were made relating to work/ life balance for women. In terms of the family, several participants identified the need for day care facilities. One woman also said that *“frequent transfer [creates many] difficulties for our children”*. Another added that *“more effort should be made to ensure [accomodat[ion] in the same place if husband and wife are both working in the police”*. In this vein, others emphasised the need for shifts to be limited to eight hours.

53 Promotions are of course to be based on a process and criteria, such as work experience, seniority, results in promotional tests and completion of training courses among others, as stipulated by internal rules and regulations. This perhaps indicates that excessive political interference in decisions around promotions has become so acute that it is seen as the “norm” by some women police rather than the actual stipulated process.

In terms of infrastructure, women frequently identified the need for separate toilets, resting rooms and prayer space for women. One woman mentioned the need for improved medical facilities. Another highlighted the benefit of a gymnasium and arrangements for games and sports activities. Other suggestions included the need for adequate transportation to be provided.

Constables shared these priorities on professional development, balancing work and family duties and infrastructure. Specific suggestions for training included driving training for all personnel, as well as training on medical care and computer literacy.

Women also emphasised that they needed to be given opportunities based on their experience. One participant highlighted that personnel in small units don't get the same opportunities as those in larger ones. To the extent that women aren't posted in larger units due to lack of separate accommodation for women – or, more alarmingly, political interference in promotions and postings – these concerns must be remedied to ensure women's career development.

Focusing on Solutions

These responses throw up a comprehensive list of institutional measures that can be taken to address impediments that women police themselves have identified. Day care facilities, separate toilets and resting rooms for women in police stations, driving lessons, computer literacy training, providing games and sports activities, include just a few. Facilitating regular and open dialogue between ranks is a sure way for police leadership to ensure that issues around working conditions can be shared and solutions suggested.

There was a recurring and important difference between Constables' responses to those of mid-level personnel. Several women Constables emphasised the need for "good behaviour" from senior officers and male peers. Though this phrasing is imprecise, it implies that women Constables face, at a minimum, less respect than their male peers, as a result of their rank (reinforced again from similar responses to other questions). At worst, this term is a euphemism for sexual harassment. The repeated mention of this concern indicates that the Police Headquarters should undertake further study to determine the nature of the problem and take steps to address it.

Having now asked women personnel to highlight the best points, as well as the obstacles they experience while working in the police, we asked them to reflect on whether or not the police department is currently a good place for women to work.



All mid-level personnel⁵⁴ agreed that the police department is a good place to work. Thus, despite the problems they identified, women still like the department and believe it is a good place for other women to work. Similarly, the majority (148 out of 152 respondents or 97.37%) of Constables thought that the police department was a good place to work.

However, in the Dhaka focus group discussion, while most participants said that the police department was a good place to work, a small number of respondents showed ambivalence. These women articulated that their original ambitions and dreams when joining the force were different from the reality, but that they adjusted to the system. However, they also said they would encourage more women to join the force as it is a job where a woman does not have to fear for her safety.

In spite of the overall trend of female personnel being positive about women working in the police force, targeted questions reveal nuances about the problems they face. For example, in the focus group with Constables in Sylhet, the participants were asked if they would encourage their daughters to join the police. Many were reluctant and said that they would ask their daughters to join at a senior rank.

Taken together, this data and the focus group discussions show that women do face many obstacles in the police. And on a larger level, all of these require institutional responses from the government and police leadership. Yet, in spite of these, women police see good reasons for other women to join the police. Further, women's experiences may differ by rank. While women would continue to join the police, the police department can do much more to ensure that these women are provided basic infrastructural facilities so that the department can extract the best from them, and the women in turn can keep a healthy life and work balance. The police department, particularly the leadership and senior women police, must introspect and identify measures to ensure that women across ranks, particularly Constables, are respected and valued by their male peers, seniors and juniors alike, and are given equal opportunities to learn and grow just like their male counterparts.

iii. Challenges to Balancing Work and Family Obligations

As reported by Constables, Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors across the three districts, working hours were rarely limited to eight hours. More commonly, shifts were at least twelve hours long. Respondents repeatedly identified this as a barrier for women police, particularly those with family responsibilities. One interviewee, a cadre-level officer, emphasised that this challenge is one of the factors that discourages women from joining the police service. Further, the physical strain of working such long hours in difficult conditions should be noted.

At the same time, some of the interviewees felt that it is up to women to prove themselves by tackling these challenges. One senior woman said:

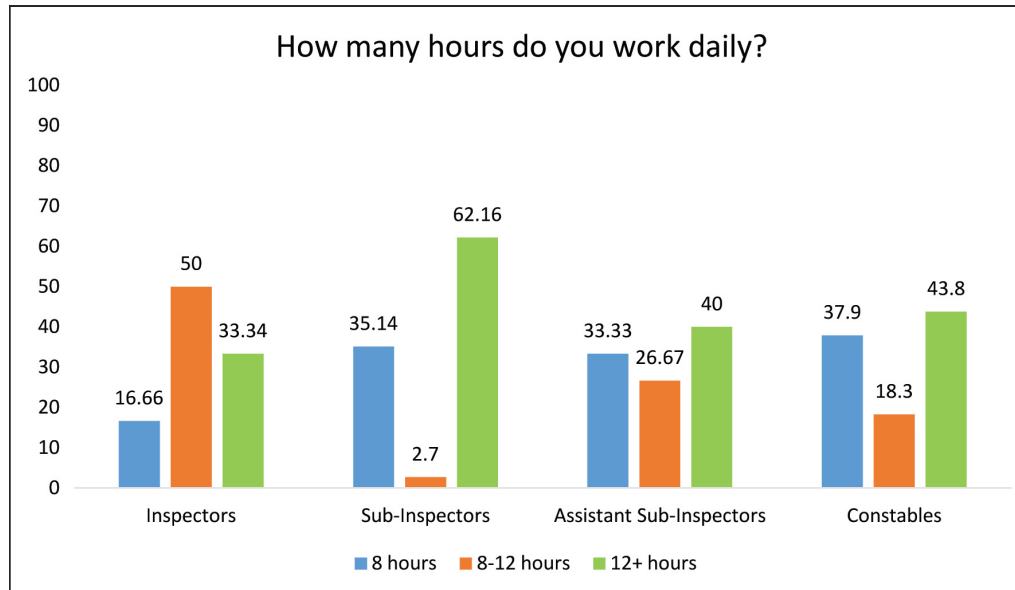
“We are trying to prove to the Constables that you should be able to do it. With regard to Constables, they join during their childbearing age. In the beginning of the career they have to adjust between family and career and the stress is high. We tell them to adjust and prove themselves. It is an Asian concept that women are responsible to look after the family. We had to sacrifice the comfort of our life.”

However, it is important that senior officers avoid making women bear the burden of countering the systemic biases that serve as barriers to women's full integration in the police force. It is here that BPWN can make a significant contribution and ensure that women do not have to prove themselves to show their seniors that they are capable.

Balancing family and work obligations presents a significant theme underpinning women's challenges in the police. Therefore, in our surveys and focus groups with mid-level personnel and Constables, a series of questions were asked on this topic to gather information on how many hours women are working and how this impacts them.

The survey findings reveal that 50% of Inspectors work between 8-12 hours and an additional 33.34% work 12+ hours. Almost two-thirds of Sub-Inspectors (62.16 %) work more than 12 hours a day. At the ASI level, 40% work more than 12 hours a day, while a further 26.67% work 8-12 hours. In the Constable category, 43.8% worked more than 12 hours while another 18.3% worked 8-12 hours a day.

⁵⁴ One of the 73 respondents left the question blank.



There seems to be considerable variation among ranks, which we observed is probably owing to different experiences among personnel in different districts. Across all ranks, the vast majority in Sylhet reported working eight hours per day.⁵⁵ By comparison, most personnel in Dhaka reported working over 12 hours a day; the majority in Chittagong were split between working 12+ hours and 8-12 hours. Because personnel from outside each of these ranges participated in the focus groups held there, concrete conclusions cannot be drawn. Still, the presence of such an apparent difference indicates an area the police department should examine more closely.

However, looking at the aggregate⁵⁶ data, three-fifths or more women from every rank reported working more than eight hours a day. Culturally, women are expected to be primary caregivers in the home. Despite the expectation that women police balance home and work responsibilities in ways their male counterparts are not expected to do, this data reveals that women work hand in hand with their male counterparts.

Excessively long working hours are a serious issue for both men and women police, and there is no question that it must be addressed for all police personnel, particularly those at the police station level. Nevertheless, this system burdens women disproportionately, and this must be recognised.

A key solution is to implement a shift system of fixed duty hours, which currently does not exist in the Bangladesh Police.⁵⁷ Improving transportation facilities and other infrastructure may also greatly reduce the length of daily work. Differences in working hours among ranks and districts also provide important data. It may be that recruitment drives should target areas where officers are working excessive hours most frequently, in order to relieve burdens caused by short staffing. By undertaking more detailed surveys, the police department itself could gather information to help it allocate resources and improve working conditions in the best manner.

As a follow up question, both mid-levels and Constables were asked: “Is it hard being on duty all the time?” This stems from Section 22 of the Police Act of 1861 which states that “every police officer shall be considered to be always on duty”. Because this colonial legal framework has not been overhauled and a shift system has not been put into place, there is no framework to regulate the hours police personnel work. This results in a culture of constant work, which makes it even more difficult for women to achieve work / life balance.

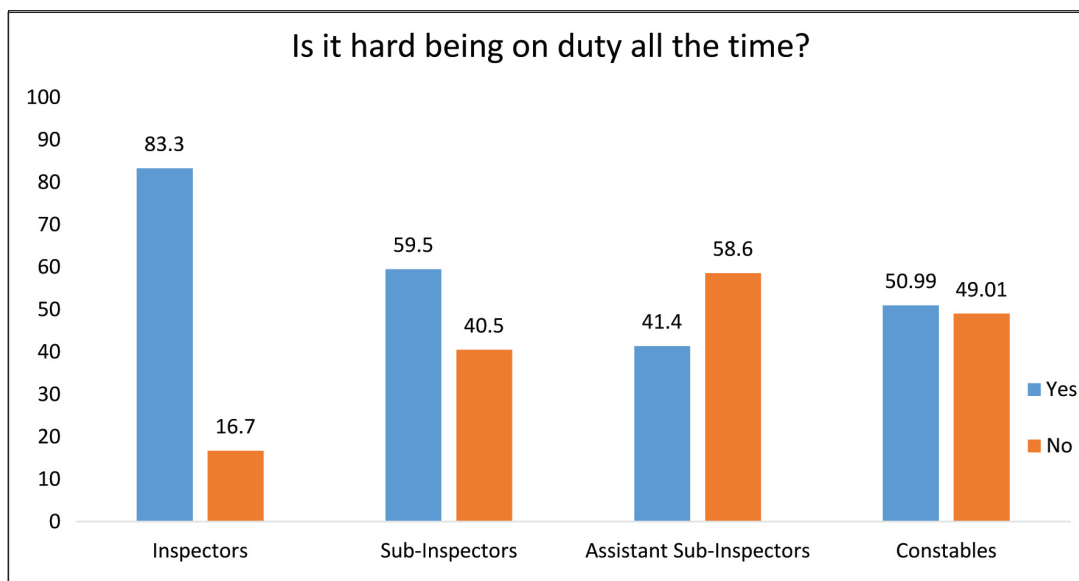
In the aggregate data, a majority of Inspectors (83.3%) and Sub-Inspectors (59.5%) said they felt it was hard to be on duty all the time. However, 58.6% of Assistant Sub-Inspectors reported that they did not feel it was hard. In the Dhaka focus group, 100% of the Inspectors, 84.6% of Sub-Inspectors and 66.7% of Assistant Sub-Inspectors felt it was hard to be on duty all the time. Importantly, it was in this district that the vast majority of personnel from all ranks reported working more than 12 hours per shift.

55 One-third of ASIs who participated were from Sylhet, accounting for the 33.33% who reported working up to eight hours per day.

56 All ranges according to rank.

57 In fact, this is a common regional phenomenon. There are no systems with formal fixed shift or duty hours (such as eight-hour shifts) in place in police organisations in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Maldives. This is a very serious issue affecting the quality of policing as well as the working lives of police personnel.

Is it hard being on duty all the time?



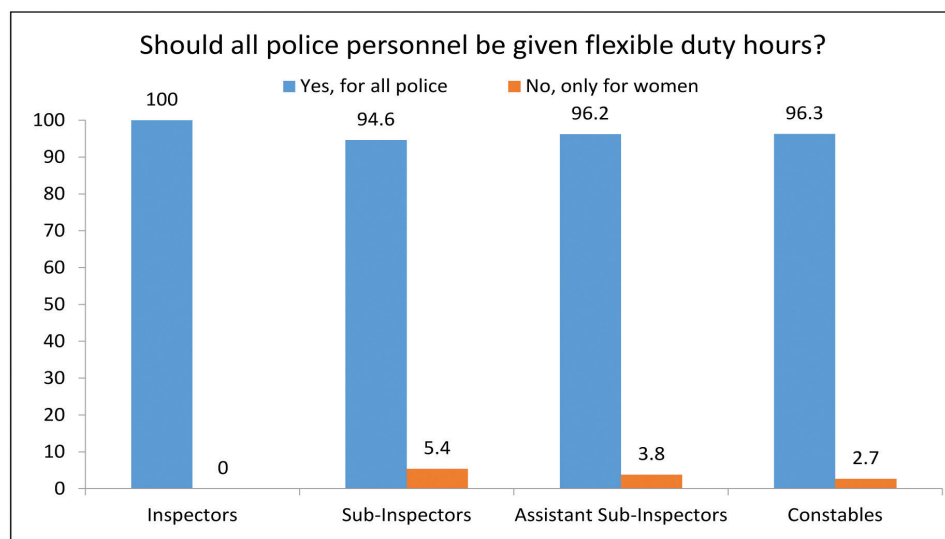
Although 50.99% of the Constables who were surveyed did feel that it was hard being on duty all the time, another 49.01% felt that it was not. In Dhaka, 76.56% and in Chittagong 68.75 % of Constables felt it was hard. It was only in Sylhet that 89.09% thought that it was not hard being on duty all the time. This huge difference in perception between Sylhet, Chittagong and Dhaka is probably because Constables reported working only eight hours a day in Sylhet while in Dhaka and Chittagong, the participants reported working more than eight hours a day.

Unsurprisingly, the difficulties of working long hours and often being uncertain about the length of shifts present problems for work/ life balance for women personnel. Hardships are only compounded by limited infrastructural facilities in the form of lack of toilets/ rest and prayer space/ vehicles and transport and the strain of having limited female colleagues for support.

For those participants who answered “no” to the question, the focus group discussions and interviews reveal a number of reasons. For example, Constables in Dhaka said that while it was hard initially to adjust to the work schedule, they have now accepted it as a way of life. Additionally, the comments of numerous cadre officers we interviewed spoke of a culture of being always at the ready as police. One woman said, “Police are on duty 24x7”.

To gather insight into how women personnel think the difficulties with shifts should be addressed, we next asked whether all police should be given flexible duty hours. We sought to ascertain the level of support for a flexible shift system for women personnel, to help them achieve work/ life balance, compared with an overall change in the shift system for all police personnel.

Should all police personnel be given flexible duty hours?

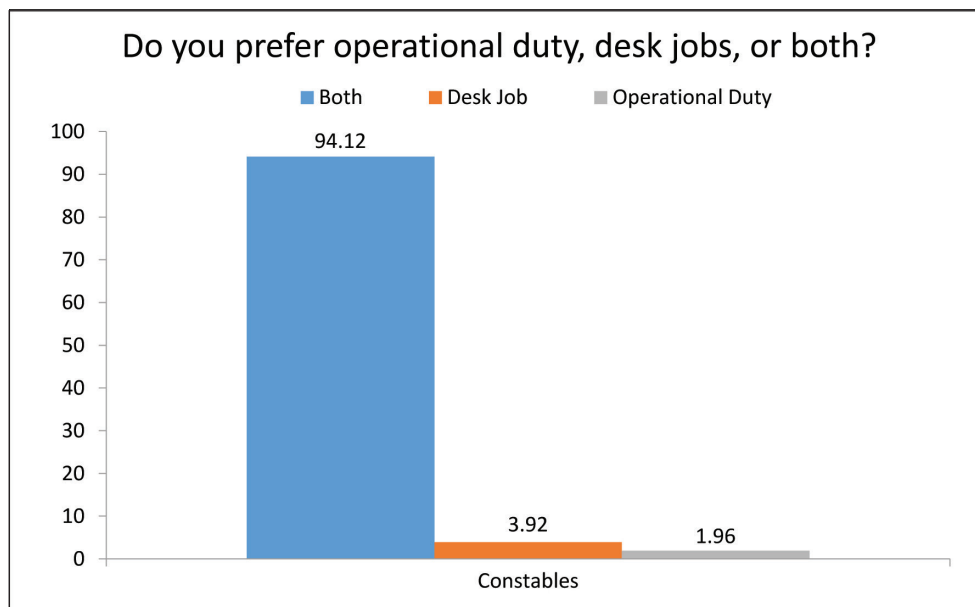


Here, the majority of respondents at all ranks felt that all personnel should be given flexible duty hours. This means that women realise that flexible duty hours is important for both men and women, so that all can contribute to the police department to the fullest.

An Eight-Hour Shift System: Recommendations from India

These results tell us that police officers typically work 12 hours or more a day in Bangladesh. The police in India are plagued by the same problem. Some state police departments have experimented by putting in place informal shift systems. Fixed eight hours of duty for certain ranks working in police stations has been recommended numerous times in the police reform discourse, but a concrete working system has not been designed or put in place anywhere. In 2014, the Indian Bureau of Police Research & Development published a study by a retired senior police officer titled, “National Requirement of Manpower for 8-Hour Shifts in Police Stations”, which gives clear workable recommendations as to how to implement an eight-hour shift system, as well as a regular weekly day off, for specific ranks working in police stations. The study acknowledged that the endemic shortage of police must be addressed to fill the ranks to implement this and computed the exact number of additional police needed to be recruited. Importantly, the study recommends that all new recruitment into the police to meet the shortfall should be of women only, as a way to bring more women in. In doing so, the police department would be able to increase the representation of women in the police department and also introduce a shift system all in one go.⁵⁸ The Bangladesh Police can consider the feasibility of these recommendations for their own context.

For the final question in this section, Constables were asked whether they prefer operational duties or desk work.⁵⁹ From discussions with BPWN, we learned that male officers often accused women of wanting to take “soft” jobs. The same accusations were evidenced during discussion in the focus groups.



Responses to the survey show that most Constables wanted both operational as well as desk jobs. Thus, in contrast to the stereotype, entry-level personnel want a balance in the kind of work they do.

In focus group discussions, participants from Dhaka and Sylhet shared that desk jobs made it easier to balance work and home life, because women are less exhausted. If, however, the length of shifts were better regulated, field duty would probably become more manageable.

58 Government of India, Bureau of Police Research and Development (2014), Sponsored study on National Requirement of Manpower for 8-Hour Shifts in Police Stations, pp. 127-128: <http://bprd.nic.in/writereaddata/linkimages/5122897254-National%20Requirement%20of%20Manpower%20for%208%20Hour%20Shifts%20in%20Police%20Stations.pdf> as on 25 November 2015.

59 The duties of cadre officers and mid-level personnel tend to be set and structured, whereas Constables may be assigned to a variety of administrative and field work. For that reason, only Constables were asked this question.

Ultimately, it must be widely recognised that women do not want to be relegated to administrative work and want to undertake challenging tasks as well. Indeed, in their answers to the first question in our focus groups and survey, the women demonstrated a commitment to duty, justice, professionalism and proving their skills. But, due to the serious lack of infrastructure and facilities for women, their ability to serve at their full capacity is restricted. Often then, they may choose desk jobs because they aren't otherwise able to balance work and family responsibilities.

How Far is Institutional Gender Bias Affecting Women's Career Growth?

Women police's repeated concerns that women who meet the relevant qualifications are not assigned leadership field postings are alarming. This is reflected in the fact that in all of Bangladesh's 64 districts, there is only one woman officer heading a district. However, according to cadre officers we interviewed, this particular district is remote and less crime prone, thereby seen as an easier posting. Additionally there is not a single woman police officer in the whole of Bangladesh heading a police station.⁶⁰

On a larger level, there must be some honest examination by the Bangladesh Police of the extent to which gender bias is seeping into decisions around deployment and postings of women police. There are definitely worrying signs of this, even anecdotally. A senior woman police officer tellingly stated that *"the authorities are one-eyed and they give blue-eyed boys all good postings"*. Another senior officer said that when she wanted to join the traffic unit (which is a tough policing job for anyone), rather than acknowledging her initiative to take on a tough post, her senior officer expressed concern that *"she may get tanned"*.

In another example, we learned that women are not being promoted to the rank of Nayek, which falls between the ranks of Constable and Assistant Sub-Inspector. There are no women at this rank in Bangladesh as female Constables are promoted directly to ASI. The reason cited for this is that Nayeks are engaged in force management and leading teams in field duty and women are not given this kind of work.⁶¹ Proceeding on the premise that all policing functions can be performed by women just as well as by men, and that women are equally capable of being in leadership positions, it is very difficult to justify objectively why women are not appointed as Nayeks.

Thus, while women are accused of not wanting to take on field work, those who do, are rarely assigned the postings they desire. Keeping this in mind, both the government and police leadership must ensure that decision-making around promotions and postings are genuinely non-discriminatory in practice. Encouragingly, the draft Gender Policy specifies that qualified women should receive priority in field and operational postings. It also states that sufficient budgetary allocation should be made to ensure women receive adequate training.

iv. Facilities and Services

The key to enable women to participate equally in the workforce is to put in place the necessary policies and facilities to ensure that they can work in a dignified manner and balance professional and personal responsibilities.

Women police officers identified several recurring infrastructural issues relating to a lack of separate toilets, restrooms and changing facilities for women. Other problems concerned the lack of accommodation or barracks for women that are necessary to enable them to take up certain postings.

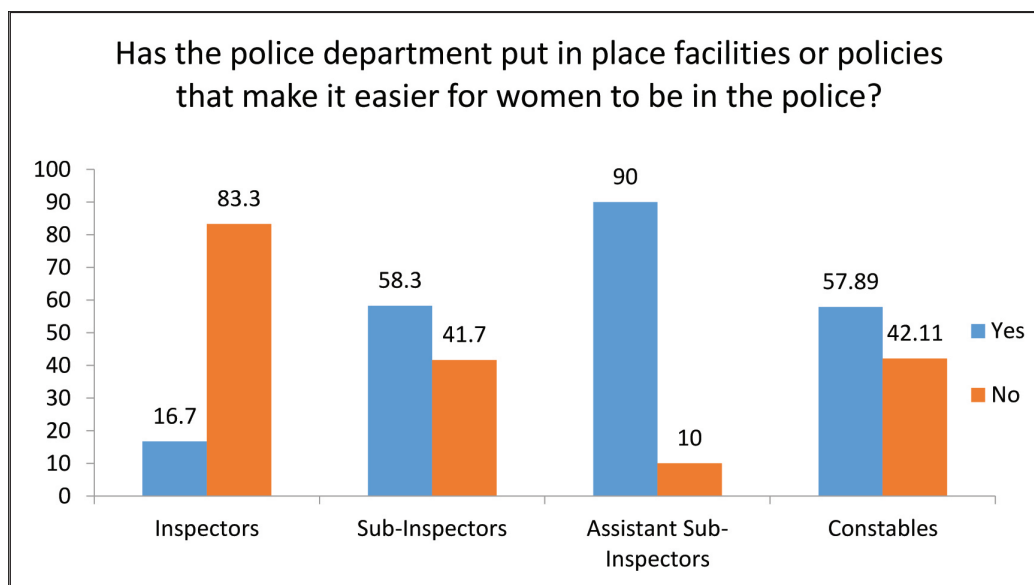
While there are undoubtedly resource challenges in terms of the costs involved in addressing these gaps, participants shared that these were not the only aspects of the problem. One senior officer related that budgetary delays have resulted in not being able to use the financial allocations that exist; thus, budgetary overhaul is needed broadly, in addition to increasing financial resources.

"What the government has to do is increase the budget to have more logistic support and facilities. Sometimes the budget comes so late that it is sent back because the financial year has ended."

To gather more details about the resource barriers women face and policies that relate to facilities and services, we asked a series of questions on this topic. The first question was whether women are aware of policies or facilities put in place by the police department to support women personnel.

⁶⁰ Information provided to the author by BPWN in an email, November 2015.

⁶¹ This candid insight was provided in email correspondence with BPWN staff, November 2015.



Mid-level personnel specified:

- BPWN
- Food and barracks
- Help from senior officers in case of any problem
- Maternity leave
- Co-location of spouses
- Ability to pursue studies while working.

Others added that they had heard of policies being developed, but had not been given any specifics.

Constables also added:

- BPWN for support and training
- Benefits for food and housing
- Some identified respect for the police as a benefit
- Travel nationally and internationally
- Maternity benefit
- Policies on sexual harassment.

According to the survey, 58.3% of Sub-Inspectors and 90% of Assistant Sub-Inspectors reported that some facilities and policies were in place to help female police personnel. However, 83.3% of Inspectors (five out of six) answered “no” to this question. While 57.89% of women Constables thought that the police department had put in place policies or facilities that made it easier for women to work in the police, about 42.11% thought otherwise. In the Chittagong focus group, participants said they needed policies and facilities to better address - childcare while they are on duty; transportation to and from duty stations; and accommodation.

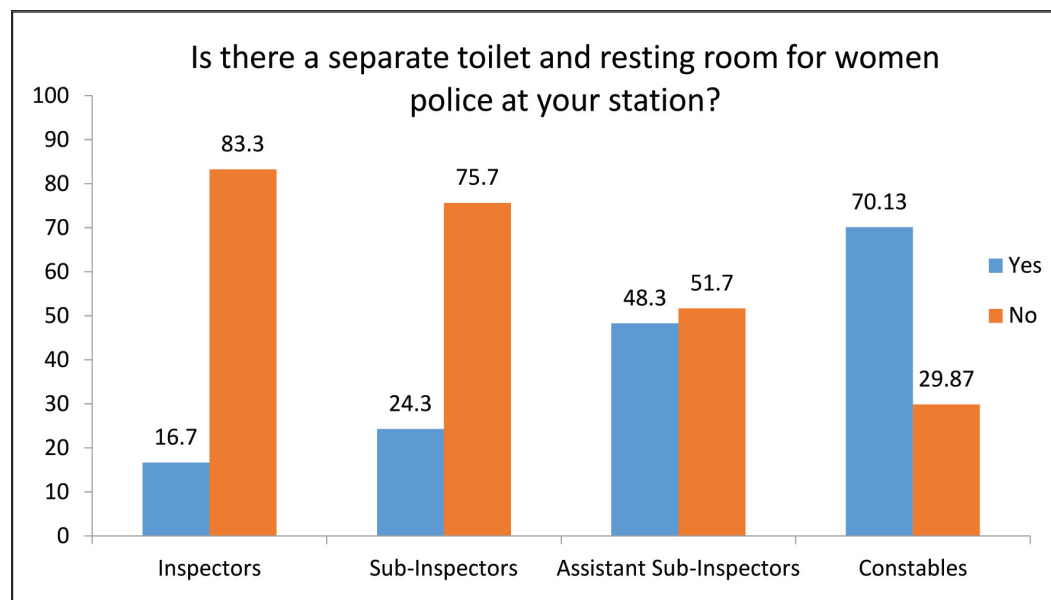
As the responses to the open-ended question show, a variety of policies and facilities were considered helpful to women. Some, such as maternity leave⁶² and BPWN are indeed specific to women, whereas provision of food and barracks apply to all personnel. Thus, those who answered “yes” seem to have done so when at least some policies and facilities were present that they considered helpful to women. Those who answered “no” perhaps felt the policies and facilities in place were not sufficient or could be more effective.

62 In Bangladesh, maternity leave for all female government servants (including women police) is 6 months (extended from 4 months in 2011).



Though it's hard to tell why there might be a difference in opinion among ranks, one reason why ASIs may have largely answered "yes" is because they are the most junior rank out of the mid-level personnel. Therefore, they may be more reluctant to say anything negative about the department, or because they are newer recruits they may not know what policies and facilities should exist to support them.

Next, to get a better idea of the specific infrastructural issues women personnel may be facing on the ground, we asked whether separate toilets and resting rooms were available for them.



In the aggregate, the vast majority of Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors said there were no separate toilets and resting rooms in their police station. Most Assistant Sub-Inspectors expressed the same.

Here, there seems to have been a noticeable difference in experiences by range. In Chittagong, 100% of Inspectors, 92.9% of Sub-Inspectors and 88.9% of Assistant Sub-Inspectors echoed the lack of basic facilities. In Dhaka as well, 100% of Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors and 92.3% of Sub-Inspectors, answered that they lacked separate toilets and resting rooms for women. By contrast, in Sylhet 100% of Inspectors, 70% of Sub-Inspectors and 92.9% of Assistant Sub-Inspectors answered that these facilities were available.

During the FGD in Chittagong, mid-level personnel said that not only was there no separate toilet for women, but that even the Officer-in-Charge's toilet is always locked so that others cannot use it. Further, though the survey results show overall acceptable conditions according to mid-level personnel in Sylhet, in the focus group, participants confided that separate toilets exist in model police stations only.⁶³ This could indicate some confusion about the question among participants. They also shared that there was no separate changing room.⁶⁴

When Constables were asked this question, in the aggregate, 70.13% said separate toilets and resting rooms were available. One range that stood out starkly against the others, however, was Chittagong where 93.94% of women Constables said separate facilities were not available. During FGDs in Chittagong, respondents reiterated that there were separate toilets or resting rooms in some places, but not in every district.

When such a great proportion of women work without a separate toilet and resting room, it must certainly have an adverse impact on their work. Women won't feel comfortable lying down and resting in the same space as men. Further, lack of separate toilets is a hygiene issue for women, particularly when it comes to disposing of sanitary napkins. Any government office should provide such basic facilities. The difficulty is only compounded given the lengthy hours women police work.

⁶³ Model thanas (model police stations) are a PRP programme to set up well-equipped police stations that will serve as a model for future stations and upgrading older ones. For more, see: http://www.prp.org.bd/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=55 as on 25 November 2015.

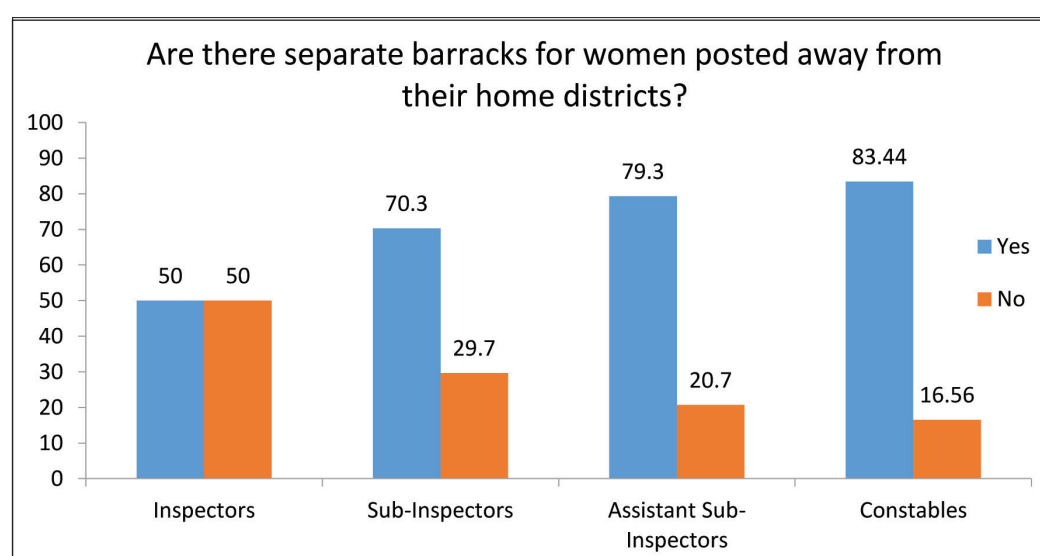
⁶⁴ Some said this was not necessary as they could use the senior ranking officer's toilet. While this openness is positive, the core issue of lack of separate changing rooms is left unaddressed.

As the participants shared, some new police stations, particularly model thanas, are properly equipped. However, most police stations are older and need some renovation. The government should earmark funds to ensure these basic facilities are provided to women personnel, particularly in light of future recruitment. Resources should especially be targeted at areas like Chittagong which appear to be most in need at present.

With the proper allocation of funds, and the implementation of the Gender Policy, this lack can be addressed as the draft Gender Policy lays down:

1. There will be separate toilets for female police in all the police stations/ranges/units, police schools and all the offices of Bangladesh Police.
2. There will be appropriate accommodation of female police in all the police stations.

The next survey question focused on whether there are separate barracks for women posted away from their home districts.



In answer to this question, 50% of Inspectors, 70.3% of SIs and 79.3% of ASIs said that separate barracks were provided for women posted away from their home districts. Similarly, 83.44% of women Constables said there were barracks for women staff posted away from home districts.

However, during the Chittagong FGD, Constables said only some police stations have attached barracks for women. In particular, they shared that police lines⁶⁵ were more likely to have separate barracks for women. In Sylhet, the mid-level personnel said that every police station was equipped with separate barracks for men and women, but that separate changing rooms were not always available.

Given the number of police stations in the country compared to the comparatively low number of women personnel, it is unlikely that all of them are equipped with barracks for women. Indeed, one potential reason for the high number of positive answers, especially among lower ranks, could be that these are available where women have been assigned postings; if separate accommodation were not available, it is likely that they would not be posted there. This indicates that perhaps our survey has not been able to capture the extent of the lack of separate barracks for women.

The lack of separate barracks in many postings restricts women's abilities to be assigned to areas and posts that fit their skills and career goals. For women who seek postings in locations without women's barracks, they often have to rent their own accommodation, which is greatly burdensome on a small salary.⁶⁶ In the larger picture, restrictions on where women can be posted limits gender sensitisation and inclusion to those areas where appropriate facilities are already in place.

⁶⁵ In comparison to a thana, which is an operational police station overseeing law and order in a particular jurisdiction, a police line is residential accommodation.

⁶⁶ According to our interviews, the base salary is 4500 Bangladeshi taka.

As one senior cadre officer aptly said:

“Women police in Bangladesh need to be valued. If they are valued then one would provide for basic facilities such that they are able to give their best to the department. Women police should feel that they are valued and considered as an asset not a liability. For the moment it is more need-based rather than value-based.”

Senior officers also emphasised that it is not enough for the government to increase the number of women in the police without looking at the facilities they need in order to work effectively. Several recommendations in the draft Gender Policy could tackle the problems to some extent:

- A female police officer will be entitled to six months’ maternity leave with full pay during childbirth and, if necessary, medical leave, annual leave and leave without pay may be added to this leave.
- There will be day care centres or child corners in all the women’s barracks, training centres, units and departments of the Bangladesh Police.
- The day care centres will be run by Bangladesh Police. The police (parent) will have to pay a minimum cost for the services of his/ her children.
- The day care centre will provide pre-schooling services to the children of the police.
- There will be a corner for breastfeeding in all police stations.

Therefore while the government and Bangladesh Police should endeavour to increase the number of women, in parallel, they must also ensure they have the infrastructure and facilities in place for women police to be comfortable. The environment must assure this.

v. Training and Professional Development

Depending on the level at which candidates are recruited, the length and content of training varies within the Bangladesh Police.

Training on Entry into the Police

Different training is imparted to personnel recruited at different levels. The following information has been taken from the Bangladesh Police website.

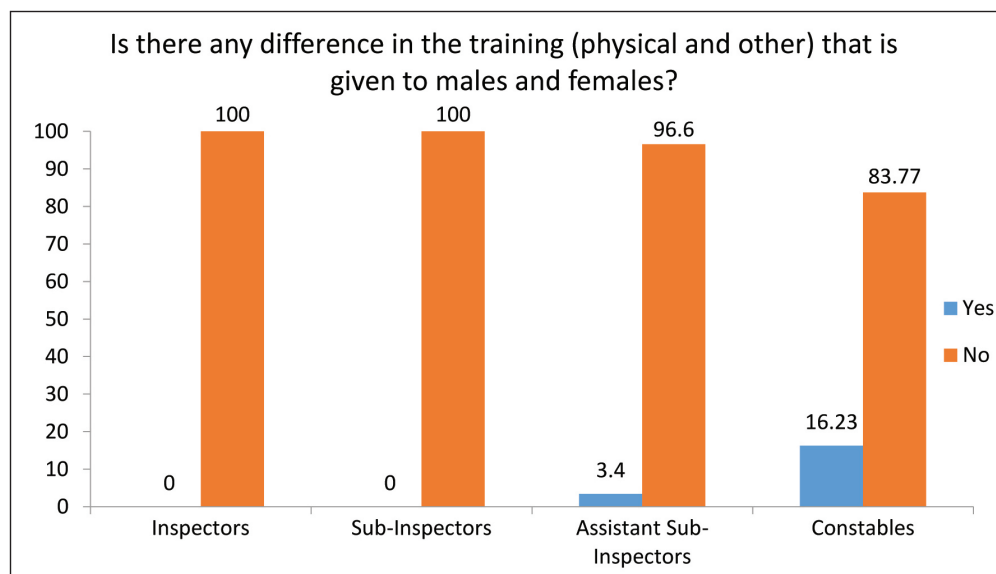
Cadre Services: On joining the service, officers undergo a one-year basic training course at the Bangladesh Police Academy as ASP Probationers. They attend knowledge and skill learning courses on law, physical training, driving, computer skills, equestrian skills and musketry. They then undergo six months of practical training in a district as a Probationer. Subsequently, they attend the Foundation Training at the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC). Throughout their professional lives, they are subject to skills development trainings.

Sub-Inspector: Recruitment is followed by a one-year training course at the Bangladesh Police Academy as Outside Cadets. Thereafter, the recruits are put through another year of practical training with different police units. Sub-Inspectors also undergo several in-service training courses at home and abroad.

Sergeant: Once recruited, Sergeants undergo a six-month training programme at the Bangladesh Police Academy as Probationary Sergeants. They are then put through six months of orientation training at their place of posting as Probationers. Sergeants also undergo different internal and external training courses at home and abroad.

Constable: After recruitment, Constables undergo six months of basic training at different centres, including the Bangladesh Police Academy as Trainee Recruit Constable (TRC). While working in different units, Constables also undergo different in-service training courses for skills development and professional growth.

To get a sense of how existing training functions and what more might be needed, we asked a series of questions to both mid-level personnel and Constables on the subject of training and professional development. The first of these was whether there is any difference in the training, physical or otherwise, provided to men and women.



The majority of mid-level personnel said that there was no difference in the training of men and women. Over four-fifths of Constables agreed that training was substantively the same for men and women.

As mentioned by participants in the focus groups, a few practical differences do exist that should be noted. One of these is different height requirements for men and women. Further, during physical training, women can take three days leave when menstruating, which is made up by an additional 15 days for make-up training.

While it is promising that women generally receive the same training as men, other problems may be present during the training period. For example, in one of our interviews with a senior policewoman, it was mentioned that during physical training, male recruits “would pass crude comments relating to [the] physical attributes of a woman’s body”. The possibility of sexual harassment, and the vulnerability of new female recruits to it, should be monitored throughout the recruitment and training process, and if found, swiftly and adequately addressed through the stipulated procedures.

Further, from these findings, it appears that women personnel gain considerably from their trainings, which is an encouraging sign. Thus, rather than problems with training per se, what participants articulated was the need to specifically target and redesign training to build capacity among women.

In our focus group discussions, personnel specifically identified driving, computer skills and English language skills as areas they wanted training on. In Sylhet, mid-level women also mentioned training on cyber-crime as an area of interest. They added that while they get 4-5 training sessions in a year, they felt that each session of 3-7 days was insufficient and highlighted the need for 15 days training.

In our interviews, senior female police officers highlighted a number of training needs to guarantee that women personnel can be most effective. These suggestions include:

- **Stress Management:** “If women are married then there are family obligation and you have to juggle between family and work. Stress management in training is not available”.⁶⁷
- **Physical Training:** “After training is over, there is no physical training to test your fitness. In the army, every year there is a physical training test”.⁶⁸

Senior officers also articulated the need for substantive training to be more widely available, so that women personnel are prepared to take on the full spectrum of police work. Such statements echo findings from the PRP’s survey of police officers in 2011, which found that fewer women received training in crime management and criminal investigation than their male counterparts. Roughly 4.3% of women officers said they received such training, compared to 15.5% of men.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Interview with a senior cadre woman officer, April 2014.

⁶⁸ Interview with a senior cadre woman officer, April 2014.

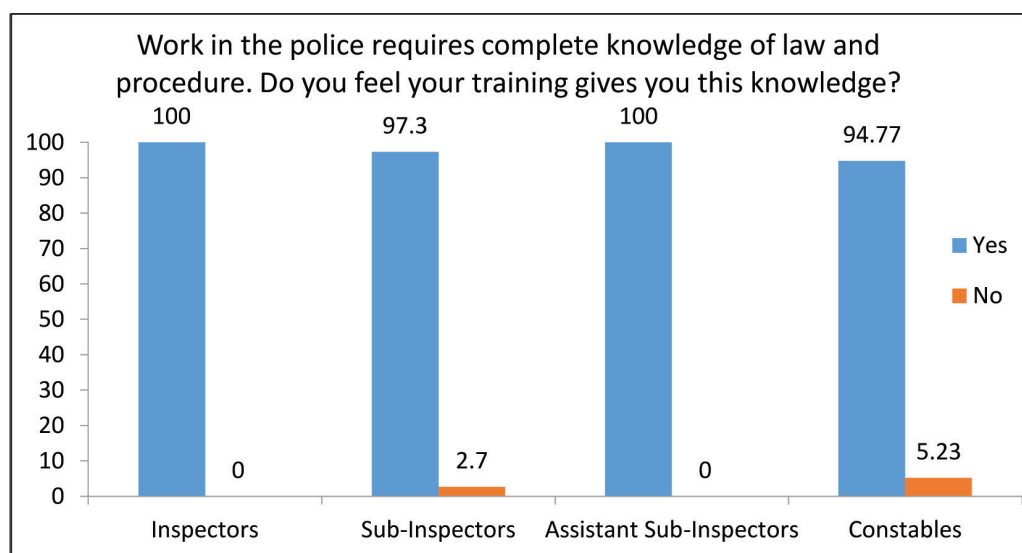
⁶⁹ Police Reforms Programme (2011), “Baseline Survey on Personal Security and Police Performance in Bangladesh”, p. 21: <http://prp.org.bd/downloads/Baseline%20Survey%20on%20Personal%20Security%20and%20Police%20Performance%20in%20Bangladesh%20-Summary%20Report.pdf> as on 2 December 2015.

It thus appears that, though equal training is given to men and women on joining the force, there is an ongoing drop off over time in access to training for women. This impacts their career advancement and the positions they can achieve. This in turn results in fewer role models for other women police.

To find out more about the issue of role models, Constables were asked the question: “What is the highest level most women Constables have attained so far as per your knowledge”? Most women answered that, for a Constable, typically, the highest rank one can attain is Inspector. However, many also recognised the possibility of entering the cadre ranks after pursuing a higher degree and passing the Bangladesh Civil Services Examination.

Other participants shared answers indicating women they knew of directly who had achieved certain posts. These included an Officer-in-Charge of a police station, as well as several in the mid-level ranks. Some participants answered simply that most women police work as Constables. This could indicate that they misunderstood the question, or do not see promotion to the mid-level ranks as a frequent occurrence.

We then sought to discover more in general about training for women personnel. These included questions on trainings on law and procedure, as well as on gender sensitisation.



Nearly all mid-level personnel felt they had a good grasp of the law and procedures involved in their work after their training. Similarly, a great majority (94.77%) of Constables felt the same.

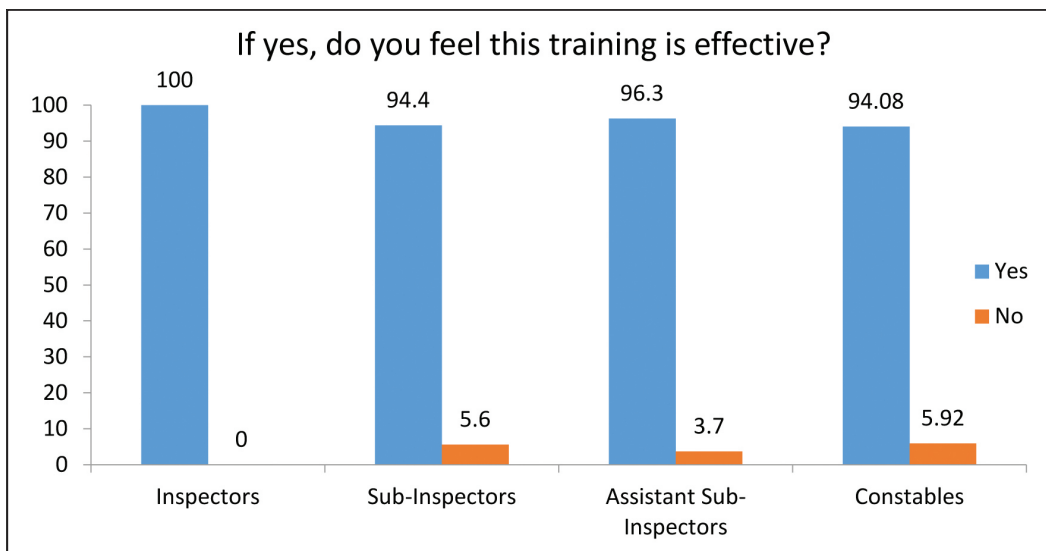
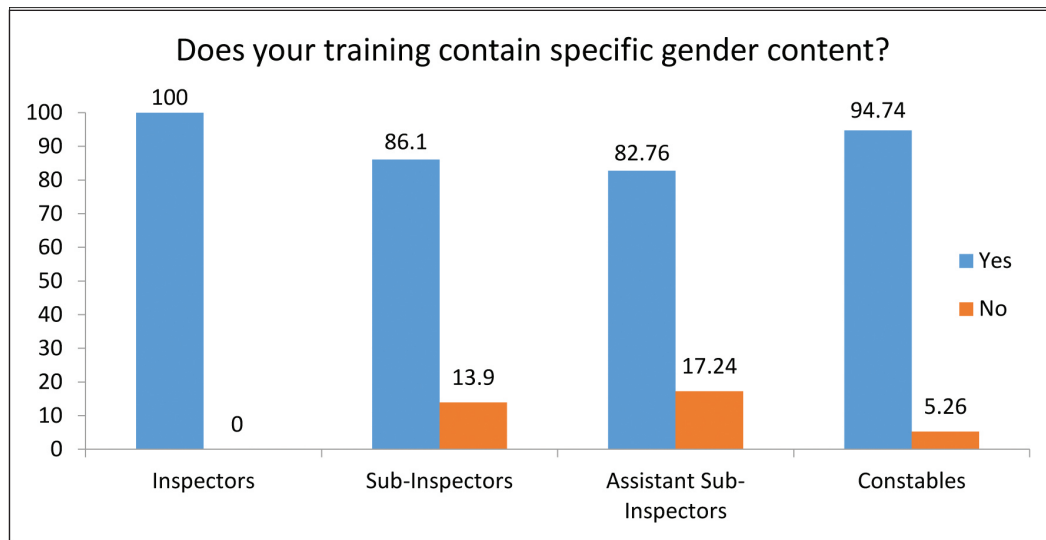
However, there was a section of Constables in Chittagong (12.12 %) and Dhaka (6.15%) who felt that training in law was not adequate. This was repeatedly mentioned in the Chittagong focus group, where participants who had served in the constabulary for six years and were thus eligible for promotion. They stated that they studied law and procedure separately from their official training in order to pursue promotion to the mid-level ranks. It also emerged that classes on law for Constables are available in the Dhaka Metropolitan Police but not the Chittagong Metropolitan Police.

Where women’s career advancement depends on taking trainings to prepare for a promotion examination, it is imperative that the police department ensures that development opportunities be available to all on an equal basis.

Among all ranks, the majority answered that their training included some content or sensitisation on gender. Of those answering “yes”, most felt it was effective.

Some lack of clarity on this point may result, however, from the different kinds of gender trainings available. For example, in the Dhaka FGD, all that the mid-level women personnel said on gender training was that there is a Manual on Women and Children (Nari O Shishu) that is taught during the training.

Additionally, mid-level personnel in Chittagong said there was a gender training component in their Police Training College courses, but felt men needed more training to become gender sensitive. Constables in Chittagong echoed the same sentiment.



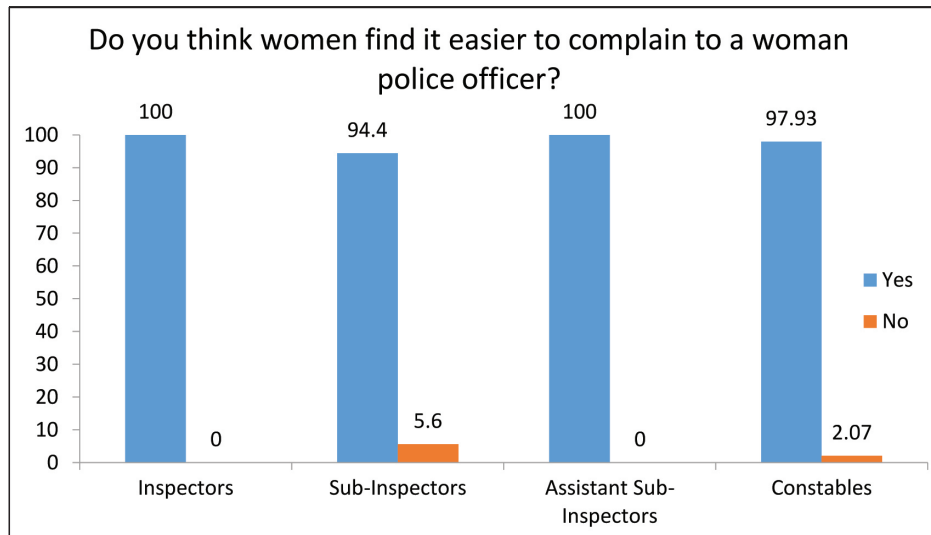
It could also be that those who said there was no gender component perhaps were not given such training or did not realise or understand what was taught. Either possibility speaks to the need for more robust training on gender sensitisation within the police force. Further, dealing on crimes against women could be broadened. Indeed, if existing trainings were effective, women police would not experience the level of bias they currently face.

Further, sensitisation should be considered for senior personnel, not only incoming recruits. This is pertinent, considering the absolute domination of men at the supervisory and leadership levels of the Bangladesh Police during the ten-year freeze on women's entry at the cadre level. One woman officer we spoke to even suggested: "Gender sensitisation should be given to senior male officers. From 1988 to 1998, only men were recruited at the cadre level and so they are DIGs now." Because gender training only commenced in the Police Training College in 2008, there is a need for separate trainings for those officers who joined before then.⁷⁰ Extinguishing gender bias needs the leadership to lead by example through heightened sensitivity and awareness, which will not be possible without the required training. This speaks to an important issue that can easily be overlooked and must be addressed on priority.

vi. Women Police and Crimes Against Women and Children

Gender equality and sensitisation are essential both within the police force and in how the police deal with women and girl victims of crime. To gather perspectives on how gender operates on the ground in policing, we asked a series of questions aimed at both these internal and external aspects.

70 Chittagong FGD.



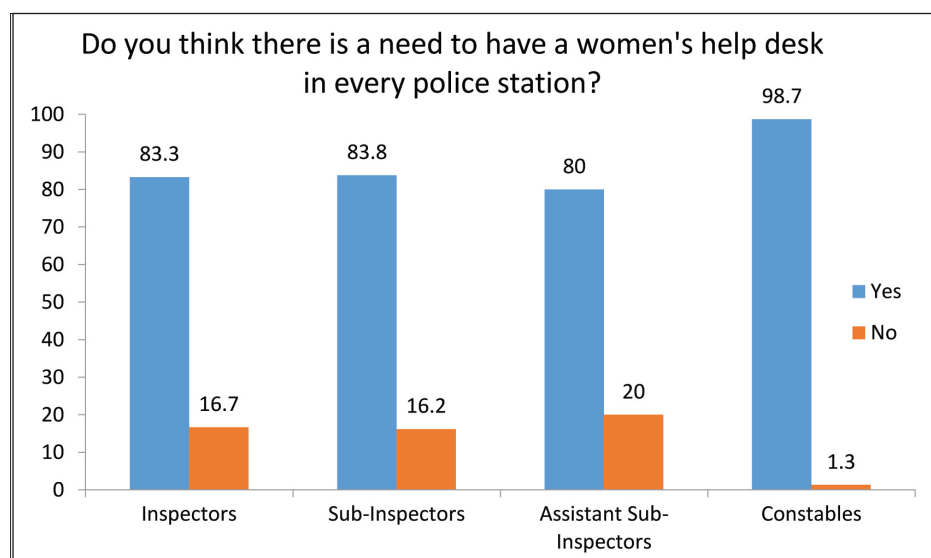
The majority of mid-level personnel and Constables felt that women victims of crime find it more comfortable to talk to women police personnel rather than male police. In our interviews, one senior woman shared this sentiment, saying:

“I used to handle domestic violence cases for a short while and women would call me to talk about such cases. People who saw me dealing with such cases with women approached me later even when I was posted out [to another location]. They remembered and called me even after I moved to another place”⁷¹

In the focus group, Chittagong women Constables shared that the main reason women prefer talking to female personnel is because male police lack appropriate gender sensitisation. According to their reports, male police officers frequently “think there is some problem with the character of the woman” in rape cases. Thus, though gender sensitisation trainings appear to exist on some levels, clearly more needs to be done. A survey of this kind cannot determine the reasons for this apparent gap, but at least identifies the problem. The Bangladesh Police should find out why training has not resulted in change and implement steps, such as further training, as well as continued monitoring of how cases of sexual assault and other crimes against women are handled, to remedy this. It is hoped that the operation of the Victim Support Centres has a positive influence in improving police response to female victims.

Having identified the extent to which women personnel feel that it is important for women to be able to speak with women police, we moved to questions on how that connection should be facilitated.

Over four-fifths of mid-level personnel and almost all Constables felt that having a dedicated women’s help



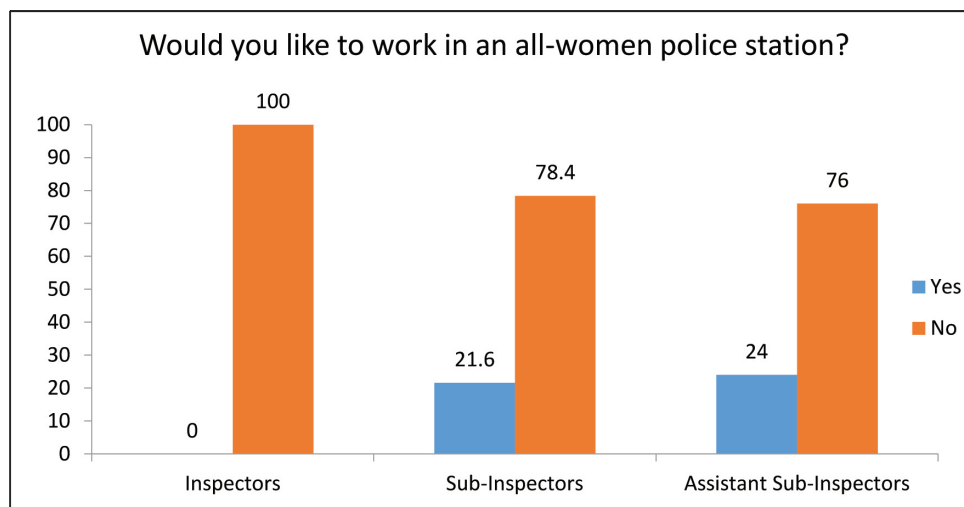
71 Interview with a senior cadre woman officer, April 2014.

desk at every police station was necessary. These results parallel the survey findings that women police widely believe that women are more comfortable approaching the police if they can speak to another woman.

As mentioned earlier, the government is already setting targets to increase the representation of women in the police. One potential way to use this recruitment to the best effect is to plan for help desks for women at most police stations in the country. This would have a great potential to remove obstacles to female victims' access to justice by ensuring that space is available for them to feel secure on approaching the police nationwide.

Some proposed all-women police stations as a model to help women in the community, especially victims, to feel comfortable approaching the police. To compare how women police feel about the help desk versus the all-women police station model, we asked mid-level personnel to share whether they would like to work in all-women police stations.

An overwhelming majority of mid-level personnel said they would not want to work at police stations staffed



solely by women. Respectively, only about a fifth of Sub-Inspectors and a quarter of Assistant Sub-Inspectors indicated a willingness to work at all-women stations.

Although there was no survey question on this subject for Constables,⁷² we did share the question in the focus groups. They were surprised by the idea, and found it ineffective at best and absurd at worst. All-women police stations are more common in Pakistan and India (though their effectiveness is being debated), whereas they are unheard of in Bangladesh.

It is clear that women police prefer the model of help-desks for women in police stations, rather than all-women police stations. We got similar feedback from the senior women officers we interviewed. One interviewee stated: “[The idea of an] all-woman police station is bad and a utopia. Thanas have to be made woman-friendly. It is good to have women’s help desks manned by women-friendly police officers”. Another shared the concern that “it will segregate women and women will not get an opportunity to learn if left in all-women police stations”.⁷³

The unease about segregating women is particularly acute where women’s opportunities in the police are already limited by lack of infrastructure and opportunities in their career growth when seen against their male colleagues. Indeed, it is already an underlying concern among many that women police are recruited only to serve women and girl victims of crime.

A 2011 public opinion survey conducted by PRP demonstrated mixed findings with respect to respondents’ confidence in the ability of women police to perform as effectively as men. When asked what role women should play in the police, almost 78% of respondents said they could assist women or child victims, with only 24.9% indicating that they could be involved in crime management or criminal investigation.⁷⁴

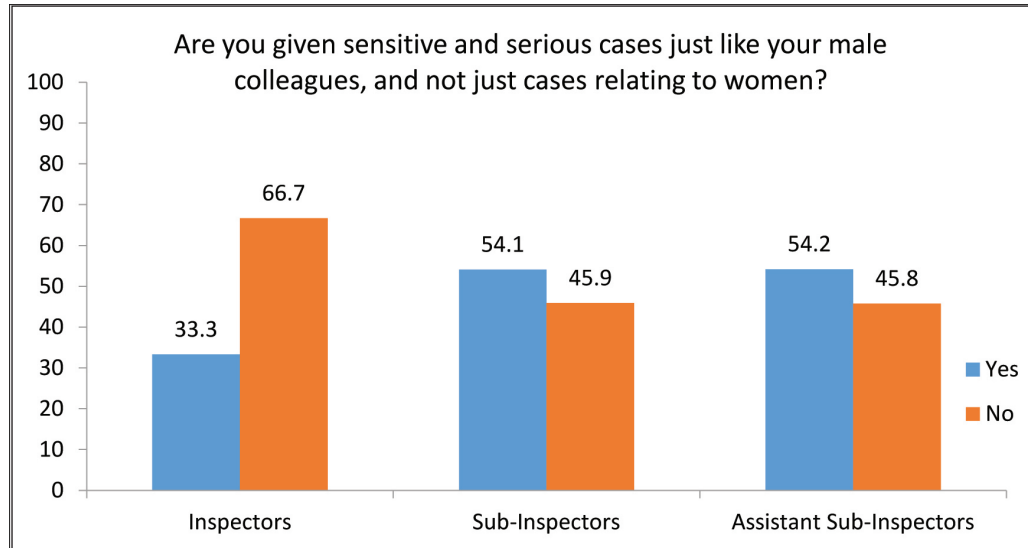
72 Originally we planned to only ask mid-level personnel this question, because assigning female personnel to all-women police stations would limit their opportunities to investigate a variety of cases and would thus more greatly affect the ranks with investigative powers.

73 Interview with a senior cadre woman officer, April 2014.

74 Police Reforms Programme (2011), “Baseline Survey on Personal Security and Police Performance in Bangladesh”, p. 21: <http://prp.org.bd/downloads/Baseline%20Survey%20on%20Personal%20Security%20and%20Police%20Performance%20in%20Bangladesh%20-Summary%20Report.pdf> as on 2 December 2015.

While these cases absolutely deserve focused attention and resources, it is also essential that women police are supported in their career development in whichever area of policing they want to work.

To find out more about how this is operating on the ground, Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors were asked whether they are assigned to investigate serious cases.



Here, the results were mixed. A high proportion of respondents felt they were not given serious cases on par with their male colleagues. Overall, two-thirds of Inspectors felt they were not treated equally when it came to assigning serious cases. The results from Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors were almost evenly split, although a slightly greater proportion from both groups felt they were treated equally.

Only two women who were part of the focus group in Chittagong had investigated murders; one was for an open and shut case in which two men argued and one was killed over one Bangladeshi taka. Respondents from Dhaka shared that they had been involved in serious cases, though some added that they have a high degree of involvement even in cases related to women only owing to the set-up of the Victim Support Centres. In Sylhet, however, many said that they were given all kinds of cases to handle.

Senior women officers we interviewed expressed a variety of similar frustrations. Comments included:

“They will not give crime duties to capable women officers. Women need to have a fire in them to prove themselves”.

“I had to request my senior to give me crime work”.

“By turn/rotation everybody should be in Rapid Action Battalion, Armed Police Battalion. I took seven years to work for crime zones. Why did it take so long?”⁷⁵

Given that so many women shared that they are not given serious cases raises questions about whether senior officers hold the notion that women cannot handle tough cases. The reason may also be lack of appropriate training to prepare women to take on such roles.

These are certainly worrying signs on the lack of priority or importance given to women’s growth as police officers. Our discussions and interviews highlighted that at least for some, recruitment of women into the police is driven by a need-based rather than value-based perspective. Hiring women is driven by the need of the police department to deal with “crimes against women and children, escorting women suspects, handling women protestors”; essentially relegating women police to women victims, suspects and crimes against women. If this is the underlying motivation, there will be no structured examination of institutional impediments that curtail women’s full inclusion in the police. Again it must be repeated that attention cannot focus only on raising the numbers of women at intake, it must be accompanied by equal amounts of self-examination within the department about what needs to be done to assimilate women into policing and to identify and root out all discrimination and bias.

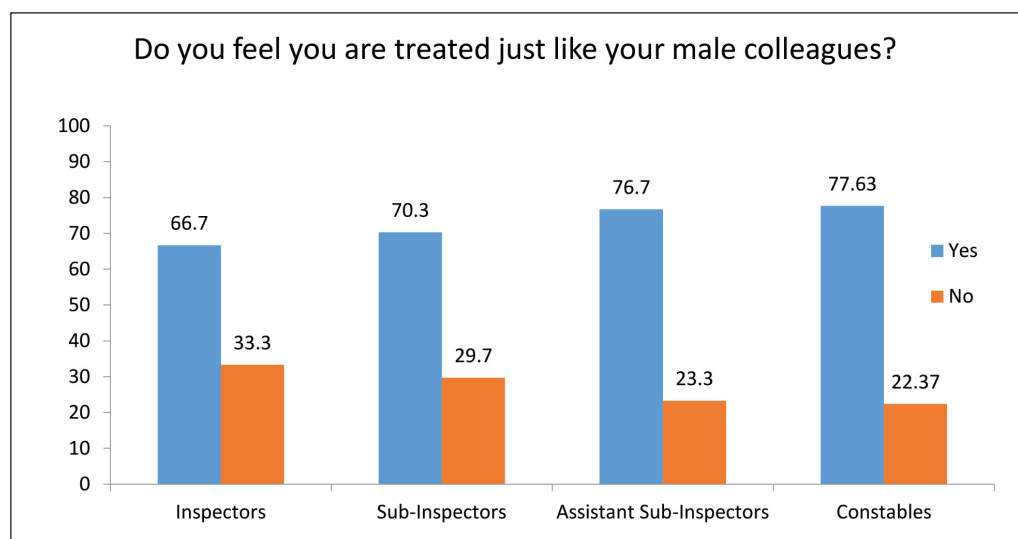
⁷⁵ Interview of a senior woman officer, April 2014.

vii. Women's Experience of Direct Bias/Harassment

Respect from Male Colleagues

Considering that for several years, women's representation in the Bangladesh Police stood below 2% and the fact that no women at the cadre ranks were recruited for a ten-year period from 1988 to 1998, it is hardly surprising that a male culture exists in the service. This is evident from the experiences of the women police officers who participated in this research as well as in external research which examined attitudes of male police officers towards their female colleagues.

Both mid-level personnel and Constables were asked whether they felt that their seniors treated them in the same way as their male colleagues.



One-third of Inspectors and more than a quarter of Sub-Inspectors, nearly a quarter of Assistant Sub-Inspectors and Constables reported that they felt they were not treated like their male colleagues. Worryingly, in Chittagong, a majority of Sub-Inspectors (57.14%) and Assistant Sub-Inspectors (70%) said they did not feel they were treated equal to their male colleagues. The one Inspector who participated in Chittagong said she felt equally treated.

Fortunately, we did not find the majority of women personnel in all ranges feeling that they are treated unequally compared to men. Still, these numbers are much too high. The fact that so many women perceive that they are treated unequally serves as a strong indication that differential treatment is routine among police personnel.

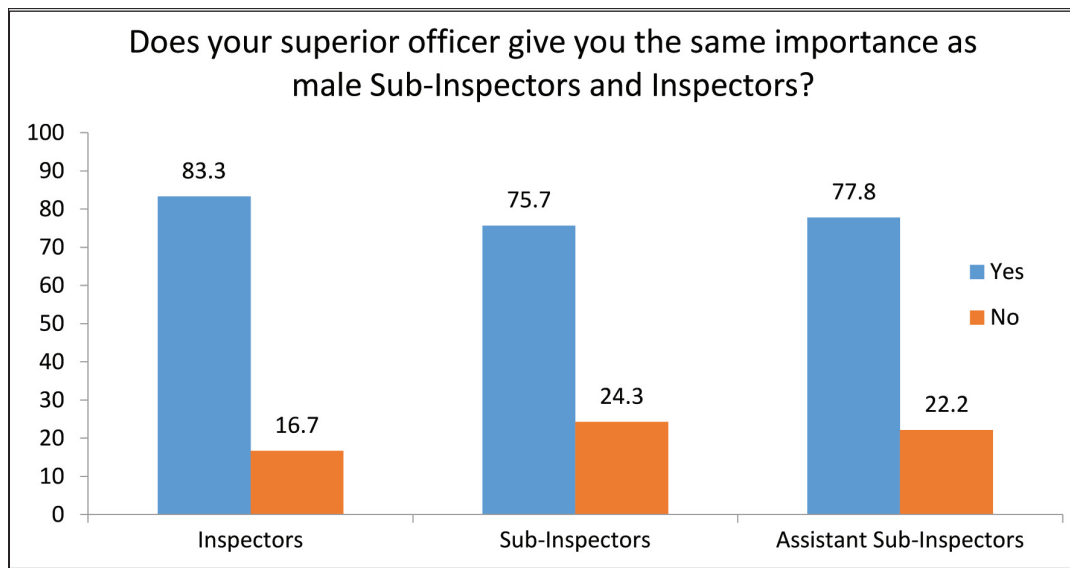
Unfortunately, past surveys carried out among police officers by the PRP also contained some worrying findings regarding the attitudes of male police towards women police officers, which may well lie at the heart of the differential treatment our participants reported.

In a survey by the PRP in 2011, 55% of male police officers said that women police officers were not as effective as their male counterparts in preventing crime, and almost 40% felt they were not as effective at investigating crime. While many expressed the view that this was because women officers needed more training, subsequent questioning revealed a more deep-seated prejudice against women. For example, 56.1% of male officers disagreed that women police officers made the police service stronger.⁷⁶

These indications of biased attitudes – and women's direct experience of disparate treatment some years later – reveal that gender bias is a stark reality within the police department. The necessary response requires the police department to recognise that gender bias is a reality among its male officers, and that adopting the Gender Policy is a clear priority.

⁷⁶ Police Reforms Programme (2011), "Baseline Survey on Personal Security and Police Performance in Bangladesh", p. 21: <http://prp.org.bd/downloads/Baseline%20Survey%20on%20Personal%20Security%20and%20Police%20Performance%20in%20Bangladesh%20-Summary%20Report.pdf> as on 2 December 2015.

We next sought specifics on how mid-level personnel were treated by male superiors and subordinates.

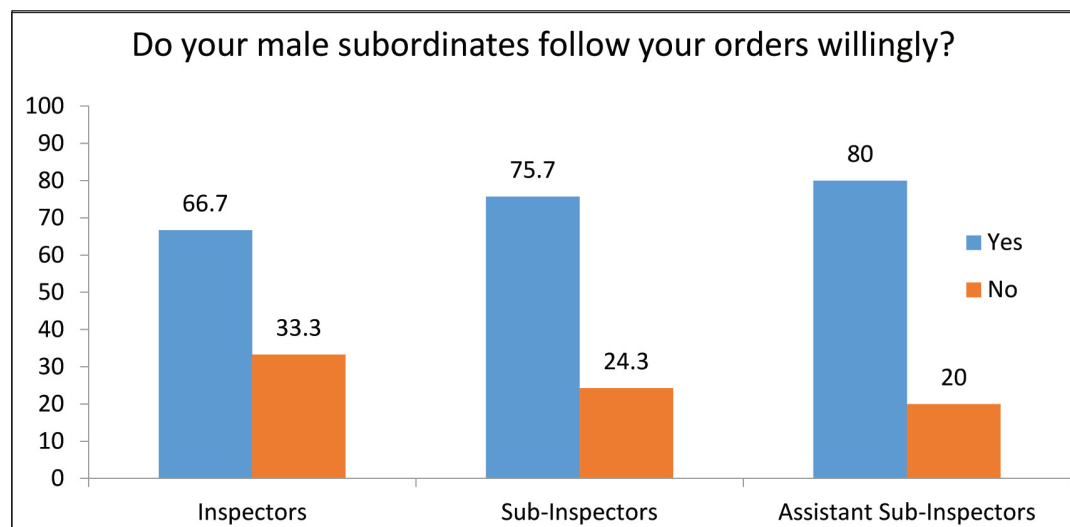


Here, 83.3% of Inspectors, 75.7% of SIs and 77.8% of ASIs answered that they felt they were given equal importance with their male counterparts. In Sylhet, every participant from each rank answered yes to this question. Results from Dhaka were also largely positive. However, in Chittagong, while the one Inspector reported being treated equally, 57.14% of SIs and 71.4% of ASIs reported that they were not.

In this case, even the aggregate data is concerning, as nearly one in five women across the three ranks responded that they don't receive equal priority with male colleagues. Such disparities impact women not only on a daily basis, but over the course of their careers when they are not given challenging cases to handle, or posted in leading field positions or denied equal promotional opportunities.

Such results once again emphasise the need for gender sensitisation in the higher ranks. Many reasons could be at work here, including outright bias. Reasons could be that superiors fail to give women difficult cases or postings because they haven't had enough training or because they are considered outright incapable and need to prove themselves. The police department should undertake more investigation into this, with an eye toward how each of the issues highlighted by women throughout the focus groups and surveys are interconnected, tie into the existence of gender bias on an institutional level and require a holistic approach.

Next, mid-level personnel were asked whether their subordinates followed their orders.



The overall picture gives a good impression with 66.7% of Inspectors, 75.7% of Sub-Inspectors and 80% of Assistant Sub-Inspectors saying that male subordinates followed their orders willingly. However, the responses

from Sylhet⁷⁷ were overwhelmingly positive compared to Chittagong and Dhaka. In the latter two ranges, 50% or more of some ranks⁷⁸ answered that their subordinates do not follow their orders willingly.

In the focus groups, women added that male subordinates would not address many of them as “Sir” initially. Instead, they addressed female superiors as “Sister”; they never, however, call male superiors “Brother”. Indeed, neither “Sister” nor “Ma’am” carry the same respect as “Sir” in Bangladesh, and the refusal to address women as “Sir” is telling enough of the level of respect given by male juniors to women in supervisory positions. Further, according to our participants, male subordinates respect female members of the cadre, but not mid-level personnel.

Comments included:

*“Junior male subordinates follow our instructions hesitatingly. They obey men’s orders more willingly and do their work efficiently. They find it difficult to address us as ‘Sir’; they address us as ‘Apa’ [meaning sister].”*⁷⁹

“Junior male staff find it difficult to address us as ‘Sir’.”

“Seniors respect us but the problem is with the juniors.”

viii. Sexual Harassment at Work

As might be expected, findings concerning the existence or extent of sexual harassment were mixed. This is not a surprising phenomenon given the common reluctance of many women to speak out.

To understand what women’s experiences are on the ground, we asked a series of questions about their experiences and what internal policies they are aware of.



Of the mid-level personnel, 2.7% of Sub-Inspectors and 3.3% of Assistant Sub-Inspectors reported experiencing sexual harassment. More than 10% of Constables said they faced sexual harassment.

According to Constables in the Chittagong focus group, a common form of harassment is male police personnel spreading rumours to defame women police. They added that even some Officers-in-Charge of police stations indulge in spreading rumours. Male police personnel were also accused of sending repeated and/ or inappropriate messages to female personnel and making comments on women’s trouser and shirt uniforms.

Among those women from both the focus groups and interviews who acknowledged that harassment was a problem, incidents cited included:

⁷⁷ For each rank in Sylhet, 100% of respondents answered “yes”.

⁷⁸ In Chittagong, the one Inspector answered “yes”, while 57.14% of Sub-Inspectors and 30% of Assistant Sub-Inspectors answered “no”. In Dhaka, two of the four Inspectors answered “no”, while the other two answered “yes”. Only one out of 13 Sub-Inspectors in Dhaka said “no”, while 50% of Assistant Sub-Inspectors answered “no”.

⁷⁹ In the Bangladesh Police Department, officers from Assistant Sub-Inspector to the highest rank – of both genders – are addressed as “Sir”.

“When we are sent on a posting we are given a bad name even before we reach the place. If I complain I cannot stay in the department”.

They were also clear on reasons for the lack of reporting:

“Complaining to a senior is not effective because we would be victimised. Complaining means adding more pressure on ourselves. In fact, if we complain, we are given more duty as a punishment”.

“Harassment happens but girls do not say anything, thinking they will be considered bad”.

The view among the junior ranks was that the problem was more common at their level than in the senior ranks:

“Sexual harassment is less in the cadres. Senior cadres are respected...only cadre level officers command respect”.

It was also the view among senior officers that harassment was experienced more at the junior level:

“A Constable may face it but not at the cadre level”.

“The problem may exist at the Constable level especially for those working in the field”.

While the overwhelming majority of senior women officers interviewed were of the view that harassment did not occur at their level, one senior officer admitted that harassment at the cadre rank did exist, but women are hesitant to complain against their more powerful seniors.

Thus, it appears sexual harassment within the police department is ongoing and prevalent. Many mechanisms exist to address this persistent problem more effectively. One is to implement the 2009 High Court Order, which directs all employers to establish Complaints Committees. This mechanism should be present in every police station if possible and certainly in every district office, so that women have institutions at hand to make redress accessible. Further, training and published material on sexual harassment and remedies, including Complaints Committees, should be available.

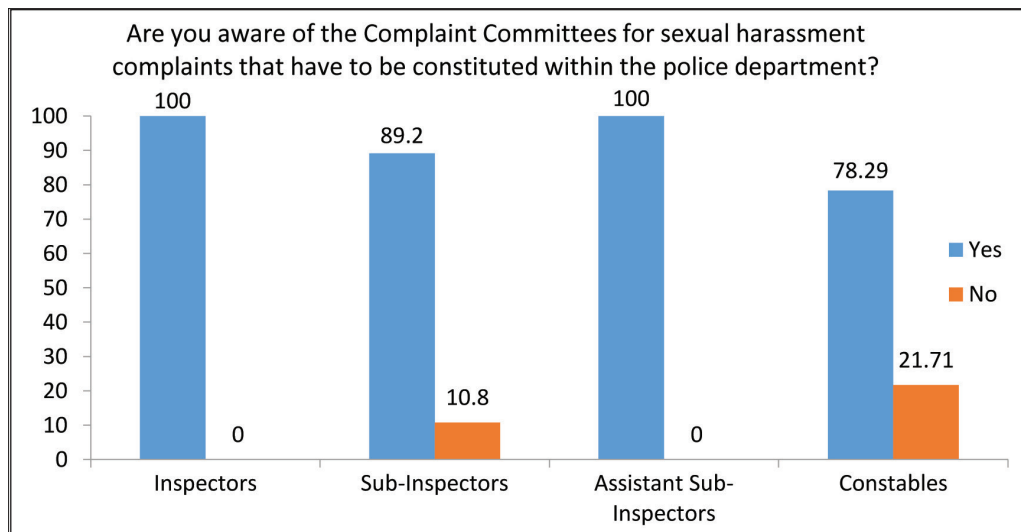
Most importantly, efforts must be made by the police department to clarify to personnel what constitutes sexual harassment and that there is a zero tolerance policy. Leadership could effectively make this point by issuing a circular to this effect.



Most mid-level personnel and Constables answered that they were aware that they could complain about sexual harassment, but there were exceptions. Alarming, among Constables in Chittagong, nearly a quarter of the participants reported that they were not aware of available remedies. It is essential not only that women are aware that they have the right to complain against sexual harassment, but that they know the specific mechanisms to use and the rights they have throughout the complaint process.

There are other institutional blocks in place. During focus group discussions, several women shared that they did not want to complain because of fear of being victimised for doing so. This is exacerbated by the shortage of senior women officers that other women can approach. Difficulties of reporting incidents to men were expressed. Women’s aversion to assert their rights in the face of sexual harassment is even more alarming given the nature of incidents that have been recounted. A participant shares her views and reveals the extent of reluctance to report due to lack of faith in the remedies available:

“4-5 years back, a Superintendent of Police pulled the Assistant Superintendent of Police inside his room and locked the door. Men think they can do anything. Where to complain? Who will complain to a senior or his superior who are more powerful? No one complains to a Deputy Inspector General. The situation is bad in a thana and in police lines. We are unable to keep track of all incidents.... Male Constables give missed calls. I do not believe any male police officer. I do not allow a Constable to enter the house. I take the message from the door and ask him to leave. There is a problem of sexual harassment; however, this issue is not always raised by the women police victims as this issue would be addressed by the men police. There are set procedure to make any complain against sexual harassment in the police department but who will complain?”



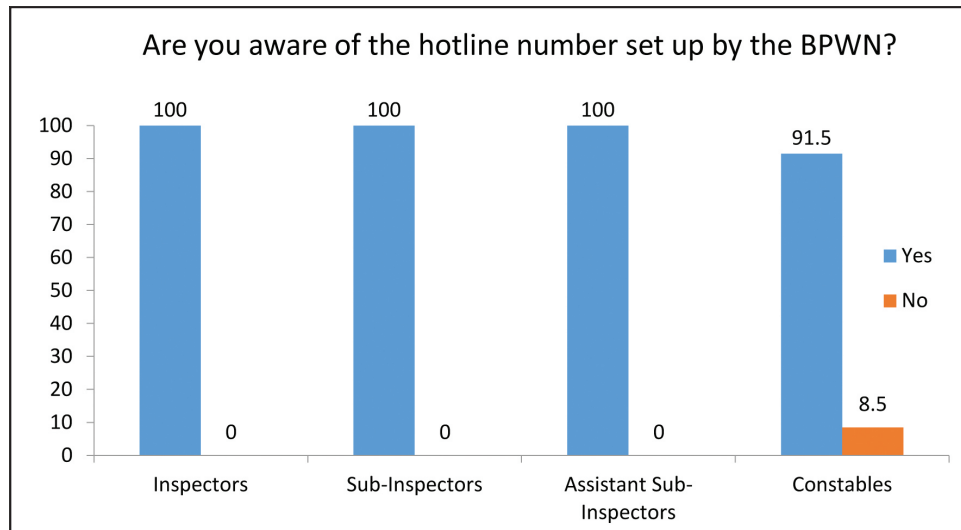
While it is encouraging that most women across all ranks demonstrated an awareness of the High Court Order, a significant number were not aware. In Chittagong, where a fifth of Constables reported facing some kind of sexual harassment, 32.2% reported that they were not aware of the Court’s Order.

Further, throughout the focus group discussions many participants who knew about the Order said they did not know the details. Many women shared that Complaints Committees have not been set up in their districts. Lack of awareness in women police personnel not only reduces their ability to seek redress for harassment, but reduces the overall pressures and accountability for these complaints mechanisms to be in place and functional.

We next asked about another mechanism to provide support for women facing sexual harassment – the BPWN Hotline.

In spite of the High Court’s Order on sexual harassment, mechanisms for women to complain are not fully functional in all police stations or offices. Further, in the absence of an official gender and anti-discrimination policy that addresses sexual harassment, women may not even know that they have support to address such harassment.

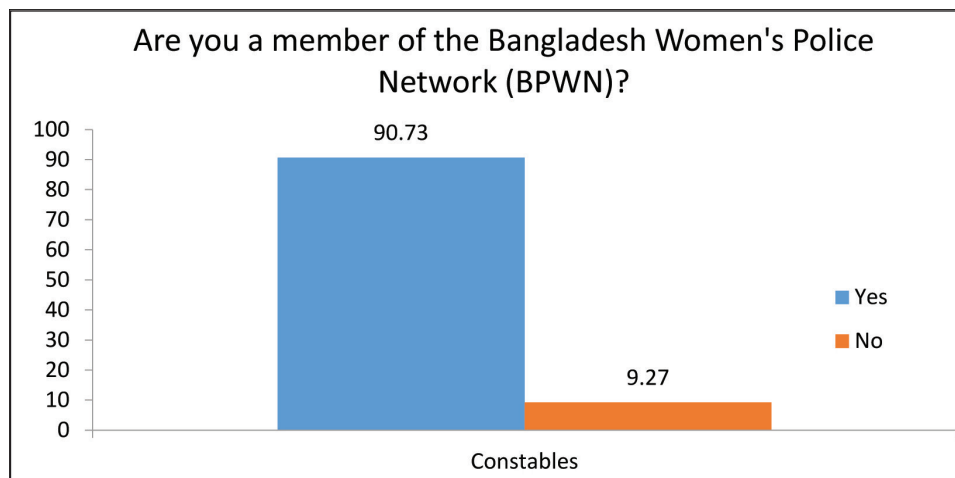
To provide effective support to female police personnel, in 2013 the BPWN created a telephone hotline that women at all ranks could use to seek advice on sexual harassment issues and other problems in the workplace. BPWN also formally notifies unit chiefs about calls of workplace harassment occurring in their districts.



A full 100% of women from the mid-level category were aware of the BPWN hotline. BPWN had organised a workshop before our event in Chittagong,⁸⁰ so in that sense the findings here may not be representative. Still, it is encouraging that the same was reported among mid-level personnel in the other districts.

Among Constables too, awareness is high. Only 8.5% were not aware of the hotline. However, in Chittagong, approximately one-fifth of Constables said they were unaware of it. Because BPWN conducted a workshop in Chittagong before our event, it is surprising that there was such low awareness. It could be that some participants responded on the basis of their knowledge before the sessions conducted that day. Even so, for so few to be aware of resources in a range where there was high reporting of sexual harassment is concerning.

Next, we asked Constables if they were members of BPWN. Although all female police personnel are automatically enrolled as members on joining the police, they must be aware of such a network and the fact that they are members. The onus to promote and spread this awareness is on the leadership of the BPWN, to ensure that all women police know about the BPWN and what they are entitled to as members. For that reason, we sought to find out the level of awareness among women police.



80 This workshop was only conducted in Chittagong; thus, there was no similar effect on the other two sessions in Dhaka and Sylhet.

Over 90% of Constables reported that they were members of the BPWN. One range that stood out drastically, though, was Chittagong, where 35.48% of respondents said they were not members. This high proportion would be concerning, especially so given the gender bias female personnel seem to be reporting more frequently there.⁸¹

One suggestion to the BPWN is to consider holding orientation sessions with new women recruits during training. This would ensure that women entering the police department are introduced to the BPWN and can familiarise themselves and make full use of the network. This would also provide women entering the police department with an awareness of their rights and opportunities. Additionally, regular updates should be sent to all the members to provide concrete information on trainings and professional development, as well as reinforce the sense of a women's support network.

⁸¹ It should be reiterated that not all participants in the Chittagong focus group were from the Chittagong range. Firm conclusions therefore cannot be drawn, but it does highlight an area that must be examined more closely.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Bangladesh Police is making concerted and sincere efforts to increase the representation of women in the police. It is apparent that the consciousness of both the government and the police department of the deficit in gender equality has increased and attention is certainly focused on increasing the number of women. The fact that discussions around the Gender and Non-Discrimination Policy have progressed as far as they have, affirms that the Bangladesh Police is trying to address the larger institutional impediments which continue to block women's genuine integration into the police.

Indeed, the survey findings indicate that more needs to be done to integrate women into the police on an equal footing with men, which will inevitably require institutional responses that demonstrate fairness, equity and recognition of women's needs. The effort must be one of full inclusion of women, not piecemeal changes made by way of concession.

There are certainly many positive findings from the survey: women find the police department a good place to work: they are steadfast in their commitment to duty, justice and security and see their work in the police as an essential public service; they are firm in their pursuit of equality and establishing their own independence and professionalism.

But unfortunately, the disadvantages faced by women outnumber these positive findings. Women are still severely underrepresented in the senior supervisory ranks. They are absent from purposeful command and operational roles. They are not assigned serious police work. Sexual harassment is commonly experienced but hardly complained against, and the mandated remedies are not in place. Male officers are not aware of, or sensitive to, the issues affecting women police, and there is not enough gender awareness training. The needed infrastructure and facilities – separate toilets, changing rooms, barracks and childcare – are lacking.

As a matter of priority, the Bangladesh Police must adopt a comprehensive gender policy with time lines, targets and an implementation plan linked to performance, monitoring and reporting. This is crucial to tackle gender equality within the police. Below are further recommendations for several stakeholders:

Recommendations

For the Bangladesh Police

1. Reinstate gender as a core strategic objective with associated actions in the next Strategic Plan
2. Adopt a strong and robust gender policy with:
 - Accompanying action plans and targets that are resourced
 - Mechanisms for monitoring and assessing implementation
 - The involvement of police leadership, both male and female
3. Continue to increase representation of women:
 - Take active steps to recruit more women police officers at the cadre and intermediary levels
 - Take active measures to ensure that the set quota of 15% at the Sub-Inspector and Constable levels are filled through advertising and raising awareness
 - Target remote areas and harder-to-reach groups; not just schools and universities
 - Use mass as well as traditional media and rope in local institutions to advertise vacancies
 - Include women in the recruitment process itself
4. Engage in efforts to address the culture within the organisation to ensure it is more welcoming of women and their role, such as:
 - Increased gender training and sensitisation
 - Inclusion of women (perhaps through setting quotas) in policy and decision-making bodies and processes

- Making insubordination of senior female officers a disciplinary matter
 - Addressing postings and promotions for women
5. Comply fully with the High Court's Order on sexual harassment
 6. Embark on a comprehensive infrastructural programme (resourced by government, with resources actually spent), to ensure that every police station or district has:
 - Separate toilets for women
 - Separate changing or restrooms
 - Transport
 - Accommodation
 - Day care facilities
 7. Review current policy on working hours to introduce fixed working hours and shifts
 8. Conduct an audit of the current roles and duties assigned to women and adopt an action plan to address identified blocks and gaps, particularly in relation to:
 - Field postings and command roles, including heading districts
 - Investigation roles
 - Serious cases beyond those involving women and children
 9. Linked to this, carry out an audit and adopt measures to ensure women have adequate in-service training:
 - So that they can fulfil the range of duties within the police force
 - That incorporates a focus on capacity-building and confidence that may currently be lacking in women
 - That includes the necessary facilities and policies that enable them to engage in training, such as child care, accommodation, etc.
 - That includes the training needs identified by women themselves such as driving, computer skills, investigation, English language and cyber crime among others
 10. Improve and strengthen training on law and procedure
 11. Ensure a transparent, objective, merit-based promotion system that works in practice to:
 - Include women in the promotion processes, such as development of criteria, assessment panels, etc.
 - Consider the inclusion of temporary positive action measures for promotion opportunities for the increased numbers of women, focusing in particular on upward movement from the lowest ranks
 - Prevent gender bias from influencing decision-making
 12. Earmark and provide funds for BPWN

For the Government

1. Initiate a comprehensive programme of police reform:
 - Beginning with new policing legislation akin to the Police Ordinance of 2007 which includes provisions on diversity and adequate women's representation
 - Engage fully and meaningfully with the PRP
 - Ensure that any necessary reforms are adequately resourced and implementation is monitored.
2. Introduce a law that prohibits sexual harassment:
 - That adopts a zero tolerance approach with suitable punishment
 - That ensures appropriate mechanisms for remedy, including appropriate gender balance
 - Imposes sanctions for non-compliance
 - Includes provisions prohibiting victimisation of complainants

3. Provide adequate resources to the Bangladesh Police to enable it to introduce required infrastructure to include:
 - Women's toilets in police stations
 - Women's restrooms or changing facilities
 - Adequate accommodation for women (and other) officers and their families for postings
 - Transport for women officers
 - Day care facilities
 - Ensure resources allocated to police are spent as mandated
4. Earmark annual funds for BPWN
5. Increase the quota for women at cadre level to enable more women to join the police at the supervisory level. Ensure the quota of 10% at the cadre level is filled

For the Bangladesh Police Women's Network (BPWN)

1. Continue building awareness of the hotline and encourage women officers to use it to report harassment and other concerns
2. Build awareness of support and advice that can be offered by BPWN to victims of harassment in taking complaints through the official mechanisms
3. Monitor data received from the hotline to identify trends or systemic problems
4. Hold orientation sessions with women recruits at training
5. Expand and strengthen the network
6. Assist the police departments at headquarters and the district levels to ensure regular recruitment of women police at ASI, SI and Constable ranks
7. Review the strength of women across the ranks at headquarters/ units/ battalions/ districts and police stations
8. Create a database of women police personnel across all ranks, district and unit wise
9. Advocate with the government to increase the representation of women at the cadre and intermediary levels
10. Advocate with the government to fund and resource needed for infrastructure in police stations, district offices and headquarters
11. Facilitate training and capacity building of women police in the junior and intermediate ranks in investigation, law and procedure, cyber-crime, driving, spoken English and computer skills
12. Advocate with the police department to ensure that qualified and competent women are not discriminated against in postings and promotions
13. Advocate with the police department to enable women to be deployed for all police work based on their skills and merit
14. Facilitate gender sensitisation of male police officers – from new recruits to senior leadership – particularly to teach what constitutes inappropriate behaviour, gender bias, and sexual harassment
15. Push for full compliance with the High Court Order prohibiting sexual harassment
16. Conduct recruitment drives in remote and far flung areas, using various mediums such as radio, TV and print

For the UNDP Police Reforms Programme (PRP)

1. Ensure that the focus on gender is sustained in the next phase of the reform programme (if there is to be one)
2. Work with the police to ensure that a gender policy is adopted that:
 - Is strong and robust
 - Has sign-off and support at the most senior level
 - Is resourced
 - Has actions plans including timetables, targets and monitoring and oversight mechanisms
3. Continue to support and guide the Bangladesh Police Women's Network, including financially

Annexure

Questionnaire for Constables

This survey is being conducted by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative as part of a report on women in policing. We will keep your responses and identity confidential. Thank you for your participation.

Name : _____
Age : _____
Rank : _____
Marital Status : _____
Years in service : _____
Police Station : _____

Please fill / tick the appropriate choice.

1. Why did you join the police?

2. Did your family support your joining the police?

YES NO

3. Do they like you being in police service?

YES NO

4. What are your main duties?

5. How many hours do you work daily?

8 hours

8 to 12 hours

More than 12 hours

6. Do you feel you are treated just like your male colleagues?

Yes No

7. Is it hard being on duty all the time?

Yes No

8. Is the police department a good place for women to work in?

Yes No

9. Has the police department put in policies or facilities which make it easier for women to be in the police?

Yes No

10. If yes, what are they and how do they help you?

11. Is there a separate toilet and resting room for women police in your police station?

Yes No

12. Are there separate Barracks for women staff posted away from their home districts?

Yes No

13. Work in the police requires complete knowledge of law and procedure. Do you feel your training gives you this knowledge?

Yes No

14. Do you prefer operational duty or prefer desk job

Field Duty
Desk Job
Both

15. Does your training include a specific gender content/sensitizat

Yes No

16. If yes, do you feel this training is effective?

Yes No

17. Is there any difference in the training (physical and other) that is given to male and females?

Yes No

18. What is the highest level position most women constable have attained so far as per your knowledge?

19. Have you ever faced any kind of sexual harassment where you work?

Yes No

20. Do you know you can complain against any kind of sexual harassment at your workplace?

Yes No

21. Are you aware of the Hotline Number by the BWPN that has recently been set up?

Yes No

22. Are you aware of the High Court Order of the Sexual Harassment cell that has to be constituted in every police department ?

Yes No

23. Are you a member of Bangladesh Women's Police Network (BWPN)?

Yes No

24. Do you think more women are needed in the police?

Yes No

25. Should all police personnel be given flexible duty hours?

No, only women

No, only men

Yes, everyone should

26. Do you think there is a need to have a women's helpdesk in every police station?

Yes No

27. What three things do you like best about your job?

1)

2)

3)

28. What three things would make you more comfortable in your work?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

29. Do you think women find it easier to complain to a woman police officer?

Yes No

30. Do you feel that your uniform gives you:

Less authority than male police

More authority

Equal authority

31. Do you think the public respects a woman police :

The same as male police

Less than male police

More than male police

Questionnaire for Inspectors/Sub-Inspectors/Assistant Sub-Inspectors

This survey is being conducted by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative as part of a report on women in policing. We will keep your responses and identity confidential. Thank you for your participation.

Name : _____
Age : _____
Rank : _____
Marital Status : _____
Years in service : _____
Police Station : _____

Please fill / tick the appropriate choice.

1. Why did you join the police?

2. Did your family support your joining the police?

YES NO

3. Do they like you being in police service?

YES NO

4. What are your main duties?

5. How many hours do you work daily?

8 hours

8 to 12 hours

More than 12 hours

6. Do you feel you are treated just like your male colleagues?

Yes No

7. Is it hard being on duty all the time?

Yes No

8. Is the police department a good place for women to work in?

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12. Are there separate Barracks for women staff posted away from their home districts?

Yes No

13. Work in the police requires complete knowledge of law and procedure. Do you feel your training gives you this knowledge?

Yes No

14. Are you given sensitive and serious cases just like the men and not just cases relating to women

Yes No

15. Do men working under you follow your orders willingly?

Yes No

16. Do your superiors take you as seriously as other male SI and Inspectors?

Yes No

17. Does your training include a specific gender content/sensitization?

Yes No

18. If yes, do you feel this training is effective?

Yes No

19. Is there any difference in the training (physical and other) that is given to male and females?

Yes No

20. Have you ever faced any kind of sexual harassment where you work?

Yes No

21. Do you know you can complain against any kind of sexual harassment at your workplace?

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No, only women
No, only men
Yes, everyone should

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Yes No

27. What three things do you like best about your job?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

28. What three things would make you more comfortable in your work?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

29. Would you like to work in an all-women police station?

Yes No

30. Do you think women find it easier to complain to a woman police officer?

Yes No

31. Do you feel that your uniform gives you:

Less authority than male police

More authority

Equal authority

32. Do you think the public respects a woman police :


The same as male police

Less than male police

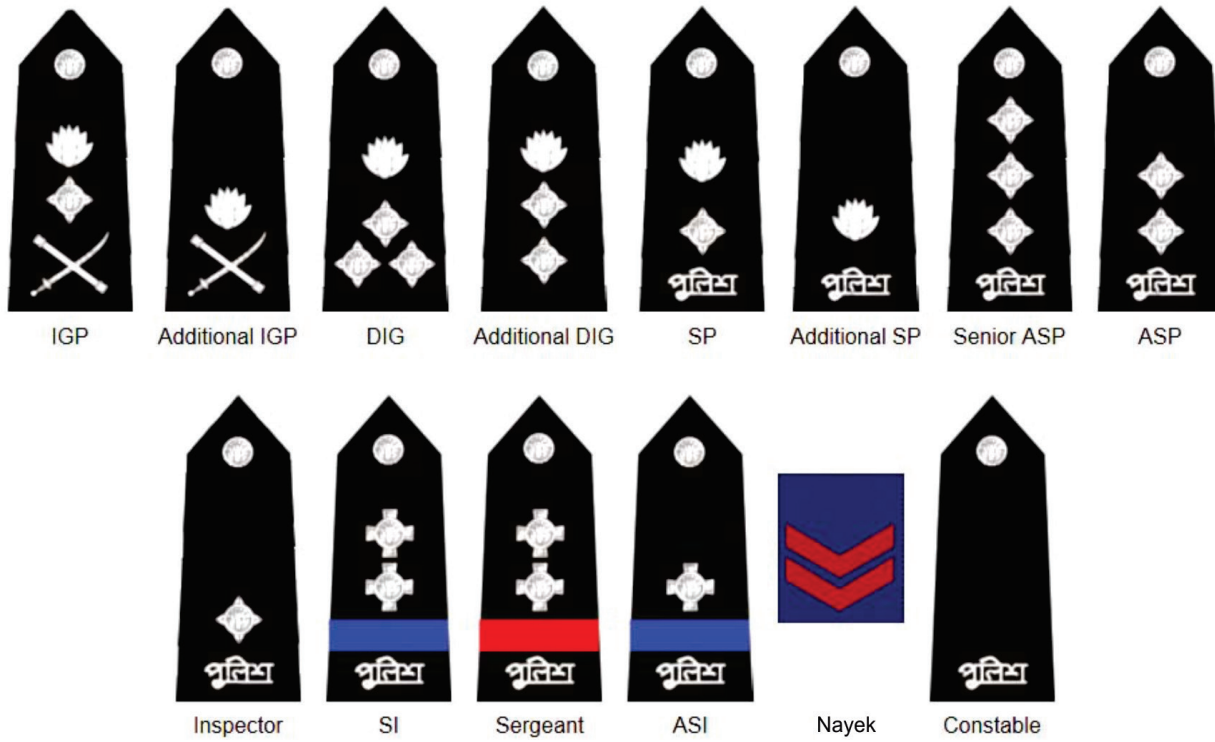
More than male police

Questions for Senior Women Police Officers

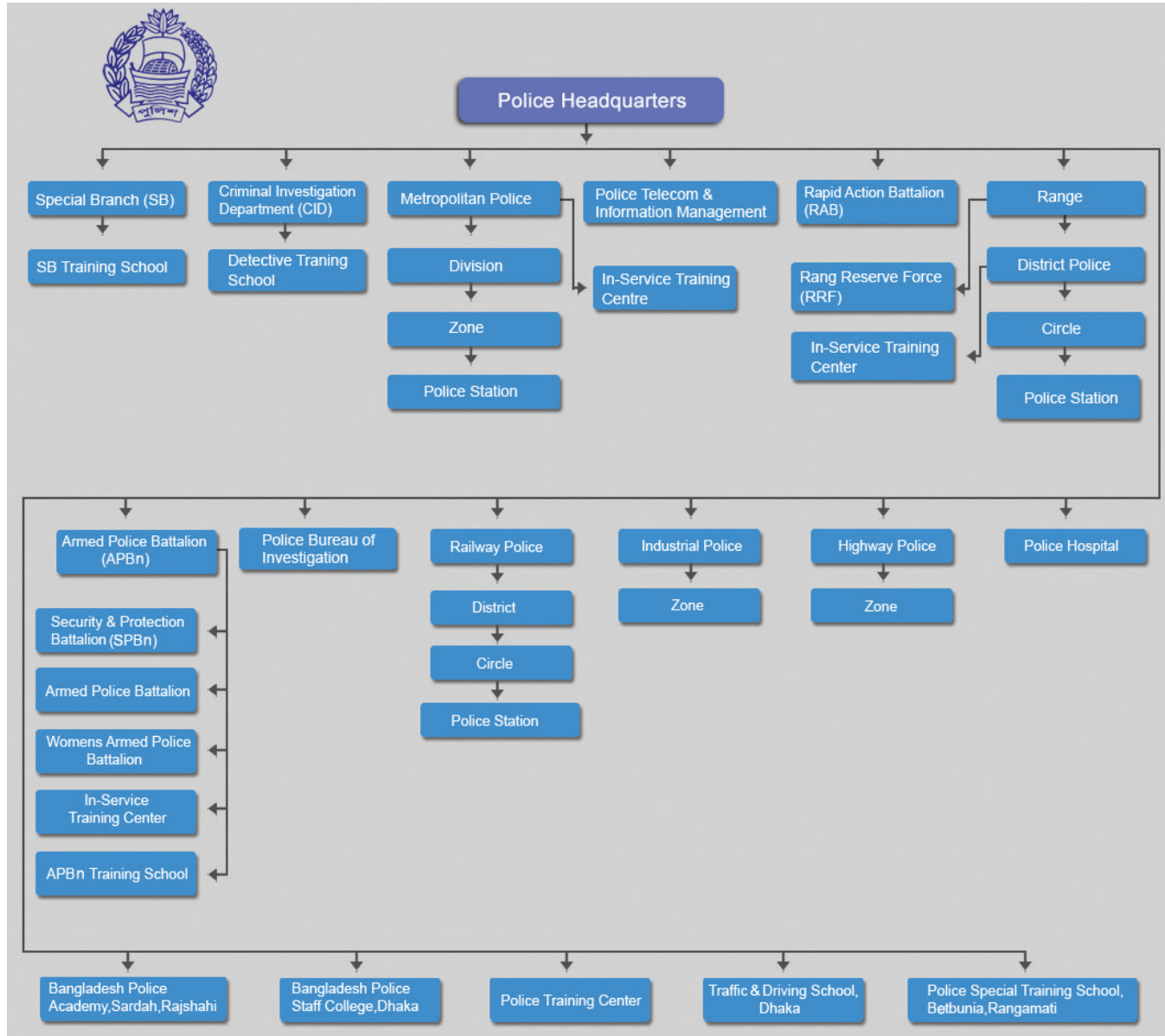
1. Why do you think it is important to have women active in policing? What specific contribution do you think women bring to policing?
2. What do you think are the reasons why representation of women in the police is so low?
3. Based on your experiences in the police, do you think there are particular barriers that women in policing face? If so, what are they?
4. Do you think there is a male culture in the police service?
5. Are there aspects of the recruitment and induction process which act as barriers to women? If so, what are they and how might they be addressed? How might more women be encouraged to join the police?
6. To what extent is sexual harassment in the workplace a problem? Are policies effectively implemented or complaints adequately addressed? If not how might this be improved?
7. In your experience, are police human resources policies and facilities suitable for women, in relation to – for example – pregnancy and maternity leave, uniforms, daycare, flexible working, separate space for women and so on?
8. Do you think there are particular kinds of duties or deployments that are not suited to women or should women be allowed to serve right across the police force? What are the obstacles to this?
9. We are going to try to gather figures to ascertain the levels of retention of women in policing, particularly between entrance to training and graduation – do you think this is a problem, and if so – why? Is retention a problem at any other points (e.g. after childbirth)? What do you think could be done about it?
10. Why do you think representation of women at senior levels in the police is lower?

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11. Are there barriers to women accessing or being promoted to senior positions? If so, what are they? Are there training, support and resources in place to support women progressing through the organisation? In particular are there any special budget allocations?
 12. What are the government and/or the police doing to increase numbers of women in the police? Is the police department ready to handle this? What changes do you think will have to be made?
 13. What is your view on all-women police stations? Do you think there is a danger of isolating women police officers into these stations and positions?
 14. In general, what do you think could be done to improve the opportunities for and experiences of women in policing? What kind of recommendations do you think it would be useful or important for this research to make?

Bangladesh Police Ranks



Structure of Bangladesh Police



CHRI Programmes

CHRI's work is based on the belief that for human rights, genuine democracy and development to become a reality in people's lives, there must be high standards and functional mechanisms for accountability and participation within the Commonwealth and its member countries. CHRI furthers this belief through strategic initiatives and advocacy on human rights, access to justice and access to information. It does this through research, publications, workshops, information dissemination and advocacy.

Access to Justice

Police Reforms: In too many countries the police are seen as an oppressive instrument of state rather than as protectors of citizens' rights, leading to widespread rights violations and denial of justice. CHRI promotes systemic reform so that the police act as upholders of the rule of law rather than as instruments of the current regime. In India, CHRI's programme aims at mobilising public support for police reform. In South Asia, CHRI works to strengthen civil society engagement on police reforms. In East Africa and Ghana, CHRI is examining police accountability issues and political interference.

Prison Reforms: CHRI's work is focused on increasing transparency of a traditionally closed system and exposing malpractices. A major area is focussed on highlighting failures of the legal system that result in terrible overcrowding and unconscionably long pre-trial detention and prison overstay, and engaging in interventions to ease this. Another area of concentration is aimed at reviving the prison oversight systems that have completely failed. We believe that attention to these areas will bring improvements to the administration of prisons as well as have a knock-on effect on the administration of justice overall.

Access to Information

CHRI is acknowledged as one of the main organisations working to promote access to information across the Commonwealth. It encourages countries to pass and implement effective right to information laws. We routinely assist in the development of legislation and have been particularly successful in promoting right to information in India, Bangladesh and Ghana where we are the Secretariat for the RTI civil society coalition. We regularly critique new bills and intervene to bring best practices into governments and civil society knowledge both in the time when laws are being formulated and when they are first being implemented. Our experience of working across even in hostile environments as well as culturally varied jurisdictions allows CHRI to bring valuable insights into countries seeking to evolve and implement new laws on right to information. In Ghana, for instance we have been promoting knowledge about the value of access to information which is guaranteed by law while at the same time pushing for introduction of an effective and progressive law. In Ghana as and when the access to information law comes into being we intend to build public knowledge in parallel with monitoring the law and using it in ways which indicate impact of the law on system accountability – most particularly in the area of policing and the working of the criminal justice system.

Strategic Initiatives Programme

CHRI monitors member states' compliance with human rights obligations and advocates around human rights exigencies where such obligations are breached. CHRI strategically engages with regional and international bodies including the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, the UN and the African Commission for Human and People's Rights. Ongoing strategic initiatives include: Advocating for and monitoring the Commonwealth's reform; Reviewing Commonwealth countries' human rights promises at the UN Human Rights Council and engaging with its Universal Periodic Review; Advocating for the protection of human rights defenders and civil society space; and Monitoring the performance of National Human Rights Institutions in the Commonwealth while advocating for their strengthening.

This report concentrates on the situation of women in policing in Bangladesh and highlights the value of diversity in policing in Bangladesh, points out the diversity deficit as regards gender, and recommends measures to repair it. At its core, this report champions the inclusion of women in policing on the utilitarian ground that in today's policing the maximum police functions can be performed by either gender and there is little to support the myth that policing is a 'man's work' alone. The report which provides survey findings, as well as documents experiences and challenges faced by women police, along with recommendations, will be of utility to the Bangladesh Government, the Bangladesh Police and civil society to inform the current debates around improving the gender balance within the police.

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