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Gender Gap in Police: A Comparative Study of North East India

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ABSTRACT

Watching around early in the morning one sees an empowered society where girls go to schools and colleges. Yet women are underrepresented in the workplace. The gender gap at workplace has grown exponentially over the time. One of the reasons of disproportionate representation of women in police is because of the fact that police and policing are equated with robust physique and machoism. Availability of suitable depreciation of gender gap in police work is crucial for decreasing the susceptibility of women against offences. The present "Woman Police Population Ratio" is insignificant. The Data on Police Organization, 2021 reflects a total of 10.49% of Woman in Police at present in India. The actual strength of total woman police is 2,17,026. This shows an increase of 0.71%, the maximum i.e. 29,435 woman police personnel in Uttar Pradesh. In the North East, Assam has the highest number of vacancy of women police i.e. 16, 866. Nagaland is the only state in the North East which has surplus women police. This paper is an exploratory study which involves descriptive and analytical research. The aim of the study is to explore the representation of women in police in North East; to inquire into the cause behind the gender gap; and to reconnoitre the challenges faced by women in police in north east. Under representation of the fairer sex in police leads to grave threats in dealing with offences against women and woman criminals. Hence, it is indispensable that the gender gap must be met at the cutting edge level.

Keywords: Gender gap, North East, Police, Women.

I. INTRODUCTION

Watching around early in the morning one sees an empowered society where girls go to schools and colleges. Yet women are underrepresented in the workplace. The gender gap at workplace has grown exponentially over the time. One of the reasons of disproportionate representation of women in police is because of the fact that police and policing are equated with robust physique and *machoism*. Availability of suitable depreciation of gender gap in police work is crucial for decreasing the susceptibility of women against offences.

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Law enforcement occupations have traditionally been dominated by males.² It has been found in different research articles that racism and sexism are deeply rooted in police culture. Most of the times the environment in which they work have been perceived to be hostile environments for the females. The constant dealing with threats, the typical gender specific uniforms (though sarees are allowed) showcase the same. Few of the major contributors of poor representation of women in police service is because of family pressure, work load, frequent confrontation of risky situations. Women police is more stressed than male.³

The present “Woman Police Population Ratio” is insignificant. The Data on Police Organization, 2021 reflects a total of 10.49% of Woman in Police at present in India. The actual strength of total woman police is 2,17,026. This shows an increase of 0.71%, the maximum i.e. 29,435 woman police personnel in Uttar Pradesh. In the North East, Assam has the highest number of vacancy of women police i.e. 16, 866. Nagaland is the only state in the North East which has surplus women police.

II. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE TERMS GENDER GAP, POLICE AND NORTHEAST

Gender Gap: The European Institute of Gender Equality has defined gender gap as “Gap in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access, rights, remuneration or benefits.”⁴

Police: When one person is committing a crime and is being tagged as a criminal, the State has bestowed upon the responsibility to look after the commission and deterrence of crime and preservation of law and order on the **Police**. Since Police is a state subject under the Constitution of India, every state government has a pivotal role to play in regulating the “formal tool of social control”. To bring in a uniformity in the police service and policing, the Parliament has introduced a Model Police Manual, 2006. U/s 2(n) of the Model Police Act 2006, “a police officer means any member of (...Name of the state...) Police Service constituted under this Act”.

North East India: The Northeast of India is the easternmost expanse of India signifying both a topographical and radical administrative division of the country. It comprises eight states- Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland and, and the

² Bushara Bano and Parvaiz Talib, 2014. Sex & Rank Differences in Indian Police: An Empirical Analysis. Indian Journal of Industrial Relations , April 2014, Vol. 49, No. 4 (April 2014), pp. 618-634. Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24546968>.

³ Bushara Bano and Parvaiz Talib, 2014. Sex & Rank Differences in Indian Police: An Empirical Analysis. Indian Journal of Industrial Relations , April 2014, Vol. 49, No. 4 (April 2014), pp. 618-634. Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24546968>.

⁴ Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1178>.

"brother" state Sikkim. The researcher would lovingly address this region as ATM(MM)ANS (Soul of the Country).

(A) Methodology of the Study

This paper is a doctrinal legal research which involves descriptive and analytical research. The aim of the study is to explore the representation of women in police in North East; to inquire into the cause behind the gender gap; and to reconnoitre the challenges faced by women in police in north east. The primary data has been collected from data on police organisation and the secondary data has been collected from books, journal, articles, and newspapers.

III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON WOMEN POLICE

Women, for the first time were given responsible posts in public departments like police service were appointed as matrons. It was way back in 1845 in the United States in New York City. Their work was to directly supervise women who were perpetrators. It was more of a chaperonage kind of duties which they had to perform. It included duties like “accompanying the woman when it is necessary for her to leave the detention quarters during the period of detention; to keep the detention quarters clean and orderly; to minister to the physical well-being of the woman in custody; to furnish chaperonage in court”.⁵

IV. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to feminist ideology, women are considered to conserve energy (‘anabolic’) This results in their being “passive, conservative, sluggish, stable and uninterested in politics”. Men, on the other hand, are expected to expend their surplus energy (‘katabolic’). This enables them to be “eager, energetic, passionate, variable and, thereby, interested in political and social matters”.⁶ The manner in which the society has classified jobs are excellent examples of anabolism and katabolism. More number of women are found to be in jobs which involve care giving: teaching, nursing, domestic chores, etc whereas men are involved outdoors acting as protectors: police, doctors, etc.

What really matters is: socialization process at home. If parents groom their girls to be strong and as capable as their sons then they will be actively participating in athletics, outdoor games etc which are stereotypical male dominated areas. So the same stands in the work place too. ⁷

⁵ Lois Higgins, 1950, Women Police Service, *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law (1931-1951), May - Jun., 1950, Vol. 41, No. 1 (May - Jun., 1950), pp. 101-106. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1138408>.

⁶ Feminism Theory and Practice. Available at https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Downloads/UG_SLM/Polsc/GE_1.pdf

⁷ Feminism Theory and Practice. Available at https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Downloads/UG_SLM/Polsc/GE_1.pdf

V. GLIMPSES OF PATRIARCHY IN POLICE AND POLICING

The term “patriarchy” is not only a descriptive term that explains how different societies construct male authority and power, but also become an analytical category. This change of the use of the term patriarchy from a descriptive to an analytical category took place in the 1970s, in a specific global historical context of feminist political and intellectual culture. During time this later led to the development of the discipline of women's studies or gender studies, when women agitated for their rights. Patriarchy links masculinity with power, independence, self-assertion, domination and activity. Feminine is linked with weakness, dependence, helplessness, docility, passivity and subservience.⁸

VI. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The strength of women police in India has been increasing exponentially for the last five years.

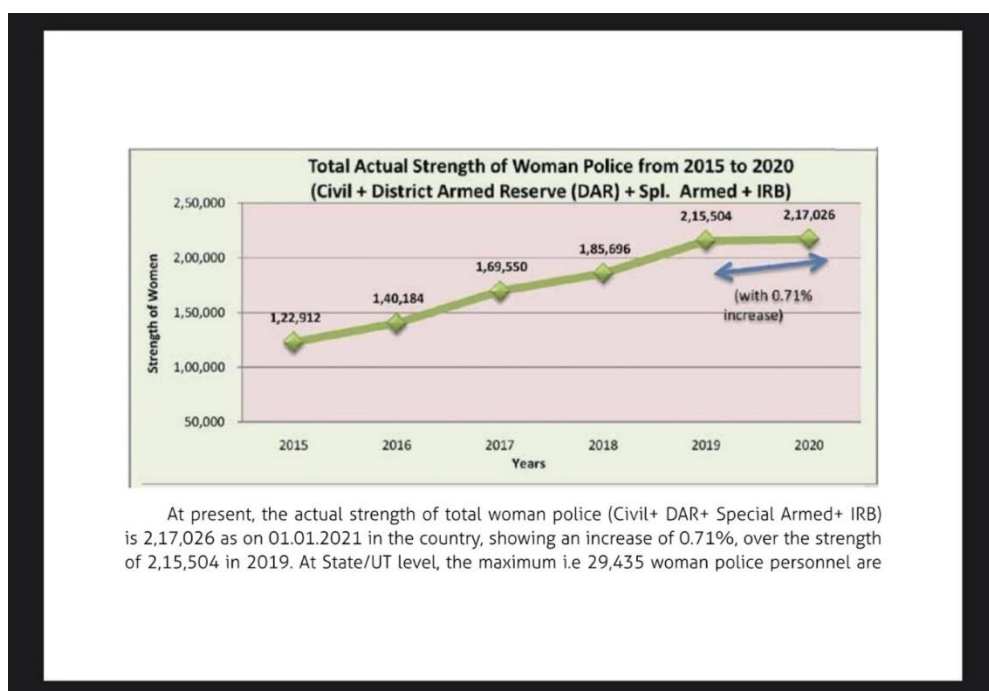


Fig. 1.1. Strength of women in police service in India

The Data on Police Organization 2021 reflects that from 2019 to 2020 there has been 0.7% increase in women police all over the nation. Rank-wise data on the Actual Strength of Woman Police in the Central Armed Police Forces

According to BPRD:

- There are 33,448 Woman Police Personnel;

⁸ Feminism Theory and Practice. Available at https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Downloads/UG_SLM/Polsc/GE_1.pdf

- 8,560 (highest) in the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).
- The percentage of Woman Police is 10.49% of the Actual Strength of the total Police force in the country.
- At the national level, the Strength of Woman Police in other departments like:
 - Traffic Police is 5,762;
 - Special Branch dealing with Intelligence is 3,454;
 - Special Police Units against Insurgency, Extremism, and Terrorism etc. is 523.
- The Woman Population per Woman Police (WPWP) is 3,038.39.

(a) Exploration of the representation of women in police in North East:

The recent data on police organization reflects that Assam has got the highest number of total number of police in the state police. The following table is on the percentage of woman police in the northeast in comparison to the total number of police:

State	Total no. of Police ⁹	Total no. of Woman Police	Percentage
Arunachal Pradesh	12,626	1,038	8.22%
Assam	62,033	5,070	8.17%
Manipur	28,894	2,636	9.12%
Meghalaya	14,380	849	5.90%
Mizoram	7,940	557	7.02%
Nagaland	27,788	2,953	10.63%
Sikkim	5,529	462	8.36%

⁹ (CIVIL + DISTRICT ARMED RESERVE (DAR) + ARMED + IRB)

Tripura	22,465	1,165	5.19%
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Table 1.1. Percentage of women police in Northeast of India

The highest percentage of woman police is found in Nagaland. This means the gap in the recruitment of males and females is comparatively less in Nagaland than the other Northeastern states.

In this paper, the researcher has utilised BPRD data to check the representation of women police in Northeast. The table given below reflects the representation of women police officers in the states of the northeast.

State	DG P/ SPL · DG P & AD DL. DG P	IG P	DI GP	AIGP/ SSP/ SP/ COM	AD DL. SP/ Dy. CO M	ASP/D Y.SP/ ASSTT. COM	INS- PECT OR / RI	S. I./ R SI	A.S .I./ AR SI	H. CO NS	CON ST	O
Aruna chal (930)	0	0	0	3	0	3	11	28	15	36	795	3 9
Assam (3601)	0	0	1	8	7	29	17	12 9	29	58	3310	1 3
Manip ur (1,373)	0	0	0	8	7	6	5	69	87	145	1046	0
Megha	1	0	0	3	1	4	14	80	9	34	287	0

laya (433)												
Mizoram (518)	0	0	0	2	0	7	52	10 6	54	155	142	0
Nagaland (766)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	44	50	36	636	0
Sikkim (462)	0	1	0	4	5	9	9	15	7	51	358	3
Tripura (1,122)	0	0	0	4	0	7	5	68	23	42	973	0

Table 1.2.: Representation of women in police in North East

Meghalaya is the only state which has got a woman police at the DIG level. All the states except Assam has no woman police as DIGP. Assam has the highest number of constables, whereas Mizoram has the least.

As police is a state subject every state government has power to make policies regarding reservation. The following table shows reservation of women introduced by the state governments of the Northeast of India:

State	Reservation as introduced by State Governments
Arunachal Pradesh	10%
Assam	30%
Manipur	NA
Meghalaya	10%
Mizoram	NA

Nagaland	33%
Sikkim	33%
Tripura	10%

Table 1.3. Reservation for Women Police

As given in the table above, Nagaland and Sikkim are the only two states who have 33% reservation for women in state police service. It is surprising to note that Mizoram has no such provision for women.

The following table show cases the strength of Women Police in police stations set up for Special Purposes:

State	Woman & Children	Corruption/ Vigilance	CID	Cyber	NDPS
Arunachal Pradesh	3	1	0	0	0
Assam	0	1	1	0	0
Manipur	9	1	0	1	1
Meghalaya	11	0	1	1	0
Mizoram	0	1	0	0	1
Nagaland	12	0	0	0	0
Sikkim	0	1	1	0	0
Tripura	0	0	0	0	0

Table 1.4. Strength of Women Police for specific purposes.

Yet again Nagaland and Meghalaya has 12 and 11 police stations set up only for crimes against women and children. All the other states have maximum one police stations performing specific functions like: dealing with NDPS, Corruption/Vigilance cases which is driven by women.

The following table deals with information on women police at the help desk:

State	No. of WOMEN In RURAL P.S.	No. of WOMEN In URBAN P.S.	No. of WOMEN In SPECIAL PURPOSE POLICE STATIONS	TOTAL No. of WOMEN HELP DESK SET UP IN ACTUAL/EXISTING
Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0
Assam	Not Provided(NP)	NP	NP	NP
Manipur	16	12	4	32
Meghalaya	4	5	3	12
Mizoram	25	14	0	39
Nagaland	2	19	7	28
Sikkim	18	9	1	28
Tripura	48	34	0	82

Table 1.5. Women Police assigned Desk Work

Tripura is the only state which has the highest number of women police at rural police stations.

The following table contains the total number of women police stations:

State	Urban-Women Police Station
Arunachal Pradesh	3
Assam	1
Manipur	9
Meghalaya	11
Mizoram	1
Nagaland	11
Sikkim	Rural:1 Urban: 1
Tripura	7

Table 1.6. Data on Women Police Station

(b) Inquiry into the cause behind the gender gap:

One requires more women at police. Remembering the infamous Mathura Rape case and Nirbhaya Case which brought in a plethora of changes one after the other within two decades time in the Code of Criminal Procedure, Indian Evidence Act and Indian Penal Code, these kinds of incidences remind us why women should be given more place in police service. The unfair representation of women in police service is because of the following reasons:

- Police service is traditionally male dominated;
- Family members do not want their daughters/daughter in laws to be in risky work places (STREOTYPE THINKING: nature of job is not suitable for women);
- They also discourage too much devotion of time into work place which police service inherently demands;
- Frequent transfers hampers family commitments: balancing professional and personal

life becomes challenging;

- India's first woman IPS officer, Kiran Bedi, is happy at the change that is coming about, albeit slowly. She says, "I faced biases, prejudices, apprehensions, envy, competition, snide remarks and isolation when I first joined the forces. Culturally, India has a huge legacy of gender discrimination. The induction of women in police force started not so long back. It is taking its time to pick up and become a preferred vocation. Today, women cops are at all levels."¹⁰

(c) Reconnoitring the challenges faced by women in police in north east:

Police work has been a very masculine work all throughout the history. Police is expected to display *machaoism* and valor in their work. If ever one asks a child to define police they will speak of "muscular bodied person with a course voice, suspicious eyes, having aggressive body language." These features are unlike that of what women showcase. Despite the above mentioned causes, India has witnesses, Ms. Kiran Bedi, Ms. Sanjukta Parasar, Ms. Princey Rani performing remarkably well in this field breaking stereotypes.

The following are the challenges faced by women police:

- Less opportunities of promotion;
- Sexual harassment or even sexual coloured comments/ remarks at work place which they are made to ignore, or maintain silence about, or laugh it out.
- Sexism and misogyny is at the core of this service which creates the gender gap: their courage, dedication and moral turpitude are questioned because of their gender;
- The contribution of women at this work place is undervalued, as if their work is a mere extension of the work women perform at home;
- The ambience at work place may not be conducive too: some police stations do not have changing rooms, crèche for women police, not all police stations have pick up and drop service for women especially during late night shifts;
- The common thought is command and control dynamic best suits the males;

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The gender gap in northeast India with reference to police is huge. The state governments have framed policies in this regard, in spite of that the representation is scarce. It has been observed

¹⁰ Available at <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/features/an-unfair-representation-430584>.

that women are given soft work owing to their anabolic characteristic. The focus has been more on women as perpetrators than women as protectors. This is evident from the fact that there are many police stations for woman but comparatively less women police. Under representation of the fairer sex in police leads to grave threats in dealing with offences against women and woman criminals. Hence, it is indispensable that the gender gap must be met at the cutting edge level.
