

Leveraging Change: Developing a Gender Niche in Policing in Pakistan

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Setting the Context

Making a visible and sustainable impact in the domain of equality between women and men seeks commitment and capacity from all the cooperation partners to conceive and execute result oriented development interventions. Gender reforms are essentially political in nature aiming at structural and systemic changes, often contested and resisted by the power holders, thus entail struggle by the advocates to transform unequal power relations. Commitment and capacity for change are therefore critical factors to translate the struggle into practice in the form of pertinent strategies, approaches and actions.

Predominant gendered notions and cultural perceptions influence the way the governance institutions respond to the needs and interests of women and men. The institutional policies and practices (from family to state) manifest gender inequalities with negative implications for women and girls in terms of opportunities, resources, capacities and voice. Widely held gender stereotypes make it difficult to introduce gender responsive measures in the policy domain. Few governance institutions, such as police, have not been fully exposed to institutional level gender initiatives, and thus sensitizing those entities become all the more challenging. In such contexts,

“small gains become big achievements as they are seen as milestones for making significant headways”.

Gender Responsive Policing: Challenges in Focus

Gender reform in policing is relatively a new area of technical assistance for Pakistan encompassing both challenges and opportunities for promoting change in policy and practice. The Gender Responsive Policing (GRP) project was launched nationwide to support the police in improving the organizational processes and operational services for being equally responsive to the security needs and interests of women and men, especially the gender based violence.

The project was initiated in an environment (police) exhibiting little gender sensitivity and priority for addressing gender issues and gender based violence. Social norms and inadequate police response on crimes against women discourages women and the families in distress to approach police. Gender gaps in staffing, structure and processes of police affect the interpersonal behavior and practice,

division of work, positioning, performance and work life balance of employees. The evidence from the project's preliminary assessments and consultations has confirmed a common pattern of challenges, although of different enormity across the police organizations, ranging from lack of women's representation in police to their feeble assimilation in mainstream policing and from inadequate gender orientation of training measures to deficient policing services and a less responsive subculture to deal with cases of gender based violence.

The gender responsive policing approach seeks systematic attention to the gender differences and dynamics of social roles, responsibilities and opportunities assigned to women and men in a particular context. The approach analyzes the differences in the social roles and positioning of women and men that result into gender differences constraining their ability to have an equal access to and control over resources and opportunities. It requires initiatives and efforts from the individuals and the institution to incorporate different needs and priorities of women and men into policies and actions.

The GRP Project (July 2009 – December 2014) is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office and jointly implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the National Police Bureau. The project is in its second phase of technical assistance to the police organizations. It aims at enabling the National Police Bureau to support the executive police to adopt and implement a standardized policy for gender mainstreaming and gender just access to policing, taking into consideration the principles of rule of law.

Capitalizing on the learning(s) and initiatives of the first phase, the GRP project is focusing on strengthening the strategic base with emphasis on the following areas of intervention:

- Facilitation in implementation of the Gender Strategy of Police 2012 - 2016
- Inclusion of gender dimension in police training
- Enhanced system of police investigations with special emphasis on gender based crimes
- Functional national and international women police networks on gender responsive policing

Results and Approaches

The GRP initiative has created a niche for gender focus within the police. Readiness of police cooperation partners to engage in gender responsive interventions, recognition of gender based challenges and incorporation of gender aspects in police work are indicators of police receptiveness. A most significant milestone is the formulation of a Gender Strategy of Police 2012 – 2016, outlining

policy provisions to promote equality perspective in policing services and organizational processes. The strategy is based on consultations with the police and drew on findings from the gender audit of the police organizations.

The endorsement of the Gender Strategy from the chiefs of all police organizations is the strategic outcome leading to systematic policy actions and practice.

The Gender Strategy 2012–2016 outlines six strategic priorities:

1. improve representation of women in police
2. develop capacities and competence of women police
3. enhance role, positioning and visibility of women police
4. cultivate gender sensitive work environment
5. assimilate gender learning into police training
6. enrich policing services with a gender-equality perspective

The Gender Strategy layouts an indigenous roadmap for the police to institutionalize gender inclusiveness over a period of time by formulating action plans and defining a monitoring mechanism.

The GRP adopted a multifaceted approach of building and broadening partnership, advancing gender analysis and awareness of policies, developing human resources and institutional capacity, piloting interventions and formulating policies. The advisory assistance from the gender audit to the training curricula and from developing a pool of trainers to initiating the Ladies Complaint Units, all have contributed in enhancing the scope of police services and gender orientation of the police cooperation partners. Project interventions, undertaken prior to the Gender Strategy consultations, have prepared a ground for the police to engage in strategy development consultations, share perspectives, discuss challenges and outline measures for incorporation in the strategy.

The Gender Audit of Police Organizations is an example of illustrating evidence on the extent of gender sensitivity of organizational culture and operational services. The audit has furnished results for formulation of the Gender Strategy of Police. Drawing on the gender analysis of the police training curriculum, the induction level police course now incorporates relevant gender aspects, pertinent pieces of legislation, human rights and violence against women. Dissemination of curriculum review has triggered a dialogue to revise the existing training standards and develop a comprehensive policy framework with a gender perspective integrated into it. The result was the formulation and approval of the Punjab's Police Training Policy with its various elements being practiced by the provincial police.

Gender awareness of police personnel through different capacity building initiatives has created a space and acceptance for inclusion and enhanced role of women police and women's access to policing services. Police trainers have been exposed to modern training techniques and gender and policing content. The Standard Operating Procedures on dealing with women and investigating crimes of violence against women (*SOPs on VAW*) are made part of the training programs. A pool of trained police trainers is available as a resource to disseminate the newly acquired knowledge and skill to a wider circle of police training institutes and police trainees.

The initiatives of Ladies Complaint Units (9), Women Police Campus in police training schools (2), advanced investigation courses for women (2), skill based trainings and data collection on VAW aimed at enhancing the police services to better respond to crimes against women and encouraging participation of women police in mainstream policing. Despite little coverage, LCUs located in mainstream police stations and managed by women officers, are serving as facilitation points and gradually changing the male perception about the role and presence of women in mainstream police stations. The Gender Strategy entails expansion of complaint units, establishment of women desks and engagement of women police in mainstream policing.

Two major conferences were organized on the theme of Enhancing Women's Role in Police. The first ever National Women Police Conference has provided an excellent opportunity for women police to get together, share policing experiences and professional challenges. The event drew the attention of police organizations towards the role and recognition of women in police. The conference has inspired women officers for future interaction and networking. The idea of country wide Women Police Network has transpired from the national conference. In the aftermath of the conference, 12 women police officers (*of which 5 graduates of investigation course*) were assigned field positions in Punjab.

The International Women Police Conference was yet another eventful attempt to build synergies and advance gender equality in policing through collaborative learning and dialogue among police delegates around the Muslim world. Around 66 police delegates from 12 countries, 10 speakers from the international institutions and 10 presenters from Pakistan have contributed insightful dialogue on gender responsive policing. Involvement of various strategic stakeholders in the conference gave momentum and greater visibility to the role and positioning of women in police.

The showcasing of 'gender just policing practices' from the international development agencies, research institutes and police networks (*UNDP, UNHead*

Quarter, UN African Union, UN peace mission in Timor Leste, International Association of Women Police, UK and Australian Council of Women and Policing) has broadened the canvass of learning for the participants to follow a gender based approach in policing. The interface with the civil society advocates and Women Parliamentary Caucus of Pakistan have established the need for lobbying with law makers on enhancing the policy environment for gender based legislation.

The delegates recognized the value of collaboration with a wide spectrum of stakeholders and have agreed to continue the cooperation through a Women's Police Network on Gender Responsive Policing. The Network of 12 countries was announced during the conference with Pakistan (women police) taking a lead on conceptualizing and steering the network with technical support from the GRP.

Conclusion / Stepping Forward

The synergy in project interventions has galvanized the police organizations to action. Capacity and commitment made it possible to leverage change to the extent where police has recognized the need to develop a policy framework to address the gender gaps at workplace and in policing services. The accomplishments in the pursuit of gender equality often come with a package of challenges. The challenges are of varying scale, surfacing in different forms and at various stages of planning and implementation of the technical assistance. A major challenge has been to carve a way and create a constituency of demand within the police seeking gender equality change. In the case of GRP initiative, the formulation and endorsement of the Gender Strategy of Police is an illustration of demand generated among the critical mass of the police to develop a strategic framework.

The action planning and implementation of the Gender Strategy are the crucial next steps for the police to translate the strategic priorities into well-defined actions with adequate monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Gender mainstreaming experience suggests that lack of action on defined priorities results in policy evaporation. Therefore, it is essential for the cooperation partners to consolidate the gains, built upon the gender initiatives and expand the scope of responsiveness. Enhanced political will and policy commitment from the police senior management are the pre-requisites for making a real difference at deeper level in police keeping the standards of equality in perspective.