

## Pakistan: Gender-responsive Policing

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In response to violent extremist group's attacks on religious places, military and police installations, markets, funeral gatherings and even schools, Pakistani police departments diverted training and resources away from crime prevention toward counterterrorism. The police engaged mainly male officers with negligible if any role of female police. Building public trust in police and improving public-police relations was not a priority. Close collaboration between police and army and the militarisation of the police had further widened the gap between public and police leading to incidents where people took the matters in their own hands. With male officers involved in counterterrorism activities, women police could have been utilised in regular police work to improve public security.

The National Police Bureau acts as a Secretariat of the Ministry of Interior Pakistan and has the mandate to give advisory support to all police organisations on policy formulation and monitors implementation. In response to these challenges, GIZ and the National Police Bureau launched a Gender Responsive Policing Project in July 2009 with a vision to bring a positive change within the institutional landscape. The project worked nationwide through close collaboration with the bureau. The project aimed to provide gender responsive policing services to the community by support equitable participation of both men and women police officers. The main rationale of the programme was to improve the delivery of police services for women, girls, elderly people, children and minorities. It was observed that wherever women were engaged in active policing there was no report of corruption and very few complaints of delayed response. In the presence of female officers, women also no longer abstained from seeking police assistance due to fear or shame.

The program's key activities were the following:

### Conducting a Gender Audit

A Gender Audit established a baseline understanding of current levels of gender awareness and sensitivity in the policing practices including recruitment and promotion, training and curricula, procedures and protocols, policies and services etc. Police officers in the mid-management level conducted the audit to ensure that the credibility of results was not questioned. The audit revealed striking gender gaps at all levels. Women police were segregated in women police stations and played an insignificant role in active policing. In response to the gender audit, the project adopted a multipronged approach for improving gender mainstreaming and sensitivity to gender-based violence in policing.

### Introducing Gender-sensitive Operating Procedures

With input from police officers across Pakistan, the project developed Standard Operating Procedures for police to deal with women victims of violence. This led to the establishment of Ladies Complaint Units and dedicated women desks inside regular male-dominated police stations to assist women with complainants. For example, more than 60 women's desks were set up in the province of Khyber Pukhtunkhawa. Setting up women desks and ladies complaint

#### The challenge:

The lack of gender sensitivity in police departments results in a lack of gender-based violence being reported and addressed, affecting human security for everyone.

#### Theory of change:

Enhance the role and positions of women within the police force to provide more adequate services for women suffering from gender-based violence.

units encouraged women to approach police for help, increased reporting of cases of violence against women, and resulted in improved responses to women's complaints.

### **Conducting Training Programs**

The project brought together police training heads from all parts of the country to formulate gender guidelines for training. This enabled the establishment of a uniform countrywide standard of learning for each rank within the police force. Police trainers from police training institutes were trained as gender trainers to sensitise male and female police trainees to provide gender sensitive services to women seeking police assistance. Police received information and training on implementation of laws supporting women's safety from violence, which helps to motivate police officers to offer timely assistance to female victims and to fight crimes against women. The project included modules on gender responsive policing in mandatory police trainings and improved general understanding of gender issues. In addition, the gender trainers modelled new interactive training methodologies to improve the overall training environment.

### **Improving National Policies and Laws**

The National Police Bureau with the technical assistance of the Gender Responsive Policing Project began to develop a Gender Strategy of Police. The project negotiated and mediated spaces for women in police. Despite initial resistance, the 2012 approval of the Gender Strategy of Policy provided national guidance on gender sensitive policing practices and provided a new rationale for gender mainstreaming. The Government of Pakistan had previously announced but had not implemented a 10% quota for women in all public jobs. Through the Gender Strategy of police the project ensured this quota in policing throughout Pakistan. Senior management was convinced to create proper positions for women police in mainstream policing. Police organisations now have to increase vacancies for women since more and more are applying for policing positions.

The Gender Strategy also highlighted that enhancing the role and position of women in active policing was not only a constitutional right of women, it was also an operational necessity to address violence against women. The philosophy behind gender responsive policing was to prevent and control violence at its roots. Gender roles often encourage women to practice using social skills such as empathy, communication and problem solving. The Gender Responsive Policing Project focused on women's strengths in these skill sets to address social problems. Violence against women was seen as a precursor of intolerance in society. Children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to run away from home, use violence, seek refuge in drugs, and indulge in criminal activities or other activities that reflect societal intolerance and violence. Safety at home results in safe and tolerant societies.

### **Preparing Women for their New Role**

Parallel activities supported the Gender Strategy. Specialised trainings were organised for women police to enhance their policing skills before negotiating for their enhanced positioning within their departments. A Women Police Network was established providing a platform for women police to table their issues and demand an active role in policing. Motivational workshops were held for women police to help them take pride in their work and stand by each other against all odds. The Women Police Network was linked with international and national organisations for technical assistance and advisory support.

### **Raising Public Awareness**

The project worked with religious scholars, media, civil society, and philanthropists to promote the idea of gender responsiveness in policing practices and improve the acceptance of the role of women in police. National and International conferences were held on gender responsive policing advocating for the enhanced role of women in police for ensuring peaceful societies.

### **Placing women as role-models into the police forces**

The women officers trained in the project were deputed in male police stations. For example, in Punjab Province a few women officers trained by the project were posted to male police stations to work shoulder to shoulder with their male colleagues. In Sindh Province, four women were made head of male police stations (Station House Officers) and one senior woman was made head of a police district for the first time in the history of Pakistan. Media headlines on their achievements further motivated the women and their colleagues, as well as prospective women who see these female police officers as role models. Nationwide motivational campaigns were organised in girls' colleges and universities to inform them on women protection laws, violation of women rights, and motivating them to join police service to help the helpless in their communities.

Several international and national organisations are now working on gender responsive policing adopting the approach of the Gender Responsive Policing project and building on its successes. Other countries such as Sudan and India are using Pakistan's Gender Strategy of Police as a model for their own work to gender mainstream in policing.



**Photo 31: Pakistani police officer working with Sudanese refugees. Photo Credit: CC Flickr/Albert González Farran, UNAMID**