SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study aimed at analysing the sociological aspects of women working in Himachal Pradesh Police. It focused on the social, personal and organisational factors that explain women’s entrance and integration in the police force. Since entrance to a new role and integration of these incumbents is a process facilitated by professional socialisation the main objectives of this study were examination of the socio-economic family background of policewomen, causes and conditions of their joining police force, the training and the learning process of a role in the police organisation involving expectations contrary to what is in general expected of women in the society, the role performance by women, possible role conflict and the response of society at large to such a role. The letter concern of the study also tends to employee possible women empowerment due to them being in police force.

The study, as the title itself suggests, was conducted in Himachal Pradesh, a hill state located in the North West region of the Himalayas. The state spread over an area of 55673 sq. km. has a population of 5170877 (Census 1991). The female population of the state is 49.09 percent with a literacy rate of 52.46 percent. The major activities of the women in the state, by and large have been agriculture, handloom, cattle rearing and looking after household chores. The employment of women in the organised sector was unknown. It is only in the recent past that they found employment opportunities in the vocational organisations and active work force. These include teaching in schools, colleges and universities, nursing profession and para-medical
personnel in hospitals, doctors, administrators and employees in the government departments. But their number is too small. Although women in Himachal Pradesh in general have been quite active in agricultural operations, but then general social status has been quite low. Malnutrition, unhygienic work conditions, social and physical exploitation have been characterising their existence. However, with the general social and economic development, some opportunities of employment for women have become possible. Police constitutes one of the limited employment spheres where women find restricted job opportunities.

Police as an important instrument of social control has been an integral part of social organisation of human society. Although the evidence suggests employment of women as guards for women captives, but policing as such has always been considered as a masculine in its traits. Thus women's entry into modern police system remained somewhat undesired phenomenon. Himachal Pradesh, although a peaceful state maintains its own active police force for the prevention and control of crime in the state. For the smooth and effective operations, the state police has been divided into three zones: The northern, the central and the southern zones with their respective headquarters at Dharamsala, Mandi and Shimla. Till 1975, police in Himachal Pradesh employed only men. The idea of women police was unknown to the people and the state. However, after 1975, police department started recruiting women as constables. At present, in all the three police zones, women are also employed. Their total number at the time of field work was one hundred and eighty-eight.
only which also constituted the universe of the study. Unlike plains entire Himachal Pradesh constitute mountainous and tough terrain. Covering all police stations all over the state having women constables is impossible as some of the areas have very heavy snow fall and remain under snow for a period ranging from six months to eight months. Due to limited means of transport some areas are inaccessible. The difficult terrain and other hazards involved in travelling from one place to another the data collecting was restricted to only 135 Police women in the districts of Shimla, Mandi, Dharamsala, Kullu, Sirmour and Solan. Contrary to the sample plan of the study the of the study finally turned out to be more of a purposive type.

Today the women are at cross-roads. They, due to their changing sex-role, share two-fold burden -- domestic as well as the economic. Despite their problems they are a vital constituent in the socio-cultural and economic development of the society. However the generalised sex-role patterns reinforced by the parents, peers and the society at large result in crucial differences in the behaviour of the two sexes. In this process of sex differentiation the males remain in the advantageous position. The continuing biased male attitude towards women also result in the under-estimation of women’s capabilities. Consequently they confined to the in majority cases traditional women-specific occupations. However with time and in accordance with the changing conditions of social and economic life a very small section of women find themselves in a somewhat changed situation in which men's attitude towards them is quite positive and favourable. Such women command
respect due to the power, economic as well as social, which they wield in relation to men. In this way some of today’s women no longer remain just charming, delicate individuals meant for the pleasure of men but exist as human beings and are asset to the society rather than liabilities. They can counsel, sense, judge, reason out, administer, ably aid and provide strength to the men folk in various spheres of life. But the number of such women is very small. But the trend of change appears to be in the offing.

In modern democratic India, more and more women are taking up economically gainful employment outside the four walls of their home and thus challenge the myth that women are incapable of carrying out the occupations which had so far been held and monopolised by men. How far women’s new roles have resulted in their socio-economic emancipation, women empowerment and their social mobility remain some of the most discussed and debated issues.

The emergence of the new role of women as policewomen establishes the fact that occupational diversification is taking place in the case of women’s employment opportunity structure which is leading to the change in the sex roles. It is quite well known that policing in India as well as elsewhere in the world was structured and designed to be completely a male occupation. The general conception about police as a profession therefore has always been in terms of male occupation. Such an understanding on the basis of peoples knowledge about the rates performed by police in the society, the police role is identified as the one dealing with deviants, criminals and other
kind of law offenders. Accordingly people in general perceive police folk as a rude and harsh perception of policemen in general is not appreciable. The joining of women in the police organisation therefore is expected to command little or no appreciation. This is particularly so when and the socio-cultural scenario of Indian society in general has remained less permissive. In this way keeping in view the duties of the police officials and the attitude held by the society towards policemen in general, it was contended that women who join this force at lower cadres come from lower and lower middle class socio-economic family status. It is their family’s economic compulsions which make them join police service. Given an alternative they would have not joined the police organization. Also Indian society being traditional and the level of modernity low, the response of the public towards employment of women in police is likely to be less encouraging.

The other apprehensions about women in police were: First the educational level of police personnel in the lower and middle cadres is generally low, the policewomen are likely to face discriminatory, derogatory and uncooperative attitude of their men colleagues towards them. Second working in police involves duties at odd hours, the physical exploitation of police women can not be ruled out. Due to such an apprehensions they are likely to face some problems in their social and marital adjustments. In the light of some of the problems women were likely to confront a question arises can one say that, police as a career would provide better prospects for women in terms of employment, empowerment, and recognition of their capabilities, self-
realisation of the importance of their role in the society in the times to come and resultant increase in their social prestige and better future prospects?

Although apprehensions about women’s joining police force were there and continue to haunt people, but the conditions created by industrialisation, enactment of certain legislation and the sharp increase in crime against women and crime by women have necessitated employment of women in police. Despite the fact that police remains a predominantly male’s domain, police stations having male and frequent contact with anti-social elements, the number of aspirants to join police has increased. It is observed that the number of these aspirants always outnumber the available vacancies (Mahajan, 1982 : 59). The emerging scenario also leads to further interest in knowing as to women with what kind of socio-economic background opt for the role of policewomen.

The findings of the study suggest that policewomen in Himachal Pradesh police are quite a young. Most of them are in their early twenties and thirties. Since marriages of girls, as per the cultural increasing of Indian society in general and Himachal Pradesh in particular are solemnised at a young age, the majority of them are married. This segment of the police women indicates that they are simultaneously performing the opposite roles. Their continuation in police is also suggestive of the balance which they have been able to strike between their traditional role of home maker and the modern role of policing. The presence of unmarried women in the same age category on the other hand reflects on the emergence of a new trend of increase in age at marriage. Thus
one also native along into changing six roles some of change in also taking place in the cultural practices in Himachal Pradesh. Since the major religion in Himachal Pradesh is Hinduism the Hindus have considerably high representation among policewomen in relation to other religious denominations, namely Sikhs, Muslims Christians and Buddhists. The women belonging to other religion also find some place in the police. With regard to caste wise classification the analysis shows that the traditional dominant castes, i.e., Brahmins and Rajputs, though considered conservative about their women folk, have maximum representation. In this way the study suggests that policemen in majority in Himachal Pradesh some from traditionally dominant religion and casts.

The educational profile of Policewomen it revealed that they not only fulfilled the basic essential qualification but few of them have completed vocational training courses also. The educational background of the family reveals a typical traditional pattern. The fathers of most the respondents are literate with minimum high school level educational qualifications. The mothers on the contrary are illiterate and less educated. The fathers’ occupational distribution reveals them as agriculturists, some in petty business or others in low cadre government jobs. Mothers are mostly confined to the household and housewife’s role. A small number of them also carry on activities such as in weaving, cattle rearing and poultry. Since majority of the policewomen come from rural background and their this role as policemen is in total contrast to the roles taken up by women in their general in the villages.
The analysis of household constitution of the respondents reveals the joint family system prevalence in the rural areas to some extent. By and large most of the policewomen come from nuclear and extended co-residential households. After joining the police service most of the respondents live with the family members or relatives. The accounting for each a living arrangements as that living of women alone is not secure. Therefore single or unmarried police women prefer to live into their relations, kith and kin. It therefore also suggest, the difference such women face when in uniform and when they are without uniform.

The present rank profile of the respondents reveal of the general pattern of occupational rank order distribution prevalent in a society. As majority of them are in the lower ranks, such as constables. Though there is no wage disparity on account of gender in the police department, but the salaries drawn by policewomen in comparison to the people working in clerical cadres in the public and private sectors are relatively less. Thus, there is some incongruent in the power commanded by those policewomen and the salaries they earn in comparison to others in the private all public sector employees.

The over all analysis of the socio-economic background of the policewomen reveals that the choice of police occupations is confined to the less educated lower and the lower middle segment of the population which upholds our assumptions that a woman who joins this force at the lower cadre has lower and lower middle class socio-economic status. As the women police recruitment survey report(1975) reported that most of the policewomen come
from middle and upper working class background, our analysis establishes a change in the trend over the years. Such a change can also be in result of state-wise variations in the standard of living by the people.

The concept of woman police being of recent origin, there is general lack of knowledge among the people at large about the nature of police duties and police as an occupation as such. The prevalent cultural biases, strongly rooted in the society regarding occupations suitable for women makes it difficult for the people at large to accept and a role without any resistance at individual or family level. Despite the expected resistance, a good number of women are opting for this occupation. Hence, the interest arises to understand the causes, conditions and objectives of women joining the police force on the one hand and also to know any difficulty faced by them in the selection of this role at their individual and family level on the other, there is some indication of this comes from the fact that the majority of respondents had actually planned for occupations such as teaching, nursing, clerical jobs, etc. as the occupation for themselves. Their initial preferences for such occupations is attributed to their socialisation in the childhood which oriented them for occupations valued by the society as the occupations for women. At the that time police as an occupation for women did not done any place in the society. Only a small number of them could think of women in police prior to the recruitment such a view also finds some validity as even now when women police is accepted by the people as a profession suitable to women only one fifth of the sample favours police as the ideal profession for women. This shows that their
association with the police profession has so far not been able to bring about any change in their attitude towards the ideal occupation for the girls. However, they joined as for most of them police was the first occupational option available to them. Knowledge they had about police was through their distant or near relatives. The reason for joining police by many of these women was their poor and compelling economic conditions. Besides this, power, authority, desire to be economically independent, orientation towards a career and other associated features motivated them to join police.

Since majority of the respondents did not have knowledge about police role, they didn't have any idea regarding the nature of their duties, associated expectations and the kind of environment in which they would work. Hence the objections of joining police expressed by the respondents quite ambivalent. However policewomen know through media about the indifferent treatment meted out to women in custody and in police stations. Thus, for most of them the one of the clear objectives of joining the police force was to understand women in custody and help them. The cause of women perhaps was the clear objective these women had prior to joining police. Some policewomen were aware of police duty to fight crime and corruption. Thus they had the objective of fighting out crime and corruption and to reform criminals. Those who were members of the National Cadet Corps during college and school had developed a some what typical notion of serving the nation through police services.
At this juncture a question arises: Could these policewomen realise their objectives as fighting corruption out of the society and rehabilitation of the women involved in crimes and the women victims of crime against women? The question particularly arises as the corruption, crimes and other ills prevalent in the society are not simple phenomenon. There exists strong nexus between crime, criminals and the politicians. It is not an easy task to break this bond between the said. It is also a known fact that the realisation of the objectives idealised before joining any occupation is subject to the prevalence of a right kind of atmosphere and opportunities. Once in the job, the actual job situation poses certain problems in the realisation of the objectives. The fact of the matter is that majority of the respondents being young and in the initial rank of constable never get the opportunity to exercise any kind of authority and take decisions independently. Moreover the policewomen are under the supervision of male officers. The attitude of males towards such is not free from the traditional values of patriarchy. In the absence of gender sensitisation policemen's behaviour somewhat critical of policewomen. The gap between formal policy of equal opportunities and the tradition based attitude of male officers towards women has led to the informal practice of sex discrimination in the police force. Due to which just and honest work of policewomen is evaluated in an unfavourable manner. Although the policewomen force is more than two decades old in Himachal Pradesh, yet it continues to remain a males' domain. One of the reasons may be cited as preponderance of men in police force in comparison to women. This is validated by the ratio of policewomen to the total police force which is highly.
negligible. Moreover the state police has little representation of women in the gazetted ranks. This also makes policewomen feel weak and insecure in force which is expected to provide security to the general public.

The other significant issue associated with role performance is how well policewomen are trained to carry on their day-to-day duties. In general the duties of police personnel vary from general social work to that of criminal investigations, making arrests, conducting raids, etc. Such a sphere of activity involves a high level of technical and legal knowledge. Thus, the training and the transformation of the personalities of the new recruits to suit the expectations of this role is necessary. In this context other issue investigated was the training of policewomen. The Himachal Police has its own police training school at Junga (Shimla), where both male and female recruits undergo training. The duration, syllabus and schedule of the training is same for men and women both. Hence, as far as training is concerned, the do not have any protective discrimination. They have to undergo similar physical training. Due to no prior socialisation about training situations, they faced certain problems. The tough, strict and rigorous training schedule on the one hand and absolutely male dominated culture at the training institute on the other were cited as the probable reasons. For a sizeable number of the respondents hailing from rural and socially orthodox background, it was their first encounter with a totally new environment. In this way they faced some problems of adjustments during their training at the police training institute.
The policewomen are divided on the issue of whether there should be a male or female instructor for imparting physical training. One fifth of the respondents still believe in the psychological and biological superiority of males and therefore prefer to have male instructors. But the majority of them prefer to have a combination of both male and female instructors. They felt that with female instructors communication would be easy and they could give proper feedback to the higher authorities to frame rules and regulations to suit policewomen's circumstances. They also pointed out towards the lack of practical aspect in the classroom training. The policewomen also explained that the actual job situations are quite different than what is taught during the routine training course.

The physical aspect of the policing is over emphasised and women's' abilities to perform the duties involving physical hazards are often doubted. Irrespective of such an attitude of the fellow policemen, policewomen have been performing a wide range of activities and duties ranging from P.T., parade at national festivals, interrogation, investigation, public relation, etc. Role performance and level of performance are related to the liking for a particular role, the infrastructure facilities available and the associated rewards. The field duties, interrogation and the like make this role of policewomen different from others. Hence the preference and willingness for such duties is not only conducive to the policewomen's role, but will also rate their performance level quite high. Around one fifth of the sample has shown preference for field and interrogation duties. These respondents had planned for
an occupation providing thrill and adventure in their childhood and they think it to be an ideal occupation for women. The adventure and challenge of this new role has considerable attraction for them. Thus they are more committed to role and their performance level is also comparatively higher. As the majority prefers to perform in-house and general office duties in contrast to work group expectations, it is found that such policewomen are not rated high in their role performance. Interrogation of women and children is carried out by policewomen only. But such a role being carried an informal work group practice, male police officials are also present. Though the majority of the respondents disapprove of the presence of male police officials during interrogation yet only a small section feels confident enough to carry on investigations deal with the culprit alone. It is this small number of women constables who disapprove such ideas. There are others who disagree with such women constables on account of suspect’s hesitation in revealing the sex related crimes and matters. This indicates the gender influences in the personality of policewomen themselves which make them hesitant to carry on investigations of certain matters in the presence of males. With regard to the use of physical punishment which is a normal practice during the process of investigations and also meets the work group’s informal expectations of the police force, most policewomen favour use of physical punishment. They also state that they have actually used this method to extract “truth” during interrogation. Similarly, mob control during agitation calls for extraordinary courage, confidence and attitude of commitment to the role. Around half of the respondents have faced such situations and are confident of tackling such
crowds. Among the rest, there are some who feel scared and try to avoid such situations. Some of the policewomen did not have such experience. Love et al. (1988) also found that compared to their male counterparts female police officers had lower self efficacy ratings in police duties dealing with violent offenders and riot situations.

The expected career growth, the planned tenure in police and the monetary aspect are some other variables that reflect the respondents’ commitment to the role. It is expected that if the policewomen are satisfied with the monetary aspect and the chances of the growth of their career, they would like to continue in this job and thus will strive for better role performance. Policewomen in the rank of Head Constable and above, are satisfied with their career growth. Therefore they intend to complete their service till retirement. Those in the rank of constable are not very optimistic because of promotion test and other service situations. The opinion is fairly divided on the option to leave or not to leave the job. But some of the respondents numbering almost one-third are highly satisfied with the job and therefore would like to recommend police job to their relatives. However on the whole the analysis reveals a confused state of policewomen’s mind as they lack consistency and also reflect a certain degree of ambivalence in their responses and behaviour.

Policing has traditionally been markedly masculine in its occupational culture and the policewomen have to interactionally manage their gender identity in the work environment where there are prejudices stemming from societal and organisational influences depicting the female as a weaker
sex. The encounter with an entirely new culture at their workplace represented numerous difficulties to the policewomen. They were often hesitant and felt awkward in the beginning. However continuous interaction helped them adapt themselves to the new role gradually. The entire process of change in the behaviour of policewomen indicate that they passed through the stage of desocialisation, socialisation and finally learning of police role. It is in this process that acquisition of a new occupational role brought about attitudinal change and conformity to the role expectations. A fundamental distinction however remains between policemen and policewomen. While the former stick to their old habits even in the presence of women the latter criticise the use of filthy language, vulgar gestures and sexual overtures of certain policemen, especially during night duties. This calls for a need of de-socialisation of policemen as far as the culture of abuses is concerned.

The structure of organisational hierarchy reflects the power structure of a given organisation. Since the human society by and large has been organised on the principles of patriarchy, the men have always been having a dominant position in the society. The acceptance of women as equal to them or as their leader therefore has never been an easy thing. The similar reflections are also found in our analysis. The policemen as per the rules and regulations accept the orders passed on to them by the senior policewomen but they grumble. The resistance of policemen is visible from the derogatory remarks which the policemen make against the policewomen. Moreover it is
also observed that the policewomen have to excel much more than their male counterparts to make a place for themselves in the police organisation.

The concurrent amelioration and revocation of women’s’ integration are operating in the police force as well as in the society. But the age-old biased attitude of the male police officers often lead to informal practice of discrimination. Around one third of the respondents have experienced discrimination at the hands of their male colleagues and seniors, though in a concealed manner. For instance the male police officials avoid entrusting serious investigation work to policewomen, hesitate in taking them on outstation duties and often make derogatory remarks on women’s’ capabilities. There also exists a considerable difference in the duty deployment schedules of policewomen and policemen.

A woman’s entry into various modern occupations sets in a multiple process of action and interaction between the demands of the occupation and her gender-specific social status and family responsibilities. Thus, women are performing multiple roles simultaneously. But their role of policewomen which demands high level of dedication often leads to the problem of role conflict at household front. In view of which they have evolved a process of adjustment. But this adjustment seems to have heavy costs as it is likely to adversely affect women and put a limit to their empowerment. A majority of them experience difficulty in performing the dual role of a policewoman and a housekeeper. The requirements of job punctuality, rigorous discipline and being on 24 hours duty, leave them in a such precarious situation
that they at times are not left with any time to take care of their household chores and even cook food for themselves. In case they fail to perform their role adequately, or absent themselves from duty the policewomen receive punishments like their male counterparts, though not that severe. They are also unable to attend to their social and personal obligations. Even for most other household chores they have to depend on other family members. Hence the role of a policewomen not only socially isolates its incumbents but also leads to varying types of reactionary social responses, opinions and attitudes towards them. Their position is quite ambivalent in as they are also feared and disrespected in the society.

In order to resolve the role conflict and the subsequent problems faced by them a majority of policewomen think that their problems can be minimised if their duty time is spliced or reduced. They also say that in the absence of basic infrastructure facilities, policewomen at times are unable to conform to the work group expectations and hence become target to various tirades. They are also faced with inter-role and intra-role conflict. In the police stations they allege that there are no separate interrogation rooms, no proper toilet facilities for women, no boarding and lodging facilities for the policewomen on outstation duties. The lack of basic facilities need serious attention of the government. Mathur (1991) in a study also found such lapses and recommended initiating of effective measures including provision of basic infrastructure facilities at the police stations. The other difficulty policewomen with small children face is that police department has not been able to provide
any day care facility for the children; hence the policewomen find themselves restricted in going on outstation duties.

Understanding the special needs and requirements of women and the ever-increasing crime rate involving women, both as criminals and as victims, the need for strengthening policewomen force has become inevitable. Although this is an accepted fact all over India, the change in the concept of police from the tough, brutal and insensitive force to the co-operative and the one using modern methods of detecting crime and psychological handling of criminals etc., is also essential. This type of change will facilitate the entry of women into this instrumental role. In contrast to women's widely accepted traditional expressive role, the performance and commitment to this role necessitates positive compromises and adjustments to various conflicting role expectations. It is not the policewomen who need to compromise but also the society at large, especially the men. Hence, the society continuously evaluates the policewomen's role and requires drastic changes in its value structure and prevalent attitudes. The policewomen themselves think that the society at large does not have a very healthy view about policemen as such. If they enjoy a sense of power and some reputation in general it only when they are in uniform. Leaner et al. (1991) concluded that while both males and females were worried that the job was hardening them emotionally, males were significantly more likely than females to report that working with people put a strain on them and that they treated citizens like impersonal objects or did not really care what happened to some of the citizens. Despite this, the majority of
these policewomen have experienced a positive attitude from society, their relatives and their friends and neighbours on the employment of women in the police force. Despite the problems encountered by the policewomen in police force as such, their role is however acquiring significant place in the society.