CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter presents the background for the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, its significance and limitations of the study.

1.1 Women, Employment and Empowerment

In the last few decades, it has come to be realized that the growth-oriented approach results in minimal concern for the human dimension of development. This has resulted in a dramatic transformation in the world thinking on development interventions and policies (Tinker and Bramsen, 1976). Such a transition in perceptions of development during the first development decade was paralleled by the addition of new input into the debate when, for the first time in the 1970s, women’s issues and development were conceptually linked (World Bank, 1980). Thus, the common understanding of development in economic terms such as rise in income and standard of life, paved the way for the understanding that women also made substantial contribution to its income. It was the women’s movement which emphasized upon patriarchy as a concept central to any understanding of the subordination of women both cross-culturally and trans-historically. While the term ‘Patriarchy’ is defined in multiple ways, it is also interpreted in universalistic terms as a concept through which women’s oppression is construed as operating similarly across the boundaries of space and time.

In recent years, several important theoretical and empirical studies on gender and class implications of the economic activities engaged in, and political
participation, by women, have come up with explanations for gender-based participation and discrimination. These studies have stressed that amongst the many identities of men and women, like class, age and nationality, ‘the systematically inferior economic position of women inside and outside the household in most societies has been the subject of a good deal of recent research’ (Sen 1984, 1985).

As a result, for the past three decades, the concern on the issue of women’s empowerment and development has taken a centre stage at both international and national levels. In the process, there is consensus on the point that women’s general position in the society has improved, not because of a gender perspective, but more importantly for achieving basic rights of citizens. The developing and underdeveloped countries that rely upon social sector potential (like education, health and legal protection) as the base for their efforts, have realized the value of women’s contribution to the economy and society both at household and public spaces. The World Bank has recognized the importance of the need for empowering women in such a way that sustainability gains momentum as a crucial factor in this endeavor. Thus, the pursuit of gender equity has remained a strongly embedded issue within the general framework of fundamental human rights and gender justice.

‘Investments’ are being made on women, recognizing their worth in economic and social development (Asian Development Bank, 1998). Such increased investments in women are expected to produce a healthier, better-educated and literate workforce that enriches the human resource foundation of the economy and polity.

Women’s lack of access to power, positions, and resources are defined by gender and socio-cultural parameters. These hinder growth and development of
women and affect their quality of life, thereby limiting productivity and efficiency. Therefore, attainment of equity and social justice through access to positions that are hitherto male dominated or male monopolized, has come to be recognized as the only alternative for promoting and improving women’s status on a sustainable basis.

1.2 Cultural Perspectives on the Status of Women

The foregoing discussion brings out that empowerment of women is a cultural issue and cannot be achieved by making a few changes in the policy of improving the status of women. The consensus at present in academic circles is to aim at removing structural constraints and barriers restricting women’s participation by making strategic interventions. This is especially necessary in a country like India where cultural dictates or compulsions necessitate discrimination and segregation between sexes, and women require special assistance to mainstream their participation.

It is against these approaches that there came about a new thinking towards encouraging greater involvement of women and their empowerment within those occupations, where they can make substantial contribution to the lives and security of fellow women. This was believed to facilitate women’s welfare as women themselves are involved in providing security and safety to their fellow women and their families. What is more, such change was expected to enable the curbing of gender based discrimination in providing safety, security and justice to the affected persons. This may be true of normal circumstances. But women are also affected by anti-social activities like robberies, burglaries, theft, murder, dacoity and so on. Women are also involved during special situations like strikes, lockouts, tensions, communal clashes, war and other such calamities, as participants and victims.
1.3  Concept of Work, Division of Labour and Women’s Status

The concept of ‘work’ is difficult to be defined as it is different in different societies. But there is a marked difference in the manner every society defines and values the work of men against that by women. The historical transition of work, from hunting stage to its present stage, has laid the foundation for a well-defined gender relation in the household and the broader society. Sociology of Gender Relations makes a reference to two areas of participation by women, viz., ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ or ‘private’ and ‘public’ spheres. Even anthropologists argue that these distinctions are based on cultural variations in what is defined as man’s and woman’s work. For example, domestic work and child bearing and rearing are women’s primary responsibilities. But they are tragically and chiefly responsible for excluding women from participation in the public sphere. Closely attached to such a thinking is the social value that is attached to work by men and women. Women’s work is considered to be lower in social and economic value than that of the men.

In other words, women’s work is generally invisible as it is carried out inside the house. This includes domestic work, for which there is no economic value. It consumes a lot of time and energy of the person engaged in them, but these occupations get higher value only when men are engaged in them. This applies to cooking, washing and cleaning activities. Even when the outside work is divided into two types, i.e., that which is carried out in the field like agriculture, and that involving going to markets for sale or purchase, women's role is less or absent in them. This leads the discussion to segregation of occupations between men and women. For example, nursing, beedi rolling etc., are considered as women’s work (Dharmalingam, 1993). Similarly, even when certain jobs are considered as
women’s responsibilities, and in which women are traditionally found in large number, their status has a lower value than that of men.

Men’s jobs being located outside the household, men are found to be going out to work, while women stay back at home with household chores. Thus, patriarchal values recognize men as breadwinners and heads of households. The income that is earned from men’s work gives them a status and superiority while women’s work is undermined and ignored or taken for granted. Thus, despite turning out very valuable work and contribution to household income, the indirect nature of this operation has made women’s work invisible and as only a part of their household work.

1.4 Empowerment of Women to Protect Women

Women’s empowerment is relatively a new phrase in the vocabulary of gender literature, having originated in the early 1990s or latter part of the eighties. The phrase is used in two broad senses i.e. general and specific. In a general sense, it refers to empowering women to be self-dependent by providing them access to all the aspects of public life and opportunities, which they were denied in the past only because of their being ‘women’. In a specific sense, women’s empowerment refers to enhancing their position in the power structure of the society. The word ‘women’s empowerment’ essentially means that the women have the power or capacity to regulate their day-to-day lives in the social, political and economic milieu of the society - a power, which enables them to move from the periphery to the centre stage.
The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles of the State Policy. The Constitution not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to adopt measures to eliminate discrimination against women by making laws in favour of women. Within the framework of democratic polity, our laws, developmental policies, plans and programs are aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. India has also ratified various international conventions to secure the rights of women. The Women's movement and a widespread network of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) having strong grass-root presence and deep insight into women's concerns have contributed to inspiring initiatives for the empowerment of women. Women today are trying to understand their position in the society. They have become increasingly aware of gender inequalities in every sphere of life and are seeking ways to fight them.

Indian women have started to cast off their age-old shackles of serfdom and male domination. They have come to have their own goals and have started scaling the ladders of social advancement with pride and dignity. Women of India are getting uplifted and emancipated and granted equal status with men in all walks of life - political, social, domestic and educational. They have freedom of franchise, they are free to join any service or follow any profession. Free India has, besides her former woman prime minister, women ambassadors, women cabinet ministers, women legislators, women governors, women scientists, engineers, doctors, space researchers and astronauts, giant IT specialists, women Generals, women public officers, officers of judiciary and Police and in many more responsible positions. No distinction is now made in matters of education between boys and girls. Their voice
is now as forceful and important as that of men. They are becoming equal partners in making or dismissing of a government.

Empowerment rests upon two crucial indicators, among a few others. When women take up work that was hitherto male-monopolised or male dominated, are they continued to be judged as being less skilled in delivering that work? Secondly, certain types of work in the public sphere are considered to be risky and tough that only men are expected to carry them out. Wherever women are ‘allowed’ to carry them out, they are considered to be less efficiently done. The work of women is also hidden in the midst of multiple roles of women in the household, and outside. Males are generally attributed with such qualities like being tough, strong, ability to speak or shout loudly, permitted to stay out during late hours, to exercise anger and physical violence on somebody, ability to control human beings, legal knowledge etc. Thus, certain jobs especially those associated with social control are generally associated with males as only they are considered to be better able to deliver them.

It may be concluded that against the framework of gender and development there are four issues that any study of women and development has to take note of. These refer to the prevailing cultural ideology that determines gender roles in a household; the marginal nature of women’s work and insufficient data or studies where women have ventured to take on male-dominant jobs. One such is protecting civilians and policing for personal safety and security and protection against crime of various sorts.
1.5 Women Empowerment - An Illusion or a Reality?

Notwithstanding the remarkable changes in the position of women in free India, there is still a great divergence between the constitutional position and stark reality of deprivation and degradation. Whatever whiff of emancipation has blown in, in Indian society, has been inhaled and enjoyed by the urban women, their population belonging to the rural areas are still totally untouched by the winds of changes. They still have been living in miserable conditions, steeped in poverty, ignorance, superstition and slavery. There still exists a wide gulf between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislations, policies, plans, programs and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality on the status of women in India, on the other. The human rights scenario in the country continues to be dismal and depressing. Women are being brutalized, commoditized, materialized and subjected to inhuman exploitation and discrimination.

1.6 Need for the Present Study

There is no dearth of studies on the changing status of women in India. Most of them have attempted to document and highlight the socio-economic and political processes that have led to changes in women’s status. Increasingly, such studies have gained added importance because of developments in understanding gender relations in the household and society. They have shown that the status of women has changed a lot towards the better. But, at the same time, they have pointed towards increasing disparities between the rich and poor women, between rural and urban women, tribal and non-tribal women, illiterates and educated among them etc. All these have combined in presenting a complex picture of women’s status. One
important contribution of most of these studies is that external intervention has been responsible for the perceived changes in women’s status.

There are a few studies (Mayoux & Anand, 1995; Inglis, 1997) which reflect on the impact of development programs on women who are already engaged in economic activities and have documented the consequent changes in their status. Even where the studies have reported such a change in status, they have adopted a macro approach. These did not take into consideration the micro-processes of socio-cultural change in nature, which would have, in the given area of study, acted as facilitators of such enhanced status. In particular, there are hardly studies of a micro nature reflecting upon women’s work and status especially when they have taken up jobs or employment that has been in the male bastion like the police service for example. The present study is a modest attempt in this direction.

1.7 Women in Police Force

Women first entered the police force in India in 1938 in a few provinces and princely states. After Independence, Delhi police force was the first to recruit police women on a regular basis with effect from 1948 followed by Andhra Pradesh in 1952 and Karnataka in 1960. By 1987, ten States and Union Territories had introduced women police.

The possibility of women functioning as full members in the male-bastion of the police was not well perceived, in the early years of evolution of police system. Even in the United Kingdom, which was the pioneer in the introduction and utilization of women in police organisation, as early as in 1821 itself, the
policewomen were described as "extravagant eccentricity" Ghosh (1981). However, changes in the social situation with increased association of woman in the performance of field duties in several branches of administration and the problems arising from increased juvenile delinquency and involvement of women in crimes, either as victims or accused, progressively necessitated the employment of women police officers as such, in a variety of police tasks. Women police have now become an integral part of the police force.

1.8 Empowerment of women in the Police

Several factors have been identified that hold back women from functioning to their full potential and get into the mainstream. These can be broadly classified as follows:

Personal Factors

Women, especially from traditional families are constantly bombarded with negative feedback about their capabilities leading to a low self-esteem about themselves. Further, they are conditioned to keep a low profile resulting in low career aspirations. These two together make them feel intimidated by male colleagues. Those who overcome these factors and do manage to get into professional conflict between affiliation and power, have to often compromise and agree for a trade-off between balancing home and career. This, at times, results in the woman’s reluctance to accept greater responsibilities in her profession as she feels guilty that the family would suffer as a result of it. Ours is still a male dominated society where gender discrimination and bias still exist. Moreover, some women just do not have the skill to handle the challenges of discrimination.
Psychological Factors

It is observed that not all women would possess a powerful motivation driven by a sense of meaning, to achieve something significant in their career. At times, a job is perceived as being just an additional income to the family. Without this passion for achievement, women do not develop a capacity for risk-taking. While women are in no way less in intelligence than men, they, at times, lack the ability to focus their intelligence on their career, as a result of or due to other priorities. This naturally results in their inability to find and define great problems to work on. The stereotype that exists in society does not approve of women who are independent and powerful while this very quality is admired and encouraged among men. These are some of the factors that hold back women in being assertive and from demanding their rightful place in their career.

Social Factors

The society being highly patriarchal in nature, the status of women in general is low. The way the girl child is socialized in relation to the boy child differs enormously in setting different standards and norms for men and women. This process of socialisation prepares women differently from men to face the challenges of a career, especially in a highly male dominated profession like the police. The women is seen by family as a wife or a mother, and not as a career-oriented police woman. There are several cultural barriers for women who are in employment; while men can get away flouting them. Further, many women lack support in the family for their career. Women's career is not taken as seriously as that of the men, even by the women who are influenced by the socio-cultural values. Unless a women
are able to cope with all these hindering factors, her being assertive and getting into
the mainstream of her career is an uphill task indeed.

**Structural Factors**

The issue starts from the stage of recruitment itself. At times the standards
set are not women-friendly. There are women exclusive criteria which keep women
out for certain types of assignments keeping them out of the mainstream. Gender
stereotypes and bias keeps women in certain (so-called) feminine roles, like desk
jobs, soft assignments etc.

1.9 **Significance of and Need for the Study**

With more and more women entering the hitherto highly male dominated
professions like the police, several issues are gaining increasing attention. Some of
the major issues pertain to their entry, survival and advancement. It is not enough to
give entry to women in these professions as mere tokenism (Archbold & Schultz,
2008), but it is important that they are provided with a level playing field on par
with men, given the same status and opportunities to fully discharge their duties and
responsibilities. It is also important that a conducive professional climate is created
in which women can survive with dignity and have equal opportunities for
advancement.

Despite many improvements in recent years, certain things have not changed
at all and this is true of most of the professions including police. Available data
shows that women are still concentrated in a limited number of areas and at lower
levels. Higher the rank, lower the number of women in those positions. Although the
doors to various professions are open to women, a host of subtle personal and social
barriers still remain. These are barriers that laws alone cannot remedy; often they are part and parcel of the usual ways of relating to each other as men and women, and are so ‘normal’ that they are not even noticed. However, they not only hamper women’s participation but affect their productivity and advancement.

Thus, the challenges of gender mainstreaming become imperative and needs to be given the due attention that it deserves. The existence of gender stereotypes, discrimination and inequality in the workplace has been an area of concern for women in all sectors of employment. As part of the run up to the First National Conference of Women in Police (MHA, 2002), the British Council supported two surveys on the Perceived Work Climate and Attitudes of Women in Police and Organizational Role Stress experienced by women in police. Responses from 500 policewomen were received from all over the country from different ranks and analyzed. These national level surveys indicated some significant findings regarding workplace characteristics and constraints that women experience, in the police service. The studies suggested that a large percentage of women felt marginalized and discriminated with respect to training, promotion, horizontal mobility, and inflexible working conditions. Stereotypes hold them back from exercising their authority. These experiences have hampered full participation in professional activities and restricted their opportunities for growth at the workplace. The studies also indicate that women experience high levels of stress as a result of "role erosion" and feelings of inadequacy with respect to lack of knowledge and skills in discharging their responsibilities (Sahgal, Chanana & Indiresan, 2005).

However, these studies and their findings are limited to the area where they were conducted and the results cannot be universally applied. India is a region-
specific country and culturally diverse citizenship. The challenges of women in police service need to be clearly understood to derive the maximum benefit not only for the women but for the police force as a whole. It is further necessary to look into the situation in states with greater globalization and development where the problems of safety and security are far more challenging to women than in traditional societies.

Karnataka is a premier state having launched a comprehensive industrial, technological face and phases of development; and since the nineties, highly globalised occupations and lifestyles. Obviously its speedy development in the last few decades has its impact on its socio economic and gender milieu, that needs to be captured from a sociological perspective with social security and gender issues as the main agenda. This research work has attempted to accomplish this.

1.10 Objectives of the Study

To understand the socio-economic profile of the households from where women police force have joined Karnataka Police Service.

To look into the motivational factors and qualifications of the women police that enabled them to join the Karnataka Police Service.

To assess the extent of empowerment and entitlement among the women police personnel (in their social, economic, political and cultural dimensions) over a period of their employment, both at the household (private sphere and public levels) and

To suggest a suitable policy framework to (building up on a strong foothold) strengthen the position of women police in the society.
1.11 Hypotheses

The study is based on the two hypotheses that are as follows

There is no significant difference in the experiences of working women in other sectors and those working in the Police sector, based on their work/family conflict experience, and

Women employees are not only playing a very vital role in the Police Department but they are also facing different types of problems in coping with the demands of work and family life.

As women in India enter the rapidly expanding workforce, they are also facing problems relating to their gender. Social security of working women is a critical issue. Besides male police personnel, women in the police force is viewed to be a great contributory factor in ensuring the safety and security of women both at home and outside. Participation of women in police force not only helps the society but also influences change in their socio-economic status within the employing organization and the communities in which they reside. It is often expected that women’s participation in the professional realm will contribute to a breakdown of traditional gender roles. And indeed, this is true of women in the police sector due to their unconventional ways of work, like a male police officer.

Women in the Police force are increasing in their number in recent years. However, it is argued that women's participation particularly at the lower rungs has many challenges and their participation is based on a continuation of traditional gender roles, which often places them at crossroads. The study is based on the premise that the persistence of such gender divides in this sector that is critical to
development and internal security and peace can perpetuate the notion of gender segregation. It may obstruct enhancement of these lower cadres of police women’s socio-economic status and provide them with equal participation in the Police department.

1.12 **Scope and Limitations of the study**

This study is confined to entry-level cadres in Karnataka police. The data gathered from these respondents based on the objectives set for the study have been analysed and the inferences are drawn. The empowerment of women through employment in Karnataka police may not be generalized.

1.13 **Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis is organized into nine chapters including the present one.

This Chapter One provides the conceptual or theoretical framework for the study based on current debates on gender and empowerment and a preview of the research, the significance and need for study in Karnataka. It also talks about the research objectives, hypotheses and limitations of the study.

Chapter Two attempts a brief review of the important cognate literature. This review of the existing research helps in identifying the conceptual and methodological issues relevant to the study and also the research gaps in the area. This would enable the researcher to collect information and subject them to sound reasoning and meaningful interpretation. A brief review of earlier research work relating to the present study is presented in this chapter.
Chapter Three is devoted to the methodology used in the present research. This chapter also speaks about the data and analytical tools and techniques used for analyzing data.

Chapter Four presents a historical account of women police in Karnataka.

Chapter Five contains the findings of the study regarding the socio-economic characteristics of women police who are our sample respondents. Issues like caste, class, education and place of residence (rural or urban nativity) of the respondents have been analysed to arrive at broad conclusions.

In Chapter Six, the details of work and family balance by the respondents, extent of empowerment and entitlement are discussed.

Chapter Seven analyses the findings regarding the perceptions of women police personnel in the study, covering the problems and challenges that they face in the process of working as women police personnel. The study critically looks at the challenges faced by women police in their private (domestic) sphere and public domain (work and society) against the backdrop of the prevailing constraints for women to empower themselves.

Chapter Eight presents the various occupational hazards that the women police encounter including personal risks, family related problems and deprivations.

Chapter Nine presents the summary of findings and offers a few policy recommendations. It is hoped that the findings of the study would help planners and policy makers to formulate appropriate policy measures for empowering women in the police department and in engendering the police department to strive for achieving higher goals of a gender equal society.