



# **Policy Brief**

## **Gender Sensitivity and Responsiveness of Sri Lanka's Police Service**

# POLICY BRIEF

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Responsiveness of  
Sri Lanka's Police Service

POLICY BRIEF: Gender Sensitivity and Responsiveness of Sri Lanka's Police Service

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# GENDER SENSITIVITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF SRI LANKA'S POLICE SERVICE: AN ASSESSMENT

## Introduction – Safety and Security of Women and Children

Violence against women and children in Sri Lanka is pervasive and exists in the family, the workplace, and the community. It includes physical, sexual, and psychological acts of violence both in physical and cyber-space. The physical safety and security of women, and also children, is fundamental to their wellbeing, and an essential prerequisite to their participation in public life. The challenge of making public and private life safe for women and children falls on many public institutions, amongst which police services are central. In fact, a country's police service is a duty bearer with responsibility to guarantee women's physical safety and security—both a right in itself, and an essential pre-condition for women's enjoyment of all other rights. Hence, the police can play a central role in promoting women's, and also children's wellbeing and upholding their rights.<sup>1</sup>

This document is a summary of the research study undertaken in 2018 with the overall objective of assessing the gender sensitivity and gender responsiveness of Sri Lanka's police service. The research study comprised two parts. The first (Study A), was an assessment of the Divisional Bureaus for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women. The research study evaluated the quality of services provided, and analysed the availability of officers at all Women and Children's Desks throughout Sri Lanka. The second (Study B), was an assessment of gender equality in Sri Lanka's Police service. The research study analysed to what extent gender discriminatory practices are entrenched in the structures, processes, and mechanisms, as well as in day-to-day practices of the Sri Lanka Police.

## *The Assessment – Upholding Equality and Promoting Wellbeing*

A gender-sensitive and gender-responsive police service “is one that both meets the distinct and different security and justice needs of men, women, boys, and girls and promotes the full and equal participation of men and women.”<sup>2</sup> The discourse on gender equality has long-established that women and men have distinct needs in society. Women's needs often remain unmet because what may seem like gender-blind or gender-neutral mechanisms and processes, in fact can be either insensitive to women's specific needs and concerns, or even discriminate against them.

The gender sensitivity and responsiveness of Sri Lanka's police service was evaluated using three inter-related measures:

- the availability and sensitivity of services and mechanisms specifically designed and put in place to respond to the issues and concerns of women in the community, and also children,
- the number of women in the police service, and

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1 UNDP and UNIFEM 2007. Gender Sensitive Police Reform in Post Conflict Societies. Policy briefing paper. New York: United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Development Fund for Women.

2 Bastick, Megan 2011. Gender Self-Assessment Guide for the Police, Armed Forces and Justice Sector. Geneva: DCAF.

- the commitment to the principles and values of gender equality within the institution's internal structures, processes, and mechanisms.

The three broad measures for assessing are inter-connected because a police service cannot effectively respond to the gendered needs of civilians if:

- Specific services and mechanisms have not been established to meet women and children's needs, such as a special Women's Desk at police stations, or police officers are insensitive and unresponsive when women make complaints about difficult and often what is perceived as private and 'shameful' issues such as domestic violence.
- The principle of gender equality is not promoted, upheld, or valued within the police institution. This means explicitly counteracting stereotypes such as women are better at desk jobs or are incapable of doing front-line work, and negative attitudes about women, and also actively promoting gender equality through policies.
- The principle of gender equality cannot be upheld unless women are also present in sufficient numbers in the police service.

### *Rationale for Women's Presence in Police Services*

The findings from this study as well as the existing international literature on women's presence in police services present compelling evidence and supports the assertion that women are just as capable at core policing competencies as men are, including those traditionally considered 'male' competencies and expertise such as weapons handling and meeting physical demands. The findings of this research study is corroborated by earlier evidence that shows that women tend to adopt a style of policing that is more conducive to maintaining public trust and confidence. Women's approach to dealing with the public is also less confrontational, meaning female officers are less prone to being perceived as abusing their authority. Women are seen as more understanding and responsive to community needs, and this style is preferred over the 'gruff' manner often adopted by male officers. Women are also perceived as less likely to be corrupt. These are crucial elements in promoting community policing, and building partnerships and engaging with the wider community.

This study highlights these elements not with the intention of perpetuating gender stereotypes, but to emphasise that there is a public acceptance of women officers that is not necessarily reflected within Sri Lanka's police service.

### *Rationale for Assessment*

A gender-sensitive and gender-responsive police service should effectively prevent and respond to the specific safety and security needs of women and men, boys and girls. In doing so, it should be committed to building police institutions which are non-discriminatory, reflective of the diversity of citizens, and accountable to all citizens. Consequently, a gender-sensitive and gender-responsive police service will better fulfil a police service's essential mandate of upholding the rule of law.<sup>3</sup>

The availability of services—including gender-sensitive mechanisms and processes—that meet the specific gendered safety and security needs of women, as well as children, is imperative if the country's police service is to ensure the wellbeing and uphold the rights of all the citizens it is set up to serve.

3 UNDP and UNIFEM 2007. Ibid.

At the same time, if women are not represented across the organizational hierarchy of the police, it is obvious that the police as an institution cannot effectively meet the needs and concerns of women and children in society. The premise is that women police officers, due to their own experiences of injustice, inequality, discrimination, harassment, and violence, are more sensitive to the safety and security needs of women and girls, and, therefore, can respond more effectively to the gendered aspect of these needs, especially gender-based violence.

However, increasing the number of women in a police service is inadequate unless there is a commitment to the principles of gender equality within the institution. Women's access to power and social position are shaped by socially constructed gender norms and gender roles. Gender-relations between men and women are, in turn, influenced by unequal power dynamics that often render women vulnerable to injustice and violence. Gender-sensitive and gender-responsive policies are "an organizational strategy which employs mechanisms to enhance the feeling of safety, satisfaction and confidence among women by providing them with better access to justice and security and by ensuring effective, transparent and reliable policing services"<sup>4</sup> Such policies "contribute towards building police institutions which are non-discriminatory, reflective of the diversity of citizens and accountable to the population at large. [In doing so], police services will better fulfil the police's essential mandate of upholding the rule of law".<sup>5</sup>

In addition, according to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, women's participation in peace processes should be recognized and promoted, especially in conflict and post-conflict contexts. This is to promote "women's engagement in democratic governance, conflict resolution, and economic activity, which are key components of the sustainability of peace in post-conflict contexts".<sup>6</sup>

Overall, the nature of policing has changed over the past decades. In the past, maintaining law and order was understood to be about exerting authority and using force. Hence, policing as a profession prioritized physical attributes such as brute strength, height, and weight. The shift towards a more proactive style of policing—'community policing'—has reconceptualised the nature of policing. The profession still requires a great level of physical fitness; however, what is considered more important and prioritized is good ethical character, and excellent interpersonal, problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills. These traits cannot be thought of as 'male' or 'female'. However, research shows that women tend to demonstrate these qualities when working with law and order more than their male counterparts.

### *Objectives of the Assessment*

The assessment was undertaken in two parts.

- The first part (Study A- Divisional Bureaus for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women: An assessment) was designed to gain an in-depth understanding of the functioning of Divisional Bureaus for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women established by the Sri Lanka Police. The overall objective of the study was to assess to what degree the services provided by the Children and Women's Divisional Bureaus are sensitive to the needs and concerns of women and children, and respond in ways that do not cause pain of mind or re-victimize any person that accesses the system.

4 UK. Department for International Development 2015 quoted in Nair, N. Sreekumaran, Shrinivas, Darak, Bhumika, T.V., Trupti Darak, Maria Mathews, L. Dayashwori Devi, Ratheebhai V, and Anjali Dave. 2017. Gender-responsive policing initiatives designed to enhance confidence, satisfaction in policing services and reduce risk of violence against women in low and middle income countries - A systematic review. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, UCL Institute of Education, University College London, p.19.

5 UNDP and UNIFEM 2007. *ibid*

6 *ibid*

The specific objectives of Study A were to: map the structure, functions, and staff composition of the Children and Women's Bureaus; identify their mechanisms and how they are operationalized; review resource allocation; evaluate the quality of services provided; and analyze the availability of officers at all Women and Children's Desks throughout Sri Lanka.

- The second part (Study B- Achieving Gender Equality in the Sri Lanka Police: An Analysis of Women Officers) was designed to analyse the status of women officers in Sri Lanka's police service, and the challenges they faced in discharging their duties. The overall objective of this part of the study was to analyse to what extent gender discriminatory practices are entrenched in the structures, processes, and mechanisms, as well as day-to-day practices of the Sri Lanka Police.

The specific objectives of Study B were to: identify women's presence in the organisational hierarchy; identify gaps in existing policies, processes, and mechanisms in the Sri Lanka Police that undermine gender equality; and evaluate practices that are discriminatory to women.

## *Research Methods*

The methodology for the study comprised two parts (1) a desk review, and (2) primary data collection and analysis. The desk review comprised (i) a policy analysis of public and internal documents including gazette notifications, government circulars, annual reports, and manuals of operations, and other relevant internal documents, and (ii) a literature review of academic research publications, research reports, systematic reviews, assessments, policy briefs, and other relevant grey literature.

Primary data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods from a range of stakeholders, including police officers, state and non-state service providers, civil society organizations, women activists, victim-survivors, and members of the community.

Two sets of samples—A and B—were selected to cover all forty-two (42) Divisional Bureaus in the nine provinces. Sample A was selected using the following criteria: two police divisions that have more than ten (10) police stations functioning under them from each province amounting to fifteen (15) Divisional Bureaus. They were: Maradana, Gampha, Matara, Thangalle, Moneragala, Rathnapura, Kurunegala, Nikaweratiya, Anuradhapura, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Ampara, Batticaloa, Jaffna, and Vavuniya. Interviews based on a structured questionnaire were conducted with the Officer in Charge (OIC) and one other officer attached to each of the fifteen Divisional Bureaus.

Sample B comprised the remainder, i.e., twenty-seven (27) Divisional Bureaus. Information from this sample was gathered through workshops where the OIC and one other officer attached to Divisional Bureaus participated. These workshops were conducted in five locations: Colombo, Kurunegala, Habarana, Nuwara Eliya, and Jaffna.

In addition, primary data was collected through: (i) in-depth qualitative interviews with men and women in senior ranks of the police Inspectors of Police (IP) up to Superintendents of Police (SP), and Deputy Inspector Generals (DIG), Directors; (ii) key informant interviews with senior officers of related state agencies, NGOs, and women activists; (iii) focus group discussions with DS level state agencies (iv) focus group discussions with members of the community; (v) survey of victim-survivors of gender-based violence from each of the divisions in sample A; (vi) in-depth interviews with victim-survivors and their family members who have accessed police services; and (vii) observations of Children and Women's Bureaus and Desks; (viii) a survey of officers occupying the junior ranks of the Sri Lanka Police (Constables, Sergeants, Sub-Inspectors).

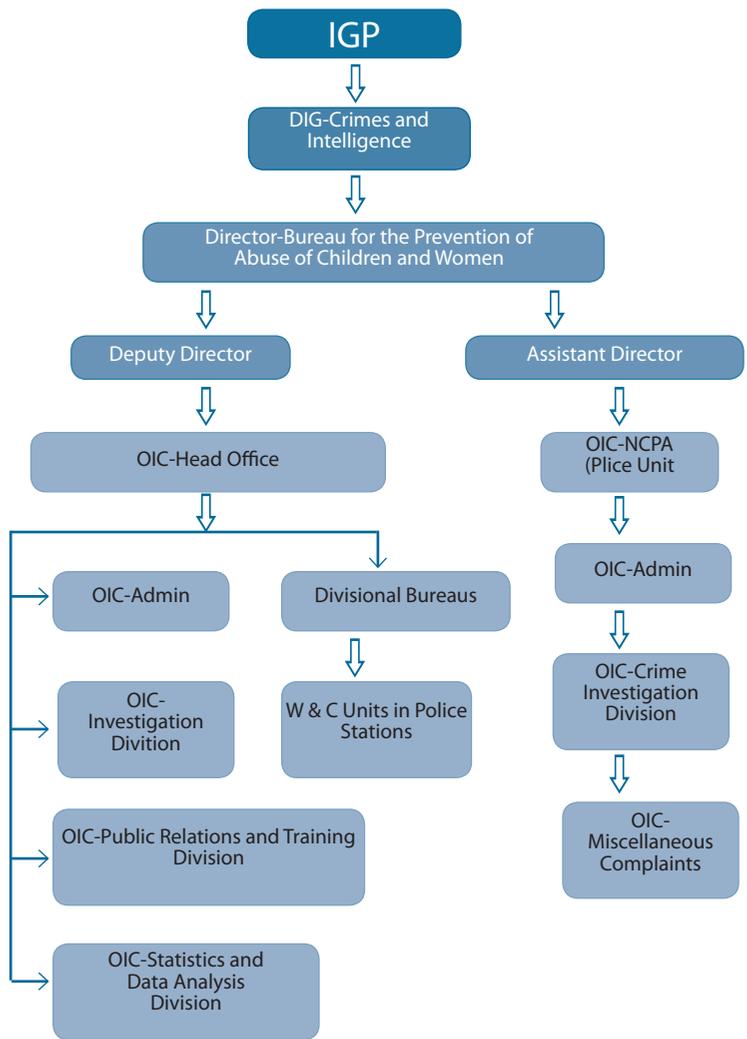
A total of seventy-five survey questionnaires were administered to victim-survivors, and fifteen (15) in-depth interviews were conducted with them. Fifteen (15) focus group discussions were held in selected DS divisions with state agencies. In addition, fifteen (15) focus group discussions were held with communities, and nineteen (19) in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants.

### Key Findings: Sensitivity and Responsiveness of the Divisional Bureaus for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women

The findings of the first part of the assessment (Study A- Divisional Bureaus for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women: An assessment) were analysed using a SWOT framework, i.e., strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the Divisional Bureaus for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women.

The following diagram is the organisational structure of the Divisional Bureaus for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women. The diagram illustrates how the headquarters of the Divisional Bureau is located within the Sri Lanka Police hierarchy.

**Structure of the Headquarters of the Bureau for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women**

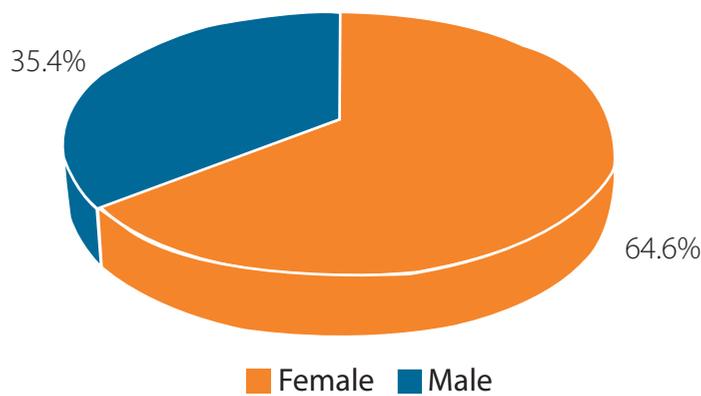


Source: Headquarters of Bureau for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women

## Strengths

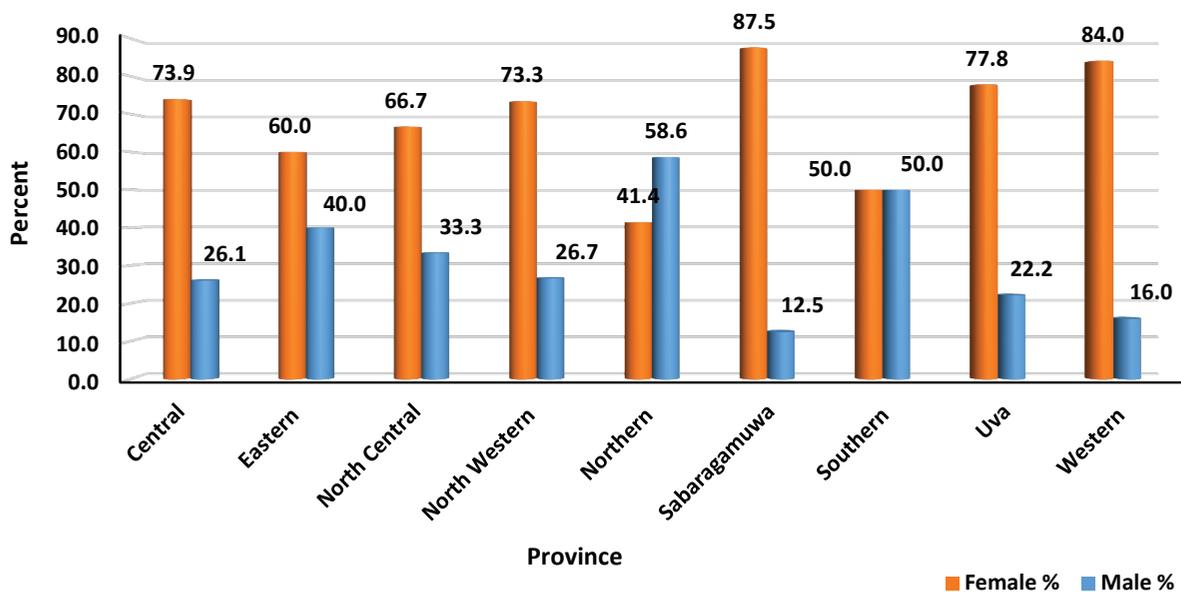
- The Headquarters of Bureau for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women in Colombo is managed by a Director under the authority of DIG Crimes and Intelligence. The present Director is a woman in the rank of Superintendent of Police (SP).
- Divisional Bureaus for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women have been established in all 42 Police Divisions covering all Provinces and Districts of the country. With the exception of one, the OIC in all Divisional Bureaus is a woman officer.
- Women officers form the majority of staff in almost all the Divisional Bureaus and all Children and Women’s Units. (However, in the Southern Province Divisional Bureaus there are an equal number of men and women; in the Northern Province there are more men than women).

Staff at Divisional Bureaus by Sex - 2018

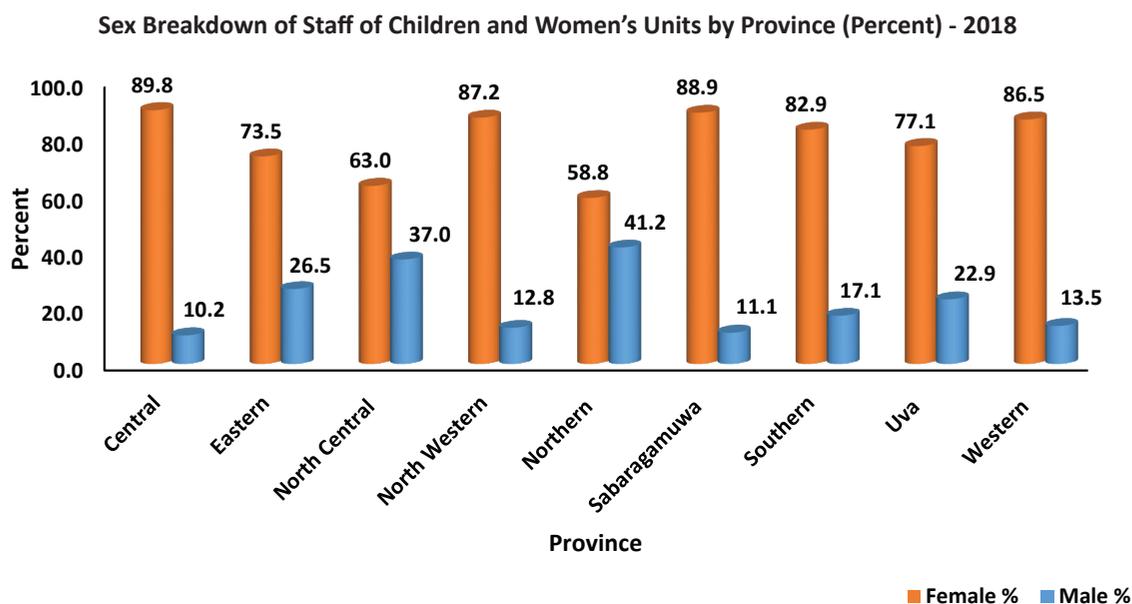


Source: Headquarters of Bureau for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women

Sex Breakdown of Staff of Divisional Bureaus by Province (Percent) -2018



Source: Headquarters of Bureau for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women



Source: Headquarters of Bureau for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women

- In most Divisional Bureaus the OICs are in the rank of Inspector of Police (IP) or Sub Inspector (SI)
- Children and Women's Units have been established in 481 of the 491 Police Stations.
- The staff at Divisional Bureaus is supportive of, and compassionate towards victim-survivors.
- Divisional Bureaus are located within easy geographical accessibility and in safe environments.
- Courses on Gender Equality and Human Rights are included in basic and in-service training of officers.

### *Weaknesses*

- The Director of the Bureau Headquarters does not have administrative authority over the police officers working in the Divisional Bureaus because they come under the authority of the Divisional Superintendent of Police (SP) or Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP). All transfers, granting of leave of absence, and fund allocation come under him instead of the Director of the Divisional Bureaus.
- The cadre approved in Crime Division Circular 19/2012 (dated 2012.08.15) has not been deployed at Divisional Bureaus and Children and Women's Units in the Police Stations. The Circular requires nine officers to be stationed at a Divisional Bureau, but only four of the forty-two Divisional Bureaus have the full approved cadre.
- The Divisional Bureaus are not ranked as other Divisions in the Sri Lanka Police. Hence, the work performed by the Divisional Bureaus, including the work of the officers, is not recognised affecting the promotional prospects of officers working in the Divisional Bureaus and Children and Women's Units.
- The ethnic composition of the Sri Lanka Police does not represent the ethnic composition of Sri Lanka.
- The lack of Tamil-speaking officers in Tamil speaking and bi-lingual Police Divisions impacts on the quality of service provision, and accessibility of services to all citizens of Sri Lanka.

- Sinhala officers lack Tamil language competency. Similarly Tamil officers lack Sinhala language competency.
- Knowledge of officers attached to Divisional Bureaus and Children and Women's Units on International Conventions, Sri Lankan Law and cyber-crimes against women, adolescent girls and children is inadequate.
- Physical, material and financial resources are inadequate.
- An emergency/welfare fund to meet the contingency requirements of victim-survivors, e.g., refreshments, bus fare, clothes if torn is not available at Divisional Bureaus.
- A majority of the Divisional Bureaus lack privacy for victim-survivors and a child friendly environment.
- Divisional Bureaus close at 4.30 p.m. Hence, the public cannot access them during the night. A female officer is summoned if there is a complaint. However, the officer may face logistical issues such as access to transport when summoned at night.
- The present system of hiring a Matron from the community to stay with the victim-survivor through the night as a substitute for a woman police officer is an unsatisfactory solution due to the possibility of confidentiality being breached. In addition, the services of a Matron are difficult to obtain due to low remuneration.
- The VPN system that has been introduced for data reporting and data management cannot be used effectively and efficiently, especially due to the lack of computers and Internet facilities.
- The categorisation of crimes based on the Penal Code and other Acts lead to under-reporting of gender-based violence. Family disputes that could have elements of violence are settled by the police and are not always referred to the courts. Therefore, these family disputes remain invisible in national Police crime statistics, as family disputes are not defined as a crime under the Sri Lanka Police categorisation.
- Cyber offences against women and children are not included in Divisional Bureau statistics as there is no Act related to cyber-crimes in Sri Lanka.
- Victim-survivors are re-victimised due to multiple evidence taking and other insensitive practices such as uniformed police accompanying child victim-survivors in public places. .
- Attitudes of police officers go against the best interest of the victim-survivor as for instance when they give priority to maintaining the integrity of the marriage bond and the family unit.
- Video-recording facilities are not available in the Divisional Bureaus to record complaints from child victim-survivors. These facilities are available only in the Police Unit at the National Child Protection Authority in Colombo.
- Crisis centres and protective mechanisms for victim-survivors are not available.
- An institutionalised coordinated referral system has not been set up.
- Investigation and litigation processes cause inordinate delays, and deny justice for victim-survivors.

## *Opportunities*

- The National Police Commission is committed to gender equality.
- Police reforms are on-going.
- Support is available from UN organisations, international and national non-governmental organisations (INGOs and NGOs).
- A number of state sanctioned service providers for vulnerable populations are available at the Divisional Secretariat and Provincial Level.
- There is community recognition of the services rendered by the Divisional Bureaus.
- The focus on community policing by the Sri Lanka Police.

## *Threats*

- Insufficient political commitment for the implementation and continuity of gender-sensitive and child-protection policies.
- Media insensitivity in reporting crime/abuse against children and women.
- Exponential increase in cyber-crimes against women, adolescent girls and children.
- Delays in prosecutions by the Attorney General's Department.
- An inadequate number of Judicial Medical Officers in the health system to collect forensic evidence for prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against women and children.

## **Key Findings: Achieving Gender Equality in the Sri Lanka Police**

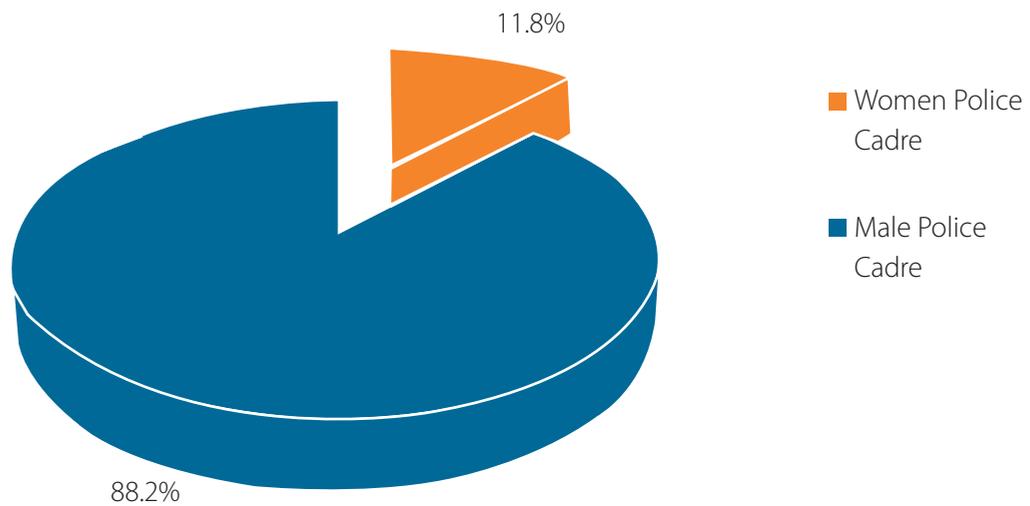
In evaluating the commitment of the Sri Lanka Police to eliminate gender-based discrimination and achieve gender equality the second part of the assessment (Study B- Achieving Gender Equality in the Sri Lanka Police: An Analysis of Women Officers) asked the following questions:

- How should gender equality be promoted in the Sri Lanka Police?
- What measures should be taken to address the historical discrimination of women in the Sri Lanka Police?

## *Women's Status in the Organizational Hierarchy*

There are 8,878 women officers in the police. Of these, 8,099 or 91.2% of officers are non-gazetted officers in the ranks of Constable and Sergeant (10.7% of the total cadre). Of the 779 gazetted officers, 769 are junior gazetted officers in the ranks of Chief Inspector, Inspector of Police, and Sub Inspector (1% of the total cadre), while only 10 women are senior gazetted officers in the ranks of Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) and Superintendent of Police (SP) (0.01% of the total cadre). No woman has been promoted beyond the rank of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP). Although a minimum quota of 15% has been recommended, the actual number of women police officers amounts to only 11.77% of the total number.

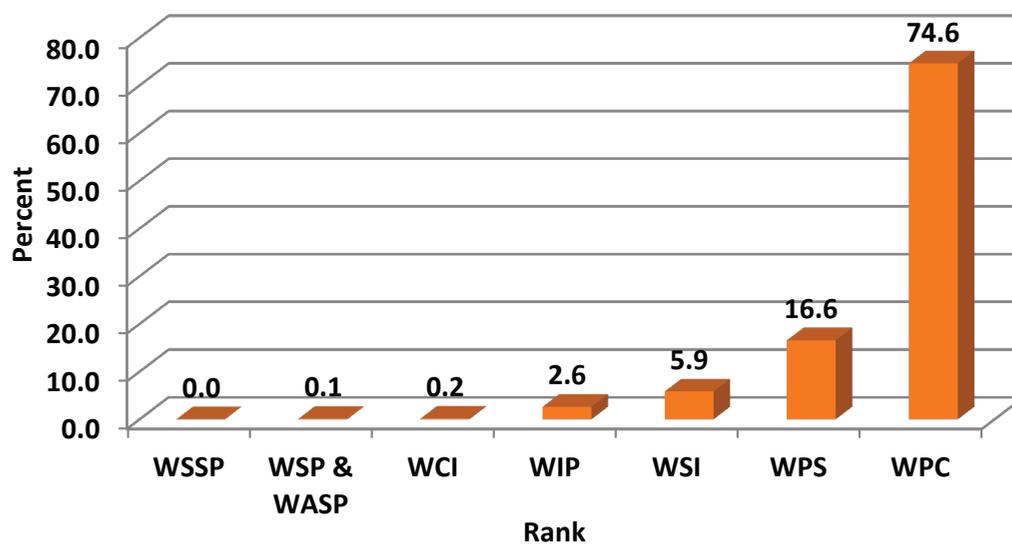
### Women Police as a Percentage of the Total Police Cadre -2018



Source: National Police Commission

There is a perception that women join the police service as they do not have any other employment options and do so only as a last resort. There is also a perception that women who have higher educational qualifications do not want to join the police service as they would aspire to more prestigious and less demanding jobs considered more suitable for women. The survey findings challenged both these assumptions as more than 70% of women had joined the police service because of personal preference.

### Women Police Officers by Rank (Percent) - 2018



Source: National Police Commission

## *Institutional Discrimination – Attitudes, Beliefs, and Practices*

As an institution, the police holds a false belief that women are incapable of succeeding to the higher ranks of the police service due to their lack of experience in the frontlines, inability to conduct dangerous criminal investigations, their caregiving responsibilities, and their lack of commitment to the police service. Women officers, on the other hand, reiterated that contrary to these misconceptions, women work long hours and night-shifts, have engaged and are willing to be involved in frontline work, and are interested in all aspects of police work, including criminal investigations. However, women are often discouraged from what is perceived to be 'male' work and often assigned to desk-related jobs and to functional divisions.

When women are recruited to the police service, they undergo the same entrance tests as men including the endurance test. However, the height specification when recruiting officers at the rank of Constable and Sub Inspector (SI) are different for women and men, but become the same when recruiting to the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) i.e., 5'6". Given the average height of women in Sri Lanka, these height specifications are discriminatory and systematically block qualified women from applying for the position and from being promoted.

Men and women officers have to undergo the basic mandatory training sessions when joining the police as constables, which includes endurance, physical, as well as weapons training. However, women's performance in the initial endurance examination has been cited as a reason for holding them back from being promoted beyond the rank of Senior Superintendent of Police.

The concentration of women in functional divisions is a result of structural and institutional discrimination that stereotype women as being more capable of desk-based administrative work. Ten Police Divisions do not have women Inspectors of Police (IPs). Out of the 234 women Inspectors of Police (IPs), 84 are in functional divisions located in the Division of Colombo. There are 15 women Chief Inspectors of whom 11 are in the Colombo Division. All 10 ASPs and SPs are also stationed in Colombo.

Institutional discrimination in Sri Lanka Police is apparent in the way women officers get talked about by senior male police officers. There were two kinds of attitudes that senior male police officers had towards women police officers. On the one hand, they were paternalistic. On the other hand, they were contemptuous. Women officers are generally regarded as weak and unambitious because they are unwilling to take on frontline work and often prioritise their familial obligations over their professional responsibilities. Hence, women are seen as arriving late and leaving early, and reluctant to work night shifts or take on front-line work in police stations. Women are seen as opting to do administrative desk-based work in functional divisions. Structural discrimination also led to women feeling compelled to take on desk jobs as a way of managing their multiple roles, both as an officer of the police service and their role as primary caregivers and household managers for the family. Gender stereotyping and gender-role allocations in the police led to further discrimination of women as women's work informed the perceptions of senior officers. Senior officers' perceived women as not only liking desk jobs and taking on functional administrative roles, but as incapable of doing front-line police work.

On the other hand, the Sri Lanka Police have made special provisions, both official and informal, for women officers based on their caregiving roles and children's educational needs. This includes married women with children under 18 being exempted from Sunday work, less frequent transfers whereby married women with children are allowed to be in one division or district for longer periods than their male counterparts, and early retirement. These special provisions are a double-edged sword as they

work to the detriment of women who seek promotion to higher ranks who are seen as forgoing the opportunity to gain the breadth of experience seen as mandatory for serving in the higher ranks.

There is ambivalence about whether women are allocated night-duty/night-time shifts. There is a general understanding that in general women are unofficially exempt from working in the nights in some stations and divisions. However, many women Constables talked about being assigned night duty and fulfilling the responsibility as demanded of them. According to some female officers, women cannot do the night shift partly due to the lack of facilities, namely changing rooms and proper washrooms in the current police stations. Moreover, many of the Police barracks that are often located in proximity to the station do not provide quarters to women officers as they are deemed unsuitable for women.

Although women were perceived to be doing less work than men, and also less important work than men, women described how they were burdened with all the paper work and database management work of the police. Moreover, although some women may be working shorter hours, a majority of women worked long hours that went beyond the hours of their particular shift. Very often women police officers gave their phone numbers to civilians, which meant fielding calls and following up on people's concerns after hours.

### *Promotions – An Impenetrable Concrete Ceiling*

Most women police officers, non-gazetted, and gazetted juniors and seniors, were extremely concerned about the lack of promotions. The issue with promotions must be discussed as two separate issues: (1) promotions due to junior and senior gazetted officers; (2) promotions due to non-gazetted officers.

**Sanctioned and Actual Cadre of Women Police Officers- 2018**

Rank	Sanctioned Cadre	Actual Cadre	% of the Actual Women Cadre	% of the Total Actual Cadre (N=75,372)
WSSP	1	0	0.00	0.00
WSP & WASP	20	10	0.11	0.01
WCI	66	15	0.17	0.02
WIP	266	234	2.64	0.31
WSI	642	520	5.86	0.69
WPS	1,800	1,472	16.58	1.95
WPC	8,468	6,627	74.65	8.79
Total	11,263	8,878	100.00	11.78

Source: National Police Commission

Gazetted officers' access to timely promotions was undermined by two inter-weaving processes. One was the unofficial formation of a 'women's cadre', which was differentiated from the 'male cadre'. When circulars announcing promotions were published, women officers were told these were relevant to the male cadre. This separation has led to the allocation of maximum quotas for women officers at each rank. Hence, women, even if they are qualified, are not evaluated on the basis of merit alongside their male colleagues. Very often this has meant their male counterparts receive promotions before them. These 'sanctioned' cadre positions have led to much anxiety and frustration amongst senior women police officers. With only one position open in the rank of SSP, only one of the ten SPs is eligible for promotion. Promotions were one of the main issues of contention that senior women officers talked about because they felt they were being deliberately held back without legitimate reason. In addition to promotions, women were not given the position of 'Director' of functional divisions even though they were eligible and capable of holding such a position. Very often, they were given the Assistant Director position and compelled to work under less qualified or equally qualified men. The fundamental rights case filed is a response to this overt discrimination of women in the higher ranks. The second way in which women are not promoted is because they do not meet the criteria for promotion, which has been discussed before.

A significant number of women Constables and Sergeants are entitled to their next promotion, but have not received them. However, what is striking is that these delays and frustrations were not seen as unique to women in the lower ranks of the police service as many men in these ranks had not received their promotions. This is evidenced by women stating that although they were unhappy with the current promotions policy, they did not feel they were particularly disadvantaged compared to their male counterparts. This is because the police in general are not promoting non-gazetted officers in the lower ranks regardless of gender.

Women officers complained that they were often overlooked when opportunities for overseas training or special training was offered. Very often women were verbally discouraged from applying for training programmes by their Divisional heads on the grounds that women were not eligible for this particular training.

### *Harassment and Bullying*

Women officers were reluctant to discuss sexual harassment explicitly. The main reason was that they felt the study would highlight harassment over discrimination, which they felt was the more salient and urgent issue facing women in the police service. Senior women officers talked about older male officers verbally harassing them when they first joined the service. However, they felt the men of their generation and younger men did not engage in these practices any more. In the survey conducted with Constables and Sergeants, a number of women mentioned that they had faced sexual harassment including the soliciting of sexual favours. Some felt that their colleagues may have been coerced to provide sexual favours in order to avoid being bullied and harassed by colleagues and seniors.

Women officers who were perceived to be lesbian were also harassed by male officers. Because they were regarded as de facto 'men', male officers tended to use harsher language and crack more sexualized jokes in their presence. Sometimes they were forced to describe their sexual acts for the amusement of male officers. Strong women with ambition were often labelled as 'lesbian'. Women who were identified as 'lesbian' were prevented from being alone with women victims and condemned for being harsh. It is noteworthy that men's harsh behaviour was seen as necessary for succeeding in the police service, whereas for women it was considered a negative trait.

## Recommendations: Improving the Sensitivity and Responsiveness of the Divisional Bureaus for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women

The recommendations for Study A - (Divisional Bureaus for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women: An assessment) are intended to improve the quality of services of the Divisional Bureaus for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women. As such, the recommendations focus on staff availability including recruitment and deployment, resources allocated, and administrative and logistical mechanisms that can improve the gender sensitivity and responsiveness of the services provided.

Overall Recommendations	
Short-term Recommendations	Suggested Activities
<p><b>Language Proficiency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit Tamil/Muslim female officers.</li> <li>Enhance language proficiency of staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a well-conceived, culturally sensitive plan to recruit women from minority communities by motivating them to apply.</li> <li>Provide refresher-training courses in Tamil language at regular intervals.</li> <li>Periodic transfers of police officers to serve in Police Divisions where minority communities are concentrated and Tamil officers to Sinhala speaking areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the knowledge of staff at Divisional Bureaus and units on International Conventions, national laws and cyber-crimes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SP of the Police Division to organize training programmes periodically for staff within the Division.</li> <li>Director, Bureau Headquarters to conduct Training of Trainers (TOT) programmes periodically for Officers in Charge (OICs) of the Divisional Bureaus to make them responsible for training their staff.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Referral System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalize a more efficient referral system among service providers at the Divisional Secretariat (DS) level and the Ministry of Health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate and coordinate with other line Ministries to formalise a referral system.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Awareness Programmes and Community Policing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Divisional Bureaus to obtain the participation of youth in their awareness and community policing activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bureau Headquarters and Divisional Bureaus to collaborate with youth clubs when conducting awareness programmes and connect with ongoing local and international campaigns.</li> <li>Form vigilance committees with the participation of youth to prevent violence against children and women.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide more resources to conduct awareness programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess resource requirements at Bureau Headquarters and Divisional Bureaus to conduct awareness programmes and develop a resource plan to seek funds from the Sri Lanka Police and the Ministry.</li> </ul>
Short to Mid-term Recommendations	Suggested Activities
<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review financial allocations for Divisional Bureaus and provide a separate allocation for the Bureaus in order to upgrade the Bureaus and the Units at the police stations.</li> <li>▪ Increase capital and operational expenses (vehicles, computers and sufficient stationery).</li> <li>▪ Establish a welfare/emergency fund to be used for victim-survivors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct a needs assessment and develop a financial and resource plan for Divisional Bureaus.</li> <li>▪ Obtain required budgetary allocations from the Treasury and Ministry of Law and Order for the Bureau Headquarters and Divisional Bureaus.</li> <li>▪ Explore the possibility of obtaining assistance from INGOs, NGOs, Banks and the corporate sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve police barracks to accommodate women to ensure that women officers are available at night time.</li> <li>▪ Increase the allowance given to female matrons from the community until residential facilities for women officers are provided.</li> <li>▪ When constructing new buildings include a room (with washroom and pantry) in the Divisional Bureaus for over-night stay of women officers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain the required funds from the Ministry of Law and Order to increase the remuneration for female matrons from the community.</li> <li>▪ Renovate Police barracks with required facilities for female officers.</li> <li>▪ Include residential facilities for female officers in the construction plans of new buildings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Responsiveness towards Children and Women</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The principle of 'best interest of the child and woman' should be followed.</li> <li>▪ Reduce re-victimisation of victim-survivors.</li> <li>▪ Police officers to wear civilian clothes when accompanying children and visiting crime scenes.</li> <li>▪ Institutionalise a mechanism where police officers and other service providers can sit together and talk to the victim- survivor.</li> <li>▪ Develop psycho-social skills in Police Officers to be empathetic and more gender sensitive.</li> <li>▪ Assign a professionally qualified Social Worker to work with the Police Officers at Divisional Bureaus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Give directions to Police Officers to wear civilian clothes when accompanying child victim-survivors.</li> <li>▪ Make case conferencing mandatory.</li> <li>▪ Include psycho-social skills in training programmes given to officers.</li> <li>▪ Establish a cadre of professional social workers to be deployed at Divisional Bureaus as supportive staff.</li> </ul>

Mid-term Recommendations	Suggested Activities
<p><b>Staff Deployment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement the Crime Division Circular 19/2012 dated 2012.08.15 and deploy the approved cadre of nine officers to Divisional Bureaus and four officers to C&amp;W Units. Review the adequacy of staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct an assessment of staff availability in the Divisional Bureaus, Units and other Divisions in SLP.</li> <li>▪ Re-distribute staff to conform with the Crime Division Circular 19/2012 dated 2012.08.15</li> </ul>
<p><b>Data Collection and Dissemination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide the necessary equipment, Internet connectivity and other facilities to enable officers to make use of the VPN system.</li> <li>▪ Eliminate tedious and time-consuming manual processes of collecting and recording information at Divisional Bureaus and C &amp; W Units.</li> <li>▪ Strengthen the statistics division at Bureau Headquarters by providing more staff, equipment, and space.</li> <li>▪ Obtain the services of a Statistician seconded from the Department of Census and Statistics.</li> <li>▪ Include family disputes with elements of violence in national crime statistics.</li> <li>▪ Work with Sri Lanka Computer Emergency Response Team (SLCERT) and other agencies to classify cyber-crimes and include them in national statistics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain services from Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT) to improve infrastructure facilities- telephone, Internet.</li> <li>▪ Provide required computers to Divisional Bureaus to eliminate the current use of manual processes in recording and collecting data.</li> <li>▪ Deploy more staff and resources to the Statistics and Analysis Division at the Bureau Headquarters.</li> <li>▪ Explore possibilities of obtaining the services of a Statistician from the Dept. of Census and Statistics.</li> <li>▪ Continue to work with SLCERT and legal authorities to bring an Act on Cyber Crimes.</li> <li>▪ Provide awareness/training on cyber-crimes and basic technical training targeting officers at Divisional Bureaus and Units at Police Stations.</li> </ul>
Mid to Long-term Recommendations	Suggested Activities
<p><b>Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Give more administrative powers to the Bureau Headquarters so that the Director has some administrative authority over the staff of the Divisional Bureaus. This will enable the Director to perform her supervisory role more effectively.</li> <li>▪ Rank the Divisional Bureaus in order to give better recognition to the services provided by the Bureaus and their officers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review the existing structure and make necessary revisions as part of the on-going police reforms.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Video- Recording of Evidence from Children</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Open Ragama and Galle Centres to provide video-recording facilities.</li> <li>▪ Establish at least one video-recording centre in each province.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examine the reasons for not opening the Ragama and Galle centres for video-recording and provide necessary resources.</li> <li>▪ Obtain financial and other resources from the Ministry of Law and Order to establish video-recording centres in each province.</li> </ul>

<b>Protection Measures</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish crisis centre in every Province</li> <li>▪ Explore assistance from non-state sectors such as INGOs, NGOs, the corporate sector and banks to establish crisis centres.</li> <li>▪ Awareness raising on the recent Act on the Assistance to and Protection of Victims and Witnesses Act, No.4 of 2015, to Divisional Bureau staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a separate budgetary allocation to set up crisis centres and maintain them with required resources.</li> <li>▪ Collaborate with other line Ministries to obtain funding to set up crisis centres.</li> <li>▪ Explore the possibility of obtaining funding assistance from UN Organisations, INGOs, NGOs and the corporate sector.</li> <li>▪ Conduct awareness programmes for Divisional Bureau Staff on the Assistance to and Protection of Victims and Witnesses Act, No.4 of 2015.</li> </ul>
<b>Future Research</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct an assessment of the Children and Women's Units located in the police stations.</li> <li>▪ Conduct periodic impact assessments of the Divisional Bureaus and C &amp; W Units (5-10 years).</li> </ul>	

## Recommendations: Achieving Gender Equality in the Sri Lanka Police

The recommendations of Study B - (Achieving Gender Equality in the Sri Lanka Police: An Analysis of Women Officers) in promoting affirmative action have taken into consideration the following questions:

- How should women's caregiving role and their contribution to society as primary caregivers and household managers be acknowledged and valued when evaluating women officers? Specifically, should women's career advancement suffer because they take maternity leave and need time to fulfil their caregiving roles?
- How should historical discrimination based on gender stereotypes be addressed through affirmative action? Specifically, how can a fair and equitable mechanism be designed to recognise the contribution women officers have made to the service, despite their being excluded or discouraged from frontline work and leadership roles?
- To what degree should special provisions be modified to ensure women officers get the breadth of experiences needed to serve in the highest ranks of the Sri Lanka Police? Specifically, how can women be assigned work in all parts of the country, fulfil night-work while taking into consideration structural issues that extend beyond the police service into society such as threats to women's safety, and the lack of good educational facilities for children?

Overall Recommendations	
Short to Mid-term Recommendations	Suggested Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Abolish the separation of the cadre into a 'woman's cadre'. Men and women should belong to the same cadre and not be differentiated on the basis of their sex.</li> <li>▪ Abolish the practice of differentiating a 'women's cadre' and assigning 'W' when ranking women (e.g., WPC, WSP).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Removing the 'W' from all official references to female officers in the police including badges through an immediate circular.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Address the reasons that have prevented the recruitment of the approved / sanctioned cadre.</li> <li>▪ Evaluate special provisions for women and amend all stipulations and conditions that in the long-term may undermine women's chances of recognition and promotion in the Police (e.g., Sunday work; night-duty etc.). However, maternity and childcare benefits must be left as is and should not contravene GOSL regulations and laws.</li> <li>▪ Make certain special provisions optional rather than mandatory to ensure that women officers interested in career advancement are able to gain the breadth of experience necessary for occupying the senior ranks.</li> <li>▪ Introduce in the short to mid-term a promotion scheme that takes into account historical and institutional discrimination, as well as special provisions, that has prevented women from meeting the criteria for promotion.</li> <li>▪ Introduce criteria by where senior ranks in the police service can be filled by women (and men) whose expertise is in the special and functional aspects of the police as is the case in the armed forces (e.g., Intelligence, CID, Prevention of abuse against women, and children Cybercrime etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A committee to evaluate all promotions criteria and amend criterion and clauses directly or indirectly discriminatory to women in the short to mid-term.</li> <li>▪ A committee to develop a comparative evaluation scheme in the short to mid-term to assess the differential roles, duties, and responsibilities that women and men have been assigned so far based on gender-role stereotypes and assumptions about women. As these roles are not considered 'like for like' at present, the evaluation scheme should take into consideration comparable roles, duties, and responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ Design a fair evaluation scheme with specific criterion for promotions of women officers currently working in the Police. Points required for promotions are sometimes hard to achieve for various reasons, for e.g., women not being deployed for frontline or field-based work; women being assigned to desk jobs; OIC rank not being given to a woman in the history of the police; OIC of the Divisional Bureaus not being recognised as the Bureaus have not been ranked.</li> <li>▪ Factor into evaluation scheme women's contribution to society through childbirth and childcare in order to prevent women being discriminated for time taken off from work, especially when work is assigned and promotions considered.</li> <li>▪ A committee to evaluate special provisions for women and amend all stipulations and conditions that in the long-term may undermine women's chances of recognition and promotion in the Police.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A committee to consider developing promotion criteria for officers working in the special and functional divisions of the police service whereby those officers can be promoted to higher ranks in the police.</li> <li>▪ A committee to be set up (to look into all of the above) comprising members of the National Police Commission, representatives of senior women officers of the Police (SP and ASP), as well as representatives from junior gazetted officers (CI, IP, SI), and representatives of senior male officers (DIG and SDIG).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruit and fill the existing vacancies (sanctioned cadre) in all ranks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduce the newly developed promotion criteria as the scheme for evaluation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remove maximum quotas (i.e., sanctioned cadre / approved cadre) for women that are currently in operation in the senior ranks.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduce a Gender Equality Policy to create an ethos of gender equality and non-discrimination in the Sri Lanka Police.</li> <li>▪ Introduce a Sexual Harassment Policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A committee comprising senior police officers (both men and women), academics, and expert members of the public to draft a policy on Gender Equality in the Police. Include sections on harassment, bullying, and sexual harassment.</li> <li>▪ Design an internal campaign to promote gender equality in the Police based on policy.</li> </ul>
Longer-term Recommendations	Suggested Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remove all barriers that preclude women from moving to the highest ranks of the Sri Lanka Police (SP, SSP, DIG, SDIG, IGP).</li> <li>▪ Introduce merit-based system for promotions of men and women in the long-term Introduce minimum quotas at all ranks to ensure at least 15% of women in the Police;</li> <li>▪ But abolish maximum quotas in order to ensure both a gender equal and merit-based system for recruitment and promotions is operationalised, and monitored and evaluated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a long-term Strategic Plan whereby the Sri Lanka Police transition from minimum quotas for women to establishing a merit-based system for recruitment, transfers, and promotions. This system should be developed using the recommendation of the Committee discussed in the previous section.</li> <li>▪ Implement, monitor, and evaluate the promotion criteria based on gender equality described above.</li> <li>▪ Specific officials and divisions to be identified for the effective implementation of the Strategic Plan.</li> <li>▪ Benchmarks and goals (short, mid, and long-term) to be established for the effective implementation of the Strategic Plan.</li> <li>▪ The National Police Commission to monitor the implementation of the strategic plan.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduce annual performance evaluations for all ranks.</li> <li>▪ Introduce Service awards and special achievement awards to address frustrations with slow or lack of promotions throughout the force for both men and women.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a mechanism to implement the annual performance review and service awards.</li> </ul>
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Specific Recommendations	Suggested Activities
<b>Recruitment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review existing criteria and benefits that may prevent women from joining the police.</li> <li>▪ Actively recruit Tamil and Muslim women to the Sri Lanka Police.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Design a promotional campaign aimed at attracting women to the Police, including women from the ethno-religious minorities.</li> <li>▪ Design a promotional campaign to be carried out in the media, as well as schools and community, especially in areas where public opinion about the police are positive. The campaign should highlight the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Service provided by the Police to the community, especially women and children.</li> <li>– The need for women to serve the nation in a post-war context, and the unique contribution they can make to maintaining law and order.</li> <li>– The Police as a place where women are groomed to be strong and confident leaders.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Promotions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement the 15% women’s quota for all ranks of the police service as a short to mid-term solution to address the gender imbalance.</li> <li>▪ Ensure timely promotions.</li> <li>▪ Review promotion criteria of SI and SP to ensure it is fair to the existing police officers.</li> <li>▪ The call for applications for promotions to be made available to men and women at the same time. This is to avoid frustration of qualified women which may undermine their performance and motivation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage women’s applications for promotions by making the process transparent and fair.</li> <li>▪ Take steps to prevent unofficial ‘blocking’, i.e., discouraging women from applying for promotions.</li> <li>▪ Rate Children and Women Bureaus so that it counts as OIC experience for women officers.</li> <li>▪ Develop a comparative ranking system for Divisional Bureaus and Children and Women Units that compare with ‘traditional’ police work to ensure women officers working at the Bureaus and Desks are not discriminated against.</li> </ul>

Deployment, Allocation of Duties, and Transfers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognise the social contribution women make in their care-giving role and take these into consideration when reviewing promotion criteria.</li> <li>▪ Provide facilities such as day-care centres to support women officers.</li> <li>▪ Consider care-work when applying the Sunday leave provision.</li> <li>▪ Introduce a roster system to ensure women get the opportunity to work night shifts and weekends.</li> <li>▪ Allocate duties equally between men and women.</li> <li>▪ Women officers of all ranks to be given the opportunity to serve in all departments and districts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pair men and women as teams for work traditionally considered more suitable for men. i.e., night work, riots and demonstrations, criminal investigations, drug busts and raids.</li> <li>▪ Challenge stereotypes in 'Police Gender Policy' whereby women's safety and societal attitudes usually preclude women or a women-only team from fulfilling police duties.</li> <li>▪ Ensure women in senior ranks (Chief Inspector upwards) are distributed fairly across all departments, districts, and divisions.</li> <li>▪ Include amenability for transfer as a criterion for recruitment and promotions.</li> </ul>
Training	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a minimum quota for women for all residential training both in Sri Lanka and overseas.</li> <li>▪ Introduce a fair and just process to select trainees for local and international training programmes.</li> <li>▪ Remove constraints that discourage women from taking part in residential training programmes, i.e., lack of residential facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage women to apply for overseas training by making the process transparent and fair.</li> <li>▪ Improve residential facilities of residential training centres.</li> </ul>
Mentoring	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publicise women's mentoring programme focusing on addressing harassment and sexual harassment in the police.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure women SPs visit their divisions at least once a month.</li> <li>▪ Design a mechanism and set of activities that will encourage junior women officers to discuss their concerns with their seniors.</li> </ul>



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