Model Policy for Women in Police

What is the issue?

With rising number of women in police, the need for a concerted policy for women in police is increasingly felt.

What is the need?

- Women constitute about 7% of the police strength in India.
- This is expected to rise, with many States and UTs providing for 30% (and more) reservation for women in the police in specific ranks.
- However, not a single State police department has attempted to draft a specific policy for this.
- Merely adopting reservation to increase gender diversity without considering the need for policymaking would do little help.
- Thus, there is a need for a model policy to make policing inclusive, non-discriminatory and efficient.

What should it contain?

- The policy should essentially challenge the deep-rooted patriarchy in the institution.
- It should lay the foundations for equal opportunities for women in every aspect of policing and ensure a safe and enabling work environment.
- **Increasing the numbers** - Increasing the number of women police is one of the first steps to ensure a level playing field for women.
- Beyond merely providing reservation, police departments should develop an action plan to achieve the target of 30% or more in a time-bound manner.
- This also applies to States that have not provided a quota as yet.
- Departments should also undertake special recruitment drives in every district to ensure geographical diversity.
- The police should also reach out to the media and educational institutions to spread awareness about opportunities for women in the police.
- Current data reveal that most women in the police are concentrated in the lower ranks; efforts should be made to change this.
- **Gender equality** - There exists a tendency to sideline women, or give them policing tasks that are physically less demanding.
- They are being confined to desk duty, or made to work on crimes against

women alone.

- The model policy should thus strive to ensure that decisions on deployment of women are free of gender stereotyping.
- This is essential to facilitate the presence and participation of women in leading operational positions.
- Women police officers should be encouraged to take on public order and investigative crimes of all types.
- Desk work too must be allocated evenly among men and women.
- **Support system** - A major burden of family and childcare responsibilities falls on women.
- But police departments still lack proper internal childcare support systems.
- Departments need to be mindful of this social reality and exercise sensitivity in making decisions on transfers and posting of women personnel.
- Most State police departments have received funds under the Modernisation of State Police Forces Scheme.
- This is for providing separate toilets and changing rooms for women, and for constructing separate accommodation for women in all police stations and units.
- Police departments must ensure the best use of this fund.
- **Complaints Committee** - Police departments must ensure safe working spaces for women and adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination and harassment.
- Departments must operationalise the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act of 2013.
- Departments are legally bound to set up Internal Complaints Committees to prevent sexual harassment at the workplace.

Source: The Hindu

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering