EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN WORKING IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY: A CASE STUDY OF DADU POLICE FORCE

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ABSTRACT

The current qualitative study was aimed to investigate challenges faced by female police officers through in-depth interviews, with a total of (24) interviews performed with lower ranking female police officers from the Dadu police force. The police officers were selected using a procedure that involved purposeful sampling. In addition, the data collected was examined using a thematic approach, which resulted in the development of (02) primary themes and (07) sub-themes. According to the data, it was discovered that the majority of female officers face a variety of challenges, such as gender bias and discrimination, inadequate training and resources, lack of career guidance, limited facilities, difficulty

obtaining trust and cooperation from the community, and difficulty balancing pregnancy, maternity leave, and the responsibilities of caring for children. In addition, the findings of the study have been the impetus for the development of several recommendations that are meant to address these problems. In order to solve these problems, extensive actions need to be taken to create an atmosphere that is more inclusive and equal. This will make it possible for female officers to thrive and make contributions that are relevant to their profession.

INTRODUCTION
"To be successful, a woman has to be much better at her job than a man-Golda Meir".

Women hold a fundamental and vital position within human society, comprising nearly half of the global population. Throughout history, women have played diverse and indispensable roles as indispensable pillars of civilization. The multifaceted contributions of women to society cannot be easily overlooked or underestimated. They have consistently complemented individuals, families, and communities, leaving an indelible impact on every facet of life. In every corner of the world, women have demonstrated their strength, resilience, and unwavering commitment to progress. From nurturing families and shaping the minds of future generations to spearheading groundbreaking advancements in science, arts, politics, and countless other fields, women have consistently proven themselves to be catalysts of positive change (Lappage, D. S 2015). There has been a considerable increase in the participation of women in policing worldwide in recent years. Increasing numbers of women have assumed active roles in law enforcement agencies, contributing to the increasingly diverse and dynamic nature of police forces worldwide. Women policing, which is also known as female policing or women in law enforcement, refers to the participation, representation, and involvement of women in policing and law enforcement agencies. It entails recruiting, training, and deploying women officers to perform law enforcement duties and ensure public safety (Marshall, G. 2013). This trend reflects a growing recognition of the value and significance of gender diversity in law enforcement and the positive impact it can have on promoting safety, establishing trust, and effectively addressing the complex challenges of contemporary society. Women's induction into the police force, initially as police matrons and subsequently as policewomen, was prompted by the need to combat the rising number of female offenders (Davis, 2005). As an extension of social work, these women were selected for a specialized position dealing with female criminals. In the United Kingdom and the United States, professional women entered the police force to serve as prison matrons. They were not sworn, did not have the same responsibilities as men, and held distinct ranks from men. (Segrave, 2014)

The first recorded history of women police officers in Pakistan dates back to 1939, during British rule. At the time, Punjab had a farmer's movement with female agitators. The authorities hired 07 constables and a chief constable to deal with the movement and keep law and order. Following independence, the next significant recruitment occurred in 1952, when twenty-five constables, 02 head constables, and 01 ASI were engaged (Jamal et al., 2010). After a 42-year hiatus, the next important project was launched in 1994, establishing

women's police stations around the country. However, the inability of female police officers to file a First Information Report (FIR) posed additional obstacles to these advancements.

Similarly, the women's police station in Peshawar was administered by Assistant Superintendent Police (ASP) Headquarters, although a female Deputy Superintendent of Police was also present. Helena Iqbal Saeed, the first female Pakistani police officer to attain the rank of Inspector General (DIG), is one of the most notable examples in the annals of women in the police force. During her service in a United Nations peacekeeping operation in 2011, Shahzadi Gulfam was awarded the International Female Police Peacekeeper Award (Uzair et al., 2022). In the police department, however, these distinctions remained exceptions and did not become standard. Currently, there are 17 women police stations around the country and one reporting center in Quetta, with a total strength of over 400,000. This represents only 0.86% of the police force (Imran, M. 2011). Although, serving in the police department is difficult for women due to the frequent mobility and public interaction required. This contradicts the sociocultural roles Pakistani society has traditionally expected women to play. Working in such male-dominated environments presents these women with numerous challenges. They are neither endorsed by their male peers nor by the general public (Pearce, 2010). According to research, female police officers are not readily accepted by their male colleagues, supervisors, or within their own police departments. Although women have been performing police duties for over a century, their male counterparts regard them with skepticism or even contempt. Alternatively, female labor in the police force is often underappreciated and undervalued. It frequently entails emotional peril and requires less physical strength than physical endurance.

Women's participation in the police force in Pakistan is a topic that has received little attention from scholars. While there have been a few studies and reports that touch upon gender dynamics in the broader context of law enforcement in Pakistan, a notable dearth of research focuses on the experiences, challenges, and contributions of women officers in the country. The lack of research on women in law enforcement in Pakistan hinders our understanding of the specific obstacles women officers confront, their professional development, and the overall impact of gender diversity in law enforcement agencies (Mohammad F. et al., 2013). The lack of empirical data and exhaustive studies on this topic also limits the development of evidence-based policies and strategies to address the unique needs and concerns of Pakistani women officers. Given the significance of gender equality and the necessity of promoting inclusive practices within law enforcement, it is essential to close this research gap. Researching this topic can yield valuable insights that can inform policy reforms, training programs, and institutional changes aimed at fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for women officers in Pakistan. Such research can also contribute to the larger discussion on gender equality and women's empowerment, paving the way for a more equitable and efficient law enforcement system in the nation (Shen, A. 2022).

Hence, the present research endeavors to delve into the intricacies surrounding the obstacles and issues faced by female police officers operating within the Dadu district. Through in-depth interviews with these officers, a comprehensive understanding of their unique challenges will be gained. The research seeks to shed light on the obstacles impeding these officers' professional development and well-being by examining their direct experiences. Moreover, secondary data will be meticulously examined to cast light on the status of women within the larger context of the Pakistani police force. This will involve analyzing existing studies, reports, and statistical data regarding the representation, recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in police. By situating the experiences of female police officers within the larger context of women in the police force, a more complete picture of the challenges and opportunities will be created. In light of the findings of the research, the ultimate goal is to develop preventive policy guidelines that can effectively address the identified obstacles and issues female police officers encounter. The resulting policy recommendations will inform targeted interventions, training programs, and organizational reforms, thereby fostering a supportive and equitable environment for women officers not only in the Dadu district but potentially in other parts of Pakistan as well. This research seeks to make significant contributions to the advancement of gender equality, the creation of professional opportunities, and the overall well-being of women in the Pakistani police force by conducting a comprehensive examination of the challenges faced by female police officers and proposing evidence-based policy recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The word "police" is derived from the Greek word "POLITIA", which indicates the state of a government or state. Commonly, police are defined as the civil force responsible for maintaining law and order and carrying out the various duties associated with criminal detection, mitigation, and management. The term generally refers to the intentional preservation of civil order and the protection of people/property from the dangers of criminal acts and public calamities (Price, 1996). Historically, men have held the majority of positions in law enforcement. However, as more women have entered the workforce and greater emphasis has been placed on equal-opportunity employment, the number of female police officers has increased dramatically. Globally and particularly in Pakistan, the overwhelming majority of women working in security services in the military and police. According to World Bank statistics (2017), 936,000 males and 4,000 women serve in Pakistan's Armed Forces. In the Police department, there are 5,731 female officers and 391,364 male officers (representing 1.2% of the total national police force).

The role of women in security in Pakistani society and abroad has acquired national and international prominence in recent years. Following UN peacekeeping goals, Pakistan increased female participation in UN Peacekeeping missions to 15% in 2017 (Security Women, 2020). Nonetheless, due to male dominance and improper working conditions in Pakistan, female police officers face a variety of difficulties and obstacles. The research conducted by Jamil and Mohyuddin (2015) noted various obstacles and concerns experienced by women police in Islamabad, including a lack of basic

amenities and a lack of suitable shelter at their assigned sites that safeguard them from rain and temperature. Another study reported that the women police face organizational obstacles from the police department and administration in the form of inflexible working hours, lack of appropriate transportation, lack of facilities, and absence of family-friendly policies, but unfortunately, these women have no influence over these issues and obstacles (Alam, A. et al., 2022).

Moreover, Muhammad Fida (2010) authored a research paper on the challenges encountered by female police officers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He cited transportation, promotions, lack of respect, lack of civic facilities, lack of housing, and similar nature of duties for married and unmarried female police officers in KPK as the most significant challenges they face. Hence the role of women in law enforcement remains complex and contentious within the policing organization and among the general public. The roots of these issues confronting women in all occupations, including law enforcement, can be traced back to long-standing gender stereotypes that are constructed and reinforced in all social organizations. According to social role theory, gendered differences in behavior result from differences in the social roles assumed by females and males. Overall, due to social, economic, and ecological challenges, males and females were reliant on their physical characteristics for labor tasks. Therefore, males were more likely to complete tasks requiring quickness, strength, and the ability to be separated from the household for a prolonged amount of time.

On the other hand, females were predominantly accountable for reproduction, and they were more likely to assume domestic and family responsibilities. Consequently, men are likely to fulfill the masculine gender position that imitates agentic potentials, and women are likely to fulfill the feminine gender role that imitates collective characteristics (Wood et al., 2000). Another preference theory contends that in prosperous modern societies, women's preferences become a dominant element of life choices, specifically the choice between a focus on activities related to children and family life and a focus on competitive and employment activities in the public sphere. The economic environment and social structure impact women's choices somewhat, although social structural factors, notably social class, are weakening (Hakim, C. 2007).

The Importance of Employing Women in Policing

Gender Equality: Recruiting female police officers promotes gender equality and aids in the removal of barriers that hinder women from serving in law enforcement. It indicates that women are equally capable of performing policing duties and helps to create a more inclusive society. According to socialist feminism, all adult humans are capable of performing essentially every type of labor. Both genders are capable of performing the tasks necessary for fundamental subsistence and emotional care (Brenner, J. 2014). Moreover, female police officers are essential for the full range of United Nations Police activities, including promoting the rule of law, intelligence, planning, leadership, investigations, public order management, capacity-building of host-State police, gender awareness raising, and community

engagement. Furthermore, female cops serve as role models for gender equality, pushing women and girls to fight for their own rights and seek jobs in law enforcement (United Nations Police, 2018). Moreover, women in Pakistan are more inclined to feel secure entering police stations with the presence of policewomen, and the risk of sexual harassment against them is potentially diminished.

Cultural Sensitivity & Access to Justice: The presence of female police officers ensures that all citizens, including women and children, have access to justice. Female victims of crime typically feel more at ease discussing their stories with female police, which can lead to better reporting and investigation of gender-based crimes such as domestic abuse, sexual assault, and harassment. Their presence might offer victims with comfort and certainty, prompting more victims to disclose such crimes. Female cops bring a unique viewpoint and awareness of the difficulties that women confront in their communities. They can empathize with female victims' special needs and concerns and manage delicate cases more successfully, increasing trust and confidence in the police force. This proactive strategy for fighting gender-based crimes can potentially improve the public's image of the police as responsive and effective. According to various research studies, women police officers have proven to be more successful and efficient than male colleagues in resolving family conflicts and have demonstrated greater concern, diligence, patience, and understanding in these circumstances (Hamil, J. 2013; Roberts, 2002).

Community Policing: Female police officers can contribute significantly to community policing activities. They can interact with local women and children, form relationships, and serve as role models. This involvement promotes trust, cooperation, and successful crime prevention by bridging the gap between the police and the community. Policewomen were needed to improve forces' operational capability and efficacy by creating trust with local populations, de-escalating violence, and gathering much more crucial intelligence than men could (Lonsway et al., 2006). Female police officers can play a crucial role in community engagement initiatives, particularly with women and underrepresented groups. Their presence facilitates the development of trust, rapport, and improved communication between police and the community. This positive interaction can cultivate a sense of partnership and collaboration, resulting in an increase in public confidence and a favorable perception of the police. Based on an article in the IACP's Police Chief Magazine, "Women police are frequently recognized as trustworthy by communities, having outstanding abilities to interact with others, resulting in more effective practices in the sphere and are less inclined to use force, excessive force, or face lawsuits than their male counterparts (the University of San Diego online, 2022).

Enhanced Police Force Image: The Pakistani police force has a tremendous opportunity to considerably enhance its public image and reputation by strategically and actively recruiting and employing more female personnel. This deliberate action demonstrates not only the law enforcement agencies unwavering dedication to gender equality but also their dedication to

professionalism and a more inclusive approach to community service (Kumar, A. 2022). The decision to enhance the number of women in the police force sends a strong message to the general public. It emphasizes a progressive and forward-thinking mentality that values diversity and seeks to create an environment where everyone feels secure and valued (Walsh & Menjivar, 2017). By actively confronting gender disparities and actively recruiting women, the police force can demonstrate its commitment to removing traditional barriers and fostering a more inclusive society. Increasing the number of women in law enforcement positions has numerous advantages. It promotes gender equality and allows women to contribute their distinct perspectives, skills, and strengths to the force. This diversity of viewpoints results in improved decision-making processes and a more comprehensive approach to addressing various community issues.

Objectives

i. To investigate the obstacles experienced by female police officers through in-depth interviews.
ii. To devise preventive policy guidelines based on research findings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
This investigation employed interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). This qualitative method permits a thorough examination of individuals' personal experiences. Rather than explaining them through the literature or theoretical concepts, it accounts for the real-life experiences of individuals (Osborn, 2015). The following method allows for the phenomenological examination of un-researched or under-studied topics (Shinebourne, 2011). Due to the paucity of prior research on the problems of female police officers, particularly in the Sindh region, the present study will address these issues. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to correspond with the usage of IPA since they facilitate more in-depth and favorable engagement between the researcher and the interviewee (Kallio et al., 2016). In March 2023, a visit to the Women's Police Station in Dadu, Sindh, was conducted in order to collect primary data for the research project.

The researcher intended to collect abundant primary data to shed light on obstacles encountered by women working in the Pakistani police force. During this visit, detailed information about the officers was gathered, including their telephone numbers, email addresses, residential addresses, years of service, ranks, and duty areas. The data collection process focused specifically on identifying and interviewing female police officers, and the purposeful sampling method allowed the researcher to select participants who met specific criteria pertinent to the research objectives. In this case, the objective was to gather insights from lower-ranking female police officers serving in different ranks; hence (08) Constable, (06) Head Constables, and (10) Sub-Inspectors were selected; therefore, a total of (24) in-depth interviews were collected. In general, every woman working in a police station, whether senior or junior, faces challenges, but lower female police officers experience greater challenges than any other senior officer. Hence, the researcher chose lower police officers for the study. After acquiring the initial contact information, the

researcher communicated with the chosen officers. Through personal phone calls, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, solicited their participation, and received their permission to share their personal stories and experiences. It is imperative to note that the researchers adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring the participants' consent was completely informed and voluntary. The researcher scheduled in-person interviews after receiving consent from the participants to conduct the research. These interviews took place at the participants' homes or offices, wherever they felt most comfortable sharing their experiences. Throughout the interview, the researcher maintained a respectful and empathic demeanor, cognizant of the sensitivity of the discussed topics. In order to assure accurate documentation and analysis, all interviews were recorded with the participants' express consent. Finally, all the collected data were analyzed using a thematic analytical approach, utilized in qualitative research to identify patterns, generate insights, and interpret data systematically and flexibly (Terry, G. et al., 2017).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION
In the results and discussion section, we organized the data collected from interview schedules into two tables and themes to provide a summary of the information. Table 01 focused on the respondents' demographic information, while Table 02 presented information about their employment. Furthermore, based on the qualitative findings, a total of (02) themes were created, namely "*General problems faced by female officers*" and "*Specific problems faced by female officers*". Meanwhile, a total of (07) sub-themes were also created. Both the themes and sub-themes are provided, along with the statements of female police officers. While providing statements, the identities of officers are protected using codes like FPO-01, and FPO-02, i.e. (FPO = Female Police Officer). Researchers collected the demographic information of the participants so that they could characterize the characteristics of the sample and provide a comprehensive overview of the participants. This data assures transparency and sample representation and permits a more thorough analysis of the data, allowing researchers to draw meaningful conclusions and implications from their study. Demographic information of all the interviewed participants is provided in (Table 01) below.

Table 01 Demographic Information Of Participants

AGE	19-30	**43%**
	40-above	**57%**
EDUCATION	Yes	**72%**
	No	**28%**
MARITAL STATUS	Married	**35%**
	Single	**53%**
	Divorce/Separated	**12%**
CHILDREN	Yes	**50%**
	No	**15%**
YEARS OF SERVICE	0-10 Years	**68%**
	20-30 Years	**32%**
ILLNESS/DISABILITY	Yes	**13%**

	No	**87%**

According to the demographic information, the following characteristics were observed among the participants:

1. **Age of Participants**: (43%) of the participants fell within the age range of 19 to 30 years, while (57%) were 40 years and above.
2. **Educational Background**: A majority of the participants, accounting for (72%), held advanced degrees, indicating a higher level of education. On the other hand, (28%) of the participants had limited or no formal education and were considered illiterate.
3. **Marital Status**: Among the participants, (35%) were married, (53%) were single, and (12%) were either divorced or separated.
4. **Parental Status**: Among the married and divorced/separated participants, (50%) reported having children, while (15%) did not have children.
5. **Years of Service**: The data indicated that (68%) of the participants had served in the police force for 0 to 10 years, while (32%) had a longer tenure of 20 to 30 years.
6. **Health Status**: Regarding health, (13%) of the participants reported being afflicted with illness, while the majority (87%) stated that they were in good health.

These demographic characteristics provide insights into the diverse composition of the participant group, including age distribution, educational background, marital status, parental status, years of service, and health status. Analyzing these demographics helps to understand the varied perspectives and experiences of the participants within the context of the study.

Table 02 Employment Information Of Participants

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION	Yes %	No %
JOB SATISFACTION	62%	38%
SATISFACTION WITH POSTED AREA	59%	41%
TRANSPORT FACILITY	14%	86%
WORKING ENVIRONMENT SATISFACTION	52%	48%
JOB SECURITY	17%	83%
MEDICAL ALLOWANCE	21%	79%

These descriptive statistics provide an overview of the participant's responses in each category, shedding light on their satisfaction levels, access to facilities, and perceptions of job security and benefits.

1. **Job Satisfaction:** Among the respondents, (62%) reported being satisfied with their job, while (38%) indicated dissatisfaction.
2. **Satisfaction with Posted Area**: In terms of satisfaction with their posted area, (59%) of the participants responded positively, indicating that they were satisfied with their assigned location, whereas (41%) expressed dissatisfaction.
3. **Transport Facility**: Only (14%) of the respondents reported having access to transport facilities provided by the organization, while the majority (86%) indicated a lack of transport facilities.
4. **Working Environment Satisfaction**: Regarding satisfaction with the working environment, (52%) of the participants expressed satisfaction, while (48%) reported dissatisfaction.
5. **Job Security**: Concerning job security, only (17%) of the respondents felt secure in their positions, while a significant majority (83%) expressed concerns or perceived lack of job security.
6. **Medical Allowance**: Regarding medical allowance, (21%) of the participants reported receiving such benefits, while (79%) stated that they did not receive any medical allowances.

In the next section, the data were analyzed using a thematic approach, which resulted in the identification of two major themes and seven sub-themes. These themes and sub-themes provide a structured framework for organizing and discussing the findings of the data analysis. All themes and sub-themes are discussed as follows:

1)   General Problems Faced By Female Police Officers:

i.Gender Bias and Discrimination

In male-dominated professions like the police and armed forces, gender-based differences are perceived to be more pronounced compared to traditionally female-dominated fields such as teaching and nursing (Sahgal, 2007). These masculinized occupations hold higher societal value, leading to greater rewards and higher pay for men than women in the same roles (Niland, 1996). Policing, one of the most masculinized occupations worldwide, presents numerous challenges and discrimination against women due to gender. Women are often denied important roles and the opportunity to handle critical tasks, which deprives them of recognition and sharing power within the profession (Sahgal, 2007). In the police force, women are frequently assigned secondary roles such as telephone operators, typists, or tasked with escorting women prisoners or investigating minor offenses related to women and children. They may even be assigned duties outside the core responsibilities of law enforcement, such as cooking in the police mess.

Moreover, women police personnel may face discrimination when it comes to the allocation of incentives and rewards. However, contrary to the stereotypes and prejudices they encounter, most women in the police desire equal treatment with their male counterparts. They strive for fair opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities and demand equal selection criteria, training standards, incentives, and work schedules (Sahgal, 2007). Ultimately, women in the police force aim to be treated on an equal footing with their male

counterparts, seeking recognition of their abilities and the chance to contribute effectively to their profession. They advocate for equal opportunities and fair treatment, emphasizing the importance of gender-neutral criteria and standards in selection, training, incentives, and work arrangements for all police personnel. Similarly, according to the Individual and survey results, 51% of Islamabad police officers and employees stated that women police officers are not involved in conducting investigations, surveillance, or arrests (Ahmed, 2016).

"I have faced gender bias throughout my career. It is frustrating to be overlooked for promotions despite my qualifications and experience. There is a glass ceiling that is hard to break". (FPO: 01).

Another female officer claims that she is subjected to gender harassment by senior male officers and senior female officers.

"I recently joined the police force, and my job station is in the headquarters, where male and female policemen work together. During our early days, senior female officers frequently avoided us, and they assigned us tasks such as bringing our officers tea or water or cleaning their offices. In contrast, men officers were assigned multiple tasks like submitting FIRs or conducting raids. This form of biased treatment impedes our learning". (FPO: 02).

ii.Limited Support For Work-Life Balance

According to research (Steph, 2006), women bear the primary responsibilities within the home, placing them in a unique position when it comes to balancing career and family demands. Striving for a harmonious equilibrium between their roles at home and in the workplace presents significant challenges for women in the police force (Washington, 2011). The multifaceted nature of policing further complicates this balance, often leading to reduced work hours for women, potentially putting them at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts in terms of career advancement (ibid.). Additionally, women within their departments may experience heightened stress due to the dual pressures they face. Female police officers often face a lack of support from their family members when it comes to their careers in the police department. The demands and challenges of police work, including irregular schedules, potential dangers, and high levels of stress, can create tensions within familial relationships. Some family members may be concerned about the risks involved or hold traditional views about gender roles, leading to a lack of understanding or support for the female officer's career choice. This lack of support from family members can manifest in various ways. It may involve pressure to leave the profession, difficulty managing household responsibilities and childcare while working long hours, or emotional strain caused by family members' negative attitudes toward their careers. These challenges can further add to the already demanding nature of police work, making it more difficult for female officers to find a balance between their personal and professional lives. According to research conducted in Pakistan, the majority of the women surveyed joined the police force due to financial constraints and hazardous domestic conditions. A significant number of

female officers joined the police force to escape their family environment. They want to join the police to support their families, earn a living, and escape their suffocating family environment (Sajid, 2013).

"I am a single daughter of my parents, and both of my parents are diabetics. I am responsible for them at all times, but owing to my long working hours, I find it impossible to do so. It is essential to acknowledge that we have personal lives outside of work and that supporting our work-life balance ultimately contributes to our overall health and job satisfaction"(FPO: 03).

iii.Inadequate Access To Training And Resources

Female police officers often face inadequate access to training and resources, which can impede their professional development and hinder their effectiveness in their roles. Training programs and resources within the police force may not adequately address the unique challenges and needs that female officers encounter in their work. This can include issues such as responding to cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, or dealing with gender-based discrimination. Without appropriate training, female officers may struggle to handle these situations effectively, potentially compromising victims' safety and well-being. Additionally, there may be a lack of specialized training and resources designed specifically for female officers, such as self-defense techniques tailored to their physical abilities or guidance on navigating gender-related challenges in law enforcement. This can limit their ability to perform optimally and advance in their careers. Police officers will likely confront complex, high-risk scenarios (Waddington et al., 2012). Handling these extremely dangerous circumstances demands extensive information and abilities, which police personnel should learn during their training. Police academies and law enforcement agencies are tasked with properly providing officers with the necessary skills to handle any on-the-job responsibilities (Chappell, 2008). Limited access to resources can also manifest in inadequate equipment and support. For example, female officers may not have access to properly fitting uniforms, protective gear, or equipment designed to accommodate their physical attributes. This can create discomfort, restrict their mobility, and even compromise their safety in the field. According to Awan (2004), a lack of training has had a negative impact on the performance of female police officers, and they have even been unable to record First Information Reports (FIRs), which is their primary obligation. Furthermore, due to a lack of investigative training, female police officers are not involved in instances involving violence against women (Tobin et al., 2013). Likewise, a lack of options for specialized training outside the city training sites and the extended duration of development sessions, particularly with family responsibilities, are restricting factors in the career growth of women police officers (Sethi, 2012).

"There is a lack of proper training specifically tailored to female officers. We need training that addresses the unique challenges we face, such as handling gender-based violence or engaging with female rape victims" (FPO: 04).

iv. Limited Mentorship & Role Models For Career Guidance

Mentorship plays a crucial role in career advancement by providing guidance, support, and opportunities for learning and growth. However, female officers may struggle to find mentors who can relate to their unique experiences and challenges. The scarcity of female mentors within the police force can limit the availability of role models who can offer guidance on navigating gender-specific issues, overcoming barriers, and achieving success in a male-dominated profession. The absence of mentorship and role models can impact female officers in several ways. It may result in limited access to career advice, networking opportunities, and insights into advancement strategies within the police department. Mentoring benefits both the mentee and the organization in terms of performance, motivation, knowledge, skills, and change (Megginson et al., 2006), and learning results can be both extrinsic and intrinsic (Jones, 2012; Audet, 2012). The lack of guidance and support can also contribute to feelings of isolation and hinder female officers' development of leadership skills and confidence. Addressing this issue requires proactive efforts to establish mentoring programs that specifically cater to the needs of female officers. Encouraging senior female officers to mentor and guide junior colleagues can provide valuable support and inspiration.

Additionally, creating platforms for networking and professional development opportunities can facilitate connections between female officers and potential role models both within and outside the police force. According to research, many of these cultural and structural unfairness issues are likely better understood by a female mentor who has faced comparable challenges, making female-to-female mentoring a vital relationship to cultivate. Mentorship amongst women can be an enabling factor for more empowerment, job progress, and independence, as well as support for the mentee in navigating the hurdles contained in current societal institutions (Muhammad F et al., 2013).

"I feel that female officers are not adequately represented in leadership positions. We need more female role models and mentors who can guide us in our career development and advocate for our interests" (FPO: 05).

"There are some more senior female officers, but they rarely speak to us. It is disheartening since we are also human beings and police like them, but they did not think we were worth talking to. When we try to communicate with them, they frequently scold us to keep within our limits" (FPO: 06).

2)   Specific Problems Faced By Female Police Officers:

i. Limited Availability of Adequate Facilities

Female police officers faced significant challenges due to the lack of several basic facilities provided to them within their work environment (Jamil. 2015). One of the most glaring issues was the absence of suitable shelter and insufficient accommodation. This deprived female officers of a comfortable and secure place to rest during their shifts, affecting their well-being and

overall job satisfaction. Additionally, the inadequacy of food facilities further compounded their difficulties, as they had limited options for accessing meals during their working hours. Another critical concern raised by the female officers was the non-provision of washrooms at their workplaces. This created a distressing situation for them, as the absence of proper washroom facilities not only compromised their comfort but also hindered their ability to focus and concentrate on their duties. The unavailability of clean and hygienic washrooms was particularly troubling, impacting their overall work experience and potentially affecting their health and productivity.

Furthermore, the work environment itself was a major point of contention for the female officers. Many reported that their duty stations were often filthy and inadequately maintained, leading to an unhygienic and unpleasant working environment. This situation not only affected their morale but also had practical implications on their ability to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Adding to the challenges, the female police station suffered from an acute staff shortage, exacerbating the difficulties they faced. With limited personnel, the existing staff had to take on multiple roles and responsibilities, including patrolling, janitorial services, surveillance, and station guarding. This heavy workload put additional strain on the limited staff and hindered their ability to focus on core policing tasks and responsibilities. Similar findings were also reported in research conducted by (Jamil, 2015) and (Chitra, 2021).

"Having separate and adequate facilities like changing rooms and restrooms is essential for our privacy, dignity, and overall well-being. It is disheartening when these basic needs are unmet" (FPO: 07).

"There is no male guard at our police station. Male guards are required because while dealing with issues such as domestic disputes, male members of female victims frequently invade our station, and we occasionally fear that they may be armed and intend to harm us" (FPO: 08).

ii. Gaining Trust & Cooperation From Community

In a patriarchal, narrow-minded Pakistani society, it can be difficult for female police officers to obtain the trust and cooperation of the community they serve. The profoundly ingrained societal norms and cultural biases can undermine their authority and credibility, making it challenging to establish rapport and forge effective relationships with community members. In a patriarchal society like Pakistan, traditional gender roles and expectations frequently restrict women's perceived roles and abilities. Female police officers may encounter skepticism and resistance from community members who doubt their ability to carry out law enforcement duties. This skepticism can hinder their efforts to establish positive relationships within the community by eroding trust (Green, E. 2021). In addition, cultural barriers and traditional views of gender roles can hinder the adoption and recognition of female police officers as legitimate authorities. Community members may be more reluctant to cooperate with female officers, preferring to interact with male officers. This prejudice can further isolate female police officers and

impede their access to vital information and community cooperation. The lack of trust and cooperation from the community poses significant obstacles to the effective performance of duties by female police officers (Peter et al., 2015). Without the assistance and cooperation of community members, they may encounter difficulties when investigating crimes, collecting evidence, and maintaining law and order. This can have far-reaching effects on community safety and the efficacy of law enforcement efforts.

"Many people in our society think that female officers are incapable of solving cases, due to which some male members do not want to talk to us and consistently demand a male police officer to solve their disputes" (FPO: 09).

iii. Difficulty in Balancing Pregnancy, Maternity Leave, and Childcare Responsibilities

Due to various sociological and organizational issues, female police personnel in Pakistan frequently encounter challenges balancing pregnancy, maternity leave, and childcare obligations. Women in law enforcement may face considerable hurdles due to patriarchal standards and traditional gender roles prevalent in Pakistani society. The lack of family-friendly policies and support structures inside police agencies is one of the most significant concerns. Many female officers have difficulty finding enough support during pregnancy and maternity leave because existing policies may not fully address their demands (Yu, H. 2015). This can lead to a lack of accommodations, limited or no maternity leave, and inadequate support for childcare arrangements.

Furthermore, the rigorous nature of the police job, which sometimes involves unpredictable shifts, long working hours, and physically demanding tasks, can create additional difficulties for pregnant officers and new mothers. Because of the demanding nature of the profession, they may need to take extended absences or experience problems returning to work after childbirth. Furthermore, cultural attitudes and prejudices about gender roles and parenting also contribute to the difficulties that female officers encounter. There may be expectations for women to prioritize their roles as mothers above their jobs, which could lead to workplace discrimination or bias. This can limit their possibilities for professional growth and progress within the police department. A study done in Pakistan found similar results, noting that a considerable majority of respondents said they do not receive timely assistance from the department in cases of sickness. This is another severe issue, and timely payment of medical expenses is insufficient to give medical assistance and support to female police officers in times of emergency, acute illness, or chronic disease (Sajid, 2013).

"I remember when I was pregnant, I worried about how my absence during maternity leave would affect my team and the workload. Returning to work was exciting and nerve-wracking, as I had to navigate the job demands while ensuring my child's well-being" (FPO: 10).

The challenges faced by female police officers are numerous and significant. Gender bias and discrimination are prevalent, with women often being

assigned secondary roles and denied important responsibilities and opportunities for advancement. Limited support for work-life balance adds to the difficulties, as women struggle to balance their career and family responsibilities, often facing a lack of understanding and support from family members. Inadequate access to training and resources hinders their professional development and effectiveness in their roles. In contrast, the absence of mentors and role models limit their guidance and support in navigating the unique challenges they face.

Specific problems faced by female police officers include the limited availability of adequate facilities, such as suitable shelter, accommodation, food facilities, and clean washrooms. The work environment may be unhygienic and poorly maintained, and staff shortages further compound the challenges. Gaining trust and cooperation from the community can be challenging due to societal norms and biases undermining their authority and credibility. Traditional gender roles and expectations can hinder their recognition as legitimate authorities, making it difficult to establish positive relationships within the community. Balancing pregnancy, maternity leave, and childcare responsibilities is another significant challenge, as existing policies and support structures may not adequately address the needs of female officers. The demanding nature of police work and cultural attitudes about gender roles can create difficulties during pregnancy and after childbirth, limiting professional growth opportunities.

To summarize, female police officers encounter various general and specific challenges that hinder their advancement and overall well-being. Resolving these issues necessitates comprehensive measures to foster a more inclusive and equitable environment, enabling female officers to excel and make meaningful contributions to their profession. Therefore, the study's findings have led to the formulation of recommendations aimed at addressing these concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS
• There is a need for improved support systems, flexible scheduling options, and childcare assistance so female officers can fulfill their responsibilities and be present for their families.
• There is a need for gender-specific training programs, allocating resources for developing tailored materials and curricula, and ensuring equal access to necessary equipment and resources for female officers. By providing adequate training and resources, police departments can empower female officers to effectively perform their duties, enhance their professional growth, and contribute to a more inclusive and effective law enforcement agency.
• Implementing family-friendly policies, such as extended maternity leave, flexible work hours, and provisions for childcare facilities, can assist female law enforcement officers balance their roles as mothers and law enforcement professionals.
• Both male and female police officers must participate in a regular training program to become more sensitive to shifting sociological, psychological, and human values.

- The men's thinking needs to alter. This is possible if men and women work together rather than separately. Moreover, the supervisors must be properly trained to improve their attitudes toward women.
- Addressing female officers' lack of family support is crucial to raising awareness and fostering open dialogues within families about the importance and value of female officers' contributions to public safety. Educating family members about the unique challenges and rewards of a career in the police department can help build understanding, encourage support, and strengthen the overall well-being of female officers.
- By fostering a culture of mentorship and providing access to role models, police departments can empower female officers, enhance their career progression, and create a more inclusive and supportive environment within the law enforcement profession.
- Workplace conditions must be improved. The woman officer requires proper bathrooms, changing rooms, and other essential amenities.
- The public's perception of the police force must change. Because they think the police agency is corrupt, the issue of recognition and status is also resolved. This public image must alter.

CONCLUSION
Women occupy a fundamental and essential societal position as nearly half of the global population. Women have been indispensable pillars of civilization throughout history, performing diverse and indispensable duties. They have consistently benefited individuals, families, and communities, leaving their mark on every facet of life. In every corner of the globe, women have demonstrated their fortitude, resiliency, and unwavering dedication to progress. The global participation of women in policing has increased substantially in recent years. A growing number of women have undertaken active roles in law enforcement agencies, contributing to the global diversification and vitality of police forces. However, women in law enforcement encounter many obstacles.

Consequently, this research aimed to investigate the complexities surrounding the obstacles and problems faced by female police officers in the Dadu district. The study found, through in-depth interviews with lower-ranking police officers, that female cops face various problems, which are divided into two categories: general problems and specific problems. General problems include gender bias and discrimination, limited support for work-life balance, inadequate training and resources, and lack of career guidance. Meanwhile, the specific problems include limited facilities, difficulty in obtaining trust and cooperation from community, and difficulty in balancing pregnancy, maternity leave, and childcare responsibilities. Furthermore, the findings of the study have led to the formulation of recommendations intended to address these issues, such as the need for gender-specific training programs, allocating resources for the development of tailored materials and curricula, and ensuring equal access to necessary equipment and resources for female officers, as well as the implementation of family-friendly policies, such as extended maternity leave, flexible work hours, and provisions for child care facilities.

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