



Women in the 21st century



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Background and significance

- It is necessary to first review the progress of women in law enforcement in order to understand the problem that plagues their gender at this current time. A study is necessary to understand how disproportionate the number of police women is in comparison to their male counterparts. The first women to become involved in law enforcement were matrons during mid 1800s. They were responsible only for the care of women and juveniles in police custody [NCWP]
- According to Owings (1925, in 1893, the Chicago Mayor appointed a woman Mrs. Marie Owens to the Chicago Police Department. She was given the rank of Policeman, but only because she was the widow of a policeman. It was not until the early 1900s, that the female was hired onto a police department and was actually given the title of policewoman. In 1910 Alice Stebbins Wells joined the Los Angeles Police Department as the first policewoman in the United States. Women in law enforcement became popular in the 1920s. In South Africa were first appointed in 1983.

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- In 1938 KWAZULU NATAL TRAFFIC POLICE was established. Only two males were employed to patrol from PIETERMARITZBURG TO DURBAN. There were no radios no blue lights and they were using motorbikes to patrol the 45th cutting. they were courtesy cops because they were not issuing fines because there was no mechanism for prosecution. For serious offences people were taken to custody e.g. Drunken driving. Only road traffic ordinance was available for officers which was revised to 21 of 66 after world war two. When World War Two broke out these officers joined the army, and K.Z.N. was left without traffic officers .At the end of the world war two officers that joined the army returned to their job and there was an additional officer. Between 1976 and 1978 two hundred officers were employed across the province including six females. Females were not allowed to do patrol duties but they were examiners . They had no scope for promotion and no advancement, they had that glass ceiling which was set very low. One of the six ladies which was employed in 1976 is still serving the department.

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- She became the first female Principal Provincial Inspector in 1999.
- She is in charge of drivers /learner's licence section in Pinetown.
- She has served the department for thirty three years.
- As generations passed on so did the type of women who entered the field.

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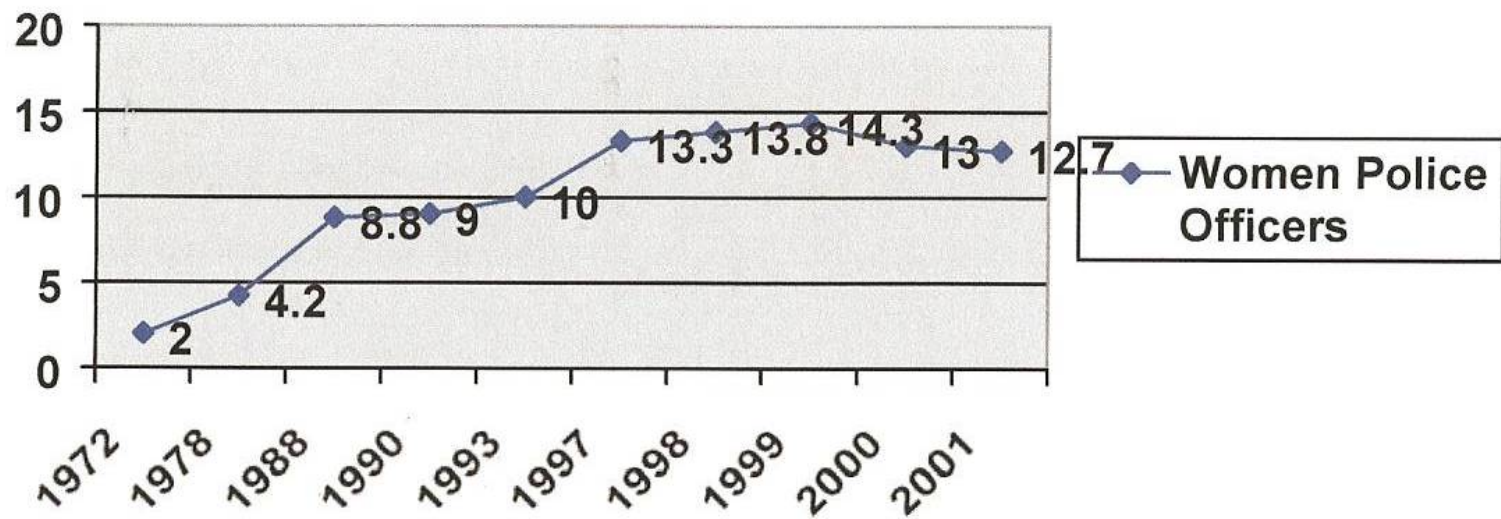
- KZN Department of transport is trying to bridge that gap, they had a massive recruitment where the target group was females this was class 1 of 2008; but we still have a long way to go to meet a 50/50 threshold when it comes to management positions .

Obstacles that currently exist when hiring and promoting women in law enforcement

- The resistance to change from the male counterparts was a major challenge to women in law enforcement. Resistance may take many forms ,including passive or active or, overt or covert, individual or organized, aggressive or timid. In addition people resist change because of fear of unknown, reluctance to change old habits.
- Although Women's performance is equal to men's but there is lack of trust from their male counterparts. However their absence is still evident in leadership positions, a problem that will in all likelihood sort itself out once policewomen have accumulated the years of experience required to gain access thereto.
- According to National Centre for Women & Policing(2003),women managers within police departments were found to be more flexible, self confident, proactive than the men who were found to be more authoritarian and prejudiced. Without many women in the higher positions to have an input into decision making, it is unlikely that much change will occur.

This graph illustrates the increase in percentage in women in law enforcement in general

Percentage of Women in Law Enforcement Agencies with 100+ Sworn Personnel: 1972-2001



Source: NCWP Survey on the Status of Women in Policing 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001

Disparities that exist between men and woman

- The disparity of men versus women on the line, in the supervisory ranks, and in top-level command positions is evident. Female officers came late into the industry and they still need to gather experience. Out of twenty five stations only five females are station commanders.
- However ,one undeniable fact is that women have found their niche in police work.
- Women have hailed as having good communications skills and are often better de-escalating potentially violent confrontations..
- Why become a policewomen and remain one? Likewise the perceptions of men and women regarding the reason why their colleagues joined the police were noticeable the same, that is the will to serve community. The limited promotion opportunities appear to be the deciding factor in leaving the field.(Fry,1983)

A QUESTION OF PHYSICAL AGILITY

- KZN M.E.C .MR. BHEKI CELE IN HIS SPEECH AT PARKRYNIE DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAY LAUNCH MENTIONED THAT A VARIETY OF PHYSICAL TESTS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED WHEN FEMALE OFFICERS ARE HIRED.
- YES FITNESS IS ONE OF THE REQUIREMENTS AS WELL AS WEIGHT MANAGEMENT AS FAR AS LAW ENFORCEMENT IS CONCERNED.,
- THIS WILL ASSIST OFFICERS AS AND WHEN EXCESSIVE FORCE AND SELF DEFENSE REQUIRED.

DEALING WITH OFFENDERS

1. YES PHYSICAL AGILITY SHOULD BE A REQUIREMENT , BUT FROM MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT NEED TO BE TACTFUL AS WELL.
2. EARN RESPECT DON'T DEMAND IT.



TELL THE TRUTH

- By way of answer ,factual and balance
- Have your shining moments without embarrassment
- Indulge a capacity to perform like a butterfly
- Filter your choices through each of the six pillars of character :trustworthy, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring & citizenship.



Potential employee

- It is clear that many advantages exist for police department to hire female police officers. Despite stereotypical beliefs on whether they can successfully do the job, it appears there is much evidence to suggest they are quite capable and, in fact are superior in some aspects of the work.
- Have constructive criticism.

communication

- Today's newspapers are plastered with bad publicity about police officers.
- Female officers offers a style of policing which relies on less physical force and this can only assist a departments liability in regards to claims of excessive force.
- According to Grennan (1987) research has shown consistently that woman are less likely to be named in a citizen complaint, sustained allegation, or civil lawsuit for excessive use of force.
- Representation of woman in the police departments also woman in the community are more likely to be represented with regards to their needs as victims.
- Research shows that women officers respond more effectively to domestic violence incidents that constitute approximately half of all violent crime calls to the police-according to Neidig, Russel and Seng(1992).

My personal advise to my fellow colleagues

- Don't let your ideas be thwarted by someone else who uses a hard edge.
- Try not to be judgmental or be upset by temporary frustrations ,things will improve tomorrow.
- You cannot keep on rejecting people and things just because they do not meet your highest expectations.
- Remember you cannot please everybody.
- Strive to become an expert on what you do.

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THE END

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