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Ministry of Home Affairs

Government of India

"Promoting Good Practices and Standards"

The Indian Police Journal

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IPJ

The Indian Police Journal

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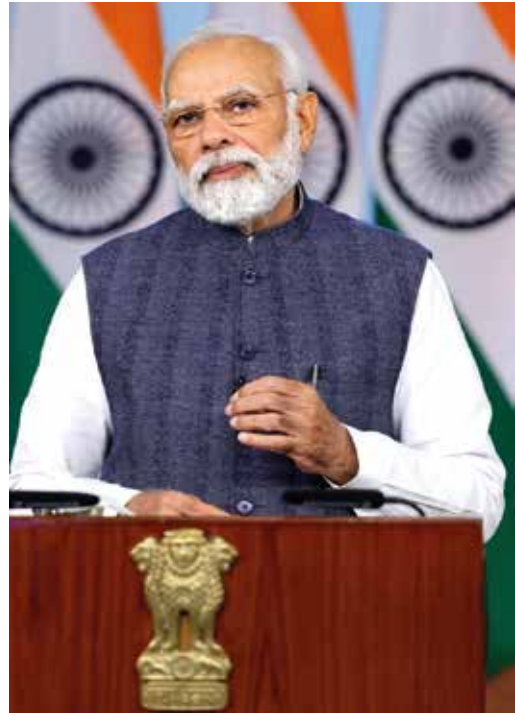
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“ I am enumerating the three steps to Digital Security. These three steps are – ‘Stop – Think – Take Action’. ”

Shri Narendra Modi

Prime Minister

(‘Mann ki Baat’ on 27.10.2024)



“ BPR&D and the Police Science Congress should collaborate with capable individuals in research and development to advance in cybercrime, infiltration, prevention of illegal drone use, narcotics, and misuse of the dark web. ”

Shri Amit Shah

Union Home Minister and
Minister of Cooperation

(50th AIPSC Gandhinagar)

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FOREWORD

Since its genesis in 1954, the Indian Police Journal (IPJ) has stood as a valuable resource of knowledge and insight for the law enforcement professionals. As the oldest police journal in the country, it continues to be an essential platform for the dissemination of research, practical experiences, and forward-thinking ideas that aid in the evolution of policing and internal security in India.

This edition highlights the journal's unwavering commitment to addressing the ever-evolving challenges in law enforcement. It seeks to inspire meaningful discussions among researchers and policymakers. The wide range of topics explored reflects the journal's holistic approach to tackling pressing issues in policing, from juvenile delinquency to prevention strategies for prison riots.

During the 59th DGSP/IGSP Conference held on November 30 and December 1, 2024, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi expanded the mantra of SMART policing and called upon police to become strategic, meticulous, adaptable, reliable and transparent. This underscores the critical role of adaptability and transparency, amongst other things in shaping the future of law enforcement.

With the increasing prevalence of cyber-enabled threats, the importance of proactive policing strategies in the digital age cannot be overstated. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah, while addressing the 50th All India Police Science Conference as the Chief Guest, emphasized that police work in five areas - "Cyber crime, Infiltration — use of technology in border security and surveillance, use of drones for illegal purpose and counter drone technology, investigation of drug cases, prevention of misuse of the dark web"- needs to be prioritized. This guidance highlights the urgent need for technological readiness in tackling emerging threats.

The IPJ endeavours to bring a spectrum of topics, bridging the gap between academic inquiry and practical application, and ensuring its continued relevance as a valuable resource for all stakeholders within the criminal justice system.

The Bureau of Police Research & Development acknowledges and appreciates the efforts of the contributors and readers who consistently support and uphold the legacy of the Indian Police Journal.


(Rajeev Kumar Sharma)
Chief Patron

"Promoting Good Practices and Standards"

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EDITORIAL

The Indian Police Journal (IPJ) exemplifies the Bureau of Police Research & Development's (BPR&D) steadfast dedication to advancing scholarly and practical discourse on the complexities of contemporary law enforcement.

This edition brings to the forefront key issues that are critical to modern policing, including the importance of citizen-centric services, social welfare initiatives, and strategies to enhance the job satisfaction and perception among police personnel.

While the focus of this issue spans diverse aspects of law enforcement, the importance of cybersecurity is seen to be ever on the rise. "Cybersecurity has become a crucial component of national security." This insight underscores the growing need for proactive measures to safeguard the nation's digital landscape, aligning with broader efforts to enhance public safety and operational efficiency. In this context, this edition also addresses the increasing concerns around cybercrimes such as sextortion, which exploit platforms like WhatsApp, further emphasizing the need for robust digital security strategies to protect both individuals and national interests.

As we confront these challenges, it is crucial to foster a collective effort toward solutions that ensure the safety and security of all citizens.

I extend my profound appreciation to the contributors and the editorial team for their meticulous efforts. To our readers, it is my hope that this issue ignites critical discourse, fosters innovative solutions, and reinforces a collective vision for a more secure and equitable society.

(Ravi Joseph Lokku, ADG)
Editor-in-Chief

"Promoting Good Practices and Standards"

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SUMMARY

The landscape of policing continues to evolve, driven by the rapid pace of technological advancement and societal change. As law enforcement faces increasingly complex challenges, it becomes vital to explore new strategies, deepen our understanding of emerging issues, and engage with cutting-edge research that addresses the pressing concerns of our time.

In this issue of the Indian Police Journal (IPJ), we present a collection of articles that offer valuable insights into a wide range of topics, from the rise of cybercrime to the mental health challenges faced by police personnel. These articles provide a thorough examination of key issues that demand attention and action from all stakeholders within the criminal justice system.

Dr. Kirti Jha Kulshreshtha, Director, Research and Training Centre for Legal and Corporate Excellence, Rajasthan, and Dr. Chinmay Kulshreshtha, Assistant Professor, Madhav University, Rajasthan, begin with a critical look at the role of WhatsApp in modern cybercrime dynamics in their article, "Sextortion: WhatsApp's Role in Modern Cybercrime Dynamics." They highlight the dangers posed by sextortion and offer insights into how digital platforms are exploited for criminal activities.

The influence of social media on cybercrime is examined by Sh. Ajit Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Applications, Noida Institute of Engineering & Technology, along with his co-authors in their article "Navigating the Digital Era: Social Media's Influence, Issues, and Cybercrime."

The investigation of narcotics-related crimes in India is the focus of Sh. Arul Varma, Additional District & Sessions Judge, Delhi, who, in his article "Plugging Loopholes in Investigation of Cases Under the NDPS Act, 1985," addresses procedural gaps and proposes measures to strengthen the investigation process.

Md. Imran Wahab, IPS, IGP (Provisioning), West Bengal, explores the root causes and preventive measures of prison riots in "Prison Riots: Causes, Consequences, and Prevention Strategies," providing a critical insight into prison unrest.

Dr. D.C. Nanjunda, Associate Professor, Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy (CSSEIP), University of Mysore, Karnataka, takes an in-depth look at the mental health issues affecting juvenile delinquents in "Prevalence of Psychiatric Morbidity among Juvenile Delinquents in Observation Homes: A Multi-Centric Study," shedding light on the intersection of youth crime and psychological well-being.

The article "Impact of COVID-19 on Personal and Professional Lives of Policewomen in Kerala" by Dr. B. Sandhya, IPS, Director General of Police (Retd.), Kerala, India, and Dr. Jyoti Belur, Associate Professor, University College London, UK, examines the unprecedented challenges faced by policewomen during the pandemic, addressing both the personal and professional impacts.

In "Grid Level Protection for Women: Use of Circle Theory in the City of Hyderabad," Sh. Harshawardhan Kuruganty, M. Tech from Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, introduces an innovative urban safety model aimed at protecting women through enhanced spatial planning.

Ms. K. Sandhya, UGC Junior Research Fellow, Department of Criminology, University of Madras, and Dr. S. Ramdoss, Professor, Department of Criminology, University of Madras, provide a detailed analysis of how rape cases involving Scheduled Castes are handled in Tamil Nadu in their article "Disposal of Rape Cases Committed Against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu: A Descriptive Analysis."

Sh. David Zothansanga, Associate Professor, Department of Public Administration, Pachhunga University College, Aizwal, focuses on "Job Satisfaction and Perception among Female Police in Mizoram," providing a unique perspective on the experiences of female officers in Mizoram's police force.

The innovative PARAVAI Model for addressing young offenders is presented by Dr. Beulah Emmanuel, Professor, APCA, Vellore and her co-authors, offering a comprehensive approach to rehabilitating young offenders.

The article "Mental Health and Stress Among Indian Police Personnel," written by Dr. Narendra Kumar Bishnoi, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Delhi, and his co-authors, examines the psychological toll of policing and the critical need for mental health support among law enforcement personnel.

Sh. Mukesh Kumar Dudi, Senior Research Fellow (Ph.D.), School of Legal Studies, Central University of Punjab, and Ms. Anamika Dalla, Master's in Political Science, Jawaharlal Nehru University, contribute "Citizen-Centric Services and Social Welfare Initiatives in Indian Police: A Quest for Quality," exploring how police services are evolving to meet the needs of citizens and examining initiatives that enhance public welfare.

Finally, Dr. Luxmi Malodia, Professor, UBS, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and Sh. Ashu Monga, Senior Research Fellow, UBS, Panjab University, Chandigarh, delve into the psychological pressures faced by law enforcement personnel during the pandemic in their article "Impact of COVID-19 on Occupational Stress Among Police Personnel in India." Their study highlights the stressors exacerbated by the crisis and suggests strategies to mitigate their effects.

These articles represent diverse perspectives on critical issues that have a significant bearing on the future of policing in India. We hope they inspire meaningful discussion and contribute to the ongoing effort to strengthen our criminal justice system.


(Ruchika Rishi, IG/Director)
Managing Editor

"Promoting Good Practices and Standards"

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Sextortion: WhatsApp's Role in Modern Cybercrime Dynamics



Dr. Kirti Jha Kulshreshtha¹

Dr. Chinmay Kulshreshtha²

Abstract

The advancement in mobile technology has created a comfortable niche for the public. The new age phones are equipped with the latest applications that facilitate connectedness with kith and kin round the clock. The flip side of this facility is revealed when these same apps are used for intimidation of people and crime execution. WhatsApp for instance, has led to notable social and technological progress in India on one hand and resulted in cyber-crimes, such as sextortion on the other. Sextortion refers to a type of cyber extortion where individuals threaten to expose sexual images or videos of the victims to extort money or cause harm. This issue has become increasingly urgent in India, where swift technological adoption is juxtaposed with socio-cultural prohibitions related to sexuality and privacy.

This paper investigates the occurrence of sextortion crimes on WhatsApp in India, focusing on patterns of cyber based crimes as well as psychological, social stigma, the reasons why these crimes go unreported in India. The paper examines how offenders take advantage of WhatsApp's encryption features and anonymity to target individuals, often exploiting vulnerabilities associated with privacy issues, societal shame, and breaches of trust. The analysis also evaluates the remedies and reporting mechanisms provided by the law enforcement agencies and how these methods have been effective in timely reporting of the cybercrimes.

Keywords: Cyber Crime, Sextortion, Blackmail, digital revolution, Meta crime, virtual world.

Introduction

The twenty-first century is an epoch of digital revolution, marked by the rapid growth and development of economies due to the easy

accessibility of the internet. This internet revolution has been linked to economic booms, ready online markets, easy money transfers, and 24/7 connectivity through video-enabled calling.

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The World Wide Web has enabled the ease of access, overcoming geographical barriers. The reduction of virtual distance has provided humans with enhanced abilities and technology to reach out, proving especially useful during disasters such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Undoubtedly, the advancement of technology has created a comfortable niche for humankind. However, it also brings challenges and crime threats. The reduction of virtual spaces also unleashes the darker side of the internet, leaving most of the population in a vulnerable state and opening avenues for cybercrime.

Cybercrime refers to criminal activities carried out using digital platforms and computers via the internet. Illegal actions include hacking, identity theft, online fraud, phishing, malware attacks, and the unauthorized use of personal data. The complexity of these crimes has evolved with technological advancements, making cybercrime a global concern. The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines cyber-crime as, "crime that is committed using the internet, for example by stealing somebody's personal or bank details or by contaminating their computer systems with a virus".

Methodology:

The methodology for the given article is descriptive as it is a review article. Mobile application-based crimes such as sextortion are relatively new as an area of research. The secondary sources covered in this article range from newspaper articles, reports, research papers, and internet statistics from both India and the global perspective.

WhatsApp based Crime: Transcending from Computer to Mobile phones

In the Home Office Research Report 75 October 2013, Dr. Mike McGuire (University of Surrey,

United Kingdom) and Samantha Dowling (Home Office Science) mention that cyber dependant crimes could be used as an umbrella term for malware, hacking, spam, worms, Trojan etc (pg. 4, 5) and highlight the profit motive behind these cyber-crimes:

Motivations for cyber-dependent crimes focus largely on personal profit or financial gain (for example, the use of malware to gain access to bank account details) or can also be a form of protest and/or criminal damage (for example, hacking and website defacement). Motivations can largely be inferred by examining the function of the programs or tools that are used. (6)

Berg and Junger (2018) in their article on "Victims of Cyber Crime in Europe" highlight that cyber bullying and other cyber frauds take place randomly with an increase in the access of internet:

Knowing that half of the world population nowadays is online (Internet World Stats 2017), we know that half of the world population is at risk of becoming a victim of a personal cyber offence. What we do not clearly know is what fraction of the population has been a victim of this type of crime. (1)

In a report prepared by Michael Kunz and Patrick Wilson (2004) "Computer Crime and Computer Fraud"- University of Maryland, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice for Montgomery County Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission, the authors agree that due to increase in accessibility to various technologies and instruments like phones, palmtop, websites etc., the online crimes have increased manifold. The computer crimes were perceived as crimes done with help of computer (7) but with the advent of time



any crime done in an “electronic environment” comes under the purview of crime as per the law perspectives of the USA.

While a diverse country like India is concerned it must be noted that with the advent of enhanced internet services and digitization, android phone is one commodity that is possessed by the masses, cutting across class, cultures and socio-economic status. It is here that the term computer crime transcends the boundaries of gadgets as WhatsApp and other social media are available in the mobile phones as well. So, the question arises do we call these crimes as computer crimes? Everyone with a mobile phone and a ready access to Wi-Fi is walking with a computer. So, siloed terms like computer crimes must be dropped and in place we need to have an umbrella colloquial for crimes done with the help of internet and cybercrime could do the needful while addressing crimes happening through mobiles as well. Roderick Broadhurst and Peter Grabosky in their work Computer related crimes in Asia Hong Kong University Press, argue that digital spaces have become criminal highways for offenders and rise in e-economy paves an avid space for cyber-crime entrepreneurs (2005).

Now the question arises that what could be the **modus operandi** of cybercrimes? They target the victims in two ways:

1. Crime against an individual- This may involve data theft, identity theft, cyber bullying and financial fraud etc. with an individual at a time.
2. Crime against governments or organizations- This can involve massive attack on system, corporate data theft or cyber terrorism committed to disrupt the systems of an institution/s.

National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal India:

The subjects of ‘Police’ and ‘Public Order’ fall under the jurisdiction of individual States as outlined in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. The responsibility for preventing, detecting, investigating, and prosecuting cyber-crimes primarily lies with the States and Union Territories through their respective Law Enforcement Agencies. The Central Government plays a supportive role by providing advisories and schemes aimed at enhancing the capabilities of these agencies. To establish a more effective and coordinated approach to combat cyber-crimes, the Central Government, via the Ministry of Home Affairs, has established the ‘Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre’ (I4C), which addresses various forms of cyber-crime across the nation.

As part of the I4C initiative, the ‘National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal’ (<https://cybercrime.gov.in>) has been introduced to facilitate the public in reporting incidents of cyber-crime, particularly those targeting women and children. Reports submitted through this portal are processed by the relevant State or Union Territory Law Enforcement Agencies, which are responsible for converting these reports into First Information Reports (FIRs) and taking appropriate legal action. Additionally, the ‘Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System’ has been implemented under I4C to allow for the prompt reporting of financial frauds, thereby aiming to prevent the misappropriation of funds by criminals. The National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (<https://cybercrime.gov.in>) under the aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs* Government of India categorically identifies the types of cyber-crimes such as:

**Table 1: List of cybercrimes in India**

Child Pornography (CSAM)	Cyber Bullying	Cyber Stalking	Cyber Grooming
Online Job Fraud	Online Sextortion	Vishing	Sexting
Smishing	SIM swap Scam	Debit Credit card fraud	Impersonation/Identity Theft
Phishing	Spamming	Ransomware	Virus, Worms, Trojans
Data Breach	Denial of Services	Website Defacement	Cyber Squatting
Pharming	Crypto jacking	Online Drug Trafficking	Espionage

Source: National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (<https://cybercrime.gov.in/webform/crimecatdes.aspx>)

While the aforementioned cyber-crimes have their unique characteristics, it cannot be denied that Kuntz and Wilson clearly differentiate between the traditional computer-based crimes and the new age crime :

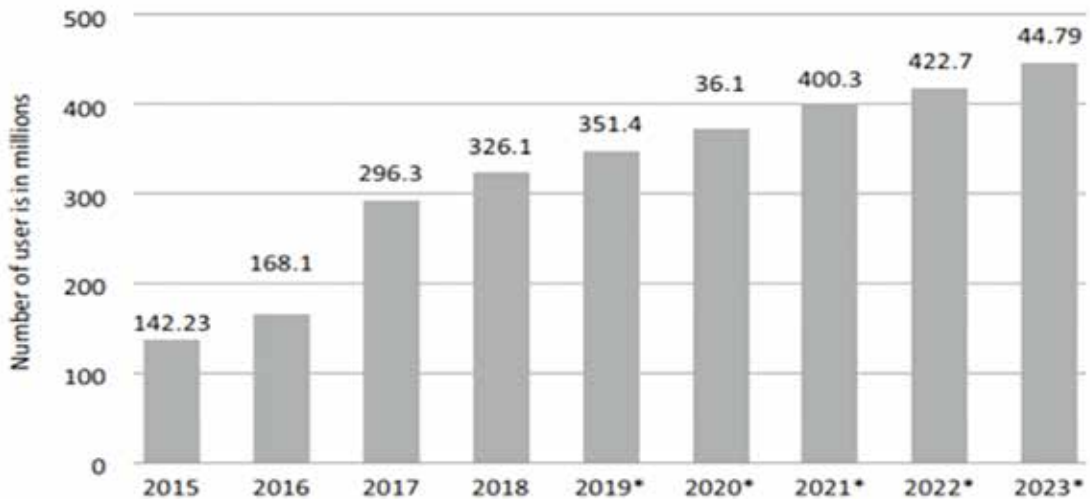
Some of the traditional crimes now taking place on computers include fraud, theft, harassment, and child pornography. Computer fraud consists of crimes such as online auction fraud, identity theft, financial and telecommunications fraud, credit card fraud, and various other schemes. Theft crimes, as related to computer crime, include categories such as monetary, service and data theft, and piracy. Harassment offenses include online harassment and cyberstalking. Child pornography crimes include both the transmission of 11 media that exploit children, as well as solicitation to commit sexual crimes against minors. (10,11)

WhatsApp sextortion: A New Age Cyber Crime:

WhatsApp by Meta is a useful application which is quite popular amongst generations young and old alike. The digital revolution has opened avenues for stakeholders from all walks of life, yet there is an 'addiction syndrome' which is quite visible amongst the users. The truth is there is no digital prudence left in the consumers because the virtual world adds charm and escapism to dull and mundane lives. The statistics of social media users of the world are also reflective of the booming digital space that remains unaffected by the socio-economic status of the users as well. Social media and internet thus have transcended beyond the economic statistics and here lies the window to crime, even through WhatsApp.



Figure 1: Social Network Users in India -2015 to 2023 (in million)



Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/278407/number-of-social-network-users-in-india/>

WhatsApp crimes have taken the centre stage in India over the span of few years. While video-enabled calling applications are found useful by many, until a few years ago, no one could have predicted that they could also facilitate grave meta-crimes or crimes through social media. While many discussions have taken place regarding the traditional computer-based crimes, the cover story titled "Securing India's Cyber Landscape" issued by Ministry of Home Affairs in *Vigilant Bharat*, a BPR&D magazine mentions that the new age crimes can be suitably called metacrimes³:

'Metacrime' is a growing concern and could become a serious concern as the immersive world becomes a part of our daily lives. In this context, it is essential for the law enforcement agencies to anticipate the challenges that may arise by listing various potential threats, the whitepaper stated. (8)

In 2019, the digitally connected Indian social media users invested around 2.4 hours on the platform everyday while at the global level, it was about 2.5 hours per day. This growth is due to the decreasing cost of data across all service providers now mostly offering 4G services (Varun B. Krishna, 2019).

Extortion via WhatsApp obscene video calls:

As the digital revolution is taking the country towards development, the criminals lurking behind the virtual spaces have also become active. While Indian law and order was dealing with cyber fraud cases like Jamtara, another mammoth challenge that was posed before them was extortion via WhatsApp calls that involved nudity. Initially such crimes went unreported because social media apps like WhatsApp were being used for extortion of money and miscellaneous crimes by the criminals through a novel methodology of crime.

³The term was first used in a White paper by Interpol, Metaverse: A Law Enforcement Perspective dt Jan.2024, *Vigilant Bharat* pg. 7.



WhatsApp is a popular social media which is used by millions of Indians and there has been an upsurge of blackmailing and extortion through WhatsApp video calls. This type of crime has been designed by keeping in mind the social image of the WhatsApp users and if any act of theirs malign their public image, then they could be easily blackmailed for money. Many WhatsApp users reported that they received video calls from unknown numbers and before they could decipher what was going on, a man or a woman on the other side of the call would strip and thus the screenshots of these video calls were recorded as screenshots. What followed was a call from a person posing as a senior police official who claimed that he would release these screenshots on social media platforms lest they part away with the amount demanded. This sextortion typically follows a four-step procedure:

1. **Initial Contact-** WhatsApp is a widely used platform that spans various socio-economic groups. Cybercriminals have recognized the potential of this extensive user base as an opportunity for illicit activities. The ease of initiating contact through a WhatsApp video call allows perpetrators to engage victims in a manner that can lead to the recording of inappropriate acts, often without the victim's awareness during the brief interaction.
2. **Baiting or Cyber Baiting-** This tactic exploits the emotional reactions of victims, serving as a malicious means to publicly disgrace or damage their reputations. During a brief nude video call, the victim may witness an individual of either gender undressing, fully exposing themselves. While the victim may begin to comprehend the situation, the entire video call is surreptitiously recorded.

3. **Blackmail-** Cybercriminals utilize the recorded content from these calls to coerce victims, alleging involvement in illicit online activities. In some instances, victims may receive threatening calls from individuals impersonating high-ranking police officials, such as a Deputy Inspector General, claiming possession of compromising images and threatening imminent arrest or virtual detention.
4. **Extortion-** This form of extortion often compels victims to comply due to the significant concern for their public image. The fear of reputational damage drives victims to acquiesce to demands, often resulting in financial loss as they seek to protect their social standing. Consequently, cyber extortionists achieve their objectives and continue to target new victims.

An IPS officer in her newspaper article has stated 4 versions of sextortion that span from 2006 to 2022 and cover revenge porn to the technology and AI enabled deep fakes of the present day. The criminals apply social engineering techniques to lure the victims into their honey traps and then begin a mental and financial torture (2022). As per a report of *Business Standard*, certain individuals have reported receiving video calls via WhatsApp from unfamiliar numbers. These calls were primarily associated with sextortion, involving nude video content that was subsequently utilized to intimidate the recipient. According to a communication obtained by PTI, "The hackers extort money from the user in exchange for not disclosing the material," as stated by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D). The BPR&D operates as a research institution focused on policing issues under the auspices of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). In response



to these incidents, WhatsApp has initiated several public awareness campaigns aimed at informing users about the safety features implemented by the platform, which is owned by the technology giant Meta. (Business Standard)

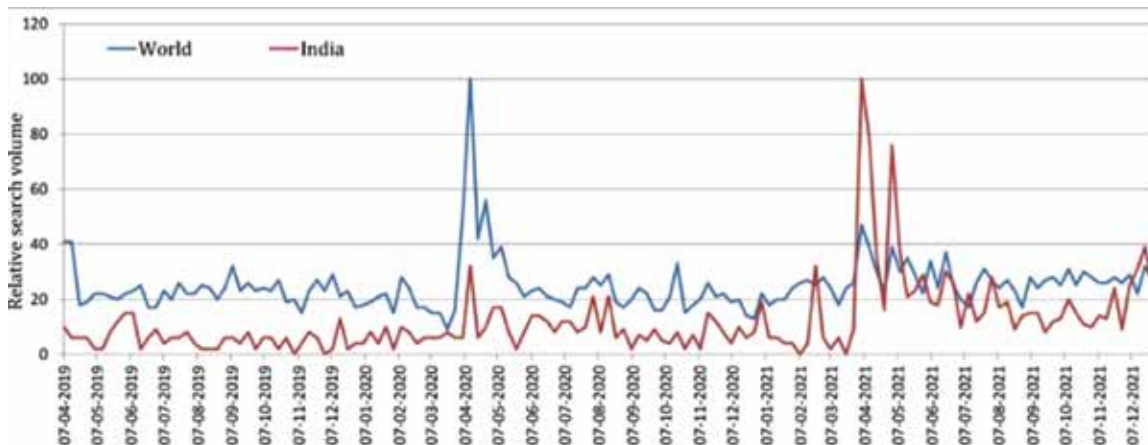
The Increasing Significance of the Issue:

- **Prevalent Adoption of WhatsApp:** WhatsApp stands out as one of the most extensively utilized messaging applications worldwide. Its end-to-end encryption feature appeals to a broad user base, including those with malicious intent. While this encryption enhances user privacy, it simultaneously complicates the efforts of law enforcement agencies to monitor and investigate unlawful activities.
- **Simplified Media Distribution:** The platform's user-friendly interface allows for the effortless sharing of images, videos, and documents, rendering it a prime medium for the transmission of potentially sensitive or incriminating content.

The social stigma associated with cyber blackmail arises from a complex interplay of public shame, fear of exposure, and victim-blaming, which collectively impose significant psychological and emotional burdens on those affected. Cyber blackmail entails the coercive threat of disclosing personal or compromising information unless the victim complies with specific demands, often of a financial or sexual nature, resulting in severe social repercussions:

1. **Fear of Judgment and Shame:** Individuals targeted by cyber blackmail frequently experience profound embarrassment and humiliation, particularly when the blackmailer threatens to unveil sensitive materials, such as intimate images, private communications, or financial records. - The stigma intensifies when the blackmail involves explicit content or violations of personal privacy, instilling a fear of judgment from family, friends, and the broader community.
2. **Victim-Blaming:** Victims may encounter blame for placing themselves in vulnerable situations that lead to cyber blackmail. Phrases such as "Why did you share that photo?" or "You should have exercised more caution" exacerbate the stigma and may deter victims from seeking assistance. - This tendency to blame victims is especially pronounced in patriarchal cultures, where prevailing gender norms can shape perceptions of victims, particularly women.
3. **Cultural and Gender-Based Stigmatization:** Women often endure more severe stigmatization in various cultural contexts due to the repercussions of cyber blackmail on their reputations. In instances of "revenge porn," for instance, women typically face greater shame than their male counterparts, further alienating them socially and emotionally. - In conservative societies, where honour and reputation hold significant importance, the mere threat of exposure can irrevocably damage a victim's social standing, complicating their ability to maintain relationships, employment, or public engagement.
4. **Mental Health Consequences:** The psychological toll of cyber blackmail, coupled with the anxiety of potential social ostracism, can precipitate conditions such as anxiety, depression, and even suicidal ideation. Victims may grapple with diminished self-esteem and a pervasive sense of isolation.

Figure 2. Global and Indian Internet Search Trends for the Term "Sextortion" in Five-Year Period (April 2019-December 2021)



Source: <https://trends.google.com/trends>

In a report published by *The Hindu*, "almost 700 people are falling prey to cybercrimes every day". The ease of access to internet and proximity to electronic gadgets like mobile phones, tablets etc. has led to an increase in consumers of mobile phones and it also opens avenues of intimidation and cyber based crimes and increasing number of WhatsApp users renders the population vulnerable to smartphone-based crimes such as sextortion (Natarajan, 2021). It would not be wrong to mention that the sudden rise in smartphone users was witnessed during and after covid19:

Access to social media has increased due to higher smartphone penetration during the COVID-19 pandemic. The school and college-going students had no option but to attend online classes from smartphones or other devices from home. In addition, the evaluations were also made in online mode. (Mondal et.al.)

While we discuss the burgeoning problem of sextortion, one news piece in *Hindustan Times* states the reality of these problems that why the

police department is unable to trace the actual perpetrators, and why the number of victims keep on increasing. Deputy Commissioner of Police Sunil Lokhande, Cyber Crime, stated:

Victims of such crimes are unwilling to come forward and report them to the police for fear of embarrassment or disrepute it might bring. However, the best and surest way of bringing such cases under control is to report them to the authorities.

Effective Methods to Combat WhatsApp Sextortion:

1. **Digital Literacy and Awareness:** It is imperative that users receive education regarding the dangers linked to the dissemination of personal or sensitive information online, especially when interacting with unfamiliar individuals or those who are not fully trusted. Enhancing awareness about the indicators of potential blackmail schemes is of utmost importance.
2. **Legal Frameworks:** While numerous nations have established laws prohibiting



cyber blackmail, the enforcement of these regulations can be challenging due to the anonymity provided by platforms such as WhatsApp. Governments and regulatory agencies are actively working to modify legal structures to more effectively address instances of cybercrime, with a particular focus on blackmail. The establishment of the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) in 2019 offered a convenient and accessible platform for individuals to report incidents of cybercrime. You can register a complaint on the NCRP at cybercrime.gov.in or dial 1930 to avail helpline support. The formation of Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre 14C is an initiative by the Ministry of Home Affairs GOI to combat, redress and prevent cybercrimes in India. The establishment of dedicated Cyber Crime Police Stations (CCPS) in various states has facilitated a more structured and concentrated approach to tackling the escalating issue of online exploitation (Rai, 2022). These stations not only address sextortion cases but also play a crucial role in educating the public about online safety.

Furthermore, Indian authorities have demonstrated remarkable adaptability in confronting the intricate and often transnational nature of cybercrimes. The initiation of the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) marks a significant advancement in improving collaboration among different police forces and establishing a cohesive response to cyber threats. Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) is a significant step forward in enhancing coordination between different police forces and creating a unified response to cyber threats (Saxena, 2021). This initiative is particularly important in the context of

sextortion, where offenders often operate from outside the country, making traditional law enforcement strategies challenging. I4C has enabled more effective international cooperation, particularly with global law enforcement agencies, to tackle these crimes on a larger scale.

3. **Support Services:** Individuals who fall victim to such crimes require access to psychological counselling, legal support, and an efficient reporting system to combat the stigma and psychological impact associated with these offenses. It is vital to encourage victims to report their experiences to address the issue on a broader scale. The National Crime Records Bureau has initiated a National Cyber Crime Training Centre to spread cybercrime awareness and training through e-learning platforms such as 'CyTrain'⁴. This becomes even more impactful because offenders frequently employ manipulative strategies, such as establishing deceptive relationships or threatening to disseminate private content, which inflicts severe psychological, emotional, and financial distress on victims (Gregoire, 2022). The deeply personal nature of these offenses often leaves victims with significant trauma, exacerbated by the anxiety of societal condemnation and shame.
4. **Reporting Mechanisms:** WhatsApp offers tools for users to report abusive content or attempts at blackmail. Victims are urged to report offenders and block them without delay. Nevertheless, some blackmailers may quickly change their phone numbers, which may necessitate further legal intervention. Although blackmail via WhatsApp is not an entirely new phenomenon, its increasing prevalence, coupled with the unique environment of social media and digital

⁴ A Massive Online Open Course initiative by Ministry of Home Affairs, India. <https://i4c.mha.gov.in/initiative.aspx>



platforms, has introduced a new facet to cyber blackmail. Effectively addressing this issue requires an integrated approach that encompasses legal, technological, and societal strategies.

Conclusion

Sextortion on WhatsApp represents a growing and concerning form of cybercrime that capitalizes on the anonymity and extensive reach of digital communication platforms to exploit victims. The global increase in sextortion incidents, including those in India, underscores the susceptibility of individuals, particularly in an era of rapidly expanding digital connectivity. India's vast and varied population poses distinct challenges in combating sextortion. The nation has experienced a notable surge in the use of messaging applications like WhatsApp, rendering it an appealing target for cybercriminals. Nevertheless, the Indian law enforcement system has made commendable progress in addressing these issues. Specialized cybercrime units within the Indian Police Department have intensified their efforts to investigate sextortion cases, promote public awareness, and collaborate with international organizations to identify and apprehend offenders.

While the Indian policing system has demonstrated remarkable efforts in addressing the growing issue of sextortion on WhatsApp, challenges remain. The country's law enforcement agencies, with their specialized cybercrime units, international collaborations, and public awareness initiatives, have shown a strong commitment to protecting citizens from the dangers of digital exploitation. However, continued efforts are needed to bridge the gap between technological advancements and the law, improve victim support systems, and ensure that society understands the importance of digital safety. Cyber enabled crimes meander over the

developing economy and growing business outreach. Therefore, the public must be educated about the methods to resolve these issues. Governments and organizations are continuously working on developing stronger cybersecurity measures to counter the growing threats. The aim of each citizen is to educate oneself and disseminate the knowledge of cyber-crimes so that preventive measures can be initiated at the outset. To reduce the stigma associated with cyber blackmail, public awareness campaigns, improved legal frameworks, and victim-support services are essential. Encouraging open conversations about cyber safety, challenging victim-blaming narratives, and fostering digital literacy can empower individuals to seek help without fear of judgment. To combat these Arch-Criminals, the citizens must behave their trust in the Indian Policing System so that the criminals are nabbed in time. One must remember, cyber space is a place without territorial boundaries, and it is the responsibility of each internet user/ WhatsApp user to wade through it safely so that crimes like WhatsApp sextortion can be avoided. Through ongoing education, collaboration, and law enforcement efforts, India can continue to improve its response to sextortion and other online crimes, ensuring a safer digital space for all users.

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Navigating the Digital Era: Social Media's Influence, Issues, and Cybercrime

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the significant adoption of social media and internet services and the challenges accompanying this growth, including cybercrime. As of January 2024, India had 751.5 million internet users, representing an internet penetration rate of 52.4%. Additionally, the country had 462.0 million social media users, accounting for 32.2% of the population. Mobile devices play a pivotal role in this transformation, with 1.12 billion active cellular connections, equating to 78.0% of the population. However, nearly half of the population, 47.6% or approximately 683.7 million people—remains offline, underscoring persistent barriers to digital access, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas. The rapid expansion of digital connectivity has profoundly impacted communication, commerce, and daily life in India, enabling new opportunities for engagement and economic participation. However, it has also brought challenges, such as heightened exposure to cyber threats, misinformation, data privacy issues, and an increased prevalence of cybercrime. Social media platforms, while empowering individuals and businesses, have also become vectors for malicious activities, influencing public opinion and raising concerns about digital security. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the influence of social media in the digital era, examining the benefits and challenges of its growth and the associated rise in cybercrime. It highlights the critical need for enhanced digital literacy, robust cybersecurity measures, and responsible digital practices to navigate the evolving digital environment in India. By addressing these challenges, stakeholders can ensure that the benefits of digital transformation are broadly accessible, fostering a safer and more inclusive digital future for all.

Keywords— Digital adoption, internet penetration, social media usage, mobile connectivity, India, digital trends, digital divide, internet users, cellular connections, demographic analysis.

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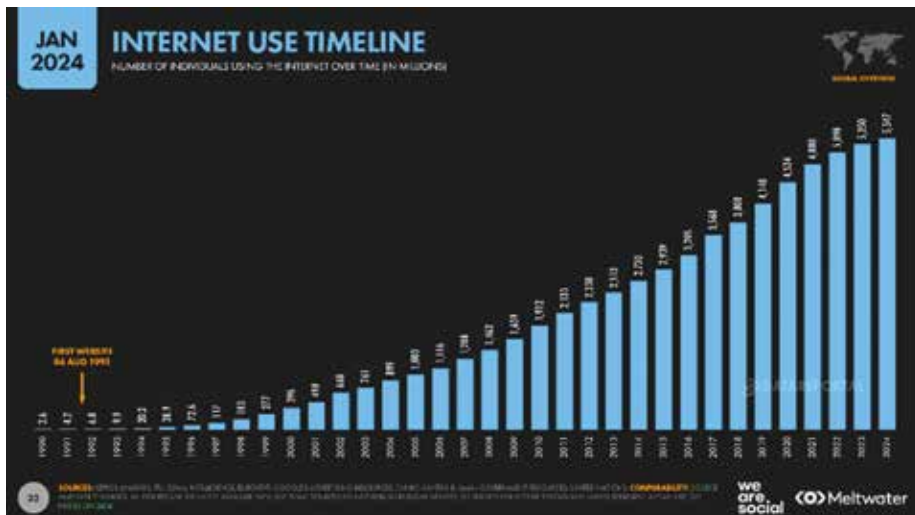


Introduction

With the widespread adoption of social media and the internet, communication, commerce, and information access have all undergone significant changes as a result of the digital revolution in India. India's digital ecosystem in 2024 illustrates the intricate relationship between opportunity, growth, and challenges. Driven by a tech-savvy younger generation and high mobile connectivity, India, with a population of 1.44 billion and a median age of 28.4 years, is one of the largest and most dynamic digital markets globally. At the beginning of 2024, 751 point five million Indians were online, which translates to a 52-point 4 percent penetration rate. The fact that 683 million people, or 47.6% of the population, do not have access to the internet despite the continuous development of digital infrastructure underscores the persistent differences in access to the internet, especially between urban and rural areas. With 462 million users by 2024—or 32.2 percent of the total population, social media has grown to be a formidable force. Social media is changing public discourse, influencing consumer behavior, and boosting digital advertising. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp,

and YouTube dominate this space. But there are also serious worries associated with this quick expansion, such as false information, concerns about data privacy, and the possibility of platforms being abused for nefarious purposes. India has adopted digital technology primarily due to its mobile connectivity, with 1.12 billion active cellular mobile connections, or 78.0 percent of the population. Mobile devices are now the main way that people access the internet due to the extensive use of smartphones and the low cost of mobile data, which has fueled the nation's digital economy.

India continues to experience a rapid uptake of digital technology, but there are a number of issues that need to be resolved. The digital divide is still a major problem, with impoverished and rural areas frequently lacking dependable internet access because of low digital literacy, insufficient infrastructure, and socioeconomic issues. As digital platforms have expanded, so have cybercrimes—such as phishing, fraud, and data breaches—which pose grave risks to people's security and privacy. Furthermore, worries about data privacy and the moral use of personal information have grown, and





the prevalence of false information and fake news on social media erodes confidence in digital content. In India's digital age, navigating the impact of social media means striking a balance between risk mitigation and innovation. Policymakers, companies, and users must work together to improve cybersecurity, advance the responsible use of digital platforms, and raise digital literacy. The many effects of social media, the difficulties posed by its explosive growth, and the growing danger of cybercrime in India's digital environment are all examined in this essay. To ensure a safer and more inclusive digital future for India, it is imperative to comprehend these dynamics and take advantage of opportunities while minimizing risks. [2].

Related Work

This paper (Gagandeep Kaur 2024 et al) presents a comprehensive analysis of the complex and transformative effects of social media in the digital age. It emphasizes the various societal implications of social media, the associated cybersecurity challenges, and the need for a cooperative approach to resolve these problems and foster a safer online community. This paper provides an extensive analysis of social media's influence in the digital era, examining its function in a range of fields such as business, finance, marketing, politics, health, and education. It recognizes the dual nature of social media, noting both its advantages—such as improved connectivity—and disadvantages—such as risks to one's mental health and privacy. The writers highlight common cybercrimes like phishing, identity theft, and cyberstalking while highlighting the difficulties with social media cybersecurity and promoting preventative measures like user education and innovative security technologies. In order to address the problems and reduce the risks related to social media, the paper

emphasizes the significance of cooperation among legislators, technology developers, and users.

The study (Manolo Farcia, Cosimo Marco Scarcellib 2024 et al), which focuses on how Italian secondary school students, ages 15 to 17, represent gender on social media, was carried out by Manolo Farci and Cosimo Marco Scarcelli as part of a project between the University of Padua and the Municipality of Padua. In terms of social and cultural capital, the 922 participants in the study came from a variety of secondary school settings in Padua, including technical, general/academic, and vocational schools. Through the use of mood boards on the Padlet platform, participants created fictitious social media profiles complete with the name, gender, age, job, interests, and social media platforms of their fictional characters. The goal of the mood board analysis was to determine how young people's internalization and replication of gender norms and popular culture are shaped by digital media logic and how these norms are reflected in their made-up personas. The study comes to the conclusion that, although social media platforms offer young people the opportunity for diverse gender expression, they can also serve to both challenge and reinforce traditional gender norms and beauty standards. This is because profiles frequently resemble stereotypical gender displays. (3)

The article (Pooran Chandra Pande¹, Dr. K.B. Asthana 2024 et al) addresses how social media plays a critical role in raising legal literacy and awareness in India, particularly among the country's illiterate and underprivileged populations. It draws attention to the constitutional right to legal assistance and criticizes the system's shortcomings, contending that ignorance breeds exploitation and rights denial. It is well known that social



media can be a powerful instrument for influencing public opinion, spreading legal knowledge, and advancing social causes. However, it can also work against the legal system. In order to prevent abuse and uphold civil rights, the authors advocate for social media regulation. They also propose forming an expert committee to create suitable guidelines. The piece ends with a suggestion for a government-led initiative to enhance the provision of legal aid services and inform the public about their legal rights.(4)

The study article (Temitope Samson Adekunle 2024 et al) focuses on analyzing and forecasting social engineering attacks on social media platforms using artificial intelligence (AI), especially RNN-LSTM models.

The AI model, which can detect hidden SE threats with a precision of 0.82 and a recall of 0.79, is trained through the study's collection and curation of a dataset comprising a variety of social media posts. The authors created a Social Engineering Assaults Detection (SEAD) pipeline that categorizes posts as malicious or benign based on entity recognition and sentiment analysis. The RNN-LSTM model demonstrated the potential of deep learning in cybersecurity by outperforming other machine learning algorithms in detecting five categories of SE attacks. The study emphasizes the need for enhanced social media platform security measures and calls for more investigation into the practical uses of AI for social media security.(5)

Table. I. Literature Summary

Author/ year	Method/model	Research gap	Parameters	References
Gagandeep Kaur et al. (2024)	Comprehensive review and analysis of social media impacts, challenges, and cybercrime.	Lack of integrated research on the broad impacts of social media, especially concerning cybercrime.	Social media influence, misinformation, privacy concerns, cyber threats.	Eng. Proc. 2024, 62, 6. https://doi.org/10.3390/engproc2024062006
Manolo Farcia, Cosimo Marco Scarcelli (2024)	Qualitative analysis of social media's role in gender identity representation among youth.	Limited exploration of how young people negotiate gender identities on social media, particularly regarding the dual role of platforms in reinforcing and challenging gender norms.	Gender representation, self-presentation, peer influence, traditional vs. modern gender norms.	DOI: 10.13136/isr.v14i1.645
Pooran Chandra Pande, Dr. K.B. Asthana (2024)	Analytical approach to studying the impact of social media on legal awareness.	Need for a deeper understanding of how social media contributes to legal awareness and the public's engagement with legal information.	Legal awareness, information dissemination, community engagement, and rights education.	Educational Administration: Theory and Practice, 30(5), 865-869.
Temitope Samson Adekunle et al. (2024)	AI-based analysis and predictive modeling of social media attacks.	Insufficient use of AI in predictive analytics to proactively manage social media attacks and mitigate cyber threats.	AI analysis, predictive analytics, cyber-attacks, data patterns, cybersecurity.	DOI: 10.62411/jcta.10120



Navigating the social media Landscape

Social media's pervasive use in the digital age has fundamentally changed how people and societies interact, posing both tremendous opportunities and challenges. The confluence of technological progress, social dynamics, economic transformations, and behavioral shifts has rendered social media a pivotal force in contemporary life, impacting everything from our modes of communication to the functioning of businesses. Affordably priced internet and the widespread use of smartphones have made information more accessible to a wider audience, allowing millions of people to enter the digital world. Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp are now indispensable resources for maintaining relationships with loved ones, exchanging information, and keeping up with current events and entertainment. In addition to altering interpersonal relationships, this shift has completely changed business practices and consumer choices thanks to influencer culture and digital marketing. But as social media has quickly ingrained itself into daily life, users are now at risk for a variety of dangers, such as misinformation spreading, cyberattacks, and privacy violations. The high degree of mobile connectivity is one of the main reasons behind social media's influence. Smartphones have surpassed one billion active cellular connections in nations like India alone. For many users, these devices serve as their main point of access to the internet. Due to its accessibility, digital payment systems, e-commerce, and online learning have all flourished, providing previously unheard-of convenience and financial opportunities. However, people are also more susceptible to online dangers like phishing, hacking, and financial fraud as a result of their growing reliance on mobile devices. Cybercriminals take advantage of the massive volumes of private information shared on social

media sites, which frequently results in identity theft and unauthorized access to private data. There is a huge disconnect between digital engagement and digital literacy, which exacerbates the problem of data privacy. Many users are unaware of how their data is gathered, stored, and used. The issue of the digital divide is still present today, particularly in developing nations where socioeconomic constraints restrict access to dependable internet and digital literacy. The lack of infrastructure and resources in rural and marginalized communities makes it difficult for them to fully engage in the digital economy, exacerbating already existing disparities in income and education. This gap makes these communities more susceptible to misinformation and exploitation in addition to making it more difficult for them to access opportunities and information.

The role that social media plays in the dissemination of misinformation and fake news has been extensively studied. The rapid and uncontrolled sharing of content has led to the rise in the popularity of false narratives and conspiracy theories. This phenomenon has important ramifications for public trust because disinformation can affect social harmony, public health responses, and elections. The psychological toll that social media takes on its users is another element that adds to its complexity. Anxiety, depression, and a warped sense of self-worth are just a few of the detrimental mental health effects that can result from being constantly exposed to carefully chosen content and idealized lifestyles. Social media sites are made to encourage interaction, which frequently results in compulsive behaviors that can ruin relationships with others and daily routines. Feelings of inadequacy and social isolation can be exacerbated by the pressure to project a flawless online persona and FOMO, particularly in the case of younger



users who are more susceptible to these emotions. The growth of social media has coincided with a rise in cybercrime, including financial fraud, cyberbullying, and online harassment. Digital platforms' anonymity frequently gives bad actors more confidence and makes it simpler for them to target specific people without suffering immediate repercussions. With AI-driven technologies now being used to carry out large-scale attacks, sway public opinion, and disseminate harmful content, cyberattacks have become more sophisticated. The increasing danger landscape emphasizes how urgently we need more robust cybersecurity defenses and legal frameworks that can safeguard consumers while maintaining the advantages of digital connectivity. The complexity of social media platforms is increased by the incorporation of AI and machine learning. Through targeted advertising and personalized content, these technologies improve user experiences, but they also bring new risks. Algorithms can exacerbate prejudices, magnify content that divides people, and build echo chambers that support preconceived notions, making it harder for users to come across opposing viewpoints. AI can also be used as a weapon for bad things, like automating cyberattacks, producing deepfakes, and disseminating false information on a never-before-seen scale. Due to its widespread use, social media promotes hate speech, extreme ideologies, and graphic content that can be harmful to society in addition to facilitating cross-cultural exchange and giving voiceless people a platform. Finding a balance between preserving social media's open and participatory nature and putting in place measures that keep people safe is a challenge for legislators, platform operators, and users. This calls for broader initiatives to inform the public about responsible digital citizenship, critical thinking, and the powerful

in addition to technical solutions like enhanced content moderation and data protection protocols. This calls for broader initiatives to educate the public on responsible digital citizenship and critical thinking, in addition to technical solutions like enhanced content moderation and data protection protocols.

Impact and consequences of Cyber Crime

The widespread use of social media has ushered in the digital era, which has had revolutionary effects on many facets of society, including communication, business, and culture. To fully comprehend the impact of social media on contemporary life, it is necessary to critically analyze the substantial positive and negative ramifications of this transition.

1. Transformation of Communication and Social Interaction

Social media has completely changed the way people communicate by removing geographical boundaries and facilitating real-time global interaction. People can now share their lives, stay in touch, and interact with a variety of communities more easily thanks to social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter. This change has democratized information and given previously marginalized voices a platform in public conversation. Social media can be used to mobilize public opinion and drive social change, as seen by the successes of movements like MeToo and BlackLivesMatter, which also highlight the platform's usefulness as an advocacy and awareness tool. There are some negative effects on communication, though. There has been a decrease in productive discourse and a rise in polarization as a result of the emergence of online echo chambers, where users are largely exposed to content that confirms their own opinions. Social



media's anonymity can also promote harmful actions like hate speech, trolling, and cyberbullying, which can impair people's mental health and lower the standard of public conversation. Furthermore, the very nature of online interactions—which frequently lack the subtleties and context of in-person conversations—can exacerbate miscommunication and conflict.

2. Economic Impacts and the Rise of Digital Commerce

Social media has significant economic effects that are changing conventional business models and opening up new avenues for digital marketing and entrepreneurship. Social media platforms are effective tools that help brands connect with their target consumers, interact with them, and increase sales. The distinction between personal expression and commercial promotion is becoming hazier thanks to the lucrative industry of influencer marketing, which involves people with large followings promoting goods and services. However, there are drawbacks to this quick transition to digital commerce. Consumption and inflated expectations can result from the pressure to uphold a flawless online persona, especially in the case of younger audiences. In addition, since users frequently have little control over how their information is used, the use of personal data for targeted advertising raises questions regarding consent and privacy. Concerns concerning market competition and the moral implications of social media companies' business practices have also been brought up by their dominance in the digital advertising space.

3. Psychological and Social Consequences

The effect of social media on mental health is a developing issue, especially for young adults and adolescents. Comparisons, low self-esteem, and anxiety can result from

being exposed to carefully chosen content all the time. A skewed perception of reality where likes, comments, and shares are equated with self-worth can result from the pressure to present an idealized version of oneself online. Research indicates that there is a need for an increased understanding of digital well-being as it relates to problems like depression, sleep disturbance, and a decrease in in-person interactions. Compulsive behaviors and decreased productivity can result from social media's addictive nature, which is intended to maximize user engagement through algorithms that prioritize attention-grabbing content. This "attention economy" takes advantage of psychological weaknesses to entice users to continually scroll and receive notifications. The net effect is a paradox whereby social media, which is meant to bring people together, frequently causes emotions of isolation and detachment from reality.

4. The Escalation of Cybercrime and Security Threats

One of the biggest issues facing the digital age is cybercrime, as new opportunities for it have been opened up by the quick development of digital platforms. Social media sites are frequently used for malicious purposes, such as ransomware attacks, phishing scams, and identity theft. Cybercriminals use publicly available personal information to target people and businesses, resulting in monetary losses, harm to their reputations, and security breaches. The spread of bogus accounts and automated programs, which disseminate false information and sway public opinion, further complicates the online landscape. Online harassment and cyberbullying are on the rise, and their victims suffer grave emotional and psychological effects. Stronger cybersecurity measures and digital literacy education are required



to help users protect themselves online because it is difficult to hold offenders accountable due to the absence of effective regulatory measures and the global reach of the internet.

5. Spread of Misinformation and Erosion of Trust

The dissemination of false information damages trust in the media, institutions, and even interpersonal relationships, making it one of the most important effects of social media. Because social media algorithms favor sensational and emotionally charged content, false information can spread quickly there. Misinformation can have a real-world impact on public behavior and decision-making, as demonstrated by the quick spread of fake news during emergencies like pandemics or elections. Its credibility as well as the sheer amount of misleading information present a challenge. Even the most astute viewers can be tricked by deepfake technology, which produces realistic looking but fraudulent audio and video content. Democratic societies, where making informed decisions is crucial, are weakened when trust in trustworthy information sources erodes.

6. Ethical and Privacy Concerns

Significant ethical concerns are brought up by social media companies' acquisition and use of personal data. Unknowingly providing large amounts of data for purposes such as targeted advertising, content personalization, and occasionally even political manipulation, users frequently allow this kind of widespread data collection. Stricter laws protecting data and more openness from businesses regarding their data practices are imperative, as evidenced by the recent scrutiny of tech giants for data breaches and misuse of user information. More people are debating the moral ramifications of algorithmic decision-

making, which determines the content that users see. Algorithms have the potential to distort reality by upholding prejudices, stifling opposing ideas, and emphasizing engagement over accuracy. The need for ethical standards in technology design and implementation is growing urgently because social media platforms have a powerful impact on public perception.

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Plugging Loopholes in Investigation of Cases Under the NDPS Act, 1985



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“It is high time, perhaps, that a consistent and dependable code of investigation is devised with a mandatory and detailed procedure for the police to implement and abide by during the course of their investigation so that the guilty do not walk free on technicalities, as they do in most cases in our country. We need say no more”

Full Bench of Supreme Court of India¹

Abstract

One of the primary reasons for acquittal in cases pertaining to the Narcotics & Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act) is noncompliance with mandatory procedural safeguards by the investigative agencies, right from the inception, till the conclusion of investigation. It thus becomes imperative for the Investigating Officers (IOs) and their supervisory officers to have thorough awareness and grasp of the rudimentary principles of the provisions of the NDPS Act. It is the desideratum that a comprehensive as well as lucid checklist be devised and disseminated amongst the law enforcing agencies. This paper endeavors to revisit the fundamentals of the law as well as update the officers on the extant case law to facilitate preparation of such a checklist, as well as equip them to conduct robust investigation thereby ensuring successful prosecutions.

Keywords— *Robust Investigation of NDPS cases*

Introduction

The initiation of a narcotics case commences either with the receipt of secret information or upon the accidental stumbling upon contraband items by police officers. Whenever an investigation is initiated upon receipt of secret information, the proof of establishing the case becomes somewhat stricter. The aspects of giving an option to the suspect to be searched coupled with the disclosures to be made to the suspect assume significance.

Furthermore, the place of search, i.e. public or private is also a determinative factor. It must be borne in mind that whether the investigation commenced on the basis of secret information or otherwise, the formalities of arrest of the accused and seizure of contraband coupled with the conveying of such information to superior officers within the stipulated period has to be adhered to. The other vital step of sampling contraband items before the Magistrate also needs to be scrupulously

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¹ Rajesh & Anr v State of Madhya Pradesh Cr Appeal No.793-794 of 2002



followed. Lastly, the Drug Disposal Committee is entrusted to undertake the process of destruction by incineration or otherwise, of the contraband as per law. Therefore, the search of the accused, seizure of the contraband, arrest of the accused, sampling of the contraband, deposit and disposal of the contraband all ought to be carried out with circumspection, and in consonance with the settled provisions of law.

Power of Entry, Search, Seizure and Arrest in terms of sections 41, 42 and 43 of the NDPS Act

Power to issue warrant or authorization

The power to issue warrant or authorization for the purposes of entry, search, seizure and arrest lies with the Magistrate. As per Section 41(3) of NDPS Act, the officer who authorizes the arrest or search, or the officer who is so authorized u/s 41 (2), shall have all the powers of an officer acting u/s 42 of NDPS Act. Now, Section 42 mandates taking down of secret information in writing. In terms of Section 42 (1), it is imperative that whenever secret information qua supply of contraband is received, the same is reduced in writing, by way of a DD entry. Further, Section 42 (2) mandates conveying of the above written information, to a superior officer within 72 hours. Thus, in practice, for cases investigated by the local police, when a Sub Inspector (SI)/ any other officer receives information, the information is reduced in writing vide a DD entry, and the secret informer along with a DD entry are produced before the Inspector, who after verifying the facts, places the DD entry before the ACP. Once the ACP is apprised of the situation, he issues necessary directions for constitution of a raiding party, and the raiding party then proceeds to investigate

the case as per law. The above chronology and sequence of events have to be reflected vide the relevant entries, else the case of the prosecution is likely to fall like a pack of cards.

Delayed compliance

The compliance with the requirements of Sections 42 (1) and 42(2) in regard to writing down the information received and sending a copy thereof to the superior officer should normally precede the entry, search and seizure by the officer. But in special circumstances involving emergent situations, the recording of the information in writing and sending a copy thereof to the superior officer may get postponed by a reasonable period, that is, after the search, entry and seizure.

While total noncompliance with requirements of sub-section (1) & (2) of Section 42 is impermissible, delayed compliance with a satisfactory explanation about the delay will be acceptable compliance with Section 42. (State of Punjab vs. Balbir Singh²).

Public/private place- Rules for determination

The rules of the game apply differently in case of commission of offence in a public place vis a vis commission of offence in a private place. The definition of the expression "public place" is very wide for deciding whether a particular area/ place is or is not a "public place" the determining factor is whether the same is accessible to or intended to be used by public or not. The accessibility of the public to such a place can be restricted or unrestricted. A restricted accessibility could be where a fee may have to be paid for entry to such a place or a permission is required for entry or something similar. Even with these restrictions the place would remain a

² (1994) 3 SCC 299



“public place”. These restrictions by themselves would not change the character of a “public place” and will not result in public place losing its character as such. (see *Santini Simone Vs Department of Customs*³). In *Santini (supra)*, it was held that the airport or the customs area at the airport of customs counter or luggage hold area or immigration area or alike at the airport would also be a public place as these areas are accessible to the public even though with certain restrictions or requirements of a permission for entry into these areas.

An empowered officer under Section 42 (1) is obligated to reduce in writing the information received by him only when an offence punishable under the Act has been committed in any building, conveyance or an enclosed space. Thus, compliance with Section 42 is not mandatory when the alleged offence was *not* committed in the abovementioned places. It is Section 43 of the NDPS Act which is attracted in situations where the seizure and arrest are conducted in a *public* place, which includes any public conveyance, hotel, shop or other place intended for used by, or accessible to the public.

The difference between Section 42 and 43 of the Act was enunciated in *Karnail Singh Vs State of Haryana*⁴, wherein it was observed that the material difference between the provision of Section 42 and 43 is that Section 42 requires recording of reasons for belief and for taking down of information received in writing with regard to the commission of an offence before conducting search and seizure, Section 43 does not contain any such provision and as such while acting under Section 43 of the Act, the empowered officer has the power of seizure for the article etc. and arrest of a person who is

found to be in possession of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance in a *public* place.

Examination of witness

The ACP concerned should be aware of the fact that she/he had *received* the secret information in writing and had endorsed her/his signatures on the report. In this context, the entries in relevant Registers and DD entries should reflect that the information was duly *reduced in writing* and was duly *seen* by the ACP concerned. In case the information was received by the ACP via telephone, it must be ensured that the information is later on reduced in writing. The factum of the ACP giving authorization for the raid must also be duly reflected.

Conveying of Information of Arrest and Seizure to Superior Officer in Accordance with Section 57 of NDPS Act.

The police officer who makes any arrest of an accused, or seizes contraband under the NDPS Act, is mandated to report the factum of such seizure or arrest, to his/her superior officer, within 48 hours of such seizure or arrest. This is a duty cast on the concerned police officer by virtue of Section 57 of the NDPS Act. The legislative intent behind Section 57 of the Act, has been delved upon in *Megha Ram v State of Rajasthan*⁵ wherein it was observed that compliance with this provision is meant to serve a dual purpose viz. to ensure authenticity to the action taken by a police officer, and secondly, the communication of the information apprises the superior officers of the position of offences against the NDPS Act and also of the steps taken and compliance of the relevant rules made by their subordinates in the administration of the said Act.

³ CRL.A No 1088/2017

⁴ (2009) 8 SCC 539

⁵ 1997 Cri LJ 3091



Examination of witness

During trials, the compliance with the above provision is primarily established by the Investigating officer, the Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) and the Reader to the ACP. The IO has the onus of proving that the information of arrest and seizure was *conveyed* to the office of the ACP, and the Reader and the ACP have the burden to establish that such information was in fact *received* on the date and time averred by the Investigating officer. The report u/s 57 of NDPS Act should categorically reflect both the factum of arrest of the accused as well as seizure of contraband items. Furthermore, since these reports establish the conveying of information contained therein, to the ACP, the originals of these documents ought to contain the endorsement of being *seen*, by the ACP, along with the relevant date. Similarly, the factum of these reports being *received* in the office of the ACP, would be testified to by the Reader. The same rules apply in case of reports prepared qua compliance with Section 42 NDPS Act. (see *Table A*)

Service of Notice u/s 50 of NDPS Act for Search of Accused.

Mandatory nature of the notice u/s 50 of the NDPS Act

The safeguards encompassed in Section 50 are essentially to protect an individual from false accusations, and also to lend credibility to police procedures. There are certain conditions to be fulfilled before an accused is searched for possible possession of contraband. The

foremost is that only an officer duly authorized under Section 42 can conduct the search. Further, the said officer is required to inform the accused about the legal right (and not mere option) of the accused to be searched in the presence of a Gazetted officer or nearest Magistrate. The requirement is fulfilled by serving a notice under Section 50 NDPS Act upon the accused. It must be borne in mind that the police should desist from giving an option to the accused to be searched before a police officer, as exercise of this third option is forbidden by the dictum of *Ranjan Kumar Chadha v State of Himachal Pradesh*⁶.

In case the accused exercises the option of being so searched before a Gazetted officer or nearest Magistrate, then the accused shall be taken before the concerned authority without unnecessary delay for the purposes of the search. If the accused does not avail this right, then the police officers may continue with their search. It is pertinent to note that the exercise of the above right, or refusal, both are also reduced in writing, and form part of documents containing notice under Section 50. The best evidence of service of such a notice would be the recovery of the original notice from the personal search memo of the accused.

It would be astonishing to know that the Constitution Bench in *State of Punjab Vs Baldev Singh*⁷ had observed that the notice to be given to the accused u/s 50 may not necessarily be in writing, and that it may be orally conveyed. However, as a matter of prudence and abundant

⁶ 2023 SCC OnLine 1262, wherein it was held as hereunder:

"56. In *Parmanand (supra)* this Court held that Section 50 confers a right upon the accused to be searched either by a Gazetted Officer or Magistrate, and as such while informing the suspect of its right, only the aforesaid two options can be provided. Section 50 could be said to be violated where a third option is also offered, be it that of being searched by the superintendent of police or by the police officer himself.

57. Although a superintendent of police is a Gazetted Officer, yet the reason why this court in *Parmanand (supra)* held the third option to be bad in law is because, first, in that case the Superintendent of Police was a part of the raiding party and as such was not an independent witness and secondly, as discussed, Section 50 provides for only two options, either a Magistrate or Gazetted Officer"

⁷ (1999) 6 SCC 172



caution, most police officers do serve a written notice upon the accused. It would not be out of context to note that *Baldev Singh (supra)* had not expressed any opinion on whether the provisions of Section 50 are mandatory or directory, but it was certainly held therein that that failure to inform the concerned person of his right as emanating from Sub-section (1) of Section 50, may render the recovery of the contraband suspect and the conviction and sentence of an accused bad and unsustainable in law. Now the law is well settled, and service of notice under section 50 NDPS Act, before commencing the search of an accused, is a mandatory condition, and no derogation therefrom is permissible. There is a catena of verdicts emphasizing this rule of law, the chief amongst them being *Vijaysinh Chandubhai Jadeja v State of Gujarat*⁸, which is a seminal Constitutional Bench verdict.

Article such as a bag, carried by an accused

After the decision in *Baldev Singh (supra)* the Courts have consistently held that Section 50 would only apply to search of a person and not to any bag, article or container, etc. being carried by them. In *State of Himachal Pradesh v Pawan Kumar*⁹, the Full Bench of the Supreme Court explained that it is not possible to include these articles within the ambit of the word "person" occurring in Section 50 of the Act. In a nutshell, if a search is conducted only of the article carried by an accused viz. any bag, container, briefcase or of his car, *without* there being a body search of the person, then provisions of Section 50 NDPS Act are not attracted.

Composite search

At times, search is conducted not only of the bags etc. carried by the accused, but the accused is also searched. This is ordinarily termed as a 'composite search'. If merely a bag carried by a person is searched without there being any search of his person, Section 50 of the NDPS Act will have no application. But if the bag carried by him is searched *and* his person is also searched, Section 50 of the NDPS Act will apply with full rigor. This proposition of law has been laid down in *State of Rajasthan v Parmanand*¹⁰. As a matter of prudence, Section 50 notices are issued irrespective of whether the search is composite or not.

Chance recovery

In cases where the police officers happen to stumble upon an accused carrying contraband item, without there being any *prior* information, then the strict provisions of Section 50 are inapplicable. Such chance recoveries usually take place during patrolling or routine random searches of vehicles or passengers in public transport. In *State of Punjab v Balbir Singh*¹¹ it was laid down that if there is a chance recovery of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance then the police officer, who is not empowered, should inform the empowered officer who should thereafter proceed in accordance with the provisions of the NDPS Act.

Search of a female suspect

In Delhi, in *Mamta v State of Delhi*¹² it was observed that the mandate of the provision cannot be diluted even on the ground that a female officer was not available at the time of search. In that case, even though the search was

⁸ (2011) 1 SCC 609

⁹ (2005) 4 SCC 350

¹⁰ (2014) 5 SCC 345

¹¹ *State of Punjab v Balbir Singh* (1994) 3 SCC 299

¹² Bail Application No. 2270/2021



conducted by a Woman Constable, that too in the presence of an ACP, the Court still held that the Woman Constable was not an empowered officer i.e. an officer superior in rank to a sepoy or constable, and thus bail was granted.

Search before nearest Magistrate

Again, in Delhi, the Hon'ble High Court has emphasized in *Mohd Jabir v State*¹³ that the notice under Section 50 ought to mention the fact that the accused has a legal right to be searched before the *nearest* Magistrate. It was observed that the Section 50 notice served to the applicant and co-accused incorrectly stated that they could be searched by any magistrate. The court deemed this a violation of Section 50, leading to the accused being granted bail on this ground.

Seizure and Sampling of Contraband Improper Sampling

The entire purpose of drawing a sample and testing the same is to establish the composition of the substance from which the sample is drawn. It has thus to be demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt that the sample is a true representative of the substance recovered. The manner of drawing of samples was mentioned in Standing Order 1/88 of the NCB, and it is also contained in the new NDPS Rules 2022. The Supreme Court in *Union of India v Bal Mukund*¹⁴ has given its imprimatur that fulfilling conditions of Standing Order 1/88 is the *requirement of law*. The Standing Order 1/88 mandates that the transferring of content of all packets into one

and then drawing a sample from the mixture is not permitted. Therefore, the IOs must ensure due compliance with the relevant provisions of NDPS Rules, 2022, at the time of drawing of samples. Moreover, as observed in *Gaunter Edwin Kircher v State of Goa*¹⁵, samples from each of the packets or pieces recovered should be sent for chemical examination.

Delay in sending samples to FSL

If we advert to Rule 13¹⁶ of the NDPS Rules, 2022 it stipulates that the samples drawn shall be sent to the FSL *without any delay*. Thus, no time frame has been specified. The time period of sending the samples to FSL was provided for in the erstwhile Standing Order 1/89 of the NCB. Resolving this anomaly, in *Kashif v State*¹⁷, the Court opined that it would be desirable that application under Section 52A should be made within 72 hours. Be that as it may, there is a Supreme Court verdict wherein a gap of 40 days between seizure and sending the samples to FSL was not held to be fatal, considering the fact that seals were intact¹⁸. *Dehors* this, the latest verdict of the Supreme Court in *Narcotics Control Bureau v Kashif*¹⁹ makes it abundantly explicit that any lapse or delay in compliance of Section 52A by itself would not vitiate the trial or would entitle the accused to be released on bail. This landmark order shall surely halt the instances of grant of bail for non-compliance with Section 52A alone.

Importance of FSL Form

The importance of an FSL Form has been

¹³ 2023 SCC OnLine Del 1827

¹⁴ (2009) 12 SCC 161

¹⁵ (1993) 3 SCC 145

¹⁶ 13. Despatch of sample for testing. – (1) The samples after being certified by the Magistrate shall be sent directly to any one of the jurisdictional laboratories of Central Revenue Control Laboratory, Central Forensic Science Laboratory or State Forensic Science Laboratory, as the case may be, for chemical analysis without any delay.

¹⁷ 2023:DHC:3438

¹⁸ Jarnail Singh v State of Punjab (2011) 3 SCC 521

¹⁹ 2024 INSC 1045



succinctly elucidated in *Radha Kishan v State*²⁰ wherein it was observed that it is the normal procedure that when the incriminating articles are seized and are required to be sent to the Central Forensic Science Laboratory, those articles are immediately sealed and deposited in Malkhana at the Police Station till they are taken out and sent to the Laboratory. Contemporaneously with seizure and sealing of such articles, impression of seal used on sealed articles is put on a form, commonly called, the CFSL form. This is so done because at the time of analysis of sealed packets in laboratory, the analyst concerned is able to tally seal impressions on sealed packets with those appearing on the CFSL form in order to rule out any possibility of tampering of seals on sealed packets after seizure anywhere or in transit till receipt in laboratory. The importance of the CFSL form thus cannot be over-emphasized because this document provides a valuable safeguard to an accused to ensure that no tampering has been done during the intervening period. Therefore, it cannot be gainsaid that the FSL form ought to form a part of the chargesheet or should be formally produced during trial.

Tampering of Seal

The specimen seal is used to ensure the integrity and authenticity of the samples taken from the seized contraband. The specimen of the seal is provided in the forwarding note to enable the chemical examiner to compare it with the seal on the sample and come to the conclusion that it reached the laboratory without any tampering. The purpose of putting the specimen seal impression in the seizure mahazar is to give an opportunity to the Court to verify the same and satisfy that the seized

substances reached the court without any tampering. Therefore, it is to be underscored that the whole purpose would be defeated if the CFSL form containing the specimen of the seal, is not deposited in the Malkhana, together with the sealed parcels, because only that course can provide an assurance that the seals have not been tampered with.

Examination of witness

Often, questions are asked to the police officials in the cross-examination as to whether the seal was handed over to an independent person i.e. to a person apart from the raiding team members. In this context, it would be useful to refer to *State v Bashir Ahmed Ponnuru*²¹ wherein it was held that it was not mandatory for the Investigating Police Officer to hand over the seal used by her/him for sealing the incriminating articles and the samples to a non-official immediately or soon thereafter and that the non-appearance or non-production of such a non-official who was entrusted with the seal would by itself be not fatal to the prosecution case.

Taking of Custody of Articles Seized in terms of Section 55 of NDPS Act

Ensuring sanctity of chain of custody

Section 55 of NDPS Act makes it incumbent upon the officer-in-charge of a police station, i.e. the SHO, to take charge of, and keep in safe custody all articles seized under this Act which may be delivered to him. The act of 'taking charge' is demonstrated or proved in Court only when the contraband or other articles, delivered to the SHO, bear the official seal of the SHO, without any tampering. Further, 'keeping in safe custody' is achieved when the case property is deposited to the police

²⁰ 2000 (56) DRJ (Supp) 619

²¹ 2014 SCC OnLine Del 6933



official who is in-charge of the Malkhana (*Mal* means property & *Khana* signifies space). The said police official, also known as the *Malkhana Moharrir* or MHC(M) is entrusted with the custody of evidence collected during investigation. The course of action that is ordinarily followed, to comply with Section 55, is as thus: the articles and samples seized from the accused are produced before the SHO in sealed parcels, whereafter the SHO then counter affixes his seal on the said parcels. Thereafter, the SHO summons the MHC(M) and deposits the case property for safe keeping with the latter, after making relevant entries in this regard in the Malkhana Register. The said Register is basically a Store Register wherein entry of details of case properties, articles of personal search etc. deposited as well as released, are recorded. The entries are made serial wise and date wise, obviating the possibility of manipulation. Without such entries, the statements of police officers tend to be viewed as mere *ipse dixit*. Courts have repeatedly underscored that the prosecution is obliged to prove safe custody of contraband upon seizure and have held that noncompliance would lead to acquittal. The recent case in point is *State of J&K Vs Shyam Lal*²² wherein the Hon'ble High Court has held that Section 55 of the NDPS Act was specifically introduced to deter any attempts to tamper with the contraband and the Court stressed the need for promptly transferring it to the secure storage of police stations and timely forwarding it to the Forensic

Science Laboratory (FSL). The Court further highlighted the fact that the burden lies on the prosecution to prove that these crucial steps were followed, and failure to demonstrate proper handling of contraband raises doubts about its authenticity and integrity.

Examination of witness

To obviate insinuations of tampering of case property, or of planting of contraband items, it thus becomes imperative for the SHO to ensure that at this stage of proceedings, sanctity of chain of custody is ensured. Assurance on this score can only be actualized if the counter seal of the SHO is affixed properly on the contraband, samples, and other articles, and correct entries are made in the Malkhana Register. Thus, the SHO, while entering the witness box must be aware of the date and time when the case property was produced before him, and the time when it was deposited by him with the Malkhana Moharrir. The SHO should also ensure that a counter seal has been put on all the parcels and items that were deposited in the Malkhana, and he should also ensure that all such parcels along with the seizure memo and FSL form are duly deposited. It would be prudent for the SHO to endorse his signatures along with his name and date, in the Malkhana Register evincing the factum of such a deposit. (see *Table B*)

Disposal of Case Property

It would be of utmost importance to underscore the import of Section 52 A of NDPS Act²³ which is

²² CRAA No 88/2010 decided by the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir & Ladakh

²³ 52A. Disposal of seized narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.—(1) The Central Government may, having regard to the hazardous nature, vulnerability to theft, substitution, constraint of proper storage space or any other relevant consideration, in respect of any narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, controlled substances or conveyances, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify such narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, controlled substances or conveyance or class of narcotic drugs, class of psychotropic substances, class of controlled substances or conveyances, which shall, as soon as may be after their seizure, be disposed of by such officer and in such manner as that Government may, from time to time, determine after following the procedure hereinafter specified. (2) Where any narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, controlled substances or conveyances has been seized and forwarded to the officer-in-charge of the nearest police station or to the officer empowered under section 53, the officer referred to in sub-section (1) shall prepare an inventory of such 4 [narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, controlled substances or conveyances] containing such details relating to their description, quality, quantity, mode of packing, marks, numbers or such other identifying particulars of the narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances,



titled as thus: '52-A. *Disposal of Seized Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*'. The import of the word 'disposal' in the above title, and in the provision as a whole, was expounded by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Union of India Vs Mohan Lal*²⁴. A slew of deductions flow from a perusal of the above verdict after reading it in juxtaposition with the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Seizure, Storage, Sampling and Disposal) Rules, 2022 ('NDPS Rules 2022'). A perusal of Rule 18 (2)²⁵ makes it explicit that it is only after compliance with Section 52 A (3) of NDPS Act that an application for disposal u/s 52 A of the NDPS Act can be moved. This is the first deduction.

Now, Section 52A (3) makes it abundantly clear that the application to be moved before a Magistrate is only for three purposes viz. (i) Certifying correctness of inventory of contraband prepared (ii) taking photographs of contraband item and certifying photographs as true, and (iii) allowing to draw representative samples of such contraband items and certifying the correctness of any list of samples so drawn. Thus, the application to be moved before the Ld. Magistrate is *not* for disposal/ destruction of case property. For *Disposal/*

Destruction of case property, the application has to be moved before the Drug Disposal Committee. It is the Officer empowered u/s 53 of the Act who can move such an application before the Drug Disposal Committee. This is the second deduction, and this too becomes explicit upon a reading of Rule 18 (2) of the NDPS Rules.

It would also be useful to refer to Rule 17 of the NDPS Rules, 2022²⁶ which mandate that the action of disposal of contraband can be initiated after the receipt of chemical analysis report. Thus, it is only after the receipt of FSL report that an application for disposal of contraband u/s 52 A of NDPS Act can be moved. This is the third deduction.

The above three conclusions or deductions of the author, it is hoped, would galvanize the concerned police officers to expeditiously move applications for the disposal of drugs in order to give effect to the true intention of legislature viz. to prevent the choking of storage facilities, the temptation of unscrupulous persons to indulge in pilferage and theft for sale and recirculation in the market.

controlled substances or conveyances] or the packing in which they are packed, country of origin and other particulars as the officer referred to in sub-section (1) may consider relevant to the identity of the narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, controlled substances or conveyances in any proceedings under this Act and make an application, to any Magistrate for the purpose of— (a) certifying the correctness of the inventory so prepared; or (b) taking, in the presence of such magistrate, photographs of such drugs, substances or conveyances and certifying such photographs as true; or (c) allowing to draw representative samples of such drugs or substances, in the presence of such magistrate and certifying the correctness of any list of samples so drawn. (3) Where an application is made under sub-section (2), the Magistrate shall, as soon as may be, allow the application. (4) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (1 of 1972) or the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974), every court trying an offence under this Act, shall treat the inventory, the photographs of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, controlled substances or conveyances] and any list of samples drawn under sub-section (2) and certified by the Magistrate, as primary evidence in respect of such offence.

²⁴ (2016) 3 SCC 379

²⁵ 18. Application to Magistrate. – (1) The officer empowered under section 53 of the Act or if the materials are seized by such an officer himself, he shall apply to the Magistrate under sub-section (2) of section 52A of the Act in Form-5 at the earliest to allow the application under sub-section (3) of section 52A of the Act. (2) After the Magistrate allows the application under sub-section (3) of section 52A of the Act, the officer referred to in sub-rule (1) shall preserve the certified inventory, photographs and samples drawn in the presence of the Magistrate as primary evidence for the case and submit details of the seized materials to the Chairman of the Drug Disposal Committee for a decision by the Committee on the disposal, and the said officer shall also send a copy of the details along with the seized materials to the officer-in-charge of the godown.

²⁶ 17. Officers who shall initiate action for disposal. – Any officer in-charge of a police station or any officer empowered under section 53 of the Act shall initiate action for disposal of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, controlled substances or conveyances under section 52A of the Act after the receipt of chemical analysis report.



Non-compliance of Section 52 A of NDPS Act sounds a death knell to the case of the prosecution

Although the title of Section 52 A of NDPS Act gives the impression that the provision delineates the procedure for disposal of contraband, yet in a spate of recent verdicts, the Courts have emphasized on the importance of not only disposal of contraband but also on drawing of samples of such drugs or substances in the presence of a Magistrate and certification of correctness of list of samples and of inventory prepared, in terms of Section 52 A (2) of the NDPS Act. The trend commenced primarily with the judgment of *Simarnjit Singh Vs State of Punjab*²⁷, which had alluded to the fact that non-compliance with Section 52 A of NDPS Act results in an acquittal. However, the true watershed moment arrived with the pronouncement of the seminal verdict of *Yusuf @ Asif Vs State*²⁸ wherein it was held that if it is an admitted position on record that the samples from the seized substance were not drawn in the presence of a Magistrate, and there is no material on record to prove that the Magistrate had certified the inventory of the substance seized or of the list of samples so drawn, the accused would be entitled to an acquittal. The ratio of the above judgment has contributed significantly to the rise of acquittals across the country.

Examination of Police witness

The police officers concerned are usually called upon to explain the delay, if any, caused in moving application u/s 52 A of NDPS Act before the Ld. Magistrate. The questions may also pivot around delays in sending the samples to the FSL. The proceedings of drawing samples

before the Ld. magistrates are also assayed in great detail during cross-examination.

Other Vital Procedural Safeguards

Dealing with Applications u/s 91 Cr.PC seeking summoning of Call Detail Records (CDR)

During trials, and even during investigation, defence Counsels move applications u/s 91 Cr. PC to procure CDRs of raiding team members along with Tower-wise locations, ostensibly to establish a plea of alibi or to disprove the presence of police officials at the spot. In this context, it is relevant to note that the CDRs, being electronic records, can be summoned by the accused, being documents relevant and admissible in his defence. The law regarding summoning of electronic records u/s 91 Cr.PC is thus no longer *res integra* as enunciated in *Suresh Kumar Vs Union of India*²⁹. However, it is pertinent to note that the aforesaid verdict also made it amply pellucid that the CDRs are relevant only to the extent of determining the location of officers concerned and need not contain other information concerning calls received or made from the phone numbers concerned. It was also observed that the CDRs can be given after redacting mobile telephone numbers called and details of callers. Even in *State Vs Haripa*³⁰, the Court was conscious of the fact that procuring CDRs of mobile phones of police officials including their tower wise locations, can prejudice both- their safety and privacy.

Mentioning FIR number on Investigation Documents

A common misconception that is harboured is that since it is only after the search and arrest of the accused that information is sent to the

²⁷ Criminal Appeal No 1443 of 2023 passed by the Supreme Court

²⁸ 2023 INSC 912

²⁹ 2014 SCC OnLine SC 1833

³⁰ 2023:DHC:5796



police station for registration of FIR, therefore, mentioning of FIR number on the arrest and search memos falsifies the case of the prosecution. Myriad questions are asked by the defence counsel on this aspect alone. In this context, it will be useful to refer to *Radheshyam Vs State of Haryana*³¹ wherein the Apex Court opined that mere writing of the FIR number on the arrest and search memos cannot entirely falsify them. Further, in *Bilal Ahmad Vs State*³², a witness had clarified that FIR number was added to the seizure memo after the FIR was registered, and the Court opined that subsequent adding of FIR number on the document for procedural convenience would not amount to tampering of the document.

Conclusion

To ensure that stellar prosecutions are launched and acquittals on technical grounds are obviated, it is the desideratum that meticulous adherence to entrenched provisions of law and procedure is achieved at each and every step of investigation. The Tables A to C appended below this article highlight the frequently asked questions to police officers. The list is only illustrative, and not exhaustive. It is hoped that an understanding of them, coupled with in-depth knowledge of the procedure, would enhance the overall quality of investigation of NDPS cases.

QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY PUT TO GAZETTED OFFICERS, OFFICERS INCHARGE OF POLICE STATIONS AND INVESTIGATION OFFICERS

TABLE A.

S.NO	QUESTIONS PUT TO ACP/Dy SP DURING CROSS-EXAMINATION
1.	WHETHER THE ACP ENDORSED HIS/HER SIGNATURES ('SEEN') ON THE REPORT?
2.	DID THE ACP MENTION THE FACTUM OF RECEIVING THE REPORT U/S 42 IN HIS/HER EXAMINATION IN CHIEF?
3.	WHO HAD PUT UP THE REPORT BEFORE THE ACP, AND WHEN?
4.	HAS THE ACP MENTIONED IN HIS/HER DEPOSITION THAT HE/SHE GAVE ORDERS FOR CONDUCTING RAID?
5.	DID THE ACP GIVE AN AUTHORISATION TO CONDUCT THE RAID?
6.	WAS THE AUTHORISATION IN WRITING? IF NOT, WHY?
7.	IF INFORMATION WAS RECEIVED BY THE ACP VIA TELEPHONE, WHAT STEPS WERE TAKEN BY HIM/HER?
8.	WHETHER THE REPORTS U/S 57 MENTIONED BOTH-SEIZURE AND ARREST?
9.	WHETHER THE ACP ENDORSED HIS/HER SIGNATURES ('SEEN') ON THE REPORTS?
10.	DID THE ACP MENTION THE FACTUM OF RECEIVING REPORT U/S 57 IN HIS/HER EXAMINATION IN CHIEF?
11.	DID ACP, BEING SUPERVISORY OFFICER, GIVE DIRECTIONS TO PLACE CAF, CDR & TOWER LOCATIONS OF ACCUSED ON RECORD?
12.	WHAT STEPS WERE TAKEN BY THE ACP TO NAB THE SOURCE/SUPPLIER OF CONTRABAND?
13.	WERE CDRs AND BANK DETAILS OF ACCUSED AND SUSPECTS OBTAINED? (REFER TO DELHI ANTI NARCOTIC TASK FORCE BOOKLET.)

³¹ (2001) 10 SCC 206

³² 2011 SCC OnLine Del 165


TABLE B.

S.NO	QUESTIONS PUT TO SHO _s DURING CROSS-EXAMINATION
1.	AT WHAT TIME THE CASE PROPERTY WAS PRODUCED BEFORE SHO BY THE IO?
2.	DID THE SHO VERIFY THE CONTENTS OF THE CASE PROPERTY BY OPENING THE PARCELS?
3.	DID SHO INQUIRE ABOUT THE SOURCE OF CONTRABAND FROM THE ACCUSED?
4.	WHETHER THE SEAL OF SHO HAS BEEN ISSUED FROM THE DEPARTMENT?
5.	AT WHAT TIME THE CASE PROPERTY WAS DEPOSITED WITH THE MHC(M) BY THE SHO?
6.	DID THE SHO SIGN AND ENTER HIS/HER NAME IN THE MALKHANA REGISTER?
7.	DID THE SHO PUT COUNTER SEAL ON ALL THE PARCELS AND ITEMS THAT WERE DEPOSITED IN THE MALKHANA?
8.	DID THE SHO HAND OVER ALL THE PARCELS+SAMPLES+SEIZURE MEMO+FSL FORM TO THE MALKHANA MOHRIR?
9.	WHAT IS THE PROOF THAT SHO WAS PRESENT IN THE POLICE STATION AT THE TIME OF DEPOSIT OF ITEMS IN MALKHANA?
10.	DID THE SHO PUT THE FIR NO. IN THE PARCELS AND FORMS?
11.	DID THE SHO HAND OVER THE FSL FORM TO MALKHANA MOHRIR?
12.	WHETHER YOUR STATEMENT WAS RECORDED BY THE IO IN THIS CASE OR NOT? IF SO, WHEN?

TABLE C.

S.NO	QUESTIONS PUT TO IO _s DURING CROSS-EXAMINATION
1.	DID THE IO OFFER THE ACCUSED TO BE SEARCHED IN THE PRESENCE OF A POLICE OFFICER/ HIMSELF?
2.	WAS A FEMALE ACCUSED SEARCHED IN THE PRESENCE OF A FEMALE POLICE OFFICER?
3.	WAS THE SEARCH CONDUCTED IN PRESENCE OF A GAZZETTED OFFICER WITHOUT GIVING HER/HIM AN OFFER OF SEARCH?
4.	WAS THERE DELAY IN MOVING APPLICATION U/S 52A NDPS ACT BEFORE THE LD MAGISTRATE? IF SO, WHY?
5.	WAS THERE DELAY IN SENDING THE SAMPLES TO THE FSL? IF SO, WHY?
6.	AT WHAT TIME SAMPLES WERE HANDED OVER TO THE SAMPLE CARRIER BY MHC (M) AFTER THE MHC(M) AFFIXED HIS SEALS ON IT, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEPOSITING THE SAME IN FSL?
7.	WHETHER MALKHANA REGISTER HAS BEEN PRODUCED ON RECORD? IF NOT, WHY?
8.	WHETHER ROAD CERTIFICATES HAVE BEEN PLACED ON RECORD? IF NOT, WHY?
9.	WHETHER MALKHANA REGISTER REFLECTS ENTRY OF DEPOSIT & TAKING OUT OF CONTRABAND +SAMPLES +SEIZURE MEMO+ FSL FORM.
10.	WHETHER ROAD CERTIFICATE REGISTER REFLECTS ENTRY OF TAKING OUT OF SAMPLES +SEIZURE MEMO+ FSL FORM TO FSL & RETURN ENTRY OF FSL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IN MALKHANA?

Prison Riots: Causes, Consequences, and Prevention Strategies



Md. Imran Wahab, IPS¹

Abstract

This paper addresses the serious problem of prison riots and investigates the various factors that contribute to their emergence. While it underscores that inadequate living conditions are the primary catalyst, it also analyzes additional factors such as stringent policies, overcrowding, trial delays, the denial of parole for the prisoners awaiting trial, restrictions on family visits, abrupt discontinuation of available facilities for inmates, insufficient medical care, lack of rehabilitation and mental health resources, and the delivery of inadequate or contaminated food in unhygienic environments. The situation is exacerbated by the severe measures employed by prison authorities, which intensify tensions. The violent March 2020 riot at Dum Dum Correctional Home in West Bengal, which resulted in casualties, exemplifies these pressing concerns. The paper calls for heightened awareness and action to address critical issues in correctional facilities, emphasizing the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment while advancing meaningful reforms. A compassionate approach is crucial for addressing the basic needs of prisons. This involves dealing with overcrowding, improving infrastructure, constructing new facilities, providing parole options for undertrial inmates, ensuring comprehensive medical services for addiction and mental health issues, and boosting staffing levels.

Keywords: Prison Riot, Prisoners, Inmates, Overcrowding, Parole, Prison Clashes, Jail Riot.

Introduction:

A prison or jail riot is a disruptive and violent incident that takes place inside a correctional institution. It usually involves many inmates flouting rules and causing property damage, often clashing violently with one another or with prison personnel. Controlling such scenarios

poses a significant difficulty in preserving order and safeguarding the well-being of all individuals present within the facility. The chaos of a riot can escalate quickly, making it imperative for authorities to respond swiftly and effectively to restore calm.

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The American Correctional Association's manual on the Causes, Preventive Measures, and Control Methods for Prison Riots and Disturbances describes a prison riot as an incident where a group of inmates might attack a staff member, damage state property, unite to resist authority, refuse to return to their designated cells or wards, or partake in any actions that disrupt the smooth functioning of the facility (1970:87). These situations can quickly become significant challenges for prison management and safety, highlighting

the need for effective prevention and control strategies.

Prison riots can occur for various reasons, including overcrowding, poor living conditions, inmate conflicts, lack of resources, mistreatment by staff, or dissatisfaction with institutional policies. While the specific triggers may vary from one riot to another, they often stem from deeper issues within the prison system.



*Prisoners pelting stones from inside Dumdum Jail during Prison Riot on 21 March 2020
(Source: Indian Express Photo)*



The nature of prison riots can differ greatly. In certain instances, inmates may release manifestos, while in others, they may behave like an uncoordinated mob. Some riots feature inmates turning on one another, while others are marked by organized political motives or demands. Conversely, there are riots with disarrayed leadership and internal conflicts resulting in violence. In particular situations, prisoners may cause harm to hostages, but in others, they may care for hostages by providing them with food and bedding, and there are cases where inmates abstain from taking hostages altogether, even when the option arises (A Theory of Prison Riots, Bert Useem and Peter A Kimball, Department of Sociology, University of Illinois at Chicago, January 1987).

The aftermath of a prison riot can be dire, resulting in injuries or fatalities for both inmates and staff, escapes, extensive property destruction, and major interruptions to the institution's regular functions. Effectively managing and resolving these disturbances necessitates a collaborative approach that includes prison officials, police, inmates, and occasionally, outside organizations. The complexity of these situations demands prompt and organized action to restore order and ensure the safety of all individuals involved. By working together, the various parties can help mitigate the damages and prevent future incidents, fostering a more secure environment within the correctional facility.

Key Issues:

The safety of prison personnel, inmates, and surrounding communities, coupled with the financial consequences of prison riots, highlights the essential need for effective prevention and management of such events. Significant issues include the management and command protocols during disturbances, racial

dynamics in the correctional setting, planning and renovating facilities, staffing guidelines, and methods to enhance personnel resources during riots. Addressing these concerns is vital to ensure the well-being of all involved and to mitigate the adverse effects associated with violent outbreaks within correctional institutions. Proactive strategies are necessary to maintain order and foster a secure environment.

Literature Review:

According to Useem and Kimball (1989:4), a prison riot occurs when authorities lose control over a large segment of the inmate population for a significant duration within a specific area of the facility. Riots can take place in various settings, making it challenging to pinpoint and prioritize the factors contributing to a specific incident (Adams, 1994:195). Common factors identified in case studies of prison riots suggest that "Attica is every prison, every prison is Attica."

Coyle (1991:141) discusses prison riots in Scotland during the late 1980s, noting that no single cause can be identified. Instead, multiple contributing factors often align, with one catalyst triggering the disturbance. As a result, both scholars and practitioners have acknowledged the inevitability of prison riots (Adams, 1994). In their analysis of American prison riots, Useem, Camp, and Camp (1996:16) found that even thorough planning cannot prevent all incidents. Freeman (1996:11) states that emergency planning must operate under the assumption that crises can happen unexpectedly. Therefore, the only reliable way to prevent riots may be to implement a secure environment akin to a "lock-down," a strategy largely opposed by many prison professionals in Europe and North America.

Numerous studies on prison riots highlight poor conditions as a factor, yet such conditions



are not solely responsible. Some prisons with dire conditions have avoided riots, while others with recent improvements faced disturbances. Post-World War II, North American prisons improved, yet this era also saw a rise in riots and hostage incidents.

Despite being prominent in the media and having serious consequences, research on prison riots remains limited, as indicated by Wilsnack (1976), Useem and Kimball (1989), and Adams (1994). Martin and Zimmerman (1994) point out the lack of agreement among various theories regarding riots. Wallack (1953) suggests that riots can serve a necessary purpose in confronting inhumane treatment, although some argue that such actions should not be needed. He believes riots address the harsh realities of penal institutions.

Ohlin (1956) notes that prison riots often provoke increased public concern. There is a strong correlation between prison violence and inmates' mental health issues, particularly in the U.S., where such incidents are on the rise, partly due to the confinement of mentally disturbed inmates in harmful settings (Toch & Kupers, 2007). Research shows that overcrowding is linked to higher violence and suicide rates (Paulus, 1988; Thornberry & Call, 1983).

Statistically, inmates with emotional disturbances or those receiving mental health services are more prone to violent behavior (Ditton, 1999; James & Glaze, 2006; Toch & Adams, 2002). The importation model focuses on how inmates' backgrounds and social connections influence their behavior, while recent studies emphasize the importance of specific social and environmental factors in prisons (Bottoms, 1999).

Boin and Van Duin (1995) examine the riots that

took place at the Attica and New Mexico prisons, proposing a distinct relationship between the quality of living conditions and the frequency of riots. Barak-Galantz (1983) defines a riot as an event involving many inmates resulting in significant destruction, a view echoed by Mark Colvin (1982).

Vernon Fox (1973) notes that U.S. prison riots from 1940 to 1970 typically involved violence and chaos, with scholars agreeing that they encompass violence and property damage. Contributing environmental factors can include overcrowding, idleness, insufficient resources, and poor administrative practices (American Correctional Association, 1981; Barak-Galantz, 1985; Dillingham & Montgomery, 1985). Ohlin (1956) also cites the harmful decentralization of authority among riot-prone institutions. A crucial aspect of any prison system is its operation with the implicit consent of inmates (Clemmer, 1940; Sykes, 1958; Mattick, 1972; Irwin, 1980). Inmates could potentially seize control if they choose to take that risk, particularly in environments where a small supervisory staff oversees a large inmate population, leading to the development of an informal inmate hierarchy and social structure.

Jail Breaks/Escapees/Clashes/Riots in Indian Prisons:

In 2022, India saw a notable surge in prison escapes, with a total of 257 inmates breaking free from their confinement. Out of these, 98 individuals escaped from police custody, while the remaining 159 evaded the judicial system. Fortunately, measures were taken to restore some level of order, as 113 fugitives were successfully recaptured during the year. Additionally, there were four recorded incidents where prison walls failed to keep inmates contained, resulting in jailbreaks. The year also witnessed a total of 45 clashes or

riots occurring inside correctional facilities, with Punjab reporting the highest number at 27. Maharashtra followed with 7 incidents, while Haryana reported 6 clashes. These disturbances led to injuries for 115 individuals, comprising 106 prisoners and 9 jail staff members, and resulted in the tragic death of one inmate. Notably, there were no reported incidents of gunfire in any prisons nationwide during this time. (Source: Prison Statistics India, 2022, BPR&D, New Delhi)

The reasons for jailbreaks, escapes, clashes, and riots in Indian prisons are complex and rooted in systemic issues. Overcrowding creates cramped living conditions, leading to increased tension among inmates, which often results in conflicts and unrest. Poor management, along with inadequate staffing and corruption, hampers effective supervision and fosters an environment conducive to escapes and riots. Additionally, insufficient infrastructure, such as outdated security measures and surveillance systems, worsens the situation. Harsh treatment from prison staff, limited access to necessities, and delays in the judicial process also contribute to inmate dissatisfaction, sparking collective unrest. Moreover, gang rivalries, external criminal influences, and a lack of effective rehabilitation programs significantly heighten violence and instability within prisons. Addressing these challenges requires a thorough reform of prison management, infrastructure, and rehabilitation initiatives.

Causes of Prison Riot:

Prison riots ultimately arise from various interacting factors. While reports frequently cite poor living conditions as a triggering element, these conditions alone do not fully explain the occurrence of riots. A range of underlying issues fosters unrest in prisons, creating a

volatile environment that can lead to significant disturbances.

Overcrowding is a significant issue, as it heightens competition among inmates for scarce resources, resulting in greater tension and unrest. Prison staff may struggle to maintain order in such unsafe conditions, especially when overwhelmed. Poor living conditions, such as substandard food, lack of family contact, inadequate medical care, and unsanitary environments, contribute to inmates' dissatisfaction and can motivate them to engage in protests.

Gang violence and conflicts within the prison can also provoke riots, particularly when rival factions vie for power and control. Additionally, staff mistreatment can breed resentment among inmates, potentially resulting in protests or full-blown riots. Policy shifts that restrict family visits or leave issues unresolved can further incite discontent and encourage collective action.



(Clockwise from top) Smoke billows out of the Dum Dum Correctional Home; debris being cleared after the incident; an inmate struggles with police officers on 21 March 2020, (Source: Times of India).

External factors may exacerbate instability within prisons, such as community tensions



and broader political unrest. The presence of contraband, including illegal drugs and weapons, also plays a role. Furthermore, a lack of effective communication between inmates and prison authorities fosters mistrust and misunderstandings, laying the groundwork for unrest.

Delays in court appearances for bail hearings and trials - particularly due to court closures or postponements stemming from extraordinary circumstances like the COVID-19 pandemic - can lead to inmate discontent and serve as a catalyst for riots. Similarly, inconsistencies and delays in granting parole can create frustration and unrest, especially when pretrial detainees are denied bail opportunities.

Such situations can disrupt social, racial or communal harmony within the prison, provoking negative sentiments among different inmate groups and ultimately resulting in violent conflicts that escalate into riots. Maintaining unity of purpose and effectively addressing grievances are essential in preventing such turmoil.

Some Instances of Prison Riots:

Throughout history, various prison riots have made a significant impact, marked by extreme violence, widespread destruction, and lasting consequences. The dangerous nature of these events is evident, with many instances resulting in significant loss of life. Here is a summary of notable prison riots that have become ingrained in our memory:

- i. Carandiru Massacre (1992) - Carandiru Penitentiary, São Paulo, Brazil:

A police intervention aimed at stopping a riot following a fight between inmate factions led to the deaths of at least 111 inmates and injuries

to 37 others. The conflict, involving 2,069 prisoners against just 15 guards, lasted three hours and was marked by severe human rights violations and excessive force, with no police injuries reported.

- ii. La Sabaneta Prison Riot (1994) - La Sabaneta Prison, Maracaibo, Venezuela:

Around 108 inmates perished in riots fueled by poor living conditions and gang rivalries. Overcrowded and lacking necessities, the prison became a battleground after gangs set part of it ablaze and attacked fleeing inmates. Estimates of casualties vary, with some sources reporting over 150 fatalities. This riot underscored the inhumane treatment prevalent in Venezuelan prisons.

- iii. Pulau Senang Settlement (1963) - Singapore:

Created to alleviate overcrowding, Pulau Senang was initially a reform initiative but devolved into violence in July 1963 due to reports of abuse. A riot on July 12 led to the deaths of the superintendent and three officials. The aftermath included a lengthy trial resulting in 18 murder convictions and other sentences for riot participants.

- iv. New Mexico State Penitentiary Riot (1980) - Santa Fe, USA:

Considered one of the most violent prison riots in American history, this incident unfolded on February 2 and 3, 1980. Inmates seized full control of the Santa Fe facility, taking twelve officers hostage. The turmoil led to the deaths of 33 inmates and left more than 200 others injured before law enforcement managed to restore order. While seven officers sustained



serious injuries during the ordeal, fortunately, there were no fatalities among the staff. The events over those two days remain a stark reminder of the dangers that can erupt within correctional institutions.

v. Dumdum Central Correctional Home (2020)
- West Bengal, India:

On March 21, inmates at Dum Dum Central Jail clashed with officials using makeshift weapons amid frustrations over COVID-19 restrictions. The unrest led to 5 reported deaths, 28 injuries, and extensive property damage, including an attempted prison break and fire-setting, prompting a large police response. The facility, meant for 3,000 inmates, housed approximately 3,900, exacerbating tensions. These events highlight the volatility and consequences of prison uprisings across different contexts.

The riot at Dumdum Correctional Home stemmed from a combination of systemic issues and specific triggering events. A pivotal factor, in my opinion, was an unexpected directive from higher authorities that revoked visitation rights for inmates, severing their ties with family members waiting outside. This abrupt change incited considerable emotional turmoil and frustration among the prisoners.



Firefighters try to put out a fire at Dum Dum Correctional Facility on March 21, the first day of a two-day standoff between inmates and security personnel| PTI

Additionally, the facility was plagued by severe overcrowding, housing nearly four thousand inmates in an environment ill-equipped to manage such numbers. This situation was further exacerbated by the fact that approximately 75% of the population were undertrial prisoners who were not granted parole during the COVID-19 pandemic, as per existing rule, while convicted inmates enjoyed temporary releases.

The poor infrastructure of the correctional home compounded these issues, making it difficult to maintain basic living standards and escalating tensions among the inmates. The suspension of regular court hearings during the pandemic intensified frustrations, particularly for undertrial prisoners, who felt trapped in a stagnant legal situation, leading to profound feelings of helplessness and anger.

In this context, the sudden termination of prisoner-family meetings became a critical flashpoint that ignited the unrest. The inability to connect with loved ones during such a traumatic and uncertain period likely pushed existing frustrations to a breaking point, resulting in a violent rebellion. This incident underscores the urgent need for effective communication and support systems for prisoners, especially in times of crisis, to prevent such escalations from occurring.

Lessons Learnt from The Riot at Dumdum Correctional Home:

The uprising at the Dumdum Correctional Home provides several vital lessons for prison administration and the broader correctional system. These lessons underscore the importance of proactive measures, transparent communication, and systemic reforms to mitigate the chances of such incidents occurring in the future.



1. Importance of Effective Communication and Understanding Inmate Needs:

Sudden and unilateral decisions, such as the abrupt cancellation of visitation rights, can lead to emotional distress and escalate tensions. Maintaining open lines of communication about any policy changes, along with offering alternatives like virtual family visits during crises, could help prevent unrest. It is essential for prison authorities to recognize the importance of maintaining inmates' connections with their families, particularly during challenging periods, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Tackling Overcrowding Issues: The issue of severe overcrowding was a significant factor in the Dumdum riot, as the facility held 3,900 inmates while its designed capacity was only 3,000. This overpopulation exacerbates tensions, complicates effective inmate management, and worsens living conditions. Urgent measures must be implemented to address overcrowding, including expediting trials, expanding parole options, and considering alternative sentencing for non-violent offenders.

3. Ensuring Fair Parole Policies: The disparity in the treatment of convicted prisoners granted temporary parole, in contrast to undertrial prisoners who comprised 75% of the inmate population, created feelings of unfairness and resentment. It is crucial to revise parole policies to promote equity and consistency, particularly during emergencies, to prevent divisions among the inmate population.

4. Infrastructure Enhancements: The recent unrest was primarily driven by inadequate infrastructure, as substandard facilities fail to provide the essential conditions for

humane living. To avert similar incidents and safeguard the well-being of inmates and staff alike, it is imperative to invest in modernizing prisons, improving sanitation, and enhancing security protocols.

5. Ongoing Judicial Proceedings: The disruption of court hearings during the pandemic left numerous undertrial detainees in a troubling legal limbo. It is essential to maintain consistent access to the judicial system, even in times of crisis. Implementing virtual court sessions could serve as an effective solution to address this concern.

6. Preventive Conflict Resolution Strategies: The recent riot underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing inmate grievances before they escalate into violence. Establishing grievance resolution mechanisms and engaging trained counsellors to mediate disputes while providing psychological assistance can significantly mitigate the risk of conflict.

7. Learning from International Incidents: Analyzing incidents like the La Sabaneta Prison Riot in Venezuela underscores the global repercussions of ignoring prison conditions. The Dumdum riot starkly illustrates the grave consequences that can arise when problems such as overcrowding, insufficient infrastructure, and poor management are disregarded. These events serve as critical reminders that failing to address the realities within correctional facilities can lead to significant unrest and violence. The implications extend beyond individual prisons, emphasizing the urgent need for reform in the prison system to ensure safety and improve living conditions for inmates worldwide. Recognizing and

addressing these issues is essential for preventing future crises.

Leveraging these insights, prison officials can create a more empathetic and effective correctional framework. This approach aims to minimize the risk of future disturbances while promoting an atmosphere that supports rehabilitation and enhances safety. By prioritizing understanding and improvement within the system, authorities can address the root causes of unrest, leading to a more harmonious environment for inmates and staff alike. Ultimately, fostering a culture of compassion and efficacy within correctional facilities not only benefits the individuals incarcerated but also contributes to the overall safety and integrity of society.



Dum Dum Prison Riot, 21 March 2020 (Source: Times of India)

The findings from the executive inquiry into the riot at the Dum Dum correctional facility have not yet been made public. As a result, I am unable to provide any specific details from the report pertaining to this incident. The absence of available findings restricts my capacity to communicate any insights or conclusions drawn from the investigation. Until the official release of these findings occurs, I am unable to furnish further information regarding the event or its related contexts. Consequently, I await any updates that may allow for public disclosure.

My analysis is based on my research, a survey of relevant literature, reports from both print and digital media, as well as my personal experiences and conversations with officials from the prison department who observed and experienced the riot firsthand.

Tackling Prison Riots:

An essential strategy for effective riot control in prisons is fostering open communication between inmates and officers. Trained negotiators can employ de-escalation techniques to promote peace during disturbances.

In the event of a riot, implementing emergency response plans is crucial for ensuring safety. Collaboration between law enforcement and emergency services, including specialized teams, is vital. A successful method for managing violence involves isolating rioters by sealing off affected areas while containing other sections.

Rather than resorting to excessive force, it is better to utilize non-lethal methods and seek assistance from fellow correctional and police officers, particularly those with specialized training. If necessary, a third-party mediator can facilitate fair negotiations. Addressing underlying issues like overpopulation and substandard living conditions is also critical for long-term stability.

Following an incident, a thorough review can reveal shortcomings in prison management, paving the way for comprehensive reforms and improved crisis intervention training for staff. Regular drills will better prepare personnel for proactive responses, and collaboration among prison officials, police, and stakeholders is essential for an effective response.



Preparation should involve designing comprehensive riot plans and establishing a command structure. Training programs must include strategic tactics and mental readiness, focusing on effective monitoring by trained staff and differentiating between types of unrest. Conflict resolution can be achieved through both direct force and patient negotiation. After a riot, it is essential to enhance staff morale, provide emotional support, and learn from past experiences to refine security strategies.

Prevention of Prison Riots:

Throughout my more than four years of service as the Special Inspector General, followed by my role as Inspector General of Police in the prisons department of West Bengal, I engaged in numerous in-depth discussions with experienced colleagues regarding critical matters related to the custody and treatment of prisoners. From these conversations, a common understanding emerged: the utmost importance of fostering a tranquil environment within prisons. Ensuring order is vital, not only to fulfill public expectations but also to establish a supportive setting that promotes rehabilitation initiatives. In the absence of peace, it becomes exceedingly challenging to engage productively with inmates and facilitate their reintegration into society.

We noted a significant mistake by some prison authorities regarding their method of suddenly dismantling the semi-official self-governing systems in overcrowded prisons, where inmate numbers have become unmanageable. These semi-official systems serve as informal mechanisms of control and oversight, often directed by influential inmates, and frequently receive implicit backing from prison staff. Such governance structures typically arise in facilities beset by overcrowding and inadequate management, where insufficient

staffing and limited resources hinder the formal administration's capacity to maintain discipline and order. The abrupt removal of these informal systems can exacerbate existing challenges in these struggling institutions.

While the choice to eliminate these semi-official self-governing structures may seem reasonable, a more cautious approach would be to involve key staff members and important prisoners in the transition, ensuring there are sufficient prison officers to manage the large inmate population before starting the process of dismantling the previous system, particularly in central prisons. Including prisoners in the process of dismantling the old system could facilitate a more seamless and beneficial outcome. By upholding a secure prison environment and closely supervising influential inmates, authorities can mitigate the chances of future disturbances. This strategy would create a regulated atmosphere that minimizes the risk of predatory behavior among inmates while improving formal governance and oversight.

To promote a peaceful atmosphere, improving living conditions in prisons is essential. This involves alleviating overcrowding through the construction of additional facilities and increasing the capacity of current ones. It is vital to provide sufficient medical and mental health care and to treat all inmates with respect. Measures should also be implemented to reduce misconduct by prison staff, coupled with adjusting staffing levels according to the inmate population. Furthermore, ensuring access to nutritious food, clean drinking water, and proper bathing facilities is critical for maintaining the well-being of all individuals in prison.

Improving communication between inmates and officials is crucial. This includes organizing



regular personal and digital meetings for prisoners with their family members, offering quality free legal aid for those who cannot afford it, and allowing fines to be paid on behalf of low-income prisoners. Additionally, establishing recreational facilities, creating more open prisons for both genders, and facilitating regular family visits are important steps. Finally, ensuring timely court hearings and treating undertrial prisoners with the same privileges as convicts, such as the possibility of parole, would greatly enhance prison security.

Post Prison Riot Steps:

When a riot occurs in a jail, the immediate priority is to restore order and prevent future incidents. This can be achieved by implementing strict security protocols, such as confining inmates to their cells, conducting thorough searches for contraband, and keeping track of each prisoner's whereabouts. Urgent medical responses are essential, including the swift evacuation of individuals needing advanced care.

A crucial component of dealing with the aftermath of the riot is conducting a thorough investigation that includes interviews with inmates and staff members. It is essential to identify and hold accountable those inmates involved in the violence, while also examining any instances of staff misconduct or mismanagement. Additionally, offering counseling and support is imperative to create an environment that promotes healing and recovery for all affected individuals. This multifaceted approach aims to address accountability, ensure justice, and facilitate a path toward rebuilding trust and restoring a sense of safety within the facility.

To effectively tackle the underlying causes of unrest, significant reforms in the prison

system are needed. This includes addressing overcrowding issues and ensuring rehabilitation programs are in place. Maintaining open lines of communication among prison staff and all parties involved is essential during this transition. Additionally, emergency plans should be reviewed, and staff should receive training in crisis management, conflict resolution, and de-escalation techniques.

To ensure that reforms are enduring, it is crucial to ground them in comprehensive analysis and to maintain ongoing evaluation of their effectiveness. By identifying emerging challenges and implementing proactive strategies, the aim should be to foster an environment that emphasizes rehabilitation and security. Through the thoughtful execution of these organized approaches, the correctional facility can develop a solid plan for restoring stability after any disruptions. Continuous oversight combined with strategic planning will ultimately support the overarching goal of creating a safer and more rehabilitative atmosphere for all involved.

Conclusion:

Prison riots highlight a significant issue surrounding the instability in correctional facilities, primarily stemming from overcrowding, poor living conditions, and instances of abuse among inmates and between staff and inmates. To protect the welfare of all individuals involved, it is crucial to address the root causes and introduce solutions aimed at preventing future disturbances. Effective preventive measures should focus on reducing overcrowding, building new correctional facilities, increasing staff numbers, and ensuring fair treatment of inmates. Moreover, it is essential to enhance rehabilitation programs, provide treatment for drug addictions and mental health issues, facilitate bail for those awaiting trial, and



expand opportunities for open prisons. A comprehensive strategy is necessary, balancing the management of conflicts with the need to confront the underlying issues of unrest. This perspective is supported by Austin MacCormick's statement that meaningful prison reform can only be achieved through systemic improvements in the prison environment. By implementing these strategies, we can work towards a safer and more humane correctional system that benefits both inmates and staff.

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Prevalence of Psychiatric Morbidity among Juvenile Delinquents in Observation Homes: A Multi-Centric Study



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Abstract

The worrying rise in juvenile delinquency is a result of a complex society. Delinquency refers to criminal activity by children under the age of 18. Delinquent behaviour is mostly caused by poor socioeconomic status, peer pressure, and mental health concerns, among other things. Observation homes are the temporary harbor for the delinquents during pendency of trial by the children's court. However, delinquents in the observation homes are suffering from severe mental health issues today. The major objective of this study was to find out the prevalence of psychiatric morbidity among the juvenile delinquents in the observation homes in 10 Indian states. The study has been conducted in Ten Indian states, visiting 20 observation homes. The study is based on the records and files maintained by the mental health counselors of the studied observation homes using the Linkert scale. Data has also been collected from the other staff members of the observation homes with analysis conducted using SPSS software. The study found Conduct disorder (13.4%) Anxiety and depression (21.5%) Anorexia Nervosa (5.7%), Neuroses (7.6%), Mild Mental Disorder (5.7%) and pervasive developmental disorder (11.7%) among the delinquents. The study also found that 23.8% delinquents have short tempers, and 14.2% have inferiority complex like behavioral issues. The Indian juvenile justice system must focus on mental health issues first. Delinquents from observation homes struggle with a range of mental health conditions, including neuroses, oppositional defiant disorder, mild mental illness, etc. Delinquents need to undergo routine assessment and screening procedures, and counselors must have updated knowledge to recognize any early indications of mental health. A repetition of offenses might result from unsuccessful counseling.

Key words: Mental health, Observation homes, Delinquents, Behavior, Counseling

Introduction

Delinquency, often known as juvenile delinquency, refers to the behaviour of children or teenagers that is deemed to violate societal

standards and laws. Research indicates that many juvenile offenders have higher rates of psychiatric disorders compared to non-

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offending youth. Delinquency among young people is a complex issue in India, as it is in many other nations, with numerous underlying reasons. According to psychologists, certain vulnerable children may develop self-esteem, anxiety, and tension disorders in an unavoidable situation, and these children may develop a sense of inferiority complex, low self-esteem, and feelings of worthlessness in their lives¹. Gradually, these children may become socially isolated, neglected, and marginalized, be exploited and abused in their lifetime, and become delinquents². When a juvenile (under the age of 18) engages in actions that are potentially dangerous to society, against the law they are referred to as delinquents or children in conflict with the law. Delinquency refers to all illegal activities including theft, rape, robbery, dacoit, assault, and drug trafficking for financial and other gains³. The National Crime Records Bureau report says 74.7 adolescents in 2019 were involved in murder, rape, and assault only. Over the last thirty years (1980–2000), handling delinquency cases informally has decreased. Observation homes mean a temporary harbor for the delinquent child until the children's court (Juvenile Justice Board) gives a verdict about the crime committed by the child, if any.

Indian Child Care Institutions (CCIs) have three tiers. 1. Children's home (for the orphan children) 2. Observation homes (for the under-trial delinquents) and 3. Special homes (for the convicted delinquents). However, Indian observation homes (temporary stay for the delinquents to face the trial by the juvenile justice board) have come under criticism over the last 30 years for their mismanagement and are facing serious functional issues. Every year, the majority of the delinquents escape from the observation homes sometimes killing the security guards^{2,3}. According to India's National Mental Health

Survey of 2015–2016, the prevalence of all psychiatric illnesses among 13–17 (general youth) year olds is around 7.3%. Studies have found prevalent mental health issues among delinquents, especially aggressive and violent behaviour common^{4,5}. It is also revealed that imprisoned juveniles were found to have at least one diagnosable major mental health issue, including Neuroses, Hyperkinesis, Suicidal tendencies, etc., in observation homes^{5,6}. Suicidal tendency seems more common among boys under detain. Delinquents found harming themselves are perversely suffering from emotional disorders and insecurity, as the study found. According to published research, conduct disorder (40.9%–64.7%), mood disorder (10%–25%), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD (4.1%–19.2%), substance use disorders (40.2%–50.4%), anxiety disorders (30%–38%), disruptive behaviour disorders (45%–55%), and mood disorders (7.3%–13.9%) are all common among detained delinquents^{4,7,8}. Further, it has also been observed that the prevalence rates of Conduct Disorder and Oppositional Defiant Disorder among delinquents ranged from 40%–90% and 35%–65%, respectively^{9,10}. Substance use, particularly alcohol and drug addiction, is a major concern among India's delinquent youth. Drug and alcohol abuse can impair judgment and raise the chance of criminal behaviour.

In addition, it is also noted that co-morbidity issues like panic disorder, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive disorder are pervasive disorders found among certain delinquents involved in serious crimes¹¹. Family background, peer group influence, conflicts, and the media are the key reasons for deviant behaviour among children^{3,1}. Treatment and non-child-friendly behaviour by the staff at childcare institutions are also sometimes responsible

for the development of mental health issues among the inmates¹². Race and ethnicity also play some role in the etiology of the mental health issue among detainees, as experts opined. Study also showed delinquency has a bidirectional association (delinquency and mental health issues go together)⁸. The current paper aims to reveal the mental health status of the delinquents staying in the selected observation homes in 10 states in India.

Methods

The current multi-centric study was conducted in 10 Indian states, including Karnataka, Maharashtra, Haryana, Delhi, Assam, Jharkhand, Manipur, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, and Madhya Pradesh. Observation homes were selected randomly from each state after consulting the concerned authority. The study team has visited around 20 observation homes (two from each state) in the above district to find out the functional and health status of the delinquents housed there. There were 496 delinquents (aged between 6 and 18 years) in the visited observation homes, and 105 children had different mental and behavioural health issues, as per the records. The study team interacted with the other staff members

of the observation homes too. Mainly, the team also met 20 counselors' who have been working in the selected observation homes over the last few years, and the team had an in-depth discussion with them. Also, the study team met the other staff for an interaction. The current analysis was exclusively based on the data and findings maintained by the in-house counselors of every observation home over the period using a mental health scale with a five-point Likert scale, etc. Those data have been procured by the study team for analysis. Also, the study has used a structured questionnaire to get that data from the counselor and other staff, including the wardens, on the mental health issues of the children. The study was conducted between 2021 and 2022, and the data has been analyzed using SPSS software (IBM 18 version). A t-test is also done. ICD-10 (clinical description and diagnostic guidelines) of the WHO have been used for the study. Children living in the observation homes for the last 1 or 2 years (pending trial) and above the age of 10 were the inclusion criteria. IEC permission taken. The study was funded by the Bureau of Police Research and Development, New Delhi. Professional help from the clinical experts was also taken by the author.

Results

Table 1: Diagnostic Categories of Psychological Morbidity found among the Delinquents

SL	ICD 10 Diagnosis	Present n(52)	Border Line n(17)	P value*
1	Conduct Disorder	7(13.4)*	3(17.6)	0.12
2	Attention-Deficit	6(11.5)	2(11.7)	0.01
3	Anxiety and Depression	11(21.5)	3(17.6)	0.11
4	Anorexia Nervosa	3(5.7)	2(11.7)	0.43
5	Violence and Recidivism	3(5.7)	0	0.05
6	Neuroses	4(7.6)	0	1.00
7	Mild Mental Disorder	0	3 (5.7)	0.14
8	Opposition Defense Order	4(7.6)	3(17.6)	0.04



SL	ICD 10 Diagnosis	Present n(52)	Border Line n(17)	P value*
9	Suicidal tendency	4(7.6)	2(11.7)	0.41
10	ADHD	2(3.8)	0	0.30
11	Pervasive Developmental Disorder	0	2(11.7)	0.11
12	Major Depressive Disorder	1(2.0)	0	0.01
13	Agoraphobia	4(7.6)	0	0.14
14	Total number of children diagnosed with psychopathology	52(99.7)	17(9.6)	0.31

*In Percentage

**Significant at, p value <0.05

(Sources: Observation Homes under Study)

Table 2: Other Behavioral Issues Found with the Children of Observation Homes

SL	Behavioral Issues	Present (n 21)	Border Line (n 15)	P value**
1	Short temperance	5(23.8)*	5(33.3)	0.02
2	Aggressive Behavior	3(14.2)	3(20.0)	0.30
3	Low self esteem	2(9.5)	0	0.40
4	Inferiority Complex	3(14.2)	4(26.6)	0.01
5	Emotional Problems	0	3(20.0)	0.05
6	Adjustment Disorder	8(38.0)	0	0.21
	Total	21(99.7)	15(99.0)	0.31

*In Percentage

** Significant at, p value <0.05

(Sources: Observation Homes under Study)

Table 3: Psychological Morbidity and Age Group

Age	N	Mean	S.D	t vale	df	Sig.	Result
6-10	21	259.5	37.4	1.67	91	0.041	NS
10-18	48	248.8	34.5				

Table 4: Counseling Methods at Observation Homes

Profiling attitude and aspirations of the delinquents			
Responses		Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	16	80.0
	No	4	20.0
	Total	20	100.0



Mapping behavioral issues			
		Frequency	Percentage
2	Yes	12	60.0
	No	8	40.0
Cognitive and personality assessment			
		Frequency	Percentage
3	Yes	14	70.0
	No	6	30.0
Primary prevention			
		Frequency	Percentage
4	Yes	15	75.0
	No	5	25.0
Diagnostic vocational aptitude			
		Frequency	Percentage
5	Yes	13	65.5
	No	7	35.5
Organizing family therapy sessions			
		Frequency	Percentage
6	Yes	11	55.0
	No	9	45.0
Group therapy sessions			
		Frequency	Percentage
7	Yes	15	75.0
	No	5	25.0

(Sources: Observation Homes under Study)

Discussion

The major aim of the study is to find out the mental health issues of the delinquents in observation homes who are facing trial. Because of their extreme vulnerability, maintaining the mental health of juveniles is a critical issue. Throughout their lives, these children are exposed to a variety of risky situations. It has also been proven that certain socio-cultural determinants have a strong and close link with the delinquency and mental health issues of children.³ The socio-demographic data reveals that the majority of delinquents come from families where the parents have either no formal education or

only primary-level schooling. Moreover, most of the parents of the delinquents (77%) work in the unorganized sector. Next, 32% of children are orphans and street children, and 7% are from families with a criminal history. Also, most of the children (71%) are from poor, excluded, and marginalized communities^{1,3}. Parents' low income, poor school achievement, bad peer groups, Socioeconomic instability, addictions at an early age, a lack of good social support, and network crises in society also lead to increased youth offenders.¹ From the interactions with the counselors it is noted that there are no such



big differences regarding mental health issues among the delinquents regarding gender, age, family type, etc.,⁴. This study found that (Table 1): Conduct Disorder (13.4%), Neuroses (7.6%), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (7.6%), Mild Mental Disorder (5.7%), ADHD (3.8%), Anxiety, and Depression (21.5%) Suicide Tendency (7.6%) among the delinquents of the observation homes, and these findings have a high consistency with other studies.^{9,10,12}

It is important to note that among male juvenile offenders, anxiety disorders have a higher prevalence rate ⁴. The findings of the Report of the National Centre for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice (2006) have revealed that 73% of juveniles experience various mental health issues under detention conditions. An elevated rate of anxiety and depression among adolescent girls was also noted in the above report. Moreover, it is found that juveniles who experience various mental health issues have been exposed to different types of traumatic conditions. Some delinquents met the criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder and multiple victimizations.⁷

This study (Table 2) also observed the prevalence of certain behavioral-related issues like short temper (23.8%), low self-esteem (9.5%), and inferiority complex (14.2%) among the delinquents at the studied observation homes.¹²⁻¹⁴ The connection between short temper and low self-esteem among disadvantaged youth has been linked to antisocial behaviour. On the other hand, researchers have suggested a tenuous link between depressive symptoms and delinquency, and some findings say there is no link between criminal behaviour and symptoms of anxiety among children ^{8, 1}. Also, it has been found that there is a possible link between depressive symptoms and an

adolescent's relatively high or low delinquent behaviour. High levels of anxiety symptoms may cause adolescents to act out a little more. However, other findings indicated that there was no substantial correlation between various depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, or the delinquent's issue in the case of girls.^{15,16} This study demonstrates that there is no such key difference in the mean of the mental health of the delinquents by age group, and the calculated 't' value (1.67) is less than the table value (1.71) at 0.05 significant levels (Table 3). In this issue, more studies are required.

The study has also found that certain children are facing corporal punishment by the staff of the institution, and hence they might have developed certain mental health issues over the period of time. ³ Moreover, due to delays in the trial, children are unnecessarily spending days at observation homes and mingling with other delinquents who are involved in the heinous crime, and this study has also found the same issue ⁷. In the discussion with the counselors, it was noted that the counselors (Table 4) are using cognitive and personality assessment, group therapy, and family therapy approaches. However, it is also revealed that most of the counselors are not well trained or qualified enough, and most of them are working on a contractual basis. Due to unfruitful counselling, sometimes delinquents commit repeated offences once they come out on bail or are acquitted by the Juvenile justice court due to the lack of solid evidence, as opined by certain staff.¹⁴ Next, The data has provided that tobacco was the most commonly used substance among juveniles, with 21% reporting its use, followed by alcohol at 25%, and inhalants like whitener at 9%. It is noteworthy that none of them exhibited dependence patterns in their substance use. Interestingly, substance use was more prevalent among juveniles under



conflict of law compared to those under care and protection. This could be due to various factors such as stress, peer influence, lack of proper guidance or supervision, and exposure to risky environments¹⁰.

Creative activities are critical to shaping children's mental growth and development. Creative activities inspire and motivate children to come out of their mental stress. It has been found that most of the observation homes are conducting drawing, painting, handicrafts, sports, and cultural programmes to inspire delinquents with mental health issues and help them make positive changes in their lives³. However, the impact of such programmes is yet to be known. They also need digital-driven vocational training as far as their future is concerned⁵.

It is suggested that counselors' need regular capacity-building programmes to map and meticulously record children's mental health right from the beginning, provide appropriate scientific counselling, and refer them to higher medical institutes for treatment if required on priority basis¹³. The study advises that some need-based modern methods like integrated co-occurring treatment, family integrative transition, multi-systemic therapy, wraparound approach, and multidimensional treatment foster care need to be adopted by the counselors' for delinquents¹⁵. In resource-poor settings, childcare institutes may seek help from local medical colleges for advanced treatment or training. The management must create a child-friendly environment and provide group support to reduce such problems among delinquents. Children need to be allowed to be in touch with their parents. Modern creative activities need to be adopted by every observation home in the country.

Children who are abused need more community attention. The return of the juvenile to the mainstream community reveals a tough process as stigma leaves a trail⁵. Many child delinquents have experienced trauma, such as abuse, neglect, or witnessing violence. Implement trauma-informed care approaches that recognize the impact of trauma on behavior and provide appropriate support and interventions. Implement diversion programs that offer alternatives to formal court processing for minor offenses. These programs often include community service, restitution, or participation in counseling or educational programs. Encourage the development of positive peer relationships through group therapy, support groups, and peer mentoring programs. Positive peer relationships can provide social support and influence behavior in a constructive manner. Implement diversion programs that offer alternatives to formal court processing for minor offenses. These programs often include community service, restitution, or participation in counseling or educational programs¹⁶.

Interventions that integrate mental health treatment with juvenile justice services need to have promising results in reducing recidivism and improving long-term outcomes for these young individuals. The current rehabilitation process is a very debatable issue in juvenile cases. Observation homes need to have all basic facilities first. Community-based rehabilitation is to be given first priority by the juvenile justice system in India. Evidence-based, multi-systematic behavioral therapy is the need of the hour. Civilized society finds it stiff to manage the problem of the re-entry of those inmates into the active community². Such children must be under constant monitoring. An early detection of mental health issues is very vital. Hence, it is suggested that the



Government needs to take action to appoint highly qualified counselors like M.Sc., graduates in psychology subject rather MSW (Master of Social Work) graduates.

The management of observation homes must ensure that mental health services do not fail to address children's immediate health needs due to diagnostic restrictions in the given setting. The capacity of the counselor needs to increase through regular training programmes. Local medical colleges and NGOs can help here⁹. All services inside the observation homes must be child-friendly and as per JJ Act 2015. Warden and counselors must be with good cooperation. The staff opined combating delinquency necessitates a multifaceted approach that emphasizes prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation². Quality education, vocational training, counselling services, and job prospects should all be prioritized. It is also critical to strengthen the juvenile justice system and ensure the application of child protection legislation in order to successfully handle delinquency concerns among observation homes in India. Today Cybercrime has been a significant concern in India due to the increased use of technology and social media. Provisions of the JJ Act, 2015 must be properly implemented. Delinquent youth may engage in online bullying, hacking, identity theft, and the distribution of explicit information¹⁷.

The major limitation of the study is that it is based on the data maintained by the working counselors of the observation homes, and the study is partially cross-sectional. The accuracy of such data and documents is quite unknown. Gender differences were not considered in the study. Language in the different states was also an issue. It is suggested that a future study be conducted in other states and focus on the correlation between children's socio-economic

background and specific mental health issues to avoid repeated offences in the future. More empirical data on such mental health issues among delinquents is also a need of the hour to avoid repeated offences among delinquents, especially gender-specific associations.

Conclusion

The study found that delinquent children from the observation homes are facing various mental health issues, ranging from moderate to severe, and some of them are borderline. Neuroses, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, and mild mental disorders are most commonly found among delinquents. Also, delinquents were found to have short tempers and violent behaviour. The juvenile justice system's initial responsibility should be to detect the mental health problems of juveniles. Not all; only a few delinquents need immediate advanced clinical medical care, as the study found, and others need normal, good mental health care. Above all, a child-friendly environment inside the observation homes is highly essential for the different stakeholders. Regular assessment and screening processes are very necessary for all delinquents. The counselor needs modern training with the help of local NGOs or medical colleges to identify early mental health symptoms among delinquents. Poor or failed counselling may lead to repeated offences by the child after being released from the observation homes. More studies are required to know how delinquency leads to mental health issues.

Statement on patient consent: The paper is based on the data maintained by the working mental health counselors of the visited observation homes and procured the same. The team did not meet the children. So, no patient consent is required. Institutional ethical clearance was obtained from the Mysore



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conflict of interest.

END NOTE

SL	Diagnosis	Features
1	Conduct Disorder	Conduct Disorder (CD) is a behavioral and emotional disorder that typically emerges in childhood or adolescence. It is characterized by a persistent pattern of violating societal norms, rules, and the rights of others.
2	Attention-Deficit	Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development.
3	Anxiety and Depression	Anxiety disorders involve excessive worry, fear, or apprehension about everyday situations. Depression, also known as major depressive disorder, is characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness etc.,
4	Anorexia Nervosa	Anorexia nervosa is a serious eating disorder characterized by an intense fear of gaining weight and a distorted body image, leading to extreme efforts to control weight and food intake.
5	Violence and Recidivism	Violence: Violence refers to the use of physical force with the intent to cause harm. Recidivism: Recidivism is the tendency for individuals to re-offend or return to criminal behavior after they have been released from incarceration or completed a sentence.
6	Neuroses	Neuroses refer to a category of mental health disorders characterized by distressing emotional symptoms that are out of proportion to any apparent cause or stressor.
7	Mild Mental Disorder	-----
8	Opposition Defense Order(OOD)	ODD is characterized by a pattern of hostile, disobedient, and defiant behavior toward authority figures, such as parents, teachers, or other adults.
9	Suicidal tendency	Suicidal tendencies, also known as suicidal ideation, refer to thoughts, feelings, or behaviors related to ending one's own life. These can range from fleeting thoughts of death to more concrete plans or attempts.
10	ADHD	Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neuro developmental disorder that affects individuals' ability to sustain attention, control impulses, and regulate their activity level.



SL	Diagnosis	Features
11	Pervasive Developmental Disorder	Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) is an outdated term that was used to describe a group of disorders characterized by delays in the development of socialization and communication skills.
12	Major Depressive Disorder	Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), commonly referred to as depression, is a mental health condition characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
13	Agoraphobia	Agoraphobia is an anxiety disorder characterized by a fear or avoidance of situations or places where escape might be difficult, or help might not be available if panic-like symptoms or other embarrassing or incapacitating symptoms were to occur.
14	Adjustment Disorder	Adjustment Disorder is a mental health condition characterized by significant emotional or behavioral symptoms that develop in response to identifiable stressors or life changes.

Sources: Medical Experts

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Impact of COVID 19 on Personal and Professional Lives of Policewomen in Kerala, India



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Abstract

This study conducted in the state of Kerala, India, contributes to the literature that examines the impact of policing during COVID 19 on the personal and professional lives of women police officers. It focused on understanding the impact of work conditions, relationship with line managers, satisfaction with the organisation's efforts to make work safe, organisational response to the pandemic, and caring and domestic responsibilities on stress levels of women officers. Findings indicated high levels of satisfaction with the organisation and relationship with line managers. Furthermore, although women officers experienced higher levels of general and work-related stress during the pandemic, these were not significantly related to their work conditions or organisational factors. Factors significantly associated with increased stress levels were increased childcare responsibilities and increased hours of work. Future research to understand the impact of organisational support, and explore coping mechanisms and resilience levels of women officers is indicated.

Keywords: Women police, work conditions, stressors, organizational support, childcare, lockdown

Introduction:

The role of law enforcement during the COVID 19 pandemic in enforcing lockdown conditions to prevent the spread of infection and working alongside health services to provide aid and support to communities has been the subject of considerable public discourse globally. Like in other parts of the world, whilst parts of the police response in India have been lauded (Pande, 2020), some policing practices involving use

of force have been criticised (*Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative*, 2020). The state reporting the least use of force and considered to have provided a humane and helpful response has been the state police of Kerala (Joy 2021) which has demonstrably contributed to the non-medical response in effectively curbing the spread of infection through enforcing the triple locks of social distancing, lockdown, and

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quarantine (Kumar 2021). Reports indicate that extraordinary efforts during the pandemic helped the state police rebuild its public image through the policies and individual efforts, despite the high cost to officers' health and wellbeing (Jacob 2021). Although at times the police were overzealous in their efforts to enforce the lockdown, nevertheless the pandemic elicited an unprecedented demand on police resources in Kerala and elsewhere.

Recent times have seen a body of literature focused on exploring how the demands of the unprecedented health crisis affected police work (c.f. Mehdizadeh and Kamkar 2020; Nielson, Zhang and Ingram 2021; Tehrani, 2022). Changes in the nature and content of policing during the pandemic occurred on two fronts - externally, in terms of ensuring compliance with lockdown restrictions creating possible tensions in police interactions with the public (Grover et al 2020; Dai et al, 2021, Kumar 2021) and internally, in terms of changes to working conditions, personal health and safety concerns, and expectations of line managers in an organisation that is under pressure (Apter 2020). Much of this research indicates that the pandemic has brought in its wake stress and anxiety for police officers in their professional and personal lives (Bambury et al, 2022; Brown and Fleming 2021; Stogner, Miller, and McLean 2020). Officers' professional stress increased due to the additional burden of policing the lockdown, altered work conditions, and concerns about health safety due to prolonged exposure to the infection (Stogner Miller and McLean, 2020). Furthermore, a study by Khadse et al (2020) indicated that in India, officers' stress was exacerbated during the pandemic due to increased care responsibilities and health related anxiety on behalf of themselves and their families, especially during the first lockdown phase between March and June 2020.

Whilst some research has indicated that male and female police officers experience work related stress similarly (Hassell, Archbold and Stichman, 2011), other research suggests that the stress levels of women police officers are different from that of male officers either due to additional factors or resulting from different stressors (McCarty and Garland, 2007). There is, however, a gap in the literature on whether there is a difference in stress levels based on ethnicity, age, and level of experience during crisis events (Morash, Kwak, and Haar, 2006; Laufs and Waseem 2020). This study attempts to address that gap by focusing on understanding the impact of the pandemic on the professional and personal lives of women police officers in the state of Kerala, India.

Women police in Kerala

Kerala lies on the south-west coast of the Indian peninsula and covers over 38,863 square km and is the 23rd largest Indian state by area and the 13th largest Indian state by population (Census of India, 2021). With a population of 35 million, it accounts for 3% of India's population and its land is three times more densely populated than the rest of the country (World Population Review 2022). The state had a sex ratio of 1084 females to 1000 males in 2011, as against the national average of 934 females per 1000 males (Census India, 2011). It has a very high human development index of 0.79, reportedly the highest in the country, and has the highest literacy rate of 98% in the country (World Population Review 2022).

Women officers have historically been integral to policing in Kerala. The first woman police wing was set up in the erstwhile state of Travancore in 1936 precursor to the renamed state of Kerala in 1956. The first All Women Police Station was inaugurated in 1973 at Kozhikode in Kerala to encourage the registration of complaints.



Women Cells to enquire into petitions were set up in each district in 1996 to address issues of atrocities against women and provide support in the registration of cases, as well as counselling services (Kerala Police, 2020). Additionally, the Pink Patrol scheme, a dedicated patrol team consisting of specially trained women police personnel to "address issues specifically related to the safety and security of women and children" was introduced by the Kerala police in 2017 (Kerala Police, 2020: 188). There is also a Women's Armed Police Battalion, amongst other regular Armed Battalions in the state, that provide support to the local police in enforcing law and order and are deployed to handle emergencies such as riots, crowd control, disaster management, elections, and VIP security (Kerala Police, 2020).

Despite these earmarked posts for women officers, it is notable that the percentage of women officers in the state is lower at all ranks than the national average for India (see Table 1 below).

rather than core front-line policing (Natarajan 2008). Although the number of women police officers has been rising, as have the different roles they are occupying, there seems to be a perception that male officers are better at most policing roles as compared to women officers, especially since they are less distracted by family responsibilities when on duty - a position that seems to unfortunately, have been internalised by women officers according to a study by Natarajan (2014). Some of the challenges faced by women police officers include gender discrimination, prejudices and biases of male colleagues, low acceptance, poor comfort levels, and importantly role ambiguity and role conflict (Randhawa and Narang, 2013).

An earlier study conducted by George and Krishnan (2013) indicated that women police officers in Kerala have several grievances about their professional role on account of the disparaging comments and treatment by their male colleagues. They expressed tensions

Table 1: Strength Comparison

Rank	Total strength		Number of women officers		Percentage of women Officers	
	All India	Kerala	All India	Kerala	All India	Kerala
Constables and Head constables	17,42,942	44,655	1,87,563	3764	10.76%	8.42%
Sub-Inspector and Inspector	1,53,821	2855	14,079	119	9.15%	4.16%
Senior Leadership	16,502	383	1,464	13	8.87%	3.39%

Research on women police in India has indicated that deployment of women officers in India has been largely restricted to dealing with juveniles and women offenders and in largely social roles

emanating from the fact that they were expected mainly to do office-based paperwork and were discouraged from going on beat patrol or investigating cases, thus curtailing



their exposure to different aspects of police work. The 'gendered nature of Indian society' has meant that domestic responsibilities are entirely the sphere of women, making it difficult for women to take up night shifts, resulting in women officers, particularly at the lower ranks, being derogatorily labelled as 'lazy' or accused of drawing the same salary as their male counterparts without doing the same amount of work (*ibid* pg115). Women officers felt that their opinions or suggestions were overlooked and their contributions sidelined. An important research finding was the perceived lack of support from senior officers to discourage this discriminatory behaviour from male colleagues and supervisors (*ibid* pg 54). Furthermore, interviewees were reportedly very afraid of speaking out openly and honestly about their working conditions, lest they be penalised by the leadership (*ibid* pg 117). It is an important caveat to bear in analysing and drawing conclusions from this research as well, especially since the research is based on an impersonal online survey with little opportunity for the researchers to build trust with the participants.

Work stressors during lockdown

At the onset of the pandemic, the state government of Kerala passed the Kerala Epidemic Disease Ordinance (KEDO) in March 2020, wherein the police had an "important role in the implementation of social distancing and lockdown through the implementation of KEDO, 2020 and other legal provisions" (Kumar, 2021: 197). A strict curfew was enforced nationwide from the 24th of March 2020 to the 30th of May 2020. Enforcement of social distancing, home quarantine, and other public health measures during a pandemic can bring the police into conflict with the public and can potentially impact the police legitimacy negatively (Jones 2020).

The impact of lockdown conditions during COVID 19 and the subsequent shift to working from home has created significant stressors in the form of "role overload, lifestyle choices, and occupational discomfort" (Kumar et al 2021: 6308) among others. Research has indicated that in the Indian context "family distraction, occupational discomfort, and distress were significant in impacting job performance" (Kumar et al 2021: 6308). Occupational stress is the pressure resulting from employment related conditions and employees feel dissonance between their skills and resources and the demands of the job (Colligan and Higgins 2006) and an increase in occupational stress was witnessed globally for frontline female workers during the pandemic (Sriharan et al 2021). Family distractions, including increased domestic and care responsibilities, as well as health related anxieties triggered by COVID are a source of psychological stress for female employees especially during the lockdown period as evidenced by recent research on frontline health workers (IPPR 2020, Sheraton et al 2020).

Research has indicated that police officers face work and family-role overload related stressors, which get exacerbated during disasters. This overload was, for instance, demonstrated by police in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, a natural disaster (Adams et al 2011). Role overload has been defined by Kahn (1980) as the pressure to do more work than is possible within the time or resources available. Duxbury and Halinsky (2018) found that even prior to lockdown, male officers reported greater work role overload related stress, and women officers exhibited greater family role overload related stress. Furthermore, women officers faced greater work-load related stress due to adverse work conditions and perceptions of a non-supportive work culture, in addition to



increased care and domestic responsibilities more generally (Duxbury and Halinsky 2018). Thus, role overload resulting from the demands of their multiple roles as employees, homemakers, and caregivers even during ordinary times, have demonstrably been a source of stress for women police officers (Kurtz, 2011; Duxbury et al 2008).

The present study is one of the handful of studies that explores the impact of COVID 19 on employees in the Indian context (Kumar et al 2021) and is probably one of the only studies specifically focusing on the impact of the pandemic on frontline women police officers in India.

Methods

We have chosen to focus on the state of Kerala in India, as one of the co- authors is a senior police officer serving in the state, with a professional interest in improving work conditions for women officers in the state.

This study replicates an earlier study by Fleming and Brown (2021; Brown and Fleming 2021) on exploring the impact of COVID 19 and the associated lockdown on the personal and professional lives of police officers in England and Wales. The online survey used by their study was adapted slightly and translated into Malayalam (the state language in Kerala) to suit the Indian context. Ethical permission was obtained from the university ethics review committee and permission to conduct the research was granted by the Kerala Police Headquarters.

Participants

Women officers of the rank of constable, sub-inspector, and inspector from across the state,

who were attending a self-defense training course in March 2022, were contacted via their WhatsApp group under the aegis of the Janamaithri Suraksha Project². They were provided with an information sheet about the project and a link to the survey. Officers were assured that their participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous, and that it would be impossible to trace who had or had not participated or completed the survey. Every effort was made to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, so participants did not feel any pressure to take part in the research. A total of 461 responses were received, of which 266 were complete and included in the final analyses.

Survey

Officers were first asked to give their consent to participate voluntarily in the research before they could proceed to the survey itself. The main remit of the survey was to explore the experiences of women officers during the pandemic and how it affected their work and personal lives. The focus was on understanding whether the pandemic resulted in changes to their working conditions, relationship with their supervisors, organizational wellbeing, as well as domestic and care responsibilities in their personal lives. Although the questionnaire contained two open ended questions – we found that the responses to these were either absent or minimal. These were thus not included in the investigators analysis.

Analysis

All survey data were analysed using the R programming language. As in Fleming & Brown (2021), all responses were categorical (e.g. “agree” or “disagree”). Hence, we used chi-squared tests to see whether the response

²Janamaithri Suraksha Project is an initiative introduced by the Kerala Police in 2008, which aims at improving police- citizen relationship and establish principles of community policing through a number of innovative projects. (<https://keralapolice.gov.in/page/janamaithri-suraksha>)



distributions of investigators' survey items of interest were statistically different from each other or not. For instance, to test whether inspectors responded "agree" significantly more than constables to the survey item "I have felt more stressed". All inferences were based on a two-tailed significance level of 0.05.

Results

We set out to investigate the impact of lockdowns on Indian policewomen's personal and professional lives. We focused specifically on three areas: comparing work conditions, satisfaction with the organisation, and domestic responsibilities before and during the lockdown.

The majority of participants were at the rank of constable, with only a handful of sub-inspectors and inspectors participating. Around two-thirds of the sample were officers posted in regular or all-women police stations with around 37% working in headquarters or in para-military battalions or specialised patrols to keep public spaces safe for women (pink patrols). Just under 40% of the sample had over 16 years of service. A vast majority of respondents were married (98%), of the 88% had children. A total of 86% of women officers had children under the age of 18 living with them. Table 2 provides a brief overview of the demographics of the responding sample.

	Constables	Sub-Inspectors/ Inspectors	Total
Role/Posting			
• Police Station	108	3	111
• Women Police Station	51	5	56
• Other office	20	0	20
• Other(unclear)	57	0	57
• Battalion	17	0	17
• Pink patrol	5	0	5
Years of Service			
• 0-5 years	85	2	87
• 6-10 years	37	0	37
• 11-15 years	22	0	22
• 16-20 years	107	0	107
• 21 and above	7	6	13
Marital Status			
• Married	249	8	257
• Single	9	0	9
Children			
• No	31	0	31
• Yes	227	8	235

Table 2: Overview of respondents



Impact of lockdown

Policing the pandemic undoubtedly brought about increased workload and stress to frontline workers more generally (Luan et al, 2020; Magill, Siegel, and Pike, 2020). Hence, investigator's goal was to identify if and how policing in India changed during the COVID-19 lockdown. Specifically, we were interested in the factors that might have contributed to increased stress for women officers during the lockdown.

Over half (~55%) of officers reported that not only did they work more hours, but that the work

itself had become more difficult and stressful. It is worth noting that a not inconsiderable proportion of respondents (~45%) were neutral or disagreed with the proposition that their work had become more difficult or involved longer hours. Moreover, 71.1% of respondents reported feeling more tired at the end of the day and nearly 70% reported feeling more stressed during lockdown compared to before lockdown. This research supports the growing literature on the adverse impact that policing the pandemic has had on the health and stress levels of police officers (Dey et al, 2020; Brown and Fleming, 2021).

Personal wellbeing during versus before lockdown

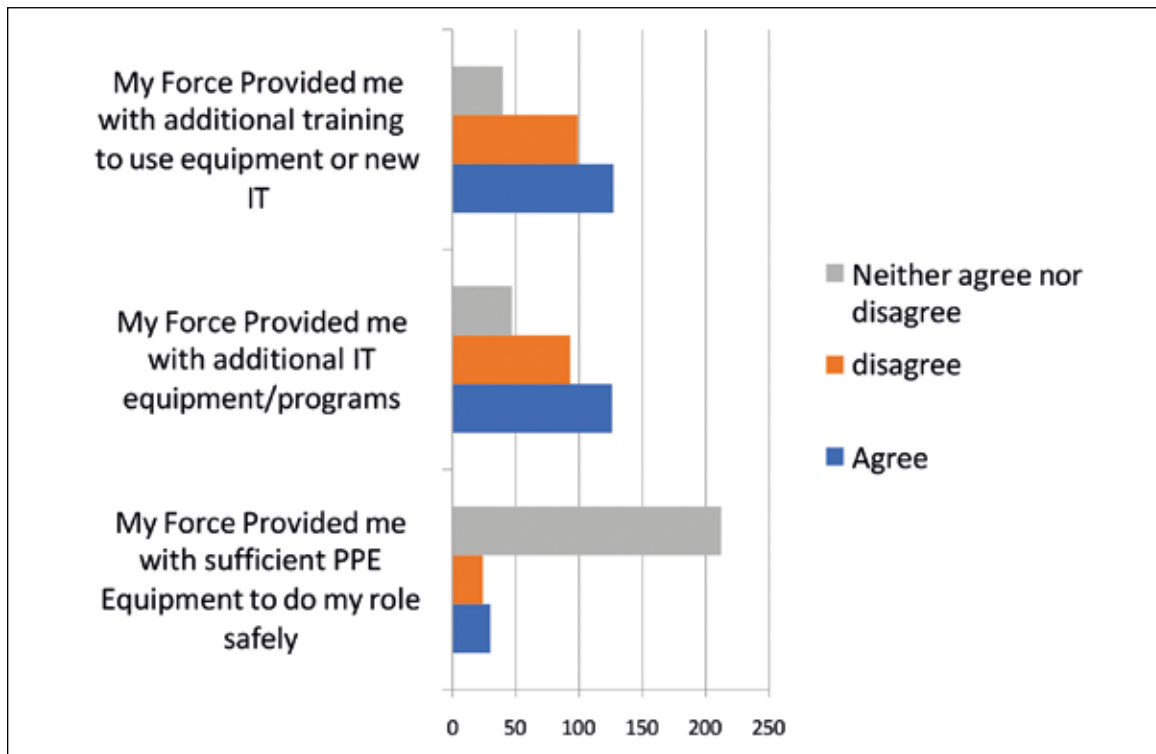


Figure 1: Stress during lockdown

Investigators further focused analysis on understanding what factors might have caused the perceived increase of stress

based on the five broad domains covered in the survey that might have affected stress during lockdown - (i) changes in work



conditions, (ii) the policewomen's perceptions of their superior officer. (iii) practical support from their organization to address concerns of safety, (iv) satisfaction with their police force, and (v) changes in childcare and domestic responsibilities. To see whether the policewomen's responses in these five domains changed during lockdown compared to before, we subtracted the 'before' from the 'during lockdown' responses to survey items that asked for how their perceptions and delegation of responsibilities changed. These 'change in perception' and 'change in responsibilities' values were tested against stress, where stress was measured as whether the policewomen agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed with statements (i) that their work has been less stressful during the lockdown, (work-role stress) and (ii) whether they felt more stressed overall during the lockdown (general stress).

Work conditions before and during lockdown

One of the biggest changes engendered by the onset of lockdown during COVID 19 was the global adoption of remote, online or home, and flexible working. Police organizations in India and more widely, have traditionally discouraged home working, on the grounds that the nature of the role does not lend itself to home working in the experience of the first two authors. The onset of lockdown restrictions meant that some police organizations had to adapt to permit remote working (Fleming and Brown 2021, Duran and Woodhams, 2022). However, investigators' findings indicated that only seven out of all respondents reported working from home and 11 said they partially worked from home (WFH) during the pandemic. Results indicate that working conditions changed very little for most participants, during the lockdown, regardless of whether they were in

frontline roles or support roles. It is not clear whether the participants considered this to be advantageous or whether they would have preferred to have greater flexibility in working. Although, the content of their work might have changed during the pandemic, especially since the focus was on enforcing the lockdown and social distancing.

Despite the low number of policewomen who wholly or partially worked from home during lockdown (2.7%), we tested whether there were proportionally more stressed policewomen who did not work from home versus those who (partially) worked from home. This showed no significant effect, suggesting that whether they worked from home did not affect policewomen's stress. However, increased hours of work did show a significant relationship with higher levels of general stress * $\chi^2(1, N=266) = 20.5, p = <0.001$ and work-related stress * $\chi^2(4, N=266) = 40.1, p = <0.001$. That is, longer working hours during the lockdown likely caused more stress overall.

The next question was how officers felt they were treated by the organization and their senior officers over this period. Officer perceptions of their relationship with line managers and the organization more broadly were compared before and during the lockdown period. As Table 3 indicates, a vast majority of officers felt supported and trusted by their supervisors throughout the period under study. It was clear that officers enjoyed high levels of trust and support from their line managers before and during lockdown. Still, perceived decreased trust from superior officers during lockdown was significantly related to general stress * $\chi^2(8, N=266) = 16.2, p = 0.039$ but not to work-role related stress during that period. This finding requires further examination through follow-up interviews with officers as to why that might be the case.



Rank	Response	Working from Home		Support of Supervisors		Trusted by Supervisors		Good Communication by supervisors		Felt appreciated by Supervisors	
		Before COVID	During Lockdown	Before COVID	During Lockdown	Before COVID	During Lockdown	Before COVID	During Lockdown	Before COVID	During Lockdown
Constables N=258	Strongly or somewhat agree	NA	2.7% 7	71.3% 184	67.8% 175	80.6% 208	74.4% 192	58.5% 151	54.3% 140	65.9% 170	62.8% 162
Sub-Inspectors N=8	Strongly or Somewhat agree	NA	0% 0	87.5% 7	87.5% 7	87.5% 7	87.5% 7	75% 6	87.5% 7	87.5% 7	87.5% 7
Total N=266	Strongly or somewhat agree	NA	2.7% 7	71.8% 191	68.4% 182	80.8% 215	74.8% 199	59% 157	55.3% 147	66.5% 177	63.5% 169

Table 3: Comparing work conditions pre and during lockdown

Organizational response during lockdown

Another source of stress might have emerged from policewomen's concerns about work safety. We would expect that if organizations provided practical support to increase work safety and training to help them do their job better, it would reduce this stress. Officers were asked whether they thought their force had responded appropriately to the lockdown restrictions in making adequate provisions for them to work online, if necessary, during lockdown, providing them with the equipment and training to work online; ensuring that they had adequate personal protective equipment; and provided appropriate training to do their job satisfactorily during the pandemic.

As can be seen in Figure 2, most of the officers surveyed were happy with the way the organization had dealt with emergencies during the lockdown in terms of providing sufficient PPE equipment, deciding to make the workplace safer, and enabling them to increase their use of social media contact with the public as well as by enabling virtual meetings and webinars. We then tested if these practical changes from the organization were related to stress and found that work stress and general stress during lockdown were not related to any of the survey items regarding practical changes from the organization during the lockdown.

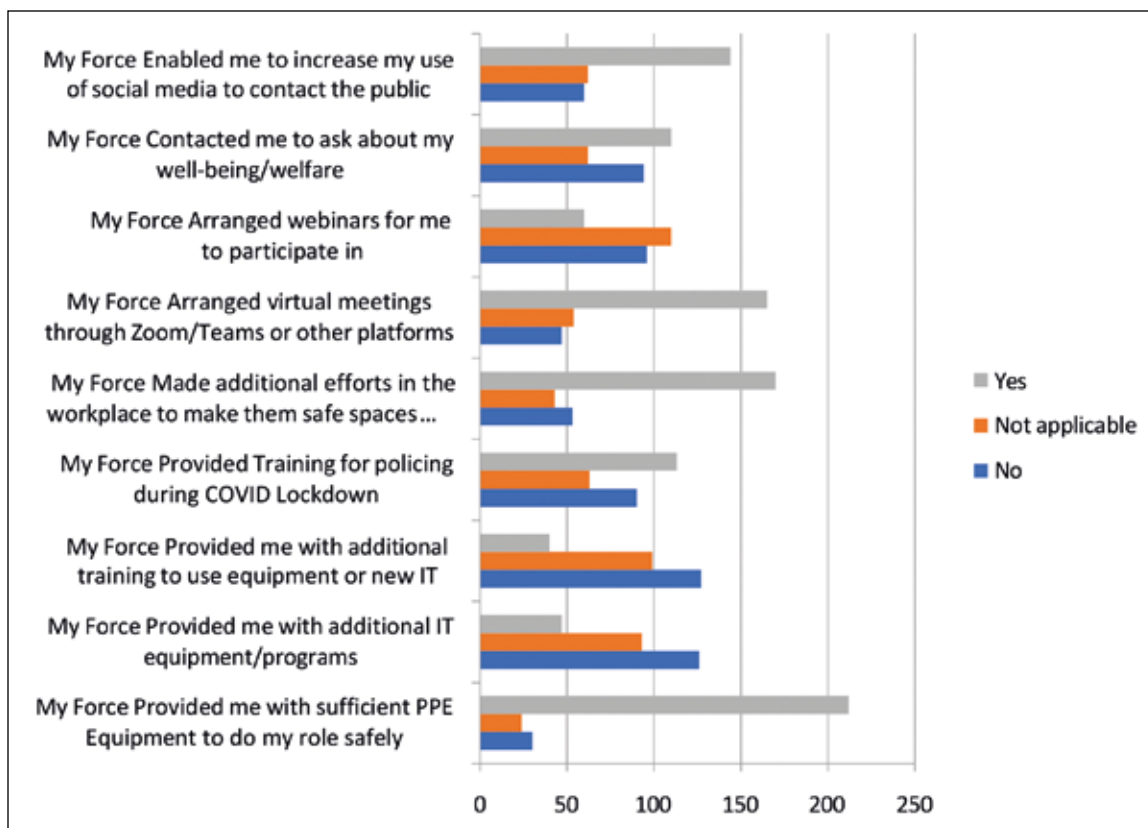


Figure 2 Organizational response to the pandemic.

Not surprisingly, a little over half the respondents (56%) reported that their use of social media to contact the public during the lockdown had increased, in keeping with findings reporting similar proliferation of the use of social media by the police in many countries, not just during the pandemic (Hu et al, 2021), but more widely during other natural disasters to improve police-community relations (Laufs and Waseem 2020).

Of some concern was the fact that only 41% of respondents reported that their organization had provided them with additional training for policing during lockdown, as opposed to nearly a third of officers (35%) who reported they did not get any additional training, and a substantial set of respondents (23%) who felt

that additional training was not required. The latter finding might be either because their role content had changed if they continued to work in offices doing their routine work, or because they did not perceive that there were changes to front-line policing that were significant enough to require additional training.

Overall, a significant proportion of officers reported that they were satisfied with the way the organization treated staff and themselves personally during the lockdown. An overwhelming 81% of officers were satisfied with the way their organization policed the pandemic, which leaves open the question – what were the measures of success? Was performance being measured against whether



there was strict enforcement of lockdown rules; good liaison and communication with communities; serving the needs of the vulnerable; or keeping disorder to a minimum? These and other questions were unfortunately

not within the remit of this research. However, none of the factors related to perceived organizational support and organizational response were significantly related to increased levels of either general or work-related stress.

Organizational satisfaction during lockdown

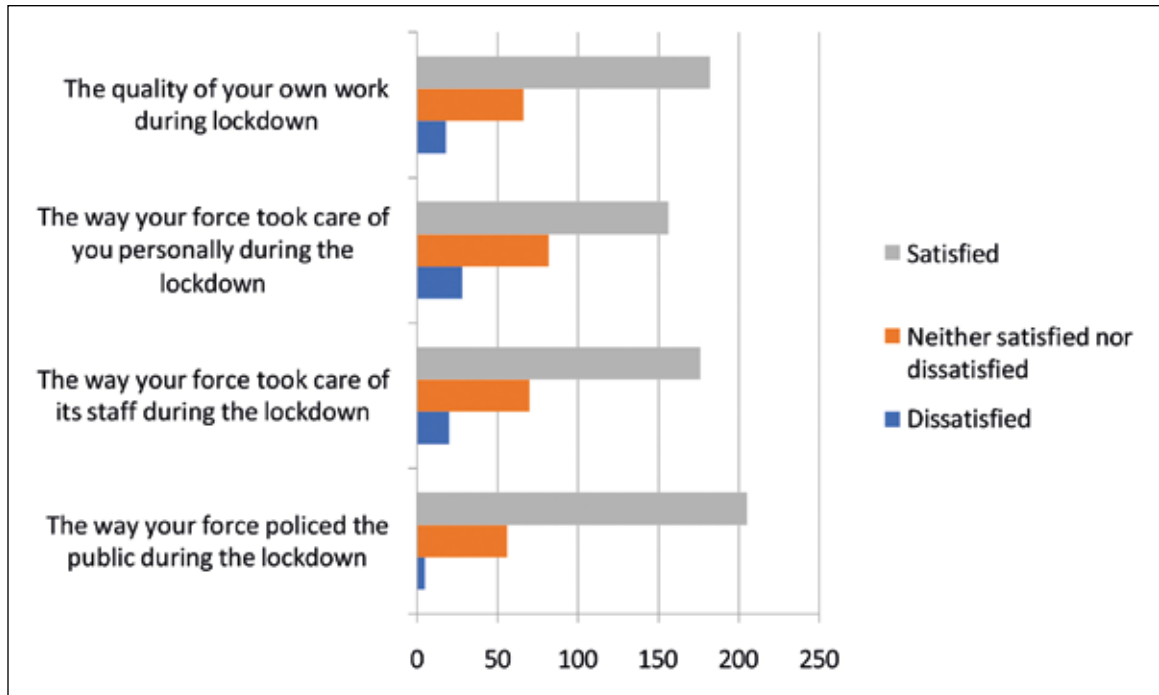


Figure 3: Satisfaction with the organization during lockdown

Domestic responsibilities before and during lockdown

Officers were asked to describe whether they were mainly responsible for caring and domestic responsibilities, whether these were shared with their partner, or whether there were other arrangements. Results in Table 4 indicate that there was a shift in caring and domestic responsibilities from pre-Covid to during lockdown, with higher number of constables taking on greater sole responsibility for domestic chores and caring for elderly and vulnerable relatives during lockdown, but marginally

lower numbers having sole responsibility for children during lockdown. Most respondents at the rank of constable (~90%) took on additional sole and shared responsibility for home-schooling children during the lockdown. Notably, a remarkable number of policewomen continued caring for a mentally or physically challenged child over lockdown (35% N=92). Forty-eight of these policewomen took on sole caring responsibilities. It does appear to be a significantly high number and indicative of the possibly high levels of stress that officers faced both prior to and during lockdown.



Rank	Agreement	Domestic Chores		Childcare		Caring for family members		Home schooling	
		Before COVID	During Lockdown	Before COVID	During Lockdown	Before COVID	During Lockdown	Before COVID	During Lockdown
Constables	Sole responsibility	48.1% (124/244)	59.4% (136/229)	53.9% (139/258)	48.1% (111/231)	44.4% (83/187)	49.5% (99/200)	NA	61.4% (116/189)
	Shared responsibility	36.1% (93/244)	27.5% (63/229)	24% (62/258)	45% (104/231)	40.6% (76/187)	38.5% (77/200)	NA	28.6% (54/189)
Sub-Inspectors	Sole responsibility	50% (4/8)	37.5% (3/8)	100% (8/8)	50% (4/8)	33.3% (2/6)	40% (2/5)	NA	60% (3/5)
	Shared responsibility	37.5% (3/8)	50% (4/8)	0% (0/8)	50% (4/8)	50% (3/6)	60% (3/5)	NA	0% (0/5)
Total	Sole responsibility	50.8% (128/252)	58.5% (139/237)	55.3% (147/266)	48.1% (115/239)	44% (85/193)	49.3% (101/205)	NA	61.3% (119/194)
	Shared responsibility	38.1% (96/252)	28.3% (67/237)	23.3% (62/266)	45.2% (108/239)	40.9% (79/193)	39% (80/205)	NA	27.8% (54/194)

Table 4: Change in childcare and domestic responsibilities before and during lockdown

It is noteworthy that between a third to half of the respondents seemed to have partners who took on shared responsibility for domestic and caring responsibilities, which is indicative of a change in the context of India where the dominant belief in “the centrality of the mother as the primary caregiver” in the upbringing of children (Tuli, 2012: 87) has currency. There was an 11% increase in the number of constables who reported that they were solely responsible for domestic chores during the lockdown, although the trend was reversed for the small number of sub-inspectors in Investigators sample. Investigators' findings do not extend to commenting on whether the quantum of domestic chores increased

during the lockdown but overall, the findings support trends reported by Deshpande (2022) which revealed that in India the burden of domestic chores increased for women during the pandemic and the average hours spent by women on them increased sharply for women as compared to the men (Deshpande, 2022).

Investigators found that policewomen with an increased childcare responsibility felt more stressed about work [$\chi^2(10, N=239) = 35.8, p < .001$] and were more stressed overall during lockdown ($\chi^2(10, N=239) = 31.5, p < .001$), and that those with increased domestic chores responsibilities also reported significantly more general stress during lockdown [$\chi^2(10,$



$N=244$) = 18.4, $p = .048$]. Added to this is the base level of stress that might have resulted from looking after a disabled child both before and during lockdown. However, home-schooling responsibilities did not appear to be significantly related to stress. There was no statistically significant relation between the increase in caring responsibilities for elderly or vulnerable relatives and work-related or general stress levels either. See Table 4 for an overview of relevant statistical tests.

Discussion

These findings strongly indicate that there was no change in working culture due to the lockdown in India, whereas this was more so the case in western countries such as the UK (Fleming & Brown, 2021). Whilst the literature indicates that WFH was a source of stress for employees (Kumar et al 2021), there is evidence to indicate that WFH also reduced stress for some employees

(Fleming and Brown 2021). For officers in Investigators sample, not being able to work from home did not lead to increased stress probably because the nature of work did not really change for most of them. Furthermore, respondents appear to have high levels of satisfaction with the way organization took care of its employees by making the workplace safer. Investigators cannot discount the possibility that this response might have been influenced by the fact that the survey was conducted in March 2022, a considerable period and following two further periods of COVID related lockdowns, by which time officers were provided with appropriate kits and equipment. The results indicate that although women officers reported feelings of stress during the lock down period, the factors that seem to have had a significant impact on stress levels were not much related to their work conditions, levels

of trust or support from line managers, nor how the organization responded to addressing their needs or policing the public during lockdown. In this respect, the findings differ significantly from the findings based on a similar survey conducted by Fleming and Brown (2021) in England and Wales.

Reports indicate that the state police in Kerala provided an exemplary service to help the community in different forms, including spreading awareness of the pandemic through accessible social media during the pandemic which has been recognized by the media (Athira, 2020; Jacob, 2021, *Indian Express* 2021) It has improved legitimacy and relationships with the community (India Narrative, 2021). Furthermore, the role of the police in enforcing the state's triple lock approach – enforcing lockdown, quarantine and social distancing has been shown to be effective in reducing the spread of the infection (Kumar 2021). These factors might largely explain why officers felt that the organization responded appropriately to the needs of the staff and provided a service to the community.

However, factors related to childcare had a somewhat significant impact on the stress levels of officers – a finding in keeping with an earlier study conducted in Kerala (George and Krishnan 2013) and elsewhere (Kurtz, 2012) as did the impact of increased hours of work on stress levels, like findings for women officers in England and Wales (Fleming and Brown 2021). It is indicative of the fact that role conflict and role stress with respect to domestic and childcare responsibilities continue to affect women police officers in normal times as during emergencies like the pandemic.

Overall, these findings do not support some other studies on the impact of COVID 19 on



stress levels of police officers conducted not only in India (Khadse et al, 2020; Grover et al, 2022) but also in other parts of the world (Sener et al 2021). Investigators' study indicates that officers were able to cope with the strains of the demands of policing the pandemic in line with findings from a few European countries reported by Frenkel et al (2021). The Kerala police have reportedly made several efforts in capacity building to address some of the issues identified by women officers in an earlier study (George and Krishnan 2013) and provided them with opportunities to progress through the ranks, work in diversified fields, and get exposure to different professional arenas of work (Sandhya.B, 2012). (The state police organization has focused on providing gender sensitization training, which has meant line managers are more attuned to the needs of women police (Sandhya.B et al.,2019). In addition, the organization has provided training sessions on meditation skills, active listening skills, yoga, physical fitness and provided music therapy and counselling facilities to enhance mental and physical well-being of officers more generally (Sandhya et al., 2020). Furthermore, the Kerala model of policing during the pandemic, based on bespoke protocols and standard operating procedures with due regard to health and reducing risk to personnel has been publicly lauded (Sandhya.B, 2020).

It could be the case that women officers have a great deal of resilience and positive psychological capital in the form of "positive vibes such as trust in self- efficacy, hopefulness, resiliency, and optimism about the future" which has been shown to help individuals tackle occupational stress better and improve psychological wellbeing during difficult times (Ravikumar, 2022: 6). The accumulation of positive psychological capital could either be because of how well the organization has

treated officers, or they have received better training to manage stress (Frenkel et al, 2021). It is important to explore further how or what specific actions were taken by the organization and line managers to ensure that officer satisfaction remained high during the natural disaster. Notwithstanding, a possible limitation of Investigators study might be the influence of social desirability bias in how officers responded to questions regarding their relationship with their line managers and satisfaction with the organization, these findings highlight the need for a follow-up study involving in-depth interviews with officers and their line managers to draw out these themes further.

Conclusion

Investigators study indicated that women officers in Kerala continued to work during the pandemic with very little recourse to home working or other flexible working arrangements. It is unclear whether this was a source of stress for officers or whether they would have preferred to have worked partially or fully from home. According to investigators' findings, levels of satisfaction with the organization and relations with line managers were not responsible for either work-role related or general stress of women officers. Investigators hypothesize based on information about the efforts made by the organization to support women officers that possibly the relatively stable working conditions of policewomen in Kerala and the positive relation with their organization and superiors might have helped them cope with some of the pandemic-induced stress. Additionally, the possibility exists that officers might have inherent resilience to deal with some stress related factors during the pandemic, which bears further examination. Additionally, research on good organizational practice of line managers and impact of other support programs offered by the organization,



as well as possible coping mechanisms adopted by officers is indicated.

Since the research revealed that increased childcare and domestic responsibilities in their personal lives lead to increased general and work-related stress, recommendations to the organization include a better understanding of the responsibilities carried by women officers in their personal lives and provision of additional support for managing familial and domestic responsibilities to women officers. Offering women officers greater flexibility in working conditions might also be an option to explore. Similarly, the research found that increased hours of work (both at home and at work), as well as a perceived reduction in the trust of senior officers, were stress-inducing for participants. This might have implications for how the organization would offer a better work-life balance to officers, as well as understand and address the causes for why line managers might have had marginally lower trust and satisfaction with women officers during the pandemic.

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Grid Level Protection for Women: Use of Circle theory in the city of Hyderabad.



Harshawardhan Kuruganty¹

Abstract

India is a country which is known for its culture and heritage, but it is also a place where 30 percent of the women are unfortunate victims of physical violence as per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4). There are many reasons for such a massive scale of violence, some of them which contribute to this violence are eve-teasing, alcoholic abusive families, dowry harassment, pressure to bear a male child, economic conditions, workplace harassment, child abuse, and others. With the availability of granular data, the Author aims to construct a mathematical model to analyze crimes committed against women within a city. This analysis will be used to predict a particular type of crime within a bounded geographical region in the city using geographical profiling techniques. With this model, one can make the outdoors safe for millions of women in this country. This can help families feel safe before they ask their child(ren) to stay indoors. To validate the model and to provide protection on the grid level, the Author did a case study on the city of Hyderabad, Telangana using the historical crime data from the past year. Visualization of a pattern of crimes using heatmaps in this city for the year 2019 was performed and the Author further believes that one can use the data for crime prediction and prevention.

Keywords: Criminal Profiling, Geographic Profiling, Circle Theory, Grid Level Protection, Women Safety, Crimes Against Women

Introduction

Women are an integral part of men's life. Yet it is unfortunate that on a regular basis, we come across the news of the most grotesque crimes like rape, among other types of violence, committed against women where men are the offenders often. And ironically the blame is often put on women's attire or their behaviour for the crimes that take place against them. (Anderson 1999). As a natural deterrent to these crimes, families often end up restricting

the freedom of women with respect to their clothing choices, education, workplace, etc. The aim of this paper is to explore, to what extent we can make our streets safe for women before putting restrictions on their freedom. If a particular location is likely to be more prone to the occurrence of a crime, then it can be indicated that more care should be taken to make the place safe for everyone.

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Canter & Larkin, 1993, applied the concept of Circle Theory based upon the assumption that offenders operate in a limited spatial mindset, creating imagined boundaries based upon pre-existing knowledge. The priming effect that takes place in such cases among the offenders is one such example. Canter also provided evidence that offenders can be divided into two subcategories when interacting with their environment. One category is the **Commuters**, and the other is the **Marauders**. It is important to understand that the traditional bottom-up approach of investigation is not always efficient, and it can be improved in terms of predictive ability and the resultant prevention that is offered. It is the need of the hour for the scientific community to explore new methods to catch criminals and save lives.

Although this can be considered as a form of criminal profiling, in this research the objective would be to look at geographical profiling as it requires fewer data points. The need of implementing "the circle theory" and many other such advanced and unique methods are emphasized along with an intention to apply the same to a crowded country like India. Commuters can be complicated because they choose their victim based on specific characteristics. So, it would be safe to assume that they do not bother much about the distance between the 'criminal range' and 'home range'. Therefore, there is a high probability that their home and criminal ranges may not overlap at all. Marauders, in comparison, are known to follow a pattern. These are the ones who might feel safe to commit crimes in their own known locality. By this, we can assume that their home and criminal range have a high chance of overlapping. Finally, according to Circle theory, it is stated that if a series of crimes are assumed to be committed by the same offender a logical guess about his home could be at the centre of

a virtual circle drawn passing through the crime locations in the case of a marauder model. Whereas in the commuter model, we estimate the criminal range in a similar method.

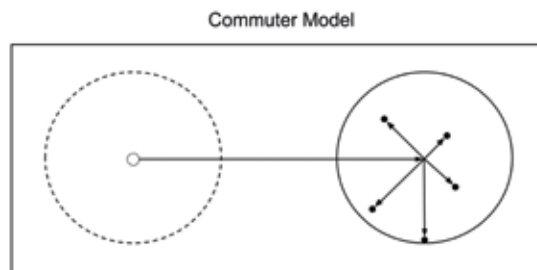


Diagram 1: Commuter model showing how the perpetrator is prone to committing crime in the assumed criminal range which may not always be close to their home range.

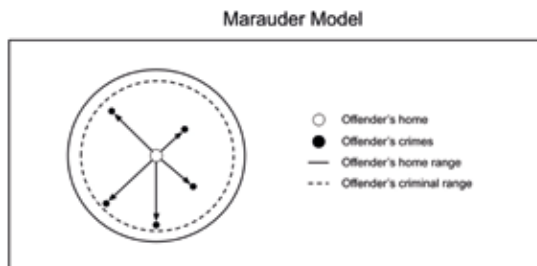


Diagram 2: Marauder model showing how the perpetrator is prone to committing crime in the assumed criminal range which may overlap with their home range.

One can perform a simple exercise to show how the Circle Theory works. First, a map can be used to mark the home range (i.e., the house of the offender) on it. Now assuming that we are dealing with a serial offender whose frequency is approximately one crime every month, a location can be marked where one would commit the offense for the first month. For the next month, if the offender wants to avoid the previous crime location, there is a chance that another location that could be far from both the home range and the previous crime location that was selected. If this exercise is performed for several months, we may end up having



location points that are plotted radially outward from the home range. Hence the idea here is to draw a hypothetical circle that passes through all the locations. The centre of the circle could be derived to be a close approximation of the actual home range of the offender.

Literature Review

The use of profiling technology to make people safe in the current society has been an active area of research in recent years. The past data on occurrences of crimes is used by several researchers to try to understand and hypothesize about future crimes. This process is now referred to as crime analysis. Few people did take a step further into using the same information for crime prediction purposes. Rohith Mallula and Preetham Chowdary (2018) explored the premise of using big data analysis for crime prediction. They used the R language and utilized the Chicago crime data set to build a model that can give the probable number of crimes in a particular area of the city. They further emphasized that their predictive policing could enable crime analysis if it can be developed specifically for any region. This throws light upon a crucial part of criminal profiling called geographic profiling. The ability to understand the crime details, which gives the information on the location of where the crime was committed, is unique and has brilliant potential. This method can reduce the time taken to bring criminals to justice, as it will use statistical analysis to predict the movements of a criminal. In contrast to the contemporary approach of offender personal profiling which requires a lot of data, in geographic profiling factors like location and date or time of occurrence play a key role than other variables like age and gender.

Further, this method also enables smart policing to analyse the current and recent data on crimes in a particular location. The analysis

can then be used to further prioritize among the existing possibilities and flag possible red zones of crime. Sandig, J. D. E., et al (2013), explained a similar method that uses Google Maps, and the Google Heat Map layer explores the concept of cluster analysis of the data points representing crime locations. The heat maps that are generated can not only help law enforcement agencies but also enable commoners to assess the level of safety in a particular area. Even in this paper, the historical data collected from the city was used to generate heat maps showing the intensity and probability of occurrence of crime in each location.

Kocsis, R. N., et al. (2002) has explored the circle theory extensively on burglars outlining the Marauder model. Their study pointed out the assumptions of circle theory, which detailed its failure on drifting offenders, the application of the Marauder model, and the Commuter model. The study emphasized the exercise of discretion in people who used such theories while applying them to specific crimes like serial robbery and assault.

Methodology

The study aims to find out the past occurrences of crimes against women and their distribution in the city. It also tries to understand the frequency of crimes that occurred to be cross-referenced against the distribution data. To estimate the level of safety offered in each location based on the previous crimes, the past crime data is utilized, (i.e., location, type of crime) acquired from the State Police Department (**Table 1** and **Table 2**) and used to plot the density of crimes in the city. Later, the same was used to interpolate and develop a heat map to evaluate the level of safety offered in various parts of the city. This heatmap can be thought of as a grid-level analysis of the past crime data.

Table 1: Sample data for women-related crimes in Hyderabad for the years 2017-19

Year/Month	February	March	April	May	June	July	November	December
2017								2
2018	2				2			
2019	1	1	4	1	2	1	2	1
Grand Total	3	1	4	1	4	1	2	3

The first step of acquiring the data is the toughest part given the sensitive nature of information regarding crimes. Hence, an effort was made to aggregate the most accessible crime data available online and plotted sample statistical graphs in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**. These figures provide information about the severity of crime

in each location. Basic information like the date of occurrence, the crime location, gender, and age from the state police department was used to generate various plots and heat maps. This can help us visualize the trends of crime and their correlation to the mentioned variables like location, gender, age, etc.

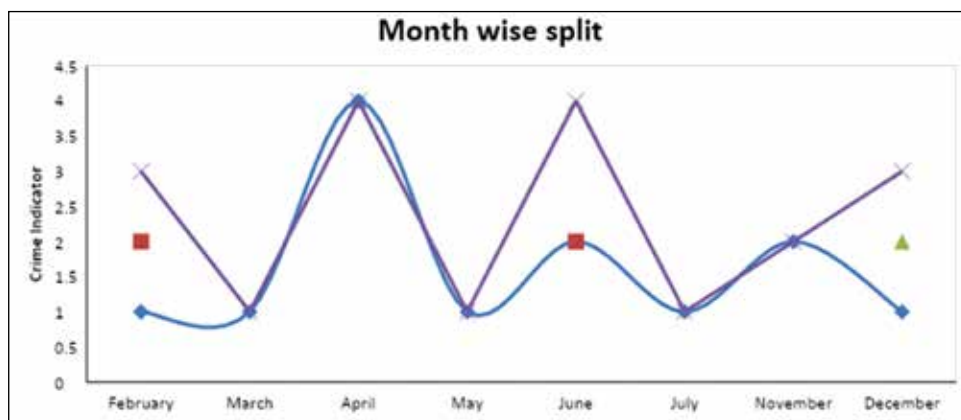


Figure 1: Month-wise split using the Sample data for women-related crimes in Hyderabad.

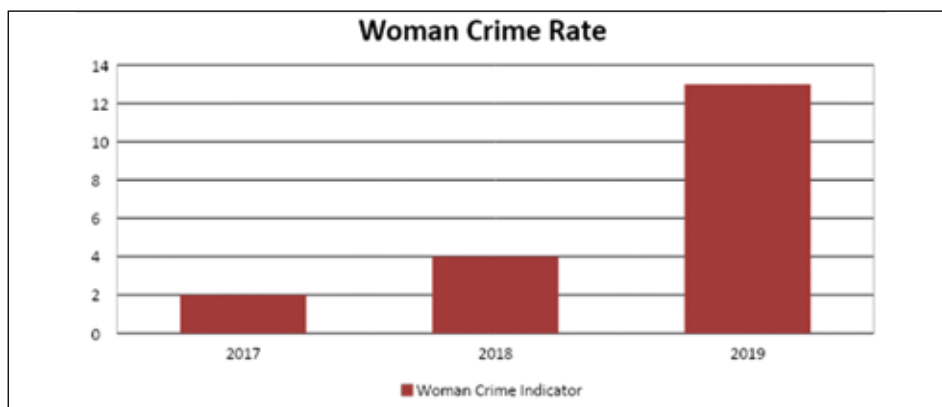


Figure 2: Women crime indicator using the Sample data in Hyderabad for the years 2017-19.



Further elaborating the methodology, the historical data was reduced to data points indicating factors like the date, time, and even type of occurrence of crime which was then plotted onto the city map of Hyderabad. As a result, **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** show the 'Month-wise split using the Sample data for women-related crimes in Hyderabad' and 'Women crime

indicator using the Sample data in Hyderabad for the years 2017-19' show the frequency of the offenses. **Figure 3** and **Figure 4** on the other hand, show the first two steps, "Step one - Identify the locations and marking of the missing people" and "Step two – Interpolate the data to generate a bubble graph" respectively.



Figure 3: Step one - Identify the locations and marking of the missing people.

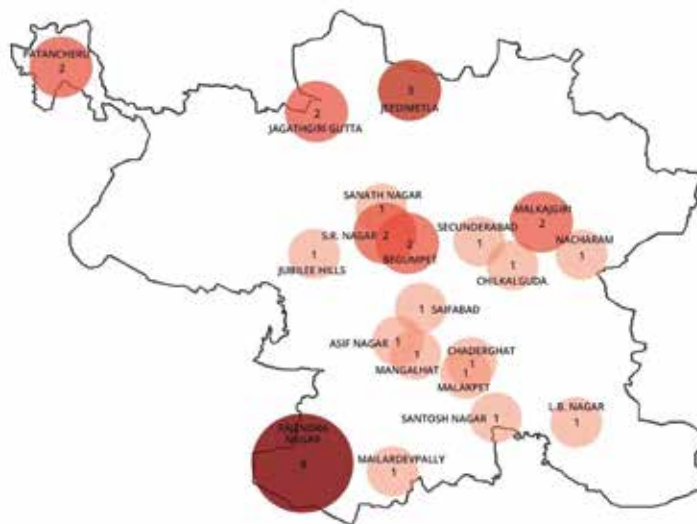


Figure 4: Step two – Interpolate the data to generate a bubble graph.

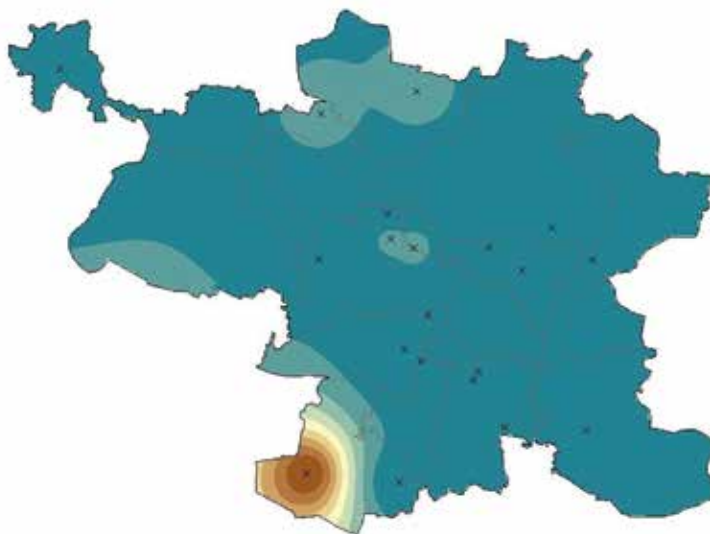


Figure 5: Step three – heat map showing the intensity.

Results and Discussion

For the first set of results, we focus on women-related crimes that were both vocal and available online in the city of Hyderabad for the years 2017-19. For a small subject sample described in **Table 1**, we can see the peaks

It is crucial to have a big enough data set to eliminate any statistical errors. Hence, we took the real-time data described in **Table 2** and generated plots for the same. To simplify the analysis, we considered the data of the missing persons' cases in the city of Hyderabad for nine

Table 2: Real-time data for the dates 1st June- 9th June 2019 in Hyderabad.

Crime Type/ Date	1st June	2nd June	3rd June	4th June	5th June	6th June	7th June	8th June	9th June	Grand Total
Boy-Missing			2					1		3
Girl-Missing	2	2	6	7	7	3	3	6	3	39
Man-Missing	5	8	10	5	2	4	4	3	3	44
Woman-Missing	6	5	4		2	7		7	1	32
Grand Total	13	15	22	12	11	14	7	17	7	118

in the months of April and June 2019, where thirteen crimes had occurred. We can also use this data, to arrive at, and plot a simple women's crime indicator. This indicator shows that there has been an increase in the crime rate over the past few years; **Figure 2**.

days. A total of 118 people were recorded as missing in a short span of time. Step one was to identify the locations and mark the number of missing people, as visualized in **Figure 3**. Step two was to interpolate the data and use it to develop heat maps, which show the intensity of the criminal activity using the colour code



and bubble graph; **Figure 4**. Finally, Step 3 was to use the heat map, which shows the crime density in a location to be used for predicting the occurrence of a crime; which leads us to the future potential of the method as shown in; **Figure 5**. The aim of this paper is not just to visualize the data in novel ways, but also to provide information about any such hot spots to the general population. Along with this, they can then exercise their discretion on how they would choose to react to this information.

Future scope

As discussed, the circle theory assumes that criminals operate and conduct criminal activities in a limited spatial mindset. Crimes can be predicted based on pre-existing knowledge and hence it is essential to understand that the traditional bottom-up approach is not always feasible and can be improved upon by using such theories as the circle theory. This creates a need to explore newer and more novel methods to catch criminals and save lives that could otherwise have been lost every day.

The aim of the research was to show a better way to predict and stop crimes than the conventional method. An effort was made to develop an extension for the existing Circle theory and assess it for accuracy in busy Indian cities. The key idea is to analyse the current and recent data on crimes in a particular location; use the analysis to interpolate the data using hypothetical circles fitting similar crimes; and then narrow down the location to a more traceable one. The Author used the same data to develop a prototype of a circle theory application that can be used to predict the location of the probable crime spot and thereby allow the law enforcement agencies to prevent a crime before it even occurs. This application is elaborated in **Figure 6**. Along with this, mobile applications that can send alert messages to women, informing them about the local hot spots of crime before they are about to enter its vicinity, should allow them to be more careful in these locations.

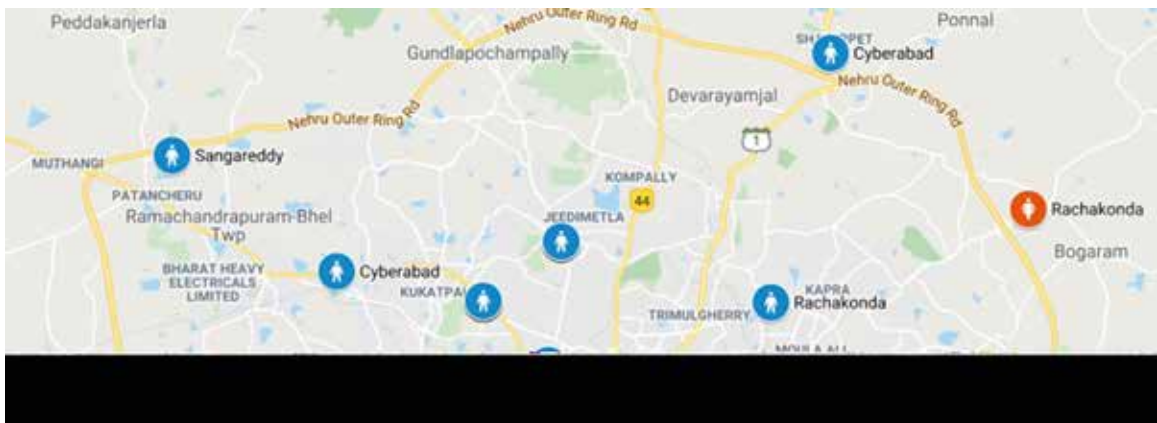


Figure 6: The crime spots in Google maps used in circle theory.

Further, law enforcers and policymakers will have a better understanding of the occurrence of crime as the locations of crime occurrences can further use correlation factors like the presence

of CCTV surveillance and the luminance of streetlights, etc. Specifically, Police officers and Law enforcers can collaborate with agencies like The National Crime Records Bureau to take in the

real-time data of crimes reported on a day-to-day basis to feed to the application or the model which can be used for crime prediction. This method can result in reducing the crime in each location as the crime range can be estimated before the crime is committed.

The identified hot spots can be shared with the respective municipalities and other local bodies to improve the infrastructure by adding streetlights and CCTVs wherever necessary. This can be one of the quicker ways to predict and prevent crime as we are using the theory of mind to think from the offender's perspective. A mobile application can be developed using incubation centres like, for example, T-HUB (for the Telangana state) which can be promoted among the youth and young adults to spread awareness about crime.

Conclusion

The problem that the Author tried to address was: What level of safety can be offered in each location if we use this crime-predicting ability? The hypothetical circle that gets created using the historical data may lead us directly to the criminal's home range location. In another case, if a person goes missing in the hypothetical circle, we can bound the crime range and stay alert. Further, the idea is to integrate this with the surveillance system of the city thereby enabling the police department to remotely solve a crime or improve their response time. A mobile application can also be developed that would alert people when they enter crime hot spots and hence, provide what could be called grid-level protection.

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Disposal of Rape Cases Committed Against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu: A Descriptive Analysis



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Abstract

Rape is a heinous crime. Police and the courts follow certain sequences to dispose of a reported rape case. Rape committed against vulnerable groups like the Scheduled Castes are to dishonour the community they belong. This paper used the disposal data from the Crime Review, Tamil Nadu from 2011 to 2022. It analyses the police, and the court disposal of rape cases committed against the Scheduled Castes women and children in Tamil Nadu. This analysis shows the disposal trend of rape cases committed against the Scheduled Castes. After analysing the secondary data, the police and the courts must improve their disposal rates. It has been concluded that liaison between various stakeholders in the criminal justice system and active utilisation of the existing workforce can improve the disposal rates of rape cases committed against Scheduled Castes.

Keywords: *Rape, Scheduled Caste, Rape against Scheduled Castes, Disposal of rape cases, Police, Court, FTSC*

Introduction

Rape is a heinous crime, with women and children being the primary victims. When this crime is committed against members of the Scheduled Castes, it warrants special attention. In India, women are often regarded as symbols of honor for their community. Considering the caste, religion, and class divides, any violation of the bodily integrity of Scheduled Caste women is viewed as an act that brings disgrace to the entire community (Chakravarti, 2018; Department of Health & Family Welfare, 2014). Consequently, rape cases involving Scheduled

Castes are addressed under the provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 ([PoA] Act, 1989).

Understanding the disposal of rape cases by police and the court

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) collects reported cases from the State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) to publish *Crime in India* statistics (Dandona et al., 2022). The SCRБ compiles these data from each district and city. According to *Crime in India* data, the rate

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of reported rape cases in India increased from 2% in 2011 to 4.7% in 2022. These statistics provide insights into the frequency of specific crimes and their disposal rates (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2022). There are separate tables for offences committed against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in 'Crime in India' statistics. These are offences related to the (PoA) Act, 1989 and the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 which deal with atrocities committed by non-scheduled Castes and non-scheduled Tribes against the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The tables given under the title 'Crime against weaker sections of society (SC/ST)' in the Crime Review Tamil Nadu provide a detailed picture of the disposal of reported crimes in Tamil Nadu (State Crime Records Bureau, 2022). At the national level, the rate of rape committed against Scheduled Castes rose from 0.1% in 2011 to 2.1% in 2022. In Tamil Nadu, the overall rate of rape cases increased modestly from 0.94% in 2011 to 1.1% in 2022. However, the trend for rape cases involving Scheduled Castes requires special attention and is analyzed in this paper. This study focuses exclusively on rape cases committed against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu.

Police and Courts follow certain sequences to dispose of the reported rape case. The police play a significant role in disposing of the rape case. Their prompt collection and preservation of evidence, and prompt filling of charge sheet aids in the speedy disposal of rape cases in the courts (Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, 2021). The role of police does not stop with filing a chargesheet, they must pursue the case, make the witnesses and accused appear in the court for the hearings (State Crime Records Bureau, 2011), make sure pieces of evidence are collected and submitted in the court,

provide victims of rape necessary protection from external threats, and they must arrange for assistance and relief for the victims.

The clearance rate is a term widely used in the international literature to describe the case solvability and efficiency of police work (Baughman, 2020; Carter & Carter, 2016; Scott et al., 2019). In India, the police disposal of crime and the court disposal of crime published in the 'Crime in India' report provides an overall idea of the performance of the police and the courts for a particular period. Also, the disposal rate depends on the available workforce. The workforce plays a key role in the better performance of the police and the courts, subsequently, the strength of the police force matters to meet the requirements of the reported crimes (Randhawa & Narang, 2013). The international standard for the overall population police ratio is 222 per lakh population, India has 152.8 police per lakh population. In Tamil Nadu, the population per police personnel is 739 (India Justice Report: Ranking States on Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid, 2022).

Nevertheless, whatever effort the police put into investigating and forwarding the rape cases for trial, the judiciary plays a vital role in the final disposal of the case. Fast Track Special Courts (FTSC) and exclusive POCSO (ePOCSO) courts were established in various districts for the speedy disposal of rape cases committed against women and children in the year 2019 (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2023), recently the scheme has been extended for three more years considering the pending cases, increasing cases and non-fulfilment of the desired objective i.e., speedy disposal (Scheme on Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) for Expeditious Disposal of Cases of Rape and



Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 (National Crime Records Bureau, 2014). It is noted that there were 14 functional FTSCs in Tamil Nadu as of March 2024. Law Commission of India, 1987 suggested increasing the judges-population ratio from 10.5 judges per 10 lakh population to 50 judges per 10 lakh population over five to ten years but, for the projected population of India 2022, there are only 15 judges per 10 lakh population against a sanctioned strength of 19 judges in India. It is notable for the analysis that the Sub-ordinate court vacancy is 19.2% for Tamil Nadu, (India Justice Report: Ranking States on Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid, 2022; State Crime Records Bureau, 2011).

According to the Crime Review Statistics in Tamil Nadu, in the crimes committed against women belonging to Scheduled Castes, next to simple hurt, rape was one of the highest committed crimes, and this was one of the reasons for the current analysis. In Tamil Nadu, the total number of rape cases committed against women and children belonging to the Scheduled Castes reported during the years (2011-2022) was 819. With the establishment of FTSCs and ePOCSO courts, rape cases are exclusively handled in these courts and in these FTSCs and ePOCSOs experienced judges were recommended who are well-trained in understanding the sensitivity of the rape case and handling of POCSO rape cases in a child-friendly manner (National Productivity Council, 2020). Literature on police and court disposal of crime is scarce in the Indian context. Only limited studies address crime against women and children from Scheduled Castes and the rape trend analysis in India.

Hence, this analysis has attempted to

understand how police and the court dispose of rape cases committed against Scheduled Castes. The methodology section describes the data used for this analysis and the procedure in detail.

Methodology

Purpose of the Study

The *Crime in India* data relies on the overall projected population of the state, without gender-wise segregation (National Crime Records Bureau, 2022). This limitation complicates the understanding of population distribution under specific crime categories. A similar issue exists in the *Crime Review* statistics of Tamil Nadu, as the State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) adheres to NCRB-prescribed procedures for data collection (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2022). The absence of gender classification for the projected population in a given year hinders precise data analysis. According to the Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner (2011), Tamil Nadu's total female population is 3,60,09,055, with Scheduled Caste females accounting for 72,33,758, constituting 20% of the total female population. Therefore, these demographics warrant exclusive study.

The crime head "rape" was extracted from the *Crime Review, Tamil Nadu* for the years 2011 to 2022 (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2022). Detailed segregation of rape data involving Scheduled Caste women and children began in 2017 (State Crime Records Bureau, 2019). Due to the unavailability of separate data for rape against Scheduled Caste children from 2011 to 2016, the analysis includes total incidents of rape involving both women and children. It is important to note that the *Crime Review* data is reported based on the "Principal Offence Rule"



(Dandona et al., 2022; State Crime Records Bureau, 2022). This analysis uses population distribution data from the 2011 Census as a baseline.

The rape cases against Scheduled Caste have been taken for analysis because of the sensitive nature of the crime and out of the researchers' curiosity, to describe the disposal of rape cases by the police and the court. There is a dearth of literature on the issue. This paper uses the online secondary statistical data published by the State Crime Records Bureau of Tamil Nadu. The secondary data i.e., Crime Review from the SCRB was used because it was readily available. The secondary data analysis was chosen because of the ready availability of data which means it is economical, it also provides the scope for replication (Ansari et al., 2015; Cacciattolo, 2015). This study also took references from the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, the Tamil Nadu Police Standing Orders Volume -1, 2019, and clarifications from the official of the State Crime Records Bureau, Tamil Nadu.

General understanding of the variables

The main variable analyzed in this paper includes cases disposed of by the police, charge-sheeting rate, conviction rate, cases disposed of by the court, police case pending percentage, and the court case pending percentage. It is important to know the classification of the variables present in the secondary data. The given explanation for the variables was interpreted from the formulae present in the columns of the crime review statistics (State Crime Records Bureau, 2022).

The cases disposed of by police mean the

total number of cases disposed of under the sub-heads such as cases not investigated under 157(1)(b) CrPC, cases transferred to other agencies, cases ended as final report non-cognizable, cases ended as final report false, cases ended as a mistake of fact or law or civil dispute, cases true but insufficient evidence or untraced or no clue, cases abated (dropped) during the investigation and the total number of cases charge-sheeted (including cases from the previous year and during the year).

The police percentage of pending cases depends on the number of cases pending for investigation at the end of the year to the total number of cases for investigation, including cases from previous years, reopened, and cases reported during the year, (National Productivity Council, 2020). The charge-sheeting rate depends on the total number of cases charge-sheeted (including the cases from last year and the cases during the year) for the total number of cases disposed off by the police (State Crime Records Bureau, 2014, 2022).

Cases disposed of by courts mean the total number of cases disposed of without trial and the total number of cases in which trials were completed (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2022). Cases are disposed off without trial under any of the given sub-heads namely, cases abated by court, cases withdrawn from prosecution, cases compounded or compromised, cases disposed of by plea bargaining, cases quashed and cases in which trials were completed are disposed of by conviction, discharge, and acquittal (State Crime Records Bureau, 2014). The court's case pending percentage depends on the number of cases pending



trial at the end of the year for the total number of cases that came for trial. The conviction rate depends on the total number of cases convicted for the total number of cases in which trials were completed (State Crime Records Bureau, 2014, 2022). Explanations about the case disposal terminologies were clarified with an official from the State Crime Records Bureau, Tamil Nadu.

Objectives

This paper attempts to achieve the following objectives:

1. To show the trend of rape cases committed against the Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu.
2. To analyze the police and the court disposal of rape cases committed against the Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu.
3. To show the disposal trend of rape cases committed against the Scheduled Castes.

Procedure

Firstly, the 12-year (2011–2022) trend in total incidences of rape illustrates the number of reported cases and the proportional increase in the rate of rape cases relative to the overall Scheduled Caste population. Secondly, the disposal sub-heads relevant to the study are described and discussed. Thirdly, the pending percentages for both police and court cases were analyzed, which show the disposal trend of rape cases committed against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu. Finally, the outcome of the analysis indicates how the police and the courts have disposed of rape cases committed against the Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu, and how the increase in rape cases has changed the workload for the police and courts, and the way forward for its improvement.

Discussion

The trend analysis of rape against the Scheduled Castes

Crime trend analysis was mostly used in major crimes like murder, rape, robbery, and burglary, and mostly all the major crimes were used altogether (Ansari et al., 2015; Dandona et al., 2022; Sindhumol et al., 2010), with Crime in India statistics being the data source. The regional patterns of crime against women (Dandona et al., 2022; Mukherjee & Krishnaji, 2001) and the regional pattern study of crime against children (Tikhute, 2023), police disposal of crime related to children (Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, 2021) all these studies indicate that there were chances of under-reporting of crime. Chart 1 shows the yearly increasing trend of rape incidents against Scheduled Castes from 11 incidents in 2011 to 166 incidents in the year 2022.

It is clear from the chart that the projected population is increasing at an arithmetic rate while the crime incidents are at a geometric rate for the years 2018 to 2022. Therefore, the rate of rape against Scheduled Castes shows an increasing trend from the year 2017. It has risen from 0.1% in 2011 to 1.1% in 2022. There is no significant increase in the projected population as in the total number of rape incidents. However, the increase in reported rape incidents cannot be seen only as a rise in atrocity against Scheduled Castes rather it may be viewed as an increase in reporting of rape cases committed against Scheduled Castes because of citizen-centric measures by police and development in institutional measures (Ansari et al., 2015; National Crime Records Bureau, 2022). There is a noticeable rise in reported rape cases; therefore, it is essential to analyze how the police and the judiciary have handled these cases.

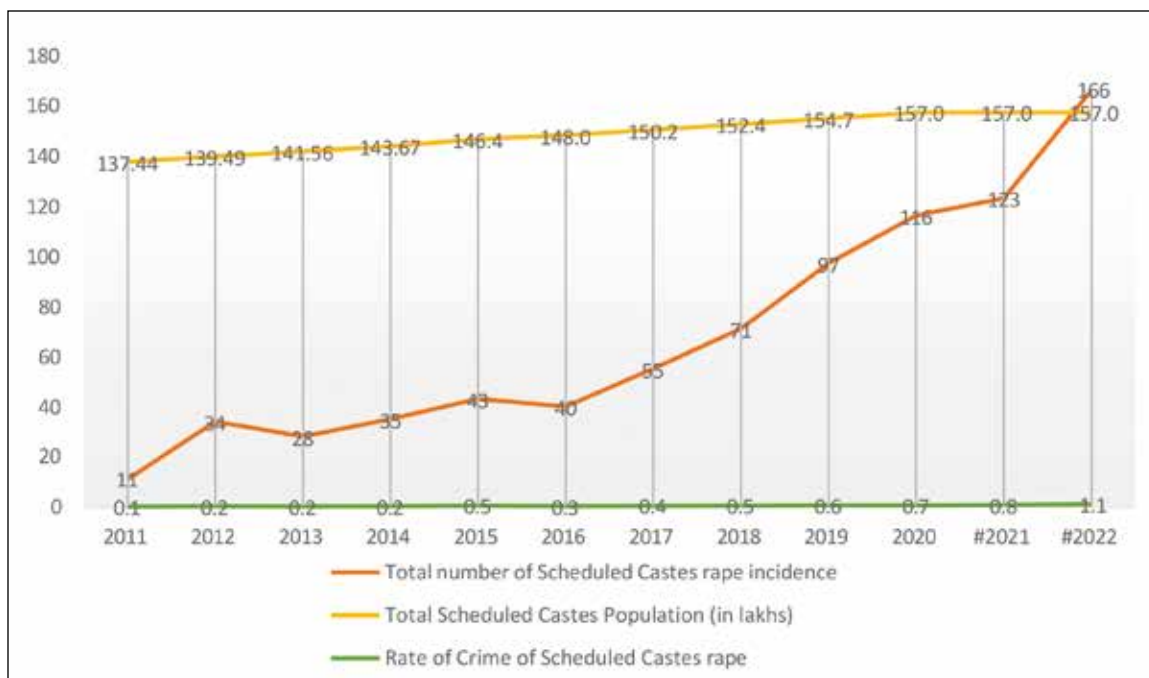


Chart 1

The trend analysis of rape against the Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu

Chart 1: The trend analysis of the rape against the Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu

Source: Crime Review, Tamil Nadu

Note. The chart depicts the increasing trend of rape against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu.

shows the years in which the projected Scheduled Castes population, 2020, has been used in calculating the crime rate.

Police disposal of rape cases committed against Scheduled Caste Table 1.
(Sub-heads under which rape cases are disposed of by Police in Tamil Nadu)

Year	2011 to 2014	2015 to 2016	2017 to 2022
Sub-heads	No. of cases		
Cases transferred to other States or agency	-	1	2
Cases ended as mistakes of fact or law or civil dispute	4	2	7
Cases true but insufficient evidence or untraced or no clue ^a	-	-	2
Cases abated during the investigation ^a	-	-	1

Source: Crime Review, Tamil Nadu.

Note. Sub-heads taken from Crime Review Tamil Nadu

^aReflect that for some period in crime review Tamil Nadu the Sub-heads were not used.



Police and the courts follow the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, and in addition to that police follow the Police Standing Order to dispose of a reported case sequentially. The Police cannot deny registering any cognizable offence namely murder, rape, etc. (The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973). Section 4(e) of the (PoA) Act, 1989 specifies that the investigation and charge sheet should be completed and filed in the Special courts within sixty days. From the available statistical data considering the serious nature of rape, the Police in Tamil Nadu have used only certain subheads in disposing of rape cases (State Crime Records Bureau, 2014). Some of the rape cases of Scheduled Castes have been transferred to another State or agency, this is the only subhead where the police need not submit the final report to the judge because (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011), after the transfer, the case procedures will be carried on by the receiving State, or agency. Table 1 shows cases transferred to other States or agencies.

Likewise, after the investigation of a rape case, if it turns out as an exaggerated non- cognizable offence, the investigating officer can give proper reasons in the final report and submit it in the court to dispose of the case ended as the final report false or the case ended as a mistake of fact or law or civil dispute. From Table 1, it is visible that in Tamil Nadu for the years 2011 and 2022, 13 rape cases were disposed of as a mistake of fact or law or civil dispute. In cases where the investigating officer finds no prospect of finding any other clue and when concludes that nothing more can be done, the investigating officer can dispose of the cases as true but insufficient evidence or untraced or no clue (Government of Tamil Nadu, 2019). Only two rape cases in Tamil Nadu have been disposed of under that subhead. When the

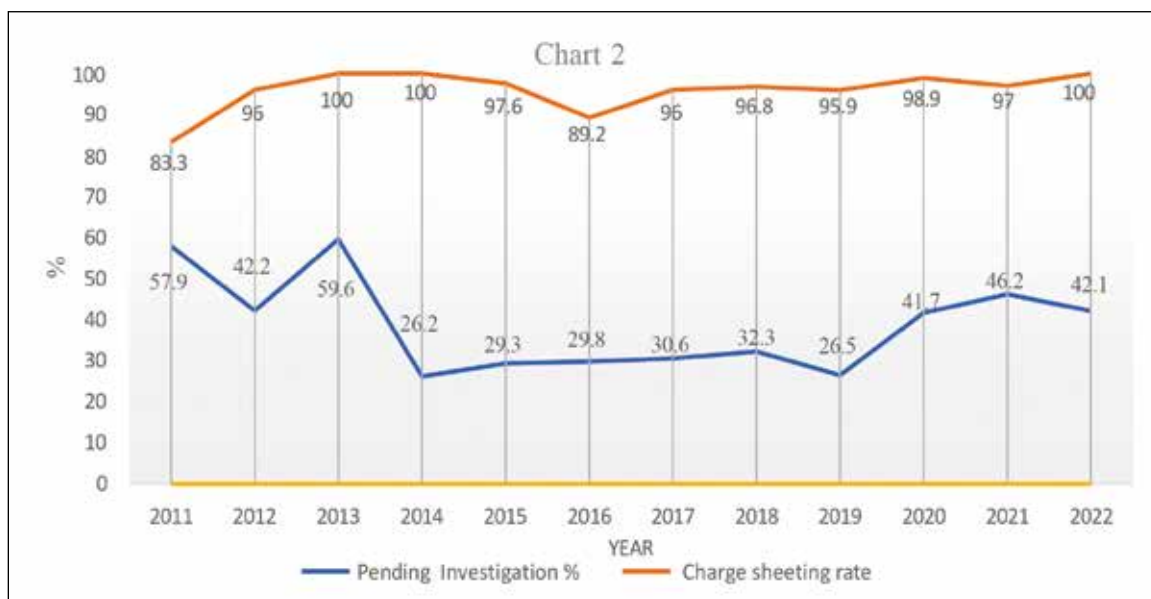
accused is no more, the case will be disposed of as case abated during the investigation, one case has been disposed of under this sub-head in Tamil Nadu. Only the judge can quash the case after the investigating officer submits the final report (Alam, n.d.; Kumar, 2009). For all the subheads, the police must follow the procedure established by law to dispose of a reported case by sending it to the court with a final report or charge sheet. Chart 2 depicts the pending percentage of police disposal of rape cases committed against the Scheduled Caste for the period 2011 to 2022.

The pending percentage of police disposal of cases depends on factors like the investigation and submission of the chargesheet. For better disposal of rape cases by police the charge sheeting rate should be higher, it is well depicted in Chart 2 in which the charge sheeting rate shows an increasing pattern, and straight line, especially for the years 2013, 2014, and 2022. However, the hidden problem is how many cases were charge-sheeted per the stipulated time limit established by the (PoA) Act, of 1989. The police charge sheeting rate was high, at the same time if we look at the total number of pending investigations percentage the chart shows a downward trend for the years 2014 to 2019 and there was an improvement for the years 2020 to 2021 and the line declines in the year 2022. Tamil Nadu has 1305 Law and order Police stations, 202 All Women Police stations and there are 37 special units (Home, 2022) however none of the data shows the sanctioned strength of Law-and-order police stations and All Women police stations. Even though Tamil Nadu has an appreciable police-per-lakh population ratio the important aspect to note is that only the Law-and-order Police register and investigate these cases. Unfortunately, these stations often suffer from actual

strength against the sanctioned strength. They cannot focus on just one category of cases and must regularly handle overburdening law and order duties (Koli, 2003). It is inferred from the statistics that the police could not follow section 4(e) of the (PoA) Act, 1989. This is due to factors like the 24/7 duty of the law-and-order police and the workload due to a limited present strength (which changes day to day based on the external duties and absence) against the actual strength available in the police stations, in addition to that they handle various other cases in a single day (Gupta, 2022; India Justice Report: Ranking States on Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid, 2022; Randhawa & Narang, 2013; Sharraf, 2013). Allocation of sanctioned strength is necessary for speedy and efficient investigation. The

law-and-order police do not have a dedicated police force to follow up on cases as "pairavi" (Sharraf, 2013), on a day-to-day basis, any police personnel from each station who can handle court procedures will be sent for court duty. However, keeping track of the progress of the Scheduled Caste case rests with each district's Social Justice and Human Rights units (the Protection Cell). Unfortunately, the problem with this unit is that it only supervises the work and does not actively aid in the case investigation and disposal as reported by an official in the Social Justice and Human Rights Wing, Tamil Nadu. Assigning more duty to the Protection Cell in investigating cases against the Scheduled Caste will improve the police disposal of the pending percentage of rape cases.

Chart 2: The Police Pending Investigation % and Charge sheeting rate of Scheduled Caste Rape cases



Source: Crime Review, Tamil Nadu

Note. The line shows the percentage changes in years for the rate of rape cases pending investigation and the charge sheeting rate.



Court disposal of rape cases committed against Scheduled Caste Table 2

Sub-heads under which rape cases are disposed of by Courts in Tamil Nadu

Year	2011 to 2014	2015 to 2016	2017 to 2022
Sub-head		No. of Case	
Cases abated by court ^a	-	-	6
Cases quashed ^a	-	-	3
Cases convicted	8	8	26
Cases discharged or acquitted	36	36	-
Cases discharged ^a	-	-	0
Cases acquitted ^a	-	-	149

Source: Crime Review, Tamil Nadu.

Note. Total of sub-heads for the taken years (2011-2022).^a Denotes that the Sub-heads were absent for some period in the Crime Review, Tamil Nadu.)

Table 2 shows the subheads used in the Crime Review, Tamil Nadu for disposing of rape cases against the Scheduled Castes by the courts. The prosecution plays a key role during and after filing a final report or the charge sheet in court. The disposal of cases by compounded or compromise and plea bargaining are not applicable for rape cases as per sections 320 and 265A of (the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973) and sections 359 and 289 of (the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023), respectively. Hence the subheads which apply to rape cases are discussed in the above table. If the accused dies before the end of the trial, the court will abate the case. In Tamil Nadu, from 2017 to 2022, six cases were abated by the court. In the trial, after hearing the prosecution, if the Magistrate finds that the charge against the accused is groundless (the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973), the magistrate

can discharge the accused. As far as the discharging of cases is concerned, none of the cases has been discharged by the court for the period from 2017 to 2022, and from 2011 to 2016 it was not mentioned separately whether the discharge or acquittal of the accused. This is considered one of the main disadvantages of using secondary data, the information needed for answering a specific question may not be available (Ali & Razi, 2020; Greenwood et al., 1975). Moreover, in any criminal case, the trial will be concluded either on acquittal of the accused or on conviction of the accused. If the judge, after the trial process, finds out that the accused is not guilty the judge can acquit the accused, otherwise, if the accused is found guilty, the accused will be convicted (the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973).

Notably, in Tamil Nadu, if we include the period



2011 to 2016 total number of cases discharged or acquitted and the total number of rape cases acquitted for the period 2017 to 2022, a total of 221 rape cases against Scheduled Caste women and children were acquitted. The cases that ended in conviction were significantly smaller in Tamil Nadu i.e., only 42 cases ended in conviction from 2011 to 2022 (see Table 1). As per section 14(2) of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, (1989), every case trial shall be completed and disposed of within two months as far as possible. The rape cases have been handled in special courts like FTSCs and ePOCSOs since 2019, despite that there were no changes in the pending percentage of the court disposal of rape cases. After the amendments in 2013, the punishment for rape against women has been made stringent and with the 2018 POCSO amendments the punishments for rape against children were made even more rigorous (Desarapu, 2023). In addition to that the scheme to handle rape cases for speedy disposal was a good initiative, but the scheme is not reaping results as desired. The women belonging to Scheduled Castes face severe discrimination not only because they belong to a weaker community but also because of their gender (Desarapu, 2023; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011).

Chart 3 depicts the very high pendency trend of trials of rape cases against Scheduled Castes with over 80% for all the given years, and the rate of convictions was below 30% for any given year. According to the Crime Review, in Tamil the total number of rape cases and convictions involving other communities of women and children for the period 2015 to 2022 it was 2237 and 505 respectively (State Crime Records Bureau, 2020). For the same period, the total number of cases and the total number of convictions for rape

against Scheduled Castes were 711 and 34, respectively. In simple terms, the conviction rate for the period 2015 to 2022 was 22.5% for rape committed against women and children belonging to other sections and the conviction rate for rape committed against women and children belonging to scheduled castes was 4.7%. In that light when rape cases result in low convictions, the true purpose of bringing justice and creating deterrence by providing stringent punishment for the offenders merely stays in the Acts. When the conviction rates are minimal, it will demotivate the victim to report the crime in the future. It is also implied that when perpetrators are acquitted in most rape cases, the victim's misery is not alleviated; rather, it increases their suffering. Ultimately the end of justice for the victims of rape is not met.

The court must depend on the police and vice-versa and the police rely on the Forensic Science Laboratories (FSLs) for evidence and cooperation of the witnesses in rape cases. The lack of cohesiveness among the stakeholders of the criminal justice system can be attributed to this situation. Because there are provisions for consulting public prosecutors during complicated cases and the public prosecutors can advise at each stage of complicated cases before filing the charge sheet (Government of Tamil Nadu, 2019).

Ironically, what we have is less sanctioned police strength and a piling up of cases in the judiciary. The courts merely send summons and warrants but the groundwork of bringing the witness, arresting the accused, and collecting evidence rest on the police, hence they need proper training in securing the scene of crime and the handling of chain of custody which is important for forensic evidence in rape trials (Goswamy, 2018). The rape cases against Scheduled Castes are sensitive compared to

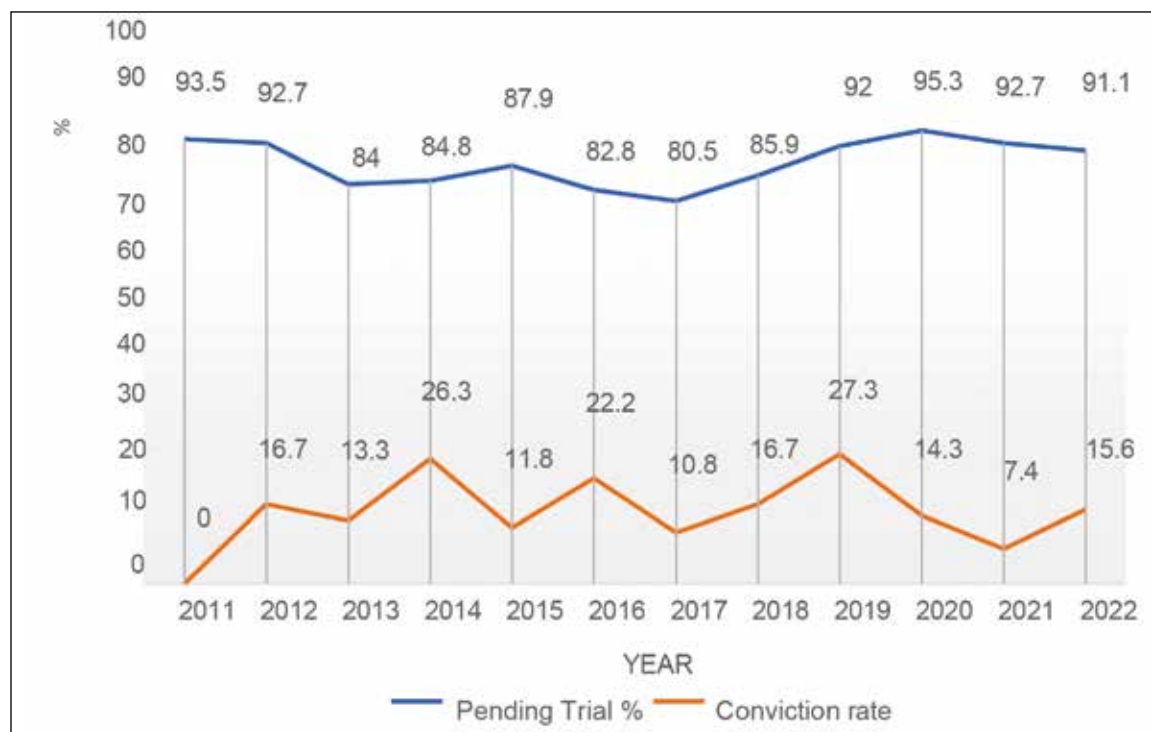


other communities, and the courts were not able to dispose of the cases within the given time limit as per the provisions of the (PoA) Act, of 1989. Most importantly, it is impossible to figure out when the police had charge-sheeted the case (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011), how long it took to file the charge sheet, or when the court trial for the case started based on the secondary data that is currently available. The courts do not have working hours like the police force and courts cannot be blamed for having vacations, unlike the police. The advocates must work on linking the case with the missing parts and work on other pending cases. The judges on the other hand must work on their reserved judgements and spend time reading the laws and the new

developments of the laws, in addition to that they must take care of additional functions like legal aid clinics and Lok Adalats, (Nair, 2024).

Hence, the reason for the pendency of court disposal cannot be solely attributed to the vacations of judges and the number of working days of courts. When referring to the Crime Review, Tamil Nadu for the years 2019 to 2022, cases convicted out of cases from previous years and cases convicted out of cases during the year were available (State Crime Records Bureau, 2020), which shows that the courts have disposed of cases by conviction only from cases out of the previous year, in that period (2019-2022), not even single case was convicted during the reported year.

Chart 3: The Court Pending Trial % and conviction rate of Rape against Scheduled Castes



Source: Crime Review, Tamil Nadu.

Note. The line shows the percentage changes in years for the rape cases pending trial and the conviction rate.



Conclusion

The cases reported by the Scheduled Castes community are handled with precaution due to the sensitive nature of the issue. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, (1995) specify that the investigation officer for Scheduled Caste cases should be an officer not below the rank of the Deputy Superintendent of Police, it also mentions setting up the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes Protection Cell, but the Protection Cell does not have functional roles like law and order police, it only monitors the police station handling of (PoA) Act, 1989 cases.

According to (the India Justice Report: Ranking States on Police, Judiciary, Prisons, and Legal Aid, 2022) Tamil Nadu ranks 1st in the judiciary rankings on indicators like diversity in the judiciary appointments and reduction in vacancies, which is ironic considering the pendency rate of rape cases. Tamil Nadu has 22 Exclusive Special Courts as of 2023 (Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department, 2023). Notably, all the rape cases are tried in FTSCs and ePOCSOs from 2019, therefore, it is inferred that the service of special courts and exclusive special courts are not currently exclusively used for rape cases against Schedule Caste. The scheme has directed each FTSC to dispose of at least 165 rape cases annually (National Productivity Council, 2020). Unfortunately, there was no direction for special grounds like victims belonging to the Schedule Caste community or other vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, the purpose of transferring rape cases to FTSCs is for speedy disposal. The significance of speedy disposal is that the victim of rape can get adequate relief during various stages of case disposal. Whether it is an exclusive special court set up as per (PoA) Act, 1989 or FTSCs there should

be cooperation between multiple stakeholders to accomplish the desired objectives.

The Stakeholders like police, Forensic science laboratories (FSLs), prosecution, judges, and NGOs need training programmes for the effective disposal of rape cases. The Central government should establish more Forensic Science Laboratories to avoid delays in producing DNA and forensic reports. Especially for Schedule Caste rape cases, the Protection Cells should be given more active roles apart from the monitoring role, their active role in investigation will reduce the burden of law-and-order police. The police and the court often face challenges like hostility from the witness and mostly in love affairs-related rape cases there is hostility from the victim (National Productivity Council, 2020), hence community level awareness is also needed to meet the ends of justice. Therefore, the protection cells can include in their awareness programs the importance of FTSCs apart from the importance of the (PoA) Act, of 1989. In the judiciary, the working hours of the courts need proper revision considering the pendency of rape cases. Initiatives like summer recess (Nair, 2024) can help reduce case pendency (Rao & Gupta, 2003). At least the number of court staff and judges working under the FTSCs can be increased. Even though FTSCs handle all the rape cases, the designated exclusive special courts for SC/ST community should monitor the pendency of rape cases from time to time for speedy disposal (Gross, 2020).

More importantly, the purpose of a speedy trial underscores justice for the victims of rape. When the trial ends in acquittals there is no deterrence created in society, especially for those who indulge in atrocities against the Schedule Caste community. Apart from increasing the number of institutions and providing the sanctioned



strength of stakeholders and proper training for the stakeholders, active liaison between the stakeholders can improve the disposal rate of rape cases committed against Scheduled Castes. There is a need for empirical study among multiple stakeholders to understand the issue further in areas such as the difficulties of law-and-order police stations, police and court disposal of crime the importance of liaison between the investigation officer and the prosecution for speedy disposal of cases, and reasons for rape trials ending in acquittals.

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A Study on job satisfaction and perception among female police in Mizoram



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Abstract

Even though the presence of women in the police force has recently seen an increase in numbers, female police officers continue to face challenges in workplace areas that one may consider as traditionally male-dominated. These include unfriendly work environments, limited promotion opportunities, and even gender-based jokes from colleagues. In India, these issues are further compounded by societal stereotypes, public mistrust, and balancing work-life demands. The current study examines the working conditions, job satisfaction, and stress levels of female police officers in Mizoram, India. These factors are known to influence officer productivity, absenteeism, and morale. Despite high job satisfaction and a lack of reported gender discrimination, challenges exist. Work-life balance remains a significant concern, and stress levels are moderately high. The identified negative correlation between job satisfaction and stress suggests that efforts to improve job satisfaction, such as addressing work-life balance concerns, could lead to a reduction in stress among female police officers in Mizoram. These findings can inform departmental strategies to create a more supportive and effective police force. This study reflects a broader trend of inclusivity. As more women enter fields like law enforcement, it is necessary to create workplaces that value their contributions. By exploring the experiences of female police officers, the research sheds light on the challenges they face alongside the rewards of the job while emphasizing the importance of organizational support and fair policies for all genders in this evolving field of policing.

Keywords: Police, women police, job satisfaction, stress, gender, Mizoram

Introduction

Despite significant strides toward gender equality, female police officers continue to face distinct challenges that hinder their professional growth and overall job satisfaction. Female officers often contend with hostile work environments, limited career growth opportunities, and gender-related

jokes from colleagues. They are frequently assigned tasks stereotyped as “women’s work,” such as managing domestic violence cases or handling traffic and parking duties (Corsianos, 2011), while more demanding assignments—such as homicide, narcotics, or organized crime—are often reserved for their

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male counterparts. The pressures of policing are further intensified by the constant struggle to balance work and family life, unpredictable work hours, and exposure to dangerous situations, which strain personal relationships. Sexual harassment remains another pervasive issue, often ignored or downplayed. These challenges, coupled with the struggle to manage childcare and family responsibilities, drive many female officers to leave the force (Cordner & Cordner, 2011).

In India, female officers in the male-dominated police force face similar issues, including overcoming gender stereotypes, and public mistrust, balancing professional and domestic duties, and earning the acceptance of their male colleagues. Despite their proven ability to effectively de-escalate conflicts, stereotypes about women being overly sensitive or weak persist (Hassell et al., 2011). Misconceptions about how their femininity affects their decision-making and perceived vulnerability to assault further complicate their integration and acceptance within the force.

Literature Review:

Recently, there has been growing interest in understanding the job satisfaction of female police officers as a crucial measure of their motivation, goal achievement, and overall morale in the workplace (Yamuna, 2020). Female police officers face various challenges in their professional lives, and research consistently highlights issues that impact their job satisfaction across multiple countries. One significant concern is the hostile work environments that many female officers endure. Studies by O'Connor et al. (2011) and Wilson (2016) reveal that gender bias and discrimination are prevalent in police forces and can severely hinder the career progression of female officers. Moreover, sexual harassment is

another serious challenge that female officers often face in the workplace, ranging from unwelcome advances and explicit comments to physical assaults. Such experiences not only increase stress levels but also significantly reduce job satisfaction (Gnanaselvam & Joseph, 2023).

Factors influencing job satisfaction extend beyond a hostile work environment and harassment, including workload, work-life balance, financial compensation, promotion opportunities, and the support—or lack thereof—provided by superiors and colleagues (Kuppusami, 2016; Kavya & Chandrashekar, 2016; Maurya, 2019). These elements collectively shape the experiences of female officers, underscoring the need for a supportive environment to enhance job satisfaction.

Limited advancement opportunities and underrepresentation further affect the well-being of female officers. For example, in the Mizoram police force, women make up about 17.73% of the total personnel, a figure higher than the national average of 11.7% but still indicative of significant underrepresentation (Mizoram General Police Headquarters data). This underrepresentation can lead to feelings of marginalization and restrict career growth, as noted by Chawla (2022) and Vij (2023). Additionally, female police officers often contend with stressors outside their immediate work environment, such as balancing work and family responsibilities and navigating societal expectations regarding their roles as women (Bhuvaneswari & Thirumoorthi, 2023; Jain & Qureshi, 2022). These pressures can intensify job-related stress and become major hindrances to female officers' satisfaction in both their professional and personal lives.



The current research focuses on female officers' job satisfaction and stress—two key factors influencing motivation, performance, and morale in the workplace in the context of Mizoram. Addressing these challenges will not only highlight the necessity of improving the work environment for female police officers but also strengthen the police force, ensuring it becomes more a supportive, inclusive, and effective organization.

Background of the Study

Mizoram is the 23rd state of India, established in 1987, having been part of Assam until 1972 when it was designated as a union territory.

The state borders Myanmar on the east and south, and Bangladesh on the west, with a total border length of 722 kilometres. The term "Mizoram" means "Land of the Hill People" in the Mizo language. As of the 2011 Census, it is the second-most literate state in India, with a literacy rate of 91.33%. Mizoram was also named the Happiest State in 2023, based on factors like family ties, work-life balance, social connections, philanthropy, religion, the effects of Covid-19, and physical and mental health (India Today, 2023). The current staff strength of the various police stations and outposts/beat per district in the state is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Total Strength of PS/OP/Beat around Various Districts of Mizoram

District	Male	Female	Total
Aizawl	268	53	324
Lunglei	37	38	75
Siaha	49	12	63
Champhai	68	11	76
Lawngtlai	49	3	52
Serchhip	42	8	50
Kolasib	91	18	109
Mamit	65	12	77
Saitual	52	7	59
Khawzawl	19	4	23
Hnahthial	56	6	62
Total	796	172	970

Source: Mizoram Police Headquarters

Objectives of the study: Based on the literature review, the following objectives were framed particularly for the study:

1. To study the individual backgrounds of female police officers in Mizoram.
2. To study the working conditions for female police officers in Mizoram police stations.
3. To study the level of stress experienced by

female police officers in Mizoram.

4. To study the job satisfaction level of female police officers in Mizoram.
5. To determine how stress and job satisfaction are related to female police officers in Mizoram.

Methods

- **Design of the Study:** The design of



the current study is exploratory, using cross-sectional data obtained through a combination of document analysis and survey methodologies.

- **Tools Used:** This study collected primary data using a questionnaire administered to female police officers in Mizoram. Secondary data was obtained from books, magazines, and articles in various journals and newspapers. The study employed the 5-item Job Satisfaction Scale (Judge et al., 1998) and the 4-item Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983), both scored from 1 to 5. These scales were chosen for their brevity to reduce respondent fatigue and demonstrated good reliability with Cronbach's Alpha values of .88 and .81, respectively.
- **Data Collection:** To obtain primary data, female police officers across different stations were reached out to personally through their supervisors to make sure everything was according to ethical standards. Participants were fully informed about the study, provided their consent, and were aware they could withdraw at any time.
- **Samples:** Out of 172 policewomen from

various districts in Mizoram, a hundred of them were initially selected for this study. Due to incomplete forms and the withdrawal of some participants, the final sampling unit consisted of 79 female police officers.

Results:

• Background Information of the Participants

The background information of the participants can be seen in Table 2. The age distribution of the participants shows that the largest group is in the '36 to 45' age range, making up 53.2% of the total. This is followed by the '26 to 35' age group, which constitutes 34.2%. The '18 to 25' age group represents 6.3% of the participants, while those in the '46 to 55' and '56 and above' age ranges make up 3.8% and 2.5%, respectively. Regarding marital status, 64.6% of participants are unmarried, while 35.4% are married. Also, the highest proportion holds a matriculate qualification (43.0%), followed by graduates (31.6%) and under matriculate individuals (22.8%). Postgraduates account for only 2.5% of the respondents.

Table 2: Background Information of the Participants

Variable	Group	N	%
Age	18 – 25	5	6.3
	26 – 35	27	34.2
	36 – 45	42	53.2
	46 – 55	3	3.8
	56 and above	2	2.5
Designation	Constable	65	82.3
	Lance Naik	1	1.3
	Havildar	12	15.2
	Assistant Sub-Inspector	1	1.3
	Sub-Inspector	79	100.0
	Inspector	0	0



Variable	Group	N	%
Marital Status	Married	28	35.4
	Unmarried	51	64.6
Educational Qualification	Under matriculate	18	22.8
	Matriculate	34	43.0
	Graduate	25	31.6
	Postgraduate	2	2.5

• Working Conditions (Table 3)

Among the participants, a majority (79.7%) work six days a week, with 12.7% working five days and 7.6% working seven days. Most (63.29%) work 7-8 hours daily, while 15.19% work 9-10 hours, and another 15.19% work 11-12 hours. A small percentage (6.33%) work more than 12 hours per day. Regarding shifts, 58.2% work during the day, while 41.8% are on alternate day/night shifts.

The main reasons for joining the police force varied: 75.9% cited job security, 16.5% joined by choice, and 7.6% joined due to a lack of other job opportunities. Despite this, 96.2% of participants expressed satisfaction with their choice of work. However, balancing duties at home was challenging for many, with 82.3% saying it was difficult to manage their roles as mother, wife, or daughter, and 8.9% mentioning high responsibility and lack of social life as issues.

Job security (59.5%) and social prestige (40.5%) were key motivators for joining the force. Dissatisfaction was primarily due to poor salaries (7.6%) and lack of family time (84.8%). Common workplace challenges included overwork (51.9%) and stress (48.1%). None of the respondents reported having experienced discrimination or harassment from their superiors or male colleagues. Of those who reported discrimination, 93.7% said their superiors acted. Most respondents (97.5%) felt appreciated by their male counterparts and believed their talents were well-utilized. There were concerns about facilities, with only 36.7% reporting a separate washing room for women and 53.2% indicating that equipment supply was adequate. Interestingly, all respondents (100%) reported not feeling discriminated against during their training and did not perceive their work environment as male-oriented.

Table 3: Working Conditions and Experiences of the Samples

Variable	Category	N	%
Duration of work in a Week	Less than 5 days	0	0
	5 days	10	12.7
	6 days	63	79.7
	7 days	6	7.6
Duration of work in a day	7-8 hours	50	63.29
	9-10 hours	12	15.19
	11-12 hours	12	15.19
	More than 12 hours	5	6.33



Variable	Category	N	%
Work-Shift	Day	46	58.2
	Night	0	0
	Alternate Day/ Night	33	41.8
Reason for Joining the Police Force	For want a job	6	7.6
	As per desire	13	16.5
	Salary	0	0
	Job Security	60	75.9
Whether Satisfied with Work Choice	Yes	76	96.2
	No	0	0
	No idea	3	3.8
Problem Faced due to Work at Home	Family relationship hampered	0	0
	Not possible to carry out the duty of a mother/wife/ daughter	65	82.3
	High responsibility	7	8.9
	No time for social life	7	8.9
Most satisfactory Part about the Job	Good salary	0	0
	Job security	47	59.5
	Social prestige	32	40.5
	Power	0	0
	Recognition of job well done	0	0
Most dissatisfactory Part about the Job	Poor salary	6	7.6
	Uncertain working hours	6	7.6
	Stressful work	0	0
	No family time	67	84.8
Problem Faced at Workplace	Working environment	0	0
	Over work	41	51.9
	Stressful	38	48.1
	Bad atmosphere	0	0
	No idea	0	0
Any Gender Discrimination at Work-place	Yes	0	0
	No	73	92.4
	No idea	6	7.6
Whether Harassed by Superiors	Yes	0	0
	No	79	100
Whether Harassed by Male Col-leagues	Yes	0	0
	No	79	100



Variable	Category	N	%
If reported, any action taken by superior?	Yes	74	93.7
	No	2	2.5
	No Idea	3	3.8
Is your work appreciated by your male counterparts?	Yes	77	97.5
	No	2	2.5
Is your talent utilized in your job?	Yes	77	97.5
	No	2	2.5
Whether any Separate Washing Room for Women	Yes	29	36.7
	No	50	63.3
Equipment Supply	Adequately Supplied	42	53.2
	Not Adequately Supplied	37	46.8
Did you feel discriminated against during your training?	Yes	0	0
	No	79	100
Do you think your work environment is more male-oriented?	Yes	0	0
	No	79	100

• Levels of Stress and Job Satisfaction Experienced

In terms of perceived stress, the respondents reported an average score of 10.55 out of 20. This could be taken as an indication that the participants experienced

a varying moderate level of stress. Also, when considering job satisfaction, the participants exhibited a moderately positive outlook with an average score of 13.95 out of a maximum possible score of 25 (Table 4).

Table 4: Mean Levels of Job Satisfaction and Stress Experienced by the Samples

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Perceived Stress	79	13.95	5.01
Job Satisfaction	79	10.55	3.97

• Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Stress

Pearson's correlation analysis (Table 5) produced a negative correlation coefficient of -0.614 ($p < .01$), which shows a moderate negative relationship between the job satisfaction of Mizo female police officers and their perceived stress levels. In other words, as perceived stress increases, job satisfaction tends to decrease, and vice

versa. This implies that policewomen who experience higher levels of perceived stress are likely to experience lower job satisfaction, which is consistent with previous research (Mohanraj & Natesan, 2015). From this finding, it is important to note that interventions or improvements aimed at enhancing job satisfaction could potentially contribute to the reduction of stress among the participants.

**Table 5: Outcome of the Pearson's Correlation Analysis**

Variable	Perceived Stress
Job Satisfaction	-.614**

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Discussion:

Many women in the police force in Mizoram cite job security and personal interest as their main reasons for joining, and they generally report satisfaction with their career choice. However, the demands of police work, such as irregular hours and shifts, create challenges in maintaining a work-life balance for them. Balancing home responsibilities with job duties is a common struggle due to the high demands of the role.

Previous research shows that factors influencing job satisfaction include social status, work security, lack of quality family time, and unpredictable working hours, which are confirmed by the study. Although instances of harassment from colleagues or superiors are rare, when discrimination does occur, corrective measures are immediately taken by the concerned authorities. Overall, female officers in Mizoram report positive perceptions regarding work recognition and the use of their skills.

The current study suggests a connection between job satisfaction and stress levels, indicating that enhancing job satisfaction could potentially reduce stress among female police officers.

Suggestions

1. Policies that help female police officers balance their work and personal lives should be developed. This could include paid maternity leave, childcare assistance, and medical insurance coverage. Also, providing

sanitary products at the workplace would be a positive step forward.

2. It is important to create educational programs and organize seminars where both male and female officers can discuss and resolve gender-specific challenges. Allowing women in law enforcement to voice their concerns openly is essential, as ignoring these issues can lead to job dissatisfaction.
3. Women should be hired for both administrative and operational roles within police departments. Appointing women only for symbolic reasons or limiting them to administrative tasks limits their capabilities and reinforces outdated gender stereotypes.
4. Any cases of sexual harassment within the police force must be taken seriously. Measures should be put in place to create a safe environment where women can report inappropriate behaviour by male colleagues or superiors without fear of retaliation. A special department should be set up in each jurisdiction's police stations and training centres to handle these complaints quickly and effectively.
5. Increasing mentoring opportunities can help female officers build useful connections and advance their careers. Formal mentorship programs should be introduced to foster relationships between higher-ranking officers and their subordinates. Providing management and leadership training to supervisors and encouraging positive interactions between female officers and their supervisors can also improve job performance.



6. Female officers often do better with less micromanagement, as it helps them maintain trust and motivates them to work harder. Improving communication at all levels will help female officers feel comfortable speaking up when needed.
7. To reduce stress, deadlines should be as flexible as possible. Projects should be scheduled well in advance when strict deadlines are necessary, or ways should be found to reduce other job responsibilities for female officers so they can meet their deadlines.
8. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) offers ideas for managing diversity within police departments, which benefits all employees by making diversity and equal opportunity training more accessible. There is also a need for women to have access to professional development opportunities to support their career growth.

Conclusion

Maintaining high levels of job satisfaction among female police officers is essential for preventing burnout and keeping them motivated. A supportive and engaging work environment helps female officers perform their best. Allowing them some control over their workspace and personal touches can enhance their job satisfaction.

Senior management must be dedicated, skilled, and committed to creating a positive learning environment within police stations. They need to understand what elements improve or hinder learning and satisfaction among female officers. Developing a clear plan to ensure consistent satisfaction and performance is important for helping female officers achieve their goals over time. Research indicates that female officers who feel well-supported are more creative, innovative, and engaged (Alessa

& Durugbo, 2022). Even small improvements in their working conditions can lead to significant long-term benefits.

In conclusion, despite the challenges of their roles, policewomen in this study generally maintain a positive view of their work. Job satisfaction is key to both personal well-being and organizational success. By creating a supportive environment and focusing on job satisfaction, both individual officers and the organization can experience substantial benefits.

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"Next-Generation Policing: Pioneering Methods for Addressing Young Offenders" – The PARAVAI MODEL



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Abstract

The paper entitled **"Next-Generation Policing: Pioneering Methods for Addressing Young Offenders" – The PARAVAI MODEL** discusses the innovative policing approaches that prioritize preventing first-time petty young offenders from engaging in petty criminal offenses or activities. Newer approaches in policing strategies have emerged as a promising method to address petty offenses committed by young offenders of the age group 18-21 years, who are covered earlier in a few states and now in many states under the Borstal Act of that state. Petty offenses, though relatively minor in nature, can have a significant impact on community safety and the development of young individuals. The objective of the paper is to highlight the best practices experimented among the first-time petty young offenders (FTYPO) to prevent them from further criminality restore them to their routine and prevent them from recidivism. The **"RRR"** philosophy -**R**eformation, **R**ehabilitation, and **R**eintegration of offenders has always been a vision of the Tamil Nadu Police Department for which they have joined hands with PRISM a Chennai based Voluntary Organisation run by a Senior Counsel to the High Court of Madras who worked out several ideas, programs and schemes as a part of the vision. The PARAVAI (Personality and Attitude Reformation Assistance Venture for Affirming Identity) program initiated by PRISM is a first of its kind initiative, which focuses on the **FTPYO – First-Time Petty Young Offenders**. It also explains the concept of next-generation policing and its application in dealing with petty offenses committed by young offenders. Next-generation policing is defined

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as a paradigm shift from volatile responses to a more preventive and problem-solving approach. It focuses on identifying and addressing the underlying causes of petty offenses, rather than solely responding to incidents after they occur. This approach recognizes that early intervention and engagement with young offenders have a profound impact on their future trajectories.

*This empirical paper explains a next-generation policing model **PARAVAI** where relevant strategies which are within the legal framework were introduced by PRISM and implemented by the Chennai Police and the Tamil Nadu law enforcement agencies. These strategies include De-addiction programmes, counselling, family therapies, and intervention initiated by the PRISM along with the Police which are community engagement initiatives leading to problem-oriented policing and targeted enforcement efforts. By intervening early, police could circumnavigate young individuals away from further involvement in criminal activities. In addition to the efforts, next-generation police strategies can improve community safety and well-being by addressing the root causes of petty offenses and creating an environment conducive to positive social interactions. The importance of collaboration between law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and other stakeholders is examined and highlighted so that, these entities can design comprehensive programs that offer support, education, and skill development opportunities for young offenders. The abstract also emphasizes the need for ongoing evaluation and refinement of next-generation policing strategies to ensure their effectiveness and minimize unintended consequences.*

Keywords: Next-generation policing, PARAVAI Model, First time petty Young Offenders.

Introduction

Next-generation policing strategies have emerged as a promising approach to addressing petty offenses committed by young offenders. Petty offenses, though relatively minor in nature, can have a significant impact on community safety and the development of young individuals. This paper explores the concept of next-generation policing and its application in tackling petty offenses committed by young offenders in Chennai City. Next-generation policing involves a shift from reactive responses to a more preventive and problem-solving approach. It focuses on identifying and addressing the underlying causes of petty offenses, rather than solely

responding to incidents after they occur. This approach recognizes that early intervention and engagement with young offenders can have a profound impact on their future trajectories.

Aim

The study aims to evaluate and document the effectiveness of the PARAVAI Model as a pioneering approach in next-generation policing to rehabilitate first-time petty young offenders to reduce recidivism, and to foster their reintegration into society.

Objectives of the Paper:

1. Assess the effectiveness of the reformatory programme "PARAVAI" for the first-time



petty young offenders, government policies, and programs in ensuring the rehabilitation and reintegration of young offenders in conflict with the law.

2. Bring to attention the role of police in rehabilitating young offenders and preventing recidivism.
3. Analyse similar practises and programmes in other states of India and in other countries to enhance the motivation towards reformation.

Review of Literature

Globally, in addressing first-time petty young offenders, there has been a significant shift, with a focus on restorative justice and rehabilitative approaches rather than retributive measures. The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Measures (Tokyo Rules, 1990) advocate for community-based interventions such as counseling, probation, and diversion programs to reintegrate young offenders (United Nations, 1990). Countries like Norway and Sweden emphasize early intervention through diversion programs that include restorative justice conferences, victim-offender mediation, and skill development training (Strang & Braithwaite, 2002). For instance, in Norway, young offenders are diverted from formal prosecution to social services, reducing recidivism rates (Lappi-Seppälä, 2016). In the United Kingdom, the Youth Justice System incorporates Youth Offender Panels and community rehabilitation orders to address the root causes of offending behavior while promoting accountability (Bateman & Hazel, 2014). Similarly, in New Zealand, the Family Group Conference model under the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act, 1989, has been successful in rehabilitating first-time petty offenders through family and community support (Maxwell & Morris, 2006). These global practices underscore the importance of non-

custodial measures that address the underlying socio-economic vulnerabilities while steering young offenders toward reintegration.

Indian police have increasingly adopted diversion programs to handle first-time petty offenders, diverting them away from the formal justice system to avoid criminal records (Muralidharan, 2020). These programs aim to rehabilitate young offenders through community service, counseling, or education. Studies show that diversion programs reduce the stigma of imprisonment and encourage reformation (Chockalingam & Vijayan, 2019). Tamil Nadu's PARAVAI program exemplifies this approach, emphasizing rehabilitation over punishment for young offenders (Angelo, 2022). Community policing is another cornerstone in managing juvenile offenders. This approach involves collaboration between the police, families, and local communities to resolve conflicts and address the underlying causes of delinquency. Mukherjee (2018) highlights that community policing initiatives in Tamil Nadu have been effective in preventing petty crimes by fostering trust between the police and vulnerable populations. The Friends of Police (FOP) program in Tamil Nadu has been particularly impactful, involving citizens in maintaining law and order and mentoring at-risk youth (Bedi, 2020). Tamil Nadu has been at the forefront of innovative practices targeting young offenders. Case studies highlight the success of programs like **PARAVAI**, where first-time petty offenders receive individualized care plans, including education and family reintegration strategies (Emmanuel & Angelo, 2024). Similarly, the **Andhra Pradesh Police's Bal Raksha Bhavan** initiative provides shelter and skill training to children in conflict with the law, demonstrating a holistic approach to rehabilitation (Reddy, 2018). These initiatives align with global best practices by ensuring



diversion from custodial settings, which often exacerbate criminal tendencies among youth. Furthermore, studies have highlighted the need for a multi-stakeholder approach involving families, police, judiciary, and social workers to prevent recidivism (Kumari, 2019). Despite progressive legislation, India faces implementation gaps, particularly in rural and marginalized communities, necessitating stronger community-based interventions and skill development programs (Bhattacharya, 2020). Programs like the PATTAM and PARAVAI Projects in Tamil Nadu focus on reformatory strategies such as character development, life skills training, and counselling for first-time petty offenders (Angelo, 2022).

In India, addressing first-time petty young offenders has gained momentum through a combination of legislative, judicial, and community-based interventions. The **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015** provides a child-centric approach to dealing with juveniles in conflict with the law, particularly for minor and petty offenses. Section 15 of the Act allows for non-custodial measures such as **counseling, community service, and probation**, ensuring that the focus remains on rehabilitation rather than punishment (Government of India, 2015). However, implementation gaps remain, particularly in rural areas, where a lack of awareness and infrastructure often leads to stigmatization of offenders (Kumari, 2019). Similarly, states like **Kerala** have implemented diversion programs under the supervision of the Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) to avoid formal prosecution for minor offenses, thereby ensuring early intervention (Singh, 2018).

Judicial pronouncements in India have also reinforced the need for reformatory justice. For instance, the **Supreme Court** in *Sheela Barse v.*

Union of India (1986) emphasized the protection of children in detention, ensuring they are not treated as hardened criminals. Furthermore, innovative practices like **open shelters and skill training centers** in Maharashtra and Gujarat are providing alternative pathways for young offenders to acquire education and vocational skills (Bhattacharya, 2020).

Studies highlight that **socioeconomic vulnerabilities**—such as poverty, lack of education, and family breakdown—play a significant role in petty offenses committed by youth (Nair, 2017). Addressing these root causes through multi-stakeholder involvement, including families, social workers, judiciary, and police, is critical. Programs under **Skill India** and **PMKVY** (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana) have been leveraged in some states to integrate young offenders into skill-building initiatives, ensuring economic rehabilitation (Sinha, 2021).

The review of literature features the rising recognition of reformatory approaches in handling young offenders, stressing rehabilitation over punitive measures. Global practices sketch down the effectiveness of diversion programs, community-based interventions, and skill development initiatives in reducing recidivism, while Indian studies reveal gaps in implementing such strategies within the existing legal framework. Emerging models like the PARAVAI Project align with international best practices, focusing on rehabilitative policing methods tailored to first-time petty offenders. The kind of amalgamation provides a healthy foundation for evaluating the PARAVAI Model's efficacy and its potential for nationwide adoption, offering a transformative shift in policing strategies for young offenders in India.



PARAVAI (G.O.No.52 dated 29/09/2022)

PARAVAI stands for Personality, Attitude, and Reformation venture affirming Identity. Reformative initiatives such as PATTAM and PARAVAI projects in Tamil Nadu have

demonstrated successful models of addressing the needs of first-time petty offenders. These programs focus on life skills training, character development, and counselling, enabling offenders to reintegrate into society while preventing recidivism (Angelo, 2022).



The PARAVAI project focuses on young offenders, specifically those in the age group of 18 to 24 years, who are often categorized as young adults. While this group is typically treated differently from juveniles under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, there are several laws and frameworks that apply to them. The relevant legal provisions for handling offenders in this age category under the PARAVAI project are explained as mentioned below;

Relevant Laws for Offenders Aged 18 to 24 Years under the PARAVAI Project

Stage	Legal Provision	Description/Details
1. General Legal Framework	Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860	Young offenders in the age group of 18 to 24 years are primarily governed by the IPC, which criminalizes various offenses such as theft, assault, and robbery. This group is treated as adults under the law, but the PARAVAI project offers rehabilitation alternatives to reduce recidivism.
2. Age of Criminal Responsibility	Indian Penal Code (Sections 82 & 83)	Under the IPC, individuals aged 18 and above are presumed to be criminally responsible. The PARAVAI project targets first-time petty offenders within this age range for rehabilitation rather than punitive measures. Rehabilitation focuses on education, skill development, and community service to mitigate criminal behavior.
3. Special Considerations for Young Adults	Probation of Offenders Act, 1958	This law allows young adult offenders to be placed on probation instead of being sentenced to prison, provided the offense is not serious. Under the PARAVAI project , first-time petty offenders in this age range may be eligible for probation, where they can undergo rehabilitation programs such as counseling, skills training, and community service.
4. Juvenile Justice for Young Adults (if applicable)	Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (Section 2(k), Section 18)	Although the law is mainly for children under 18, it allows for some flexibility for offenders aged 18-24, especially if they were under 18 at the time of committing the offense. Under PARAVAI , individuals who were minors at the time of committing petty offenses may be rehabilitated under this framework if they are considered for diversion from judicial punishment.



Stage	Legal Provision	Description/Details
5. Rehabilitation Programs	National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015	This policy facilitates skill development for young adults and is crucial for offenders in the 18-24 age group who are part of the PARAVAI project . It provides frameworks for offering vocational training, education, and employment opportunities to rehabilitate young offenders.
6. Alternatives to Detention	Section 360 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)	This section provides for the release of offenders (including young adults) on probation after their conviction, subject to good behavior. In PARAVAI , this provision helps to divert young adults from incarceration, promoting rehabilitation through training and social reintegration.
7. Sentencing for Petty Offenses	Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), Section 427	This provision allows young adult offenders to be given lighter sentences or reduced terms of imprisonment for minor offenses. In PARAVAI , the focus is on reducing recidivism by offering rehabilitative support through counseling, training, and alternative sentencing options like fines, community service, or probation.
8. Employment and Skill Development	National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) Act, 2008	Under the NSDC Act, young adults can be provided with skill development training, which is an integral part of the PARAVAI project . It supports young offenders in acquiring vocational skills to reintegrate into society and reduce their likelihood of engaging in further criminal activity.
9. Reformation and Reintegration	The National Rehabilitation Policy, 2016	The policy supports the rehabilitation of young offenders and their reintegration into society. PARAVAI adopts this policy by providing young adults with counseling, education, employment opportunities, and community support to ensure they do not relapse into criminal behavior.
10. Post-Rehabilitation Support	Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Welfare Act, 1995	Though aimed at adult prisoners, this Act provides guidelines for rehabilitating offenders. PARAVAI uses similar frameworks to offer support after rehabilitation programs, helping young offenders in this age group adjust and thrive in society post-release.

To summarise the important notable characteristics,

- I. **Indian Penal Code (IPC):** Young offenders aged 18 to 24 are treated as adults, and offenses under the IPC are applicable. However, the **PARAVAI project** aims to provide alternative, rehabilitative measures instead of incarceration for minor offenses.
- II. **Probation of Offenders Act, 1958:** Provides an opportunity for young adults to avoid detention, making it an important legal provision for participants in the **PARAVAI project**.

- III. **Juvenile Justice Act (2015):** While primarily for minors, there are provisions for young adults who were juveniles at the time of their offenses to be diverted from the judicial system to rehabilitation programs like those in **PARAVAI**.
- IV. **National Skill Development:** Vital for the reintegration of young offenders, the focus on skills training under national policies helps young offenders develop employability and reduces the likelihood of reoffending.



These legal provisions help tailor the **PARAVAI project** for young offenders in the 18 to 24 age group, ensuring that they receive appropriate rehabilitation and reintegration support.

THE TIMELINE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT "PARAVAI" & THE METHODOLOGY OF THE PROJECT

The implementation of the PARAVAI (Pro-Active Rehabilitation and Assistance for Vulnerable Adolescents Initiative) project marks a significant milestone in reformatory policing in Tamil Nadu, aimed at rehabilitating first-time petty young offenders aged 18-24. Launched in 2020, the project was developed in response to the growing need for a structured, rehabilitative approach to addressing minor offenses among young adults, emphasizing diversion from the criminal justice system and promoting positive societal reintegration.

Step I: A Non-formal detailed discussion with The Director General of police, the Head of Police and the Commissioner of Police about the project PARAVAI.

Step II: Training for Police Inspectors, Head Constable (Nodal Police Officers), and Writers: Nodal Officers of the stakeholder departments were given orientation training on 28 March 2022 by the resource person of PRISM. In addition, three more training programs were held on 02 April 2022 at Sub-jail, Saidapet, and 04 April 2022, 09 April 2022 at the Office of Joint Commissioner of Police, South Zone,

for the NPOs. Four orientation programs (21 May 2022, 18 June 2022, 09 July 2022, and 17 September 2022), were held for 117 Inspectors of Police of GCP about the PARAVAI program. Similarly, three training programs (16 July 2022, 20 August 2022, and 10 September 2022) for 148 Police Station Writers of GCP were oriented on the PARAVAI program and its functioning.

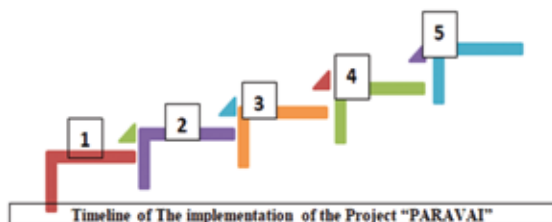
Sl. No.	Category	Trained
I.	Police Personnel	
1.	Head Constables	29
2.	Writers	148
3.	Inspectors	156
4.	Senior Police Officers	40
	Total	373
II.	Other category	
1.	Probation officers	10
	Total (I+II)	383

Step: III -Training of other stakeholders:

On 08 October 2022, the Orientation Programme for 10 Probation Officers of Social Defence and the Prison and Correctional Services Department was conducted by PRISM resource persons at Sub-jail, Saidapet. This phase focuses on building capacity for holistic rehabilitation by fostering inter-sectoral collaboration and ensuring consistent, community-based support systems for young offenders. Training modules include counseling techniques, restorative justice practices, and reintegration strategies tailored to the needs of the vulnerable.

Step IV: Training Senior Police Officers:

On 14 Nov 2022, a Workshop on PARAVAI for 12 Deputy Commissioners of Police and 19 Assistant Commissioners of Police of GCP was conducted by PRISM at the Office of the Commissioner of Police, Vepery, Chennai. The





officials were trained according to Table no.3. In order to effectively implement the PARAVAI project where for the first time in the world the police have taken up a defined role to reform a group of first-time young offenders to prevent recidivism and their transition into habitual offenders, it was essential to train police officers at different levels basically to help them understand their roles as a reformer. To achieve the objectives the following categories of police officers were taken up:

first-time petty young offenders is a carefully designed programme to meet the unique needs of FTYPOs while also providing opportunities for rehabilitation and positive behavior change and the ultimate aim is to reduce recidivism. The Drop-in Centre, a first-of-its kind program designed specially to provide a conducive environment for the reformation of 'Young First time Petty Offenders' to prevent recidivism and facilitate their reintegration as responsible contributing members of society, would initially host the following activities. The following are the characteristics of the drop-in centre.

Step V: Drop-in Centre: A Drop-in Centre for

Sl.No.	Characteristics of Drop-in Centre	
1.	Safe and Welcoming Environment	The centre has a safe and non-threatening space where young offenders feel welcomed and supported.
2.	Qualified Staff	The centre has qualified staff members such as counselors, social workers, and youth mentors who are trained in working with young offenders.
3.	Community Partnerships	Collaborate with local schools, law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and businesses to create a network of support for young offenders.
4.	Assessment and Referral Services	Upon arrival, individuals undergo an assessment to determine their needs and risk factors. Based on this assessment, appropriate referrals are made to services such as counseling, educational programs, or job training.
5.	Educational and Skill-building Programs	Offer educational workshops, skill-building classes, and vocational training opportunities to help young offenders develop new skills and interests.
6.	Case Management and Follow-up Support	Provide ongoing case management services to monitor progress, address setbacks, and ensure continuity of care after leaving the centre with the help of Nodal Police officers.
7.	Recreation and Leisure Activities	Offer recreational and leisure activities such as sports, arts and crafts, music, and outdoor activities.
8.	Restorative Justice Practices	Incorporate restorative justice principles into the centre's programs, emphasizing accountability, empathy, and repairing the harm caused by the offense.
9.	Family Involvement	Involve families in the rehabilitation process through family counseling, parent education workshops, and family therapy sessions.
10.	Counseling and Therapy Services	Provide individual and group counseling sessions to address underlying issues such as substance abuse, mental health challenges, trauma, or family conflicts. Therapy helps offenders understand their behavior patterns and develop healthier coping strategies.



PARAVAI Drop-in Centre was inaugurated at the Government Model Higher Secondary School, Saidapet, Chennai, Tamil Nadu on 21st December 2022. The centre is managed by a qualified social worker to provide interventions through activities like sports, music, and open interaction sessions for the young, first-time, and petty offenders for their physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, and legal needs. The centre is open from Mon – Sat, 4-8pm. During weekends special tournaments and camps are organised for the FTPYO. Magistrates on request have started imposing compulsory attendance at the Drop-in Centre by young, petty first-time offenders while granting bail.

The trained Police are providing support including the placements and training for these boys. A team is deputed in Drop-in Centre to take care of the reformation needs of these boys who attend the drop-in centre. By way of integrating these characteristic features, a drop-in center for first-time petty young offenders can provide a holistic and supportive environment that promotes rehabilitation, positive behavior change, and successful reintegration into the community. Based on these findings, PRISM an NGO has worked on this model with the help of the Chennai Police and has successfully brought into function the Drop-in Centre at Chennai.

CURRENT STATUS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF DROP-IN CENTRE

The current status of the project PARAVAI including the DROP-IN CENTRE is that so far the project handled 289 FTPYOs (First-Time Petty Young Offender) and 75 Children in conflict with law. Fifteen of the children in conflict with the law were re-admitted to the schools where they had previously attended after the NPOs (Nodal Police Officers) effectively followed up with them. 65 FTPYOs

and 04 children in conflict with the law were re-admitted to universities and colleges where they had previously studied before committing the offense.

In order to maintain their financial stability, 04 FTPYOs and 01 Child in Conflict with the Law were re-admitted to colleges and also assisted to be placed part-time jobs. As a result of Nodal Police Officers' tiresome efforts, three children in conflict with law and 56 FTPYOs overall were placed in new skilled and unskilled jobs and were prevented from recidivism.

Overall, 113 of the FTPYOs and 19 Children in conflict with the law were engaged in new jobs due to the efforts of the Nodal Police Officers. Though the Nodal officers were able to create an impact but still 13 FTPYOs and 14 Children in conflict with the law are still staying idle in their homes.

RECIDIVISM AND OTHER STATUS OF THE FTPYO:

The objective of this project is to reduce recidivism among petty young offenders however, 20 FTPYOs and 11 Children in conflict with law were re-arrested in another case inspite of the NPO's guidance and follow-up. On the other hand, 10 FTPYOs and 05 Children in conflict with law were found to have been previously involved in another case after enrolling in PARAVAI Project. For a few children like 06 FTPYOs and 03 Children in conflict with law, the section was altered from petty offences to grievous offence after having enrolled in PARAVAI Project, 01 FTPYO still lodged in Sub-Jail, Saidapet and 01 FTPYO deceased.

PARAVAI PROJECT - OUTCOME OF THE DROP-IN CENTRE

- ❖ 60 FTPYOs were handled by and at Drop – In Centre.



- ❖ 29 of them are regularly followed up by the Nodal Police Officers.
- ❖ 31 of them were directed by the interest of Metropolitan Magistrates under condition bail.
- ❖ 06 of them got a job by the effort of Joint Commissioner of Police, South zone at CPS Mobility Services Pvt. Ltd., Chennai Airport as clerk, parking assistant, cashier etc.,
- ❖ 10 of them are continuing their college studies.

category from the records and self-reports of the young offenders the following data is presented. Currently, there are 280 students under PARAVAI Project where 107 are petty offenders. The offenses committed by them are 379, 380, 294b and 506 (ii). The offenses you've mentioned—Sections 379, 380, 294(b), and 506(ii) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)—have corresponding provisions in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, as follows:

IPC Section	Offense Description	Corresponding BNS Section	BNS Section Title
379	Punishment for theft	303(2)	Theft
380	Theft in dwelling house, etc.	305	Theft in a dwelling house, or means of transportation or place of worship, etc.
294(b)	Obscene acts and songs	356	Obscene acts and songs
506(ii)	Criminal intimidation with threat to cause death or grievous hurt	354(2)	Criminal intimidation with threat to cause death or grievous hurt

- ❖ 12 of them are continuing their old jobs with the help of the NPO's.
- ❖ 01 FTPYO sent to De-Addiction In-patient Treatment at Corner Stone by a Nodal officer.

These sections in the BNS correspond to the specified offenses in the IPC, maintaining the legal framework's continuity while updating certain terminologies and provisions to align with contemporary standards. The crimes committed by the Young offenders are explained in the table below which includes the following:

TYPE OF CRIMES COMMITTED BY THE YOUNG OFFENDERS

Though the exact data is not available in this

Name of the offense	Explanation
Theft	Stealing items of small value, such as shoplifting, stealing from a friend, or petty larceny. Taking items from stores without paying for them.
Vandalism	Graffiti: Defacing public or private property with graffiti or other markings. Minor damage to public or private property like breaking windows, damaging vehicles, etc.
Public disorder	Engaging in public fights or disturbing the peace. Being publicly intoxicated or causing disruptions while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
Traffic offenses	Violating traffic rules, like not wearing safety gear (for example, helmets while riding two-wheelers). Parking vehicles in unauthorized areas.



Name of the offense	Explanation
Substance abuse	Consuming alcohol in public places, especially for minors. Possession of small amounts of illicit drugs, often related to experimentation or peer influence.
Disturbing public order	Being visibly drunk or high in public spaces. Playing loud music or disturbing others in public places.
Cheating or fraud	Minor fraud such as using fake documents or cheating in exams, is often common among school-going youth.
Petty assault	Minor physical altercations or fighting without serious injury.
Trespassing	Entering private property or restricted areas without permission.
Minor domestic disputes	Verbal Abuse or Misconduct: Occasional disputes involving verbal abuse, commonly seen in family or school settings

- In 2015, all juvenile offenses in Chennai were classified as petty crimes.
- In 2016, 78.5% of juvenile offenses were petty crimes, with the remaining 21.5% involving more serious offenses.
- In 2019, Chennai recorded 647 juvenile offenses, a 28% increase from 502 in 2018.
- Data for subsequent years (2017–2024) is not readily available in the provided sources.

LEGAL PROVISIONS APPLICABLE IN PARAVAI PROJECT AT DIFFERENT STAGES

The PARAVAI Project focuses on the rehabilitation and reintegration of first-time petty young offenders in police custody. This

involves ensuring legal compliance, upholding human rights, and integrating juvenile justice principles at different stages of intervention. The new criminal laws emphasize a more rehabilitative approach, particularly for young offenders, and provide frameworks for alternative sentencing, diversion programs, and mental health interventions. These developments complement the **PARAVAI project's** focus on first-time petty young offenders, offering a more holistic and supportive pathway for reform. The **PARAVAI project** benefits from these legislative changes by aligning its practices with evolving criminal justice policies that prioritize rehabilitation and reintegration.

Legal provisions applicable at different stages of PARAVAI

I.	APPREHENSION/DETENTION STAGE	
1.	Section 41A, 41B, 41C of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2024	• individuals protected against unnecessary arrests • Notice for appearance mandated • Guidelines for police procedures.
2.	Article 21 of the Constitution of India	• Right to life and personal liberty • At the time of arrest, ensures fair treatment and procedural safeguards
3.	Section 50 of CrPC, 1973 (now updated under BNS, 2024)	• the detainee to be informed about the grounds of arrest and their rights by the police.
4.	Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015	• Police to place children alleged to be against the law before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) without unnecessary delay (Sec.10).



II. POLICE INVESTIGATION STAGE		
5.	Section 3 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015	• Principle of presumption of innocence for juveniles.
6.	Section 12 of the JJ Act, 2015	• Warranties bail for juveniles unless there is reasonable belief that release would endanger their safety.
7.	Section 160(1) of CrPC (now part of BNS)	• States that only children or juveniles under 15 years cannot be required to attend police stations for inquiry.
8.	D.K. Basu vs. State of West Bengal (1997)	• Established guidelines for police behavior during arrests, ensuring humane treatment.
9.	National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Guidelines	• Make sure that no force, abuse, or torture is inflicted during questioning.
III. PRESENTATION BEFORE THE JUVENILE JUSTICE BOARD (JJB)		
10.	Section 15 of the JJ Act, 2015	• To ascertain the culpability of the juvenile, the Board conducts an inquiry and ensures rehabilitation rather than punishment.
11.	Section 17 of the JJ Act, 2015	• Deals with the disposal of cases through various rehabilitative and alternative measures like counseling, community service, or probation.
12.	Section 39 of the JJ Act, 2015	• Individual care plans are developed to encourage Rehabilitation and social reintegration.
13.	Article 39(e) of the Constitution of India	• To protect children and youth from abuse, exploitation and moral and material neglect.
IV. REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION STAGE		
14.	Section 18 of the JJ Act, 2015	• Rehabilitation of petty offenders through counseling, education, vocational training, or mentorship.
15.	Section 40-41 of the JJ Act, 2015	• Mandates the formulation of rehabilitation plans and their implementation to reintegrate into the society.
16.	The Probation of Offenders Act, 1958	• to encourage reformatory justice provisions to allow offenders to be released on probation.
17.	Model Prison Manual, 2016	• Provides guidelines for post-release rehabilitation and linking offenders with community-based programs.
V. POST-REHABILITATION FOLLOW-UP STAGE		
18.	Post-Rehabilitation Follow-Up Stage Section 19 of the JJ Act, 2015	• To ensure they do not fall prey to recidivism, post-release monitoring of juveniles is advocated in this section.
19.	Right to Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act)	• As part of reintegration need to ensure educational support for children/youth.
20.	Social Welfare Schemes	• Integration with existing government schemes for example with the PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana) for vocational training & Skill India Initiative.
21.	UN Standard Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Measures (Tokyo Rules, 1990)	Non-institutional treatment advocated over institutionalised punishment.



To further enhance the PARAVAI project for first-time petty offenders in the 18-24 age group, recent criminal laws are included and compared with existing provisions in other laws. Below is a table showing the newly introduced criminal laws, their relevance, and a comparison with earlier provisions under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), and other acts, particularly in the context of young offenders.

New Criminal Laws and Comparison with Existing Provisions for Offenders Aged 18-24:

The new criminal laws lay emphasis on a

more rehabilitative approach, on the whole for young offenders, and grant access to the framework for, diversion programs, mental health interventions and alternative sentencing. These developments supplement the PARAVAI project's focus on first-time petty young offenders, offering a more holistic and supportive pathway for reform. The PARAVAI project benefits from these legislative changes by aligning its practices with evolving criminal justice policies that prioritize rehabilitation and reintegration.

Legal Provision	Description	Comparison with other Laws
Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2024	The BNS Bill is an overhaul of the IPC, with provisions focused on enhancing deterrence, rehabilitation, and sentencing. The Bill brings changes to juvenile and adult sentencing frameworks.	While the IPC treated offenders aged 18 and above as adults, the BNS Bill introduces a more holistic approach, including provisions for rehabilitation and correctional programs for young offenders. The law makes provisions for differentiated sentencing, where the social background and rehabilitative potential of young offenders are considered. PARAVAI aligns with these changes, emphasizing rehabilitation.
The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Act, 2023	Harsher penalties for drug trafficking. Introduces measures to prevent young people from falling into drug-related offenses, offering rehabilitative measures.	Previous provisions were more focused on punitive measures. The amendment introduces diversion programs and decriminalization for first-time offenders if they undergo rehabilitation programs. In PARAVAI , this aligns with efforts to reduce recidivism, offering counseling, drug rehabilitation, and skills development.
The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018	The Act expanded definitions of crimes, particularly those related to sexual offenses, and introduced stringent punishments for such crimes. While it focuses on adult offenders, it also has implications for young adults involved in sexual crimes.	Earlier provisions were largely focused on punishment for sexual crimes without significant focus on rehabilitation of young offenders. The new law allows alternatives to punishment , like counseling and community service, which are central to the PARAVAI project for young adults in cases of lesser sexual offenses.
The Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018	The Act expanded the scope of corruption offenses, particularly targeting officials, but it also has implications for young adults engaged in petty bribery or corruption-related activities.	The earlier law did not focus on young offenders involved in corruption-related activities. The amendments emphasize educational programs for youth involved in corruption. PARAVAI can integrate educational programs to prevent young offenders from engaging in such behaviors, with a focus on ethical conduct and social responsibility.



Legal Provision	Description	Comparison with other Laws
The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) (Revised in 2024)	This law ensures that children up to the age of 14 receive education, but its revised provisions now include special measures to support young adults (14-18 years) at risk of entering the criminal justice system.	Prior provisions focused mainly on ensuring access to education until 14. The revised law now extends support for those in the 18-24 age group at risk of offending, including those participating in diversion programs like PARAVAI . Educational programs are a key part of PARAVAI for young offenders in this age group, aiming at reformation and reintegration.
The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017	Focuses on mental health support for offenders, especially those with mental health conditions. It mandates treatment, care, and rehabilitation, and gives offenders access to healthcare.	The previous legal framework did not address mental health conditions as an important aspect of rehabilitation for young offenders. The 2017 Act mandates rehabilitation for offenders with mental health conditions. PARAVAI applies this by including mental health support as a critical element of its rehabilitation approach, ensuring that young offenders get access to care for underlying issues like trauma or substance abuse.
The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (Amended in 2022)	The law focuses on juveniles under 18 years but has been amended to allow for the rehabilitation of young adults aged 18-24 under certain conditions, based on their offense and social context.	Earlier, offenders in the 18-24 age group were treated as adults under the IPC, often resulting in harsher sentences. The amendment allows a more nuanced approach, where offenders in this age group can access diversion, rehabilitation, and reintegration programs like PARAVAI . This provides an opportunity to implement restorative justice measures rather than relying solely on imprisonment.
The Data Protection Bill, 2023	While primarily focused on data privacy, this Bill impacts the PARAVAI project by ensuring that young offenders' personal data and rehabilitation progress are protected.	Prior privacy laws offered limited protections regarding offender data. The new law offers better safeguards, ensuring that young offenders' personal data is protected during their rehabilitation in the PARAVAI project , maintaining confidentiality in the process and ensuring their privacy rights are upheld.

To demonstrate the effect of incarceration, a case is quoted:

Case no.#1. *A boy of 18 years was remanded for petty theft in a Jail where he was influenced by a gang inside the Borstal enclosure and joined the gang and was released on Bail where he committed a murder along with his friends with whom he got associated while in Borstal institution and is again convicted for murder. He entered prison as a boy, but due to bad association, returned to prison as a Man after committing a murder and a few other notable crimes too.*

CASE ANALYSIS

Effects on Incarceration on a young offender:

The young offender gets infected with other sorts of crime. Labelling theory works and the offenders revert to Crime. The family of the offenders stigmatised. Female siblings would face issues of stigma in the society during their wedding and in their laws. Facing social rejection and lack of social acceptance leads to recidivism in the person either hardens the person or leads to committal of offenses. Being on the registers of the Police station leads to deprivation of employment and further living



of the person when analysed leads to either suicide or seeking guidance from the hardened criminals. The offender loses his hope for the future and becomes depressed and gets into drugs and other issues or crime.

The labelling theory suggests that a person engages in deviant behaviour not only because of their own individual behaviour but also because of societal response. This means that when society labels an individual as deviant, they will eventually engage in that labelled deviant behaviour. This is endorsed by an internationally renowned expert in child and adolescent psychiatry, Shekhar P. Seshadri, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, NIMHANS, Bengaluru. Professor Seshadri explains that *"adolescents are less culpable than adults because 'adolescent criminal conduct is driven by transitory influences that are constitutive of this developmental stage. By nature of their psycho-biological profile, adolescents are greatly influenced by their environment, and too immature to weigh the consequences of their actions.'"* This predisposes them to poor decision-making — a key factor that distinguishes them from adults. But, just as they can be influenced negatively, they can also be moulded in the right way. To try and punish them like adults and send them to prison would grossly violate their right to equality.

THE IMPACT OF THE PARAVAI PROJECT

The NCRB publishes national recidivism rates annually under its **Prison Statistics of India (PSI)** and **Crime in India Reports**. As per the latest NCRB data (e.g., 2022), the percentage of repeat offenders in India stands at approximately **6.5%** for juveniles in conflict with the law. Among juveniles, the majority of repeat offenses fall under petty crimes, such as theft, minor assault, or property-related crimes. Recidivism among **juvenile offenders**

contributes significantly to the cycle of minor crimes, especially due to socioeconomic factors.

INTERVENTION IN OTHER COUNTRIES AMONG THE FTPYO

Case studies can offer valuable insights into the experiences of first-time petty young offenders, their backgrounds, the circumstances leading to their offenses, and the interventions that can help them redirect their lives. Here are a few hypothetical case studies based on common scenarios:

Case # 2. John's Story: Shoplifting Incident

John is a 16-year-old high school student from a low-income family. He has been struggling academically and feels disconnected from his peers. John was caught shoplifting from a local convenience store, stealing snacks and a small electronic device. After being apprehended by store security, John was referred to a juvenile diversion program affiliated with his school. The program included counseling sessions to address his feelings of alienation, academic support to improve his grades, and community service at a local food bank to learn about giving back to society. Through the program, John gained a sense of belonging, improved his academic performance, and developed empathy for others. He successfully completed the program and avoided further legal trouble.

Case # 3. Maria's Journey: Vandalism and Peer Pressure

Maria is a 14-year-old girl living in a suburban neighbourhood. She has recently started hanging out with a new group of friends who engage in risky behaviors. Maria and her friends were



caught vandalizing public property with graffiti during a late-night outing. Maria's parents enrolled her in a youth mentoring program focused on positive peer influence and leadership development. She also attended anger management and conflict resolution workshops. Through the mentoring program, Maria found positive role models and learned to make better choices. She developed healthier friendships and learned how to manage conflicts constructively. Her involvement in community beautification projects also helped her understand the impact of her actions on public spaces.

Case # 4. Carlos's Struggle: Substance Abuse and Petty Theft

Carlos is a 17-year-old who comes from a broken family with a history of substance abuse. He has been struggling with addiction to alcohol and marijuana. Carlos was arrested for stealing small items like electronics and clothing from local stores to support his drug habit. Carlos was placed in a juvenile rehabilitation program that offered substance abuse counseling, life skills training, and vocational education opportunities. Through intensive counseling and support, Carlos addressed his substance abuse issues and learned valuable job skills. He gained confidence and self-esteem, reducing his reliance on criminal activities to support his addiction. With ongoing support from mentors, Carlos transitioned to a job training program and successfully stayed away from further criminal involvement.

Case # 5. Leila's Struggle: Cyber bullying and Harassment

Leila is a 15-year-old high school student who has been dealing with social anxiety

and bullying at school, especially cyber bullying on social media platforms. In retaliation to online harassment, Leila created fake social media accounts to bully her classmates anonymously. School counselors and administrators discovered Leila's actions during an investigation into cyber bullying incidents. She was enrolled in a youth support program focused on digital citizenship, empathy development, and mental health awareness. Through therapy sessions and peer support groups, Leila learned healthier coping mechanisms for dealing with bullying and managing her anxiety. She also participated in workshops on responsible social media use and conflict resolution. Leila apologized to her classmates and worked towards rebuilding positive relationships, contributing positively to anti-bullying initiatives at school.

Case # 6. Raj's Dilemma: Peer Pressure and Petty Theft

Raj is a 16-year-old immigrant from a low-income family, struggling to fit in at his new school. He faces peer pressure from classmates involved in petty criminal activities. Under peer influence, Raj participated in stealing bicycles from a local park to prove his loyalty to a peer group. School counselors identified Raj's vulnerability to peer pressure and connected him with a mentorship program for immigrant youth. He also received counseling to address self-esteem issues and develop positive social skills. Through mentorship and counseling, Raj gained confidence in his cultural identity and learned to resist negative peer influences. He engaged in community service projects with fellow immigrant youth, fostering a sense of belonging and purpose. Raj's



improved self-esteem and decision-making skills helped him avoid further involvement in criminal activities.

Case # 7. Sophie's Struggle: Truancy and Petty Vandalism

Sophie is a 14-year-old from a single-parent household, struggling with absenteeism and boredom in school. Sophie skipped school with friends and participated in minor acts of vandalism, such as graffiti on school property and public walls. School administrators and social workers collaborated to address Sophie's truancy and behavioral issues. She was enrolled in an alternative education program that offered personalized learning plans and mentorship opportunities. Through individualized support and academic mentoring, Sophie regained interest in learning and her attendance improved. She also participated in art therapy sessions to express creativity positively. Sophie's involvement in school clubs and community art projects helped her channel energy into constructive activities, reducing involvement in vandalism and improving overall well-being.

In developed countries case specific reformation programmes are formulated, implemented, researched and followed and care is given according to strategies devised by the system, therefore the success rate is above average and the reformation process is quite successful. Inadequacies in the Prevailing Law to Facilitate Wider Implementation of the PARAVAI Project, while the existing legal framework, including the Police Act, 1861, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (now updated in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2024), provides a foundation

for reformatory approaches like the PARAVAI Project, certain inadequacies hinder its wider implementation. The following gaps and limitations need to be addressed:

Absence of Legal Mandate for Diversion Programs in Police Units

While the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 allows for diversion and rehabilitation of young offenders, there is no explicit mandate for police units to adopt structured diversion programs at an early stage. Police often lack clarity on non-custodial measures at the pre-charge and pre-prosecution levels, leading to unnecessary formalization of petty cases. No specific legal provision requires police to implement community-based programs such as PARAVAI for first-time petty offenders. Amendments to include mandatory diversionary programs and partnerships with NGOs under police supervision.

Over-Criminalization of Petty Offenses

The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (and its updates under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2024) still formalizes processes for petty offenses, leading to avoidable arrests and stigma for first-time young offenders. Police often register First Information Reports (FIRs) for minor infractions due to a lack of clear diversionary provisions. Legal provisions on petty offenses do not sufficiently emphasize diversion or non-custodial measures during early police intervention. Introduce specific legal provisions allowing for pre-charge diversion, encouraging police units to utilize programs like PARAVAI as an alternative to FIRs and custodial measures.

Stigma and Social Reintegration Challenges

Existing laws focus on legal processes and punishment but do not provide sufficient post-diversion support for the social reintegration of



first-time offenders. Programs like PARAVAI aim to bridge this gap, but legal frameworks lack provisions for continued rehabilitative support. Absence of a legal mandate for long-term monitoring, follow-up, and social integration of first-time offenders. Amend laws to include post-rehabilitation monitoring as part of police and social welfare duties.

Inconsistency across States

The implementation of diversion programs and rehabilitation initiatives varies across states due to a lack of uniform legal provisions. States with progressive reformative programmes may adopt programs like PARAVAI, while others may not. No uniform legal policy for diversion programs at the national level. Introduce national guidelines under the **Model Police Act** or Juvenile Justice Act to standardize programs like PARAVAI across all states.

Key Takeaways:

- **Young Offenders Act:** There is a dire need to revise the Borstal Act of the states of India which would provide a comprehensive legal framework for the care, protection, and rehabilitation of young offenders. This law is central to the PARAVAI project's operations at every stage.
- **Special Young Offenders Police Units (SYPUs):** These units within police stations ensure that young offenders receive appropriate care and are referred to the right interventions under the PARAVAI project.
- **National Policy for Young Adults:** To ensure that the PARAVAI project is aligned with national objectives for children's welfare and rehabilitation.
- **Community and Family Involvement:** Ensures that young offenders are not just processed by the justice system but are reintegrated back into their communities

with the support of their families, making the PARAVAI project holistic.

- **Indian Police** should adopt PARAVAI as a successful model and implement in all Police stations of India.
- **Drop-in Centre** should be opened in all Districts and states of India.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the PARAVAI initiative and the establishment of a Drop-in Center for first-time petty young offenders represent a significant step towards addressing young offenders' issue of crime and promoting rehabilitation within the community. Through a collaborative effort involving law enforcement, social services, educational institutions, and community stakeholders, this project has aimed to provide a holistic approach to supporting at-risk youth.

The implementation of PARAVAI's predictive analytics model has allowed for early identification and intervention for young individuals at risk of engaging in delinquent behaviours, emphasizing prevention and diversion strategies over punitive measures. By leveraging data-driven insights, targeted interventions, and community engagement, the project has sought to break the cycle of re-offending and empower young individuals to make positive choices.

The establishment of the Drop-in Center complements these efforts by providing a safe and supportive environment where young offenders can access counselling, educational opportunities, skill-building programs, and community resources. By addressing underlying issues, fostering personal growth, and promoting restorative justice practices, the center aims to reduce recidivism rates and support the successful reintegration of youth



as responsible citizens into society.

As we reflect on the outcomes of the PARAVAI and Drop-in Center project, we recognize the importance of collaboration, innovation, and a compassionate approach to Young Offenders. By investing in early intervention, rehabilitation, and community support, we not only improve outcomes for young offenders but also contribute to building a safer and more inclusive community for all. The lessons learned from this project can serve as a model for future initiatives aimed at promoting positive youth development and reducing juvenile delinquency nationwide.

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Mental Health and Stress Among Indian Police Personnel: A Crisis in the Shadows



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Abstract

The mental health crisis among India's police personnel is a silent storm brewing behind the uniform it is a spiraling descent into anxiety, depression, and trauma that manifests daily. Stress permeates every aspect of their long working hours, with officers' physical and mental resilience eroding under the strain of relentless workloads. The constant exposure to violence, combined with ever-increasing public expectations, further aggravates their psychological well-being, leaving them mentally and physically exhausted. This stress is not confined to individual experiences rather it weaves through the very fabric of the system, driven by deeper institutional flaws. Chronic understaffing, deteriorating infrastructure, persistent political interference, and a deeply ingrained societal stigma around mental health push this fragile structure to the brink. Reports from the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) and the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) lay bare the gravity of the situation: a staggering 90% of police officers grapple with high levels of stress. In states like Rajasthan, where crime rates soar and resources fall short, the strain on officers is particularly acute. Yet, despite the undeniable scale of the problem, support for mental health within these institutions remains perilously inadequate. The stigma runs so deep that many officers, fearing the ruin of their careers, avoid seeking the help they desperately need. This piece scrutinizes the intersection of stress, trauma, and systemic neglect within the police force, with a particular focus on Rajasthan, arguing that without urgent reforms like policy shifts, mental health campaigns, and structural overhauls this crisis is likely to become irreversible.

Keywords: Mental health, Indian police, Rajasthan police, Stress, PTSD, Burnout, Police reform, Depression, Suicides, Work-life balance, Occupational hazards.

Introduction

The intricate landscape of policing in India is as vast as it is intense, a profession where

every officer is caught between the demand for order and the chaos of a sprawling society. With over 2.8 million individuals in uniform,

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the Indian police force bears the tremendous responsibility of enforcing laws, maintaining public peace, and dispensing justice across a nation teeming with diversity and conflict. Yet beneath the stoic exteriors of those who serve is a workforce frequently pushed beyond its limits. Overstretched, often under-equipped, and overwhelmingly under-supported, Indian police personnel face staggering mental health challenges.

Recent data unveils a troubling reality that more than 90% of officers experience substantial stress due to the relentless nature of their duties (BPRD, 2021). The daily challenges such as long hours of work, volatile public interactions, exposure to violent crime, and the unyielding pressure from political leaders exert a near-crushing toll on their mental well-being. The mental toll on Indian police personnel manifests in widespread anxiety, depression, burnout, and tragically, suicide. The numbers are chilling as over 405 police suicides were reported in 2021 alone, a staggering statistic that underscores the gravity of the crisis (National Crime Records Bureau [NCRB], 2021). Yet, addressing this mental health catastrophe remains a steep, uphill battle, one that the system has barely begun to confront. A deeply entrenched culture both within the police force and the broader society stigmatizes open conversations about mental health. The notion that seeking help is tantamount to weakness or career setbacks leaves officers trapped in a perilous cycle of silence and untreated psychological conditions. Departments themselves lack the necessary mental health resources, leaving these frontline defenders to fend for themselves.

This article digs into the depths of the mental health crisis plaguing Indian police personnel, with a keen lens on Rajasthan's police force. It dissects the roots of stress, trauma, and

burnout, while also critiquing the systemic barriers that prevent effective mental health care. In comparing India's approach to international models, this paper outlines actionable recommendations for reform.

The Multifaceted Sources of Stress in Indian Policing

1. Occupational Hazards: Trauma and Violence Exposure :

Indian police officers are often thrust headlong into a storm of violence, chaos, and unspeakable human suffering. They arrive first when riots flare, when protests explode and when crimes stain the streets with blood. It's an unforgiving front-row seat to humanity's darkest moments. The brutality they witness, not occasionally but nearly every single day, etches itself into their psyche. The cumulative weight of seeing such horror, again and again, doesn't just fade, it carves deep, permanent scars. Each incident leaves a mark until the burden becomes nearly unbearable. A glance at the numbers from 2021 alone shows 46,000 homicides, 88,000 rapes, and 31,000 riots which reveals the gruesome reality that these officers confront (National Crime Records Bureau [NCRB], 2021). Their role as enforcers places them at the heart of unimaginable scenes, and the cumulative effect of this exposure can stretch psychological resilience to its breaking point. According to Singh and Kaur (2021), police personnel exposed to such traumatic incidents demonstrate heightened symptoms of PTSD, including emotional numbing, flashbacks, and hypervigilance.

For those stationed in conflict zones, such as Jammu & Kashmir or the Naxal-affected regions, the stress reaches critical levels (Shabin O.S and Dr. M. Priyamvada ;2019). A 2020 study published in the Indian Journal of Psychiatry showed that officers in these high-



tension zones are twice as likely to suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) compared to their counterparts elsewhere. These regions simmer with insurgency and violence, subjecting officers to chronic stress, emotional numbing, and a heightened risk of severe psychiatric disorders (Vinod Kumar T. M. ;2022).

Rajasthan faces its own nightmarish challenges. With over 6,337 reported rape cases in 2021, the state has the grim honor of topping India's violent crime statistics (NCRB). The officers tasked with investigating these brutalities are left with a psychological burden so heavy that it crushes their mental resilience. In districts like Alwar and Jodhpur, where communal violence and caste-based conflicts flare regularly, the emotional burden is compounded. Officers operating in such volatile environments are not merely dealing with crime, they are immersed in it. Daily exposure to such violence cultivates symptoms eerily similar to PTSD. Many begin to exhibit emotional detachment, as a means of coping with the constant barrage of suffering they witness (Khan M. R. 2021).

Here, it's not just about the physical dangers of policing, it's about the relentless psychological trauma that comes with being both witness and mediator to humanity's darkest moments. For many officers, the mind becomes the final casualty, broken under the strain of a job that demands so much, yet offers so little in terms of mental health support (Arun P. and Chavan B. S. (2021).

2. Long Working Hours and Poor Work-Life Balance:

The Indian police personnel are known for their grueling work schedules. A 2019 study by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) painted a staggering picture which

shows that 65% of police officers slog through shifts that stretch beyond 14 hours, and for about 30%, their weekly offs are but a distant dream. This unrelenting schedule isn't just physically draining, it's emotionally suffocating too. When officers are constantly thrust from one assignment to another, without a moment to pause or reset, it's only a matter of time before exhaustion takes root. And this isn't the kind of fatigue that a single night of sleep can erase, it digs deeper. Sleep deprivation, mental exhaustion, and emotional weariness converge into a vicious cycle (Shabin O.S and Dr. M. Priyamvatha, 2019).

A 2020 Lokniti-CSDS study unearthed a grim reality for officers' family lives. An overwhelming 87% of the force felt that their long working hours were corroding their relationships with family. Strained marriages, neglected children, and an all-encompassing sense of isolation permeate the personal lives of those meant to protect the public. It's a bitter irony that while the officers safeguard communities, their own families often feel abandoned. Additionally, 90% of those surveyed revealed feelings of being overburdened and left to fend for themselves, sparking deep-seated frustration and helplessness. Similarly, a 2023 survey by the Bhoi Foundation revealed that over 50% of police officers suffer from mental health issues, including stress and hypertension, leading to substance abuse and family conflicts. The mental toll of balancing or rather, failing to balance the professional obligations with personal commitments is undeniable (Ragesh, G., Sathyanath, S., Jayakrishnan, K., & Philip, M. ;2021).

Rajasthan's police force mirrors this grim national trend. A 2020 CHRI study found that 60% of officers here work over 12 hours a day, with a startling 45% regularly forgoing their



weekly rest days. Particularly in tourist-heavy districts like Jaipur and Jaisalmer, where the seasonal influx of visitors brings additional challenges, officers often find themselves trapped in a cycle of unceasing demand. The continuous performance pressure without a reprieve drains both body and mind, leaving officers emotionally worn down and cognitively depleted. Sleep becomes a luxury, rest a rarity, and mental health inevitably takes a back seat.

3. Understaffing and Resource Constraints:

At the heart of India's policing crisis is a glaring numbers problem, the country's police-population ratio stands at just 152 officers per 100,000 people, a figure far below the United Nations' recommendation of 222 (BPRD, 2021). What this means on the ground is that the officers present are spread impossibly thin. The weight of responsibilities piles high, yet the hands to carry them are few. A 2021 Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report casts a bleak shadow, revealing how officers are expected to function under crushing limitations. Vehicles falling apart, weapons so outdated they belong in museums, and communication equipment failing when it matters most. It's like sending them into war unarmed, expecting miracles while they're stuck with broken tools. In states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Maharashtra with high crime rates the pressure is even more pronounced. The 2021 BPRD report noted that in Uttar Pradesh, each officer's workload is nearly double the national average, driving many towards burnout (Ogińska-Bulik, N., & Juczyński, Z.; 2021). Maharashtra, too, presents a daunting scenario, some officers manage upwards of 40 cases simultaneously, an impossible feat that leads to operational inefficiencies, and rising stress. When every moment of the day is spent juggling cases, often with no end in sight, exhaustion becomes the norm.

Rajasthan isn't spared from this resource crisis either. With a police-population ratio of only 133 officers per 100,000, the strain on police personnel is immense. This shortfall forces officers to shoulder an overwhelming array of duties, often working in isolation, particularly in rural areas like Barmer and Bikaner. The situation worsens when equipment shortages enter the equation. The 2021 BPRD report highlighted severe deficits in vehicles and communication tools in these regions, where officers must navigate vast, inhospitable desert landscapes with little to no support. Operating under such conditions, with inadequate resources and overwhelming duties, only exacerbates the stress and psychological strain that officers endure (Rogesh G., Tharayil H. M., Hamza A., 2017).

4. Political Pressure and Public Scrutiny:

India's police force moves through a maze of twisted allegiances, where political motives cast long shadows over their everyday tasks. Officers often find themselves walking a tightrope, pushed by forces beyond their control. They are being constantly tugged in opposite directions where a Status of Policing in India Report 2019 reveals that a whopping 72% of police officers feel political coercion creeping into their duties, warping their sense of right and wrong. Every action, and every decision turns into a moral battleground, as officers wrestle with whether to uphold the law or bend to political interests. These moments of tension etch away at their psyche, leaving a trail of exhaustion and disillusionment (Vaijayanthi K., Kamalanabhan T. J., 2014).

The public's trust, meanwhile, teeters on a fragile balance. A Lokniti-CSDS survey from 2020 painted a bleak picture which shows that only 30% of Indians place full trust in the police, while a significant 42% harbor deep



doubts about their integrity. Police officers stand under a glaring spotlight, one intensified by the digital age. Social media magnifies every misstep, every controversy. The ever-present fear of being scrutinized, judged, or even vilified by millions adds an oppressive layer of stress, a tension that constantly bubbles beneath the surface. The anxiety of being a symbol of systemic failure lingers in every action (Chaturvedi A.;2021).

Rajasthan, like the parts of India, faces an immense amount of political interference in their everyday work. According to a 2019 survey by the Indian Police Foundation, 74% of officers in the state feel the strain of political interference, especially when navigating communal tensions or high-profile cases. These officers are not just enforcing laws but walking an ethical minefield, where every decision can pull them deeper into moral conflict. These situations breed a quiet, but heavy, psychological toll, one that saps away morale and amplifies the stress they already endure (Chaturvedi A. ;2021).

Psychological Impact: A Growing Mental Health Epidemic

1. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):

Violence, trauma, and suffering is an endless cycle that police officers are immersed in day after day. It leaves a mark, a deeply ingrained psychological scar. Research, particularly a 2021 study in the International Journal of Mental Health Systems, shows that 12-15% of India's police personnel exhibit symptoms of PTSD. These symptoms advance in various forms like nightmares that disturb sleep, flashbacks that jolt them back to traumatic incidents, emotional walls that grow thicker over time, and hypervigilance that never switches off. The danger, especially for officers in conflict-ridden areas like Jammu & Kashmir or Naxal-affected regions, is omnipresent (Department of Jammu

and Kashmir Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2018). The longer they are exposed, the more profound the damage (Singh, R., & Kaur, J. ;2021).

The international picture is not much rosier. Studies in the U.S., such as those conducted by the American Psychological Association, indicate that 15-20% of police officers suffer from PTSD. However, India's unique socio-political pressures, combined with a glaring absence of mental health infrastructure, make the problem more dire. In countries like the U.S., support structures exist to help officers manage PTSD but in India, it is largely a void. The mental health care officers desperately need is largely unavailable or completely out of reach, leaving them alone in their struggle against mounting trauma (Violanti, J. M. ;2018).

2. Depression and Anxiety Disorders:

According to a 2022 report of the Indian Psychiatric Society (IPS) 40% of Indian police officers struggle with moderate to severe depression, while 35% deal with chronic anxiety. To understand the gravity, when comparing these numbers with the general population, the depression rates hover between 7-10% according to the National Mental Health Survey of 2016. The contrast is as shocking as it is tragic. These officers are trapped in an unrelenting cycle of stress, long work hours, sleepless nights, societal expectations, and the relentless public gaze that grinds away at their mental health, leaving them teetering on the edge.

In Rajasthan, this mental health crisis hits harder as the same IPS report revealed that 40% of police officers in Rajasthan suffer from moderate to severe depression, while 35% battle chronic anxiety. The stress in high-crime areas like Jaipur and Jodhpur only intensifies



this. Every day, officers in these regions face a torrent of violent incidents, overwhelming workloads, and societal pressure. What could have been manageable stress, morphs into a mental health catastrophe? Their struggle is not unique to Rajasthan, either. States like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal tell a similar story, with officers there facing extreme workloads, little acknowledgment of their sacrifices, and the omnipresent threat of disciplinary action hanging over their heads.

This silent mental burden is not just a state issue, it is a national epidemic. An epidemic that demands swift, comprehensive solutions before it consumes an already overburdened police force (Rogesh G. Tharayil H. M., Hamza A.;2017).

3. Burnout Syndrome:

Burnout is not just a word as it goes beyond the surface of everyday stress, this is a chronic, grinding strain that erodes both physical stamina and emotional fortitude. This insidious, creeping malaise has deeply infiltrated the Indian police force. Bit by bit, it chips away until all that is left is exhaustion, coupled with a hollow sense of inefficacy. A 2020 study from the Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine laid bare the severity of the situation as an overwhelming 70% of officers reported grappling with emotional fatigue, growing cynicism, and feelings of inadequacy (Deswal P. and Jha A.;2020). The cost to their productivity is enormous but the toll on their mental health is catastrophic.

Case study: In Tamil Nadu, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Police officers were saddled with pandemic duties atop their already crushing workloads. As a result, burnout cases spiked by nearly 30% (BPRD, 2021). These officers were on the clock around the clock and

often without adequate protective gear, facing not just the virus but bone-deep exhaustion (Vinod Kumar T. M.;2022). This resulted in crippling fatigue, mounting despair, and a tragic surge in hopelessness. The emotional strain was unrelenting, pushing many to their limits.

4. Suicides Among Police Personnel:

The rising tide of suicides within India's police force casts a stark light on the depth of the mental health crisis unfolding behind the badge. In 2021, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) registered 405 police suicides. Job-related stress emerged as the dominant factor, exacerbated by financial pressure, family tensions, and a glaring absence of professional support systems. Disturbingly, the suicide rate among police personnel stands notably higher than that of the general population, signaling a systemic failure to safeguard their mental well-being.

Furthermore, a 2024 survey found that 83% of officers report mental health impacts from work, with 16% experiencing suicidal thoughts (Santre S.;2024). Certain states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Karnataka have recorded highest number of police suicides. In 2021, these states reported 95, 86 and 78 suicides, respectively. In Rajasthan that same year, 31 officers took their own lives, crushed under the relentless weight of occupational stress, financial hardship, and a lack of institutional support that mirrors the nationwide trend(National Crime Records Bureau. (2021). What is particularly alarming is that junior officers and constables who are on the ground in high-stress, and high-conflict areas are the most vulnerable. With little to no psychological support, burnout and trauma become part of their daily landscape, leaving them tragically exposed to the darkest of outcomes which is ending their own lives.



Systemic Barriers: Why Mental Health Care Remains Neglected

1. Stigma Around Mental Health:

Mental health stigma runs deep in Indian society, but within the police force, it is practically ingrained. Toughness, resilience, and stoicism are the pillars of police culture. A 2022 survey by the Indian Police Foundation (IPF) laid out starkly that 65% of officers believe that seeking psychological help would damage their reputation. This masculine mindset does not leave any room for open discussions about emotional or mental struggles. They are trained to suppress their emotions and if they admit vulnerability there is a high risk for them to be labeled as unfit for duty, and as a result, many officers do not seek treatment (Singh R. and Kaur J. (2021).

Cultural Challenge: In a world where physical strength and emotional control reign supreme, mental health struggles are dismissed as personal failures. Officers are trained to suppress their emotions and if they admit vulnerability, they are at the risk of being labelled "unfit for duty." This results in issues like depression, anxiety, and PTSD fester, pushing officers further into isolation (Singh, R., & Kaur, J.; 2021).

2. Lack of Mental Health Infrastructure:

Sure, the mental health challenges within the police force are becoming harder to ignore, but the infrastructure to support them is nearly non-existent. In a 2021 report by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD), the situation becomes even more grim as less than 10% of police stations across India have access to mental health professionals. This gap leaves countless officers to grapple with their psychological burdens alone. In most cases, police departments do not even have basic mental health programs, let alone counseling services. It is a void where there should be

support (Rogesh Gharial H. M., Hamza A. ;2017).

State-Specific Example: In states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, which carry some of the heaviest crime loads and police duties in India, there are no dedicated mental health services for their forces. Meanwhile, in more progressive states like Kerala and Karnataka, efforts have been made to integrate psychological counseling into their departments, but these programs are running on fumes, underfunded, and understaffed (Sheldon V. L. C.;2022). In Rajasthan, less than 15% of its rural police stations have access to any form of mental health support. In places like Barmer, where officers are posted in remote, isolated conditions, the absence of psychological care only amplifies the sense of helplessness.

International Comparison: In places like the United States and the United Kingdom, mental health support systems are embedded into the structure of police forces. By providing counseling and debriefing sessions, especially for those officers who have dealt with traumatic incidents. Indian police forces, on the other hand, lag far behind. The absence of these essential support systems is only worsening the already dire mental health crisis among officers (Ogińska-Bulik, N., & Juczyński, Z. ;2021).

3. Fear of Career Repercussions:

One of the biggest hurdles standing between Indian police officers and mental health care is fear. Fear that getting help will derail their careers. According to a 2022 survey by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), 70% of officers believe that admitting to psychological distress or seeking mental health treatment could throw a wrench in their career progression. For many, opening up about mental health struggles feels like inviting



demotions, undesirable reassignments, or even outright dismissal (Deswal P. and Jha A.;2020).

Organizational Response: Traditionally, police hierarchies have shown little sympathy for officers facing mental health challenges. Many officers report that admitting to mental health issues leads to a sharp drop in their status and respect within the force. Some worry they will be seen as unreliable or unfit for duty, cutting them off from meaningful responsibilities and career advancement (Md. Imran Wahab; 2023).

Breaking the Cycle: Unless the fear of professional consequences is addressed, officers will keep suffering in silence. To break this cycle, departments must reform policies to protect those who seek mental health treatment from discrimination or punishment. Shielding officers from these repercussions is the only way to encourage them to seek help.

The Way Forward: Recommendations for Reform

Addressing the mental health crisis in India's police forces demands a complete overhaul both in systems and in culture. Here are some key recommendations:

1. Developing Comprehensive Mental Health Programs:

Police departments need to act to implement formal mental health programs that include regular psychological assessments, access to professional counseling, and peer support networks. The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD, 2021) has recommended making mental health screenings a part of routine medical check-ups for all personnel. Officers in high-stress roles like riot control or counter-terrorism should not just have the option of trauma counseling, it should be mandatory.

Domestic best practice: Kerala produced *Kerala's Help and Assistance to Tackle Stress (HATS)* program, initiated in 2017, through this over 6,000 police personnel sought help for work-related stress by 2024.

Likewise in 2022 Assistance and Networking Across States (Tele MANAS), amidst the unrelenting pressures of frontline work, Tele MANAS was initiated as a 24/7 tele-counseling service, offering mental health support to essential workers like police officers. It breaks the barriers of time and location, providing immediate access to care when needed most. With a focus on digital interventions, this program ensures that mental health services are not only available but reachable, extending its support nationwide (Sheldon V. L. C. ;2022).

Similarly, the District Mental Health Program (DMHP), which is a part of the National Mental Health Programme, aims to bring mental health services closer to communities. Offering counseling, early detection, and community interventions, its decentralized approach promises local care. However, the program faces limitations due to insufficient resources, lack of training, and weak monitoring which hinder its full potential, leaving gaps in its execution (Arun P. and Chavan B. S. ;2021).

Global Best Practices: In countries like Canada and Australia that have set up comprehensive police mental health programs. They offer counseling, trauma debriefings, and peer support for officers involved in critical incidents. In Canada, the Road to Mental Readiness program, originally developed by the Canadian Armed Forces, has been adapted for the police. It promotes mental health awareness and resilience training. This resulted in significant reductions in stress related illnesses and a noticeable



increase in officers reaching out for help when they needed it(Violanti, J. M. ;2020).

A 2019 study by the World Health Organization (WHO) on workplace mental health programs found that integrating mental health support within an organization leads to a 25% reduction in psychological distress and a 35% improvement in productivity. For India's police forces, adopting such programs could dramatically lower the mental health burden and improve overall officer effectiveness(Ogińska-Bulik, N., & Juczyński, Z. ;2021).

International Comparison: Countries like the United States and the United Kingdom have integrated mental health support into the very fabric of their police forces. Regular counseling and debriefing sessions, especially for officers who have been through traumatic incidents, are all embedded in their institutional structure. Meanwhile, Indian police forces are miles behind, with a glaring absence of these critical structures. Which results in a mental health crisis that is only getting worse(Carleton, R. N., Korol, S., Mason, J. E., Hozempa, K., Anderson, G. S., Jones, N. A., Dobson, K. S., Szeto, A., & Bailey, S. (2018).

A 2019 WHO study on workplace mental health programs found that integrating mental health support into an organization can cut psychological distress by 25% and boost productivity by 35%. If Indian police forces adopt similar programs, we could see a significant drop in the mental health burden, and officers would be more effective in their roles.

2. Improving Work-Life Balance:

Reducing excessive workload and ensuring proper rest for the officers is vital to resolving their mental health problems. Overwork, and

sleep deprivation lead to burnout, anxiety, and serious mental health issues. Cutting down on excessive hours and ensuring proper rest is not just helpful, it is necessary. States like Kerala and Karnataka are already experimenting by trying out reduced work weeks and ensuring officers have regular days off(Deswal P. and Jha A. ;2020).

Data-Driven Insight: The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI, 2020) recommends limiting officers' shifts to 8-10 hours a day, with weekly rest days bringing it in line with labor laws that already exist. A 2020 BPRD study showed that officers with regular time off reported 30% lower stress levels and 40% higher job satisfaction than those grinding out long hours. Expanding these policies across the board could change everything for the mental health of the police force (Violanti, J. M. (2020).

3. Mental Health Awareness and Stigma Reduction:

One of the biggest hurdles in tackling the mental health crisis within the police force is the idea that admitting to a mental health issue somehow makes you weak. Breaking that down through awareness campaigns, education, and training that emphasize that mental health is not a luxury, it is a necessity.

Education and Training: Mental health education should be a part of every police training academy, with no exceptions. Normalize talking about mental health right from the start. Officers need to know how to spot the signs of mental distress, not just in their colleagues but in themselves. Equip them with real tools to manage stress and trauma. Authority at every level needs to be trained to understand the mental health needs of their teams. Officers need to know they can seek



help without fear of judgment or career damage (Indian Police Foundation, 2022).

Success Story around the globe: An initiative aimed at emergency services, has successfully reduced stigma and promoted mental health awareness in the police force. The program offers workshops, online resources, and peer support systems, helping officers develop better coping mechanisms and seek help when needed. Adopting similar initiatives in India could significantly improve mental health outcomes among police personnel (Singh, R., & Kaur, J. (2021).

In the UK, the Mind's Blue Light Programme has successfully reduced the stigma. The initiative is focused on emergency services, it offers workshops, online resources, and peer support systems that have helped officers develop better ways to cope and, more importantly, to seek help (Mind's Blue Light Programme (UK) (2018)). If something like this could be adapted for India's police, the impact could be revolutionary.

4. Implementing Peer Support Networks:

Peer support networks have been proven to be very helpful to police officers in coping with stress and trauma. These networks give officers a place to share their experiences in a safe, non-judgmental environment. It is about emotional support, practical advice, and building trust within the force. Creating these peer support groups inside police departments could be very helpful in fostering a culture of mutual care and real understanding.

International Example: In the United States the Blue H.E.L.P. initiative is built around peer support. It connects law enforcement officers struggling with mental health issues to other officers who have been through it. Which

resulted in huge improvements in mental health and well-being. It helps officers handle the stress that comes with the job, not by avoiding it, but by navigating it together.

Recommendation: Setting up similar peer support networks in Indian police departments could go a long way in helping officers feel less alone. It is about building networks, shattering the stigma, and carving out a space where officers can candidly share their struggles without fear. However, these peer support networks cannot stand alone. They need to be backed by formal counseling services, a dual-front attack ensuring officers get emotional support from their peers and the professional help they deserve. Pairing these elements ensures that officers aren't just surviving the pressure but finding avenues to thrive, mentally and emotionally, within their demanding roles (Carleton, R. N., Korol, S., Mason, J. E., Hozempa, K., Anderson, G. S., Jones, N. A., Dobson, K. S., Szeto, A., & Bailey, S. ;2018).

5. Policy-Level Reforms and Advocacy:

If mental health is not front and center in future police reforms, we are just repeating past mistakes. As witnessed in the Prakash Singh case, which was a landmark reform in 2006, but failed to address mental health issues faced by the police officers. We need a new mandate, one that does not tiptoe around burnout, trauma, or mental health evaluations. Collaboration between the Ministry of Home Affairs, BPRD, and state police departments, all working toward standardized mental health protocols is needed.

Public Advocacy and Awareness: Public discourse on police reform usually focuses on accountability training and efficiency but skips mental health. That needs to be changed by advocacy groups, mental health professionals,



and police reform organizations. When we highlight the human cost of ignoring mental health, we create the pressure needed to force policymakers' hands toward change (Carleton, R. N., Korol, S., Mason, J. E., Hozempa, K., Anderson, G. S., Jones, N. A., Dobson, K. S., Szeto, A., & Bailey, S. (2018).

Conclusion

The mental health crisis in India's police forces is an escalating issue. Officers, drowning in trauma, burnout, and relentless pressure, often keep silent as they are terrified of stigma, fearing for their careers. The system's failure to address this is not just a moral failure, but a ticking time bomb threatening law enforcement's ability to function. Addressing the mental health crisis within India's police forces demands radical reforms. Global best practices scream for mental health programs, regular psychological checks, and peer support systems as essentials. But it is not just about easing the workload or weaving mental health education into training, it is about cracking the fortress of stigma. Law enforcement must become a space where asking for help is a strength, not a liability.

At the forefront of this shift should be BPRD, championing mandatory screenings, structured support, and legal protection for officers seeking mental health care. A police force that treasures its mental well-being would lead to better policing, higher morale, and a public that trusts more deeply.

Similarly in Rajasthan, where understaffing and soaring crime rates fuel the fire, mental health needs to be an absolute priority. Immediate intervention is non-negotiable. Establish regular mental health assessments, open access to counseling, and most critically, dismantle the toxic stigma clinging to mental health struggles.

Reforms here do not just mean healthier officers, they mean safer streets, stronger communities, and a police force that is resilient in the face of modern challenges.

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Citizen-Centric Services and Social Welfare Initiatives in Indian Police: A Quest for Quality



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Abstract

Law enforcement agencies have been present in different forms throughout history, with their development progressing steadily over time. The functions and goals of law enforcement have transformed over the years, adjusting to evolving circumstances and the requirements of society. Concurrent with changes in the character of the state and governance, the duties of law enforcement officers and the standards set by both the government and the public have progressed. Within a welfare state, there are heightened expectations from the police force. To meet these expectations, it becomes essential for the police to implement constructive changes in their operations. As a significant executive agency of the state, the police have a dual role to fulfil in maintaining law and order and providing essential services to the citizens.

This article offers a theoretical analysis of the transformation in the Indian Police system, spanning from the oppressive British colonial era to the contemporary democratic governance system within the welfare state paradigm. The analysis aims to evaluate the shifts and adaptations in the role, purpose, and functioning of the Indian Police, aligning with changes in the nature and governance of the state. The study employs a theoretical approach based on secondary statistics. The analysis unveils a noteworthy transformation within the Indian police force, which, once a tool of state power, has now evolved into a pivotal agency embodying the welfare character of the state. The police have played a crucial role in fostering the welfare and development of citizens by placing them at the forefront of governance, which is the primary goal of the state.

Keywords: Indian Police System, Evolution, Role Transformation, Public Welfare State, Citizen-Centric, Social Welfare

Introduction:

The primary function of any state is to safeguard the life, liberty, and property of its

citizens while upholding law and order within its territory.³ A state is deemed a 'failed state' if it cannot effectively manage law and order in

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³Plato, *The Republic* (Fingerprint Publishing, India, 2015); see also, Government of India, "Report of the Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System" 23 (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2003).



society.⁴ To fulfill this essential responsibility, the establishment of a well-organized police system in every state becomes imperative. In a welfare-oriented state, all policy-making and administrative endeavors prioritize the well-being of the populace. The police, as a crucial component of general administration, must, therefore, adopt a citizen-centric and service-oriented approach to policing. The recommendations of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission,⁵ the goals outlined in the Model Police Act of 2006, Sustainable Development Goal 16,⁶ and other relevant sources, all highlight the importance and advantages of citizen-centric policing. In line with these principles, numerous progressive initiatives, including community policing, citizen service portals, and social media platforms, have been introduced to cultivate a citizen-centric and service-oriented approach within the Indian Police system.

History and Development of Police System in India:

The contemporary Indian police system was significantly swayed by British colonial rule. The modern police force was formally established by the British administration through the Police Act of 1861, following the events of the 1857 revolution. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 laid bare the deficiencies and inadequacies of the police system during the Company rule. In the aftermath of quelling the rebellion, the British Crown presumed control of India's administration and implemented a series of

laws and regulations to revamp as well as fortify the police force.

This system has undergone a series of reforms and adaptations to address the requirements and complexities of a diverse and ever-changing society. While it possesses its inherent strengths, it is not without its share of weaknesses. Over the years, the system has encountered numerous issues and challenges, including concerns related to corruption, politicization, human rights violations, and resource limitations.⁷

Purpose of Police System in India:

During British colonial rule, the major aim of the Indian Police was to safeguard the interests of the British colonial administration and ensure the maintenance of law and order in regions under British authority. In that historical context, the Indian police had the following principal objectives.⁸

1. Maintaining law and order: The Indian police were entrusted with the critical duty of upholding public safety, preventing, and investigating crimes, and preserving law and order within British Indian territories. Concurrently, they were responsible for enforcing British laws and regulations among the Indian populace.
2. Protection of British interests: The primary goal of the Indian Police during that era was to safeguard the economic and political interests of British rule in India. It was their duty to shield the interests of the British rule

⁴ Common Cause & Lokniti - Centre for the Study Developing Societies, "Status of Policing in India Report 2018: A Study of Performance and Perceptions" available at: <https://commoncause.in/pdf/SPIR2018.pdf> (last visited on September 12, 2023).

⁵ 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission, "5th Report on Public Order: Justice for each ... Peace for all" (2007).

⁶ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, available at: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> (last visited on August 14, 2023).

⁷ Arvind Verma, *The New Khaki: The Evolving Nature of Policing in India* (CRC Press Taylor & Francis Group, Boca Raton, USA, 2011).

⁸ J. C. Madan, *Indian police, its development up to 1905: an historical analysis* (Uppal publication, New Delhi, 1980); see also, Surajit Chandra Mukhopadhyay, *Conceptualising Post-Colonial Policing: An Analysis and Application of Policing Public Order in India* (1997) (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leicester).



in India. It was their duty to shield British-owned properties, such as factories and railway lines, from any potential threat or disruption.

3. **Suppression of dissent:** The Indian Police were employed to quell any form of dissent or resistance against British rule. Their responsibility extended to enforcing British laws and regulations, thereby suppressing any acts of dissent or resistance directed at the colonial administration.
4. **Intelligence gathering:** The police, as part of the British administration, were responsible for intelligence gathering. Their duties included collecting information about potential threats to British rule, monitoring political activities, and reporting to the government on any dissent, suspicious, or subversive activities within the Indian public.
5. **Support for colonial rule:** The Indian police functioned as an instrument of British colonial rule. Their role involved supporting the implementation of British policies and regulations, exerting control over the local populace, and aiding in the operation of the administrative machinery.
6. **Social Control:** The police also had a role in maintaining social control in British India. The police regulated public behavior. However, the primary aim of the Police Act of 1861 was to reorganize the police system, enhancing its effectiveness and efficiency in preventing and detecting crimes. Nevertheless, during that period, the police force was employed as a means of British control over the Indian population under government authority. The role of the police in British India was predominantly focused

on safeguarding the interests of the colonial rulers, exercising control over the populace, and upholding British supremacy.

Role of the Police:

According to Mishra and Mohanty (1992),⁹ the police's function and role within any state are shaped by the state's nature and governance system. In the colonial era, the police primarily served to safeguard the ruler's interests and carry out their directives. In contrast, within a welfare state and a democratic governance system, the police have evolved into a significant public service agency focused on the welfare of citizens. In such a state, the police's role extends beyond law enforcement, actively contributing to various aspects of social welfare. The scope of the police here encompasses coordination and cooperation with various government agencies, community organizations, NGOs, and the public to foster a safe and inclusive society.¹⁰ The role of the Indian police has evolved significantly since the colonial era. Following India's independence in 1947, the Indian police system underwent profound transformations to align with democratic principles and address the requirements of a sovereign nation. The Indian police system is deeply integrated into the fabric of Indian society and plays a pivotal role in its development and progress.¹¹

Changing Nature of the Indian Police:

In the contemporary context, the Indian police system strives to preserve peace and order in society, uphold the law, prevent and investigate crimes, safeguard the rights and interests of citizens, and offer protection and assistance to the public.¹² Additionally, the police system in

⁹ Available at: D:\July 2011\SOSW kulwant\msw- (egyankosh.ac.in) (last visited on September 22, 2023).

¹⁰ Peter Manning, "Role and Function of the Police" *Encyclopaedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice* 4510-4529 (2014).

¹¹ K. S. Dhillon, *Police and Politics in India: Colonial Concepts, Democratic Compulsion, Indian Police 1942-2002* (Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 2005).

¹² John A. Eterno, Arvind Verma, et.al. (eds.), *Global Issues in Contemporary Policing* x (CRC Press Taylor & Francis Group, Boca Raton, USA, 2017).



India shoulders the responsibility of addressing diverse challenges and threats such as terrorism, communal violence, cybercrime, and organized crime.

In the present day, the police's scope has expanded significantly, with their presence impacting every facet of society, directly and indirectly affecting various aspects of life, from elections to examinations, sports to religious events. The police now play a pivotal role in these diverse domains. In this age of heightened public expectations from the police, it has become imperative to adapt their operations to meet the citizen's evolving needs.¹³ In response to these demands, the Indian Police has made adjustments to its objectives and operations, and some of the key aspects of this evolving nature are as follows:

1. **Public Service and Support:** The police serve as a link to the public by offering aid in various forms, including providing guidance and assistance to individuals in need, aiding in the recovery of lost documents, offering information on legal procedures, and providing help during emergencies or natural disasters.
2. **Social Welfare Engagement:** The Indian Police actively engages in social welfare efforts, such as organizing programs focused on child protection, women's safety, substance abuse prevention, community development, and crime prevention through social interventions. They also foster collaboration and coordination with other government agencies and NGOs to tackle social issues and promote social justice.
3. **Protection of Vulnerable Groups:** The police play a crucial role in safeguarding vulnerable sections of society, including women, children, the elderly, and marginalized communities. They conduct specialized operations and programs to prevent and investigate crimes against these groups, ensuring their safety and addressing their unique needs and concerns, thereby fostering a sense of security within these segments of the population.
4. **Traffic Control and Road Safety:** Upholding road safety is a fundamental aspect of police responsibilities within a welfare state. Police enforce traffic regulations, manage traffic flow, and take preventive measures to reduce accidents. They organize various programs to educate the public about road safety and raise awareness regarding compliance with traffic rules, along with conducting awareness campaigns to promote responsible driving behavior.
5. **Community Involvement and Issue Resolution:** Active community engagement is a vital aspect of policing in a welfare state. The police proactively interact with local communities, building trust and collaborating to identify and address community issues. They promote dispute resolution through mediation and encourage public interaction, fostering community participation in both crime prevention and issue resolution.
6. **Aid to Crime Victims and Vulnerable Individuals:** The police extend support and assistance to victims of crimes, ensuring their rights and facilitating access to justice. They work closely with counselling service providers, support organizations, and other agencies to offer emotional support, counselling services, and legal assistance to victims and vulnerable individuals.
7. **Collaboration with Social Services:** In a welfare state, the police frequently collaborate closely with various social service agencies,

¹³ J. Frank, K.J. Novak and B.W. Smith, "Exploring the Basis of Citizens' Attitudes Towards the Police" 8/2 Police Quarterly 206-228 (2005).



including healthcare providers, mental health professionals, and social workers. This collaboration aims to comprehensively address social issues and deliver integrated services to individuals in need.

8. **Safeguarding Human Rights:** Safeguarding the human rights of citizens stands as the paramount duty of the police in a welfare state. They are also responsible for ensuring that the rights and dignity of all individuals are upheld, preventing discrimination and exploitation in any form. The principles of fairness, justice, and equality must be applied universally.

The modifications exemplify the evolving landscape of policing in India, emphasizing a citizen-centric approach, human rights, professionalism, and adaptability to emerging challenges. Presently, the role of the police is boundless and extensive within a welfare state, encompassing the regulation of human behavior.¹⁴ However, it is imperative to sustain efforts for more robust police reforms, enhance police-public communication, and effectively address issues related to corruption and abuse of power within the police system.

The Transition from A Law-and-Order Agency to A Citizen-Centric Service Provider:

The concept of a "citizen service provider" within a law-and-order agency entails that the police not only prioritize maintaining law and order and preventing and investigating crime but also extend various police services and assistance to citizens in a responsive and transparent manner. The Indian Police has undergone a swift transformation, shifting from

primarily being a law-and-order agency to a citizen service provider. Its nature has evolved to emphasize citizen services, with a strong commitment to delivering efficient and citizen-centric services. The overarching goal is to ensure convenient access to police services, prompt, efficient, and time-bound actions, and to foster accountability and transparency among citizens.¹⁵

Several key facets of this transformation include:

1. **Enhancing Accessibility and Accountability:** The Indian Police has implemented various progressive measures to ensure accessible and accountable essential services for citizens. This includes the introduction of a helpline service, an online complaint registration system, and a dedicated mobile application. These innovations enable citizens to easily seek assistance from the police while also enhancing police accountability for delivering these services.¹⁶
2. **Fostering Public Awareness and Outreach:** The Indian Police actively engages in educating citizens about their rights, responsibilities, and the services provided by the police force. This endeavor involves conducting workshops, seminars, and community meetings. The primary goal of such outreach initiatives is to bridge the gap between law enforcement agencies and the public, promoting a more positive and constructive relationship.
3. **Proactive Policing:** The Indian police system has embraced a proactive approach and intensified policing efforts. This entails identifying high-risk areas for criminal activity, analyzing crime patterns and trends,

¹⁴ Mahesh K. Nalla and Joseph A. Hamm, "Is Police Integrity an Important Predictor of Citizen Satisfaction in Police in Post-colonial Emerging Democracies? The Case of India" 13 Asian Criminology 19-34 (2018).

¹⁵ 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission, "5th Report on Public Order: Justice for each ... Peace for all" (2007).

¹⁶ Centre for Good Governance, "Creating People-Centric Police Administration A Change Management Toolkit" (2010).



and implementing preventive measures as needed. The primary goal of these proactive policing strategies is to anticipate and prevent crimes, thereby safeguarding civil security.

4. **Technological Integration:** In today's digital era, leveraging technology is paramount across all sectors, including civic services provided by the police in India. Recognizing this, the Indian Police has embraced technological advancements in several citizen services. These include the introduction of a digital platform for complaint registration and tracking, the implementation of a CCTV surveillance system, the use of e-challans for addressing traffic violations, and the utilization of social media platforms for communication and public engagement. This technological integration has significantly enhanced accessibility, efficiency, and transparency in delivering citizen services.
5. **Skill Development, Capacity Building, and Training:** The Indian Police has prioritized skill development, capacity building, and training initiatives for its personnel to enhance their abilities in delivering civil services. Programs like Mission Karmayogi and Smart Policing have been instrumental in this endeavor. These training programs specifically emphasize skill enhancement in areas such as communication, community engagement, problem-solving, and fostering empathy toward citizens. This approach aims to ensure the provision of superior services to the public.

Overall, the evolution of the Indian police, shifting from a traditional law and order agency to a

modern civil service provider, underscores the state's commitment to public welfare, aligning with public expectations and the principles of good governance. The central objective of this transformation is to cultivate trust in the police force among the public, encourage active citizen involvement, deliver timely, transparent, and responsive services, and ensure the safety and well-being of citizens—a fundamental aim of any welfare state.¹⁷

Various Citizen Services Offered by the Police:

Currently, the police force serves as a crucial executive branch of the state, acting as the most prominent and recognizable representation of government authority. Their role is of paramount importance in various scenarios, encompassing periods of peace, emergencies, responses to natural disasters, government elections, and the enforcement of the rule of law. To effectively fulfil these multifaceted responsibilities, the police must maintain both direct and indirect channels of communication, coordination, and public relations. To facilitate these interactions, various civil services are offered by the police, as outlined in the Parliamentary Committee Report of 2022:¹⁸

- Offering a range of online services, including but not limited to complaint filing, First Information Reports (FIRs), and requests for verification certificates.
- Establishing helplines and toll-free numbers to address a wide array of issues, such as women's safety, child protection, support for senior citizens, and efficient traffic management.
- Maintaining social media platforms to

¹⁷ S. V. Chandrashekar, "Importance of Citizen Centric Services in Modern Policing" 9/8 *Quest Journals, Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science* 55-59 (2021).

¹⁸ The Two Hundred Thirty Seventh Report on Police - Training, Modernisation and Reforms, released by Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee (Rajya Sabha) on Home Affairs (2022).



engage with the public, gather feedback, address grievances, and promote awareness campaigns.

- Implementing community policing initiatives, including neighborhood monitoring groups, police-public participation forums, and beat constable systems.
- Providing comprehensive victim support services, encompassing counselling, legal assistance, compensation, and rehabilitation.
- Ensuring the availability of emergency services, including ambulance, fire brigade, and disaster management resources.
- Facilitating collaboration and cooperation among various central and state agencies involved in policing and security to enhance coordination and effectiveness.

Policing as a Form of Social Welfare:

The Indian Police play a pivotal role in advancing social welfare and safeguarding societal well-being. Here are some of the major programs initiated by the Indian Police in this context:

1. **Social Welfare Initiatives:** The police collaborate with various government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community groups, and social service providers to execute and endorse numerous social welfare programs. They encompass educational, healthcare, substance abuse prevention, and rehabilitation programs. The police play a crucial role in ensuring the effective implementation of these initiatives and offer the necessary support.
2. **Cooperation and support for weaker sections of society:** The police are dedicated to ensuring the well-being and security of marginalized segments of society, which include homeless individuals, children from street families, and individuals with disabilities. Law enforcement agencies work in tandem with social service organizations to provide aid, access to resources, and protection to these vulnerable communities.
3. **Women and Child Protection Initiatives:** the Indian Police has launched various initiatives to ensure the safety and well-being of women and children. These efforts include establishing women's help desks within police stations, women-specific helplines, special police units like child welfare officers for juveniles, and conducting awareness campaigns addressing women's rights, gender-based violence, and child protection.
4. **Prevention and Rehabilitation of Substance Abuse:** The police actively engage in awareness campaigns and drug-free initiatives aimed at preventing drug abuse, with the goal to mitigate the social, economic, and physical damage caused by substance abuse. They organize de-addiction camps and facilitate the connection of drug addicts with rehabilitation centers to offer essential support and treatment.
5. **Disaster Management and Crisis Response:** In times of natural disasters, emergencies, and crises, the police play a vital role in delivering swift assistance and effectively managing the situation. They expedite rescue operations, maintain order, and coordinate with various agencies. Furthermore, the police actively contribute to the safety, well-being, and rehabilitation of affected individuals, thereby reducing the impact of disasters and offering relief to affected communities.
6. **Public Welfare Initiatives:** In addition to their commitment to public and social welfare, the Indian Police also implement various



welfare programs for their personnel. These initiatives encompass healthcare, housing, education, and financial support for police families. By ensuring the welfare of their personnel, the police create a supportive environment in which their officers can carry out their public duties without undue stress.

Analyzing Social Welfare Programs Administered by the Police:

While the primary duty of the police is to uphold law and order, the Indian Police actively engage in a range of social welfare initiatives designed to enhance the well-being and security of society. This analysis delves into several noteworthy social welfare programs implemented by the Indian Police:¹⁹

- **Bharosa:** In 2016, the Hyderabad City Police introduced the “Bharosa” program, aimed at assisting women and children who have suffered from violence, abuse, or exploitation. This initiative operates through a dedicated center known as the Bharosa Support Centre, offering services such as counselling, legal aid, medical assistance, shelter, rehabilitation, and various forms of support to victims of crime. Additionally, the program encompasses awareness campaigns and training sessions on women’s rights and safety.²⁰
- **Police Didi:** Launched by the Mumbai Police in 2017, the “Police Didi” program is designed to empower women residing in slum areas and to proactively prevent crimes against them. The program entails women

police officers visiting slum communities and engaging with women on a range of critical issues, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, child abuse, education, and health. Women are also equipped with helpline numbers and emergency contacts through this initiative, encouraging them to report any crimes or issues to the police for swift intervention and support.²¹

- **YUVA:** Launched by the Delhi Police in 2017, the YUVA program focuses on empowering young individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, aiming to protect them from crime and substance abuse while providing skill development and employment opportunities. The program identifies and enrolls young people who may be at risk due to their surroundings or associations, particularly in relation to criminal activities or substance abuse. Through various partner organizations, YUVA offers sports training, skill development, and vocational training, with assistance in job placement. Furthermore, the program provides advice and counselling to support youth in their quest for employment. In 2021, the Delhi Police organized 844 sports programs with 19,402 registered participants and 219 vocational training programs with 4,088 youth beneficiaries, reflecting the program’s significant impact.²²
- **Janmaitri Suraksha Project:** Initiated by the Kerala Police, the Janmaitri Suraksha Project aims to bolster community policing and bolster public safety. Under this program, local committees are established, comprising police officers,

¹⁹ Bureau of Police Research and Development, “Best Practices at Police Stations in Various States and UTs” (2021); see also, National Crime Record Bureau, “Good Practices & Success Stories” (2020).

²⁰ Available at: BHAROSA HYDERABAD POLICE (telangana.gov.in) (last visited on August 18, 2023).

²¹ Available at: Mumbai: ‘Police didis’ encourage kids to speak out against sexual abuse | Mumbai News - The Indian Express, (last visited on September 26, 2023).

²² Mukesh Kumar Dudi and Mohd. Kaif, “Best Practices for Child Protection by Delhi Police: An Analysis” 3/1 Children First Journal 140-144 (2023).



elected representatives, respected community members, and residents. These committees collaborate to identify and devise solutions for a range of local issues, including matters related to crime, traffic, and cleanliness. The program also includes various additional activities, such as awareness campaigns, cultural events, and sports programs, fostering trust and cooperation between the police and the community.²³

- **Mumbai Police's Innovative 'Elderline 1090':** This helpline represents a collaborative effort between the Mumbai Police, Times of India, and a private technology firm. 'Elderline 1090' serves as a comprehensive network that unites all stakeholders, agencies, and organizations dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of senior citizens. The initiative operates under the vigilant supervision of the Mumbai Police. Within the framework of this program, Mumbai Police facilitates the convergence of volunteers, doctors, clinics, hospitals, counsellors, social workers, ordinary citizens, and police personnel through innovative technology to help the elderly. Competent individuals or organizations can become registered service providers following a straightforward interview and a thorough background check, receiving a distinctive identity card upon registration.²⁴
- **Student Police Cadets:** Initiated by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2018, the Student Police Cadets program is designed to instill values of discipline, respect for citizens, social responsibility, and adherence to

the law and human values among school students. This program provides training to students in multiple facets of policing, including traffic management, disaster management, and crime prevention. An additional objective of this initiative is to foster a positive relationship between the police and the student population.²⁵

- **E-Vidyarambham:** The Kerala police have introduced a special scheme named E-Vidyarambham to support students in participating in online classes during the lockdown. This initiative, implemented with the assistance of Janamaithri Police, aims to provide digital learning devices to 50,000 students across the state. The state police chief has urged officers to gather new or used smartphones, laptops, tablets, iPhones, and iPads for students from economically weaker sections who lack access to these devices. Additionally, Janamaithri police officers with computer expertise visited students at their homes during their free time to offer assistance.²⁶
- **Police ki Pathshala:** In the Nicobar district of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, where a significant portion of the population belongs to scheduled tribes, the A & N Police have launched the "Police ki Pathshala" initiative to bridge the gap between formal education and the competitive world. As part of this initiative, free coaching classes are provided on all subjects to tribal students at the SP office conference hall by police station staff every Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. These classes have gained significant popularity among students and their parents. To

²³ Janamaithri Suraksha Project, available at: (keralapolice.gov.in) (last visited on August 21, 2023).

²⁴ ElderLine - A Mumbai Police Initiative for Senior Citizens, available at: Initiatives | Mumbai Police (last visited on August 18, 2023).

²⁵ MHA guidelines, available at: PMDivStudentPoliceCadet_12122018.pdf (mha.gov.in) (last visited on September 12, 2023).

²⁶ Available at: Malakkappara PS (keralapolice.gov.in) (last visited on September 24, 2023); see also, Staff reporter, "Police turn saviours for tribal students" The Hindu, August 04, 2020.



enhance interactivity and facilitate learning, a smart classroom has been established where students are shown video lectures aligned with their curriculum.²⁷

- **Sashakti:** Self-defence Training: Today, a significant number of women are engaged in work outside their homes. Self-defence training programs have instilled a sense of confidence in them, enabling them to resist any form of inappropriate behaviour and promptly report such incidents to the police without hesitation. These training sessions are designed to equip girls and women with the skills necessary to protect themselves and fend off potential aggressors. Designated self-defence training teams are established within the Special Police Unit for Women & Children and various districts. These teams organise a variety of training courses held in schools, colleges, community centres, parks, and JJ clusters. These specially designed courses teach girls and women practical self-defence techniques tailored to their needs. Delhi Police has earned recognition in the Limca Book of Records for its commendable efforts in this field. Over 998,216 women have been trained through 5,172 programs conducted under the Sashakti scheme since 2002, marking a significant milestone in empowering women through self-defence training.²⁸
- **Suraksha Setu Society:** It is an initiative led by the Gujarat Police and serves as a bridge between law enforcement and local communities, fostering collaboration and trust. With a focus on crime prevention and fostering harmony, it engages citizens, NGOs, and police alike, empowering communities to collectively address safety

concerns. Through targeted interventions and proactive measures, society aims to tackle the root causes of crime by addressing underlying social issues. Notably, it provides support to vulnerable groups, including women, children, and the elderly. Through regular communication and dialogue, the Suraksha Setu Society strengthens community-police relations, instilling a sense of ownership and accountability among residents. Ultimately, its mission is to create safer, more cohesive neighbourhoods where everyone can thrive without fear, thereby enhancing the overall well-being and harmony of society.²⁹

Analysis:

The social welfare programs initiated by the Indian Police exemplify the police force's dedication to fostering a sense of security and overall well-being within society. These police-led initiatives directly confront a range of social issues and play a vital role in shaping a safer and more inclusive community. It is imperative to continuously assess and enhance these programs to guarantee their efficacy in promoting social welfare.

Further analysis reveals that these initiatives not only bridge the gap between the police and the community but also foster a culture of proactive crime prevention. By addressing the root causes of crime through education, community engagement, and targeted support for vulnerable groups, these programs reduce the burden on law enforcement and empower citizens to take an active role in their own safety. For example, educational outreach programs and self-defence training for women

²⁷ Available at: 'Police Ki Pathshala' attracts large number of Students (andaman.gov.in) (last visited on September 30, 2023).

²⁸ Available at: Best practices.docx (delhipolice.gov.in) (last visited on September 21, 2023).

²⁹ Available at: Suraksha Setu (last visited on September 04, 2023).



instill confidence and equip individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to prevent victimisation. Additionally, the technological advancements integrated into these initiatives, such as digital portals for reporting incidents and accessing police services, enhance transparency and streamline interactions with law enforcement. Continuous feedback and adaptation are crucial for the success of these programs, ensuring they remain responsive to the evolving needs of the community. Through these comprehensive efforts, the Indian Police demonstrate a commitment to not only maintaining law and order but also promoting a holistic approach to community well-being and safety.

Conclusion:

The Police force is an indispensable component of any society, as it is fundamental to the functioning of an organized and contended nation. In the context of a welfare state, the role of the police takes on a more constructive character, facilitating an environment in which individuals can pursue personal growth and fulfil their aspirations. While the balance between positive and negative aspects of policing may vary from one country to another, the goal is to establish a harmonious relationship between the police and the public. This harmonious relationship is built on mutual trust and respect, where the police are responsive to the needs of the public, and the public, in turn, is willing to collaborate with the police. Such collaboration fosters a sense of shared responsibility for community welfare and security. In this scenario, the police not only enforce laws but also serve as catalysts for social change, ensuring that all citizens can thrive in a safe and supportive environment. When the police and the public work together in this manner, a society geared towards the welfare of its citizens becomes a reality, paving

the way for a more inclusive, just, and peaceful nation.

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Impact of COVID-19 on occupational stress among Police Personnel in India



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Abstract

The impact of COVID-19 and its mutated variants left no region or population in the world from experiencing its effects. The multitude of its effects ranged from physical, emotional, psychological, and social health aspects. The challenges thrown by the pandemic were unparalleled and the nation's understaffed and underfunded law enforcement agencies found themselves not ready for crises of such large scale requiring delivery of work with tasks of unprecedented and varied complexities. Oxford Covid-19 Government Response Tracker reported the lockdown announced by India, the most stringent one and has scored 100% on the scale, nevertheless, incidents of violence, and serious confrontations with the police, and medical personnel were observed in various parts of the country. The nation's police along with medical personnel have been at the forefront of India's public health campaign, maintaining law and order, providing information related to government orders, and ensuring the supply of drinking water, food, and medicines to the local population in border and remote areas. However, there has been scarce literature encompassing the effect of the pandemic on police personnel, even more scarce when it comes to studying the variety of aspects of the pandemic on police personnel.

The present study aimed to explore issues that the police force encountered during the lockdown and their impact on the enforcement of the law, to review the literature on the effect of lockdown on the occupational stress of the police force. The issues ranged from increased daily workload to managing crises of migrant workers, misguided rumours, provocative speeches by community leaders, monitoring social media platforms so that peddling of fake news and dissemination of rumours related to COVID-19 could be prevented, and crowd violence. The paper also provides insights into the effect of increased duties and responsibilities due to the pandemic on the occupational stress and mental health of police personnel. Overly forceful enforcement strategies and compassion-oriented strategies are found as the two possible directions that police response to COVID-19 can take, the former further increases the rift with the public contributed by feelings of

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loneliness, social isolation, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and strained relationships under the strict lockdown measures. The latter involves being empathetic towards the helplessness and vulnerabilities of the public in synergy with the roles and duties that are associated with pandemic control. This research paper in its review indicates the critical role of police in the lockdown that goes beyond their training manuals, the increase in occupational stress of the police, and the effects of the pandemic on police with a comparison to the general population and recommends the possible measures that can be taken in a similar situation in future. Some of them include professional counselling and other well-being measures to cope with the feeling of loneliness, and strains on family relations as police personnel avoided visiting their family members due to the risk of infection, isolation, and managing work-life balance. Supportive relationships with friends and family have been linked to positive health and young officers were found to rely more on social support than personnel in senior ranks. Proper provision of PPE kits, workshops, and technical expertise especially given the surveillance employed in Covid for contact tracing, programmes on stress management, and emotional intelligence have also been suggested.

Keywords: Covid-19, Lockdown, Indian Police, Occupational Stress.

Introduction

Over a century ago in 1918, the Spanish Flu popularly known as Bombay Influenza in India resulted in a heavy toll on lives around the world, and specifically in India, it killed between 17-18 million people which was 6% of the population of that time and more than all the casualties in World War One. After more than a century in December 2019, a similar threat penetrated our lives when a cluster of pneumonia cases was reported from Wuhan, the ninth most populous city in China. The early cases were reported from those visiting seafood and live animal markets in the same city. Further investigations found that this was caused by a newly discovered severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS COV-2), a disease subsequently named COVID-19. It spread first within Wuhan and then to China and finally to the rest of the world. The first case of coronavirus in the world was officially declared on December 31, 2019, from Wuhan, China. Subsequently, WHO after looking over

the situation declared it the "Public Health Emergency of International Concern." In India, the first cases of COVID-19 were reported on January 30, 2020, from Kerala, an individual who had returned from Wuhan but the first death, which was reported in Karnataka, did not occur until March 12.

The world in the past has seen global health crises be it in the form of Spanish flu, Smallpox, Chickenpox, Ebola, SARS, Bird Flu, Swine Flu (H1N1), and others but, the impact that Covid-19 made on law enforcement is severely unmatched. Governments around the world took different steps according to the situation, they encountered but one of the common steps that were seen among the nations was lockdown. From March 25, 2020, to April 14, India too went into what was one of the strictest lockdowns in the world (University of Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker, 2020). Along with the lockdown, a general advisory to contain the spread of the



virus, like for citizens to stay at home, follow social distancing norms, and maintain good hygiene was announced. As of August 2021, the lockdown has been lifted in the majority of areas around the country but there are still small pockets that are assigned as “containment zones” on a case-to-case basis if any spike in the number of infections is observed in those areas.

Past studies have highlighted the critical role of law enforcement services in contributing to the effort of controlling pandemics worldwide. In following up on the announcement of the lockdown, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued guidelines and made the police force, including the CAPFs responsible for enforcing the lockdown, maintaining law and order as well as taking steps to avoid any disruptions in the supply chain and to facilitate smooth movement of corona warriors. The enforcement of lockdowns has been one of the most challenging responsibilities the police force faced in India, the most populated democracy in the world where around 1.4 billion people were potential hosts of the virus.

Among the first responders to the COVID-19 pandemic was the police force and they are also popularly listed as one of the “corona warriors,” along with them were healthcare professionals and staff, providers of essential services, and others. Just like a century ago when the Spanish Flu hit Indian shores, the first cases were reported from Ward police sepoys in Indian police ranks in the city of Mumbai, this time as well police had a lot on their shoulders for which no prior training existed in the manual.

Overall, the Police force in India is generally trained in dealing with most common tasks and services that come in use in their routine service like the maintenance of law and order

in society and dealing with natural and man-made disasters, but the challenges thrown up by COVID-19 were unique for the Indian police. There had never been such crises before, and the police manuals had no standard operating procedures (SOP) to deal with such a situation as pandemic control is not emphasized as a subject during the training of the police (Pitts, 2021). Consequently, COVID-19 required police to assume responsibility for emergencies in an environment of misunderstood risk and fear that were not part of their regular work profile.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore issues encountered by the police personnel during their duty in COVID-19 lockdown.
2. To examine the effect of lockdown on the occupational stress of police personnel.
3. To recommend measures and best practices for the police force in a future pandemic.

Literature Review

- **Occupational stress**

The occupational stress or job stress process refers to how sources of stress in the work environment (stressors) can lead to psychological (negative emotional experiences like anxiety, frustration, depression), behavioral (decrease in productivity, increase in absenteeism, turnover), or physiologic manifestations of stress (fatigue, headaches, high blood pressure, cardiovascular issues) and, to longer-term health effects. It is a condition undergoing feeling experienced by the individual when he/she perceives that work demands, responsibilities, and pressure do not match or exceed the resources (personal and social) and hence challenge their ability to cope.



- **Occupational Stress in the Police**

In the Police Forces/ Departments, occupational stress is a given, like the uniform one wears and therefore policing is considered one of the most stressful jobs because daily work involves duties that are characterized by high demands and low control, violence, confrontation, traumatic incidents, and there is always a possibility of being seriously injured or killed. Moreover, high public expectations, constant media scrutiny of police efficiency, and questioning their integrity also lead to stress which further has negative physiological, psychological, and behavioral outcomes (Roy, 2019). Stress levels in police organizations are among the highest in any professional group (Sharma, 2019). The fact that police officers generally experience especially high levels of occupational stress is well documented (Brown & Campbell, 1990; Liberman et al., 2002). Work overload is found to be the highest contributor to causing stress in police (Tyagi & Dhar 2014).

Post-traumatic stress disorder has gained general acceptance due to the high intensity and high-risk work. (Regehr et al., 2019). The police especially in India can never be said to be "off duty" because there are no fixed working hours when it comes to policing. With growing demands from the job accompanied by a lack of an emotional support system at work (from colleagues and superiors) and at home, a lack of recognition for good work, excessive paperwork, and continuous stigma associated with seeking professional mental health support, occupational stress has also been rising. The risk of exposure to confrontation and violence personally in their daily duty and the day-to-day involvement in a variety of traumatic incidents make police work

regarded as inherently stressful (Collins, 2003). There have been findings that job-related trauma leads to the development of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, substance use disorder, and suicide or suicide ideation have been key findings (Velazquez & Hernandez 2019). Police often react in a fraction of a second to complex life-threatening situations regularly. Even though with so many challenges to face, they get threats to their lives and in some instances get criticism on social media (Abdollahi, 2002; Burns, 2008). Further, long, and unpredictable working hours, dealing with violators of law and anti-social elements, threats of being injured or killed, bureaucratic structure, rigidly allocated work patterns, high disciplinary procedures, and regimentation, lack of respect from the public, and work shifts were sources of stress among police (Mathur, 1995). Besides, there is political pressure, lack of time for family, negative public image, and low salary are the primary causes of stress among police (Bano 2011). The pandemic forced the police to keep a safe distance from their family members owing to their being in daily and close contact with the public. Work-family conflict, and inadequate time spent with family have been found to be associated with burnout (Burke, 1988; Bowen et al., 2014). Occupational (assault, crowd control, recovery of bodies) and personal (family member injured, rare contact with family, an uninhabitable home) factors contribute to PTSD and depressive symptoms West et al. (2008).

When it came to enforcing the restrictions and making the lockdown materialize successfully on the ground, the police made it happen through the Law, by the use of the relevant sections of the Indian Penal



Code (IPC) and the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), making it critical for the law enforcement to come in the frontline, a challenge which the Indian police took with a sense of commitment. It was the police force who took the major responsibility of implementing the lockdown on the ground through steps like restricting public movement, avoiding crowding in public places, patrolling the residential areas, and also by ensuring that norms related to physical distancing are maintained during the pandemic, through the enforcement of various appropriate legal acts that gives them the power to ensure such measures like the Epidemic Disease Act, 1987, and the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

The period of lockdown, as well as the period, thereafter, saw not just occasional altercations but also several attacks on medical workers who were on their duty and were out in the field to take samples, and the doctors and the police had to face such troublesome situations. What made the job of the policemen difficult in such a situation was not limited to their safety but the safety of the medical workers as well as the doctors. Another potential source of fear among the police may be the concern about being infected due to daily proximity with the public, which involves both the infected and medical workers who were more engaged as the situation demanded. In addition to that, the fear of carrying the infection to family members may also be a source of distress to the psychological side of them (Khadse et al., 2020).

An online survey of Maharashtra police reports that 50% of the respondents had mental disturbance due to fear of COVID-19, whereas 32.4% reported being under stress due to multiple reasons at

the workplace (Kokane et al., 2020). Fear of getting infected with the virus was also found to be associated with isolated incidents of suicides by police (Raina 2020; Reddy 2020).

- ***Policing in the Pandemic: Increased Workload and Occupational Stress***

The duty of a policeman has been quoted as one of the most challenging, health-threatening, and psychologically stressful jobs in the world (Pandey, 2017). In many parts of India, the police agencies particularly in Delhi since August 2019 have been reeling under immense pressure due to public reactions to recent legal amendments like that of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the announcement regarding updating the National Population Register, the reactions took to the streets of the capital and materialized in the form of riots incurring injuries and lives of many (Biswas & Sultana, 2020). As the representative of the Government in the community, police officers are sometimes subject to public ridicule and tense public confrontations. Any of these experiences can trigger negative feelings such as anger, annoyance, tension, and frustration, and they can intensify police officers' stress, and concerns about risk, and lead to burnout. (Ungureanu & Bertolotti, 2020) With Covid-19, the already troublesome situation for the security apparatus mushroomed into a more complicated situation. Almost three-fourths of police admitted that the citizens were put under increased surveillance (SPIR, 2020). For instance, in Punjab, a few anti-social elements perpetrated the worst brutality on the police when they were stopped during a police check. They not only attacked the unarmed police with swords but also



severed the hand of one of the police officers. There were repeated reports and incidents wherein patients in quarantine facilities made gross remarks and signals at the nurses who were performing their professional duties. In April 2020, stones were thrown at doctors who were on their routine duty on the field to do contract tracing of Covid-19 patients, at ambulances, and then at police when they arrived at the situation for rescue in UP and Indore.

These factors contribute to occupational stress along with mental health problems in police (Nagar, 2007). People were unwilling to come forward with the contact or source of the virus. In those situations, the police skill sets in investigation and intelligence came to the rescue. Contact tracing through an epidemiological area of practice requires investigation and the use of forensic science, the police have the expertise of both which helped in drawing forward and backward linkages of the infected, to know the pattern of catching the virus and those who came in contact. The Call Record Analysis (CDR) of the infected was used extensively for the same reason from UP to Kerala and for those who came from abroad to Punjab and Bengaluru (Kapoor, 2020).

- **Migrant Workers**

With the announcement of social distancing and lockdown measures, the delicate strata of the society, the daily wage earners, or the migrant workers who migrate from different parts, especially from the rural regions of the country to work in industrial and manufacturing centers in urban cities faced a crisis of a different kind as all economic activities came to a standstill, they naturally started moving back to their native places

on their own as they were left stranded in cities and felt that they were not given enough time to prepare for a lockdown. Police across the country found it difficult to manage such an exodus of workers more so without the necessary Covid tests.

Workers engaged in construction site work during the day and often sleep at that site only. With lockdown, they were left with no option but to leave the site of work. In the absence of money and with no ration and no facilities for transportation available at that time they thronged the streets of the capital just after the day the lockdown was announced to start the journey of thousands of kilometers to their homes. The workers were in a tough spot and with a huge number of them on foot on roads in between a lockdown, the situation became difficult for the police to manage. Later, the respective state governments intervened and arranged for buses for these workers but before such an arrangement could be made, the workers were asked to stay at their current places. Any arrangements in a large and populated country like India take time and the pandemic was making the general population including the migrant workers restless.

Gujarat experienced violence on the streets with around 500 migrant workers clashing with the police as their ration dried up and with no job or work and money they demanded to be returned to their respective places. Seeing the situation getting out of control the police resorted to preventive measures like using tear gas shells. In Bongaigaon and Dhubri, Assam saw violent incidents where people attacked policemen trying to close marketplaces as around 300 people gathered in violation of



guidelines. One policeman was attacked with sticks while another who was trying to protect him was hit by a brick on his head. In March 2020, Mumbai police registered 150 FIRs (First Information Reports) against the attendees of a religious congregation held in Delhi for their negligent actions during the pandemic, as more than 400 Covid-19 cases and about 15 deaths were found to be linked to the congregation. One in three police officials frequently encountered situations where migrants were trying to enter shelters, but police used force to prevent them from doing so (SPIR, 2020). Haryana police had to lathi-charge a group of villagers when they disrupted the cremation of an elderly woman at a designated COVID-19 cremation ground over suspicious that she might have died of the virus and her cremation would spread the virus in the area. A similar incident was seen in Chennai where a doctor who had likely contracted the disease from a patient was denied a decent burial as villagers attacked the authorities.

The second wave, elections, and by-polls in different parts of the country, laxity setting in the attitude of people, and oxygen crises created haywire across the country and made the work for the police force more taxing, both physically as well as mentally. Incidents of oxygen tankers and cylinders being looted in times of acute shortage forced the governments of different states to provide police protection to vehicles carrying cylinders and gas tankers. Uttar Pradesh police were given orders to escort the vehicle to its destination to avoid any clashes during its journey. All these examples show that during the whole phase of lockdown, there were always sections of people, few it may be, who were indifferent

or uncooperative with the police, the enforcing authorities to make the lockdown effective thus creating impediments towards achieving the actual objective of lockdown which was containing the virus. This made the work of the police force more complex as they were at times criticized by the general media for implementing the Covid-19 protocols strictly and restricting the unnecessary movement of people to contain the virus and yet at the same time, any scope of laxity was blamed on the police for not being true to their duty, hence at times police was forced to sort through government directives and persistent media reports (Pitts et al. 2021).

- ***Role of community/ religious leaders***

Besides protecting the healthcare workers and the medical essentials, the police force also had to take care of the general harmony at a community/ societal level. The role of religious and community leaders is of significance in this regard. There were instances of disturbances as well as examples where leaders and police collectively explained and convinced the public of the importance of following the Covid measures announced by the government. For example, in March, the Delhi government restricted any gathering, however, this norm was flouted just two days later by ABHM by organizing a party involving more than 200 people. The Tablighi Jamaat also made things difficult for the police force by continuing to receive participants (more than 900) from 41 Covid-19 affected countries during the Lockdown.

But within the community itself, some leaders condemned the irresponsible behavior of the organizers and requested them to follow the rules and regulations,



and this was not restricted to a particular religion, there were imams as well as priests who asked their followers to celebrate festivals during the lockdown period by staying indoors.

Intending to increase awareness about Covid appropriate behavior primarily in rural areas, the police in different parts of the country have urged religious leaders and clerics to spread the much-needed awareness for the same along with the need for vaccines among the masses. In April when India was in the tight grip of the second wave of the pandemic police roped in religious leaders urging them to make appeals and persuade the public to avoid visiting religious places since both Navratri and Ramzan have commenced. The police also used public announcement systems, distributing posters in such areas to appeal for social distancing and to avoid any confrontation with the public. Around this time Shab-e-Barat, also known as the night of forgiveness, was observed. Besides the elaborate security arrangements to prevent any sort of gathering, the senior officials of the Delhi Police held meetings with Imams (religious leaders), organizers, and representatives who hold such gatherings to persuade them and the community not to come out of their homes and observe the occasion solemnly. Goa police approached religious leaders (Archbishop of Goa and Daman) to record their appeal urging people to stay indoors. The Guruvayur temple authorities in Kerala urged their devotees not to visit the temple, marriage functions were cancelled, and thermal scanning arrangements were made.

This new way of community outreach by the police during the pandemic helped to

maintain general harmony in society as well as provide an effective tool for future use in difficult situations. Previous research has also shown that a trusted religious leader can help to change behavior and can also play a major role in facilitating healthy lifestyle habits (Anshel and Smith, 2013).

- **Service Face**

Besides the routine police work that comes right out of the handbook, maintaining law and order, Covid-19 also highlighted the social service function of people. As the lockdown progressed and police started enforcing the guidelines that restricted normal life and movement in otherwise close-knit community life, the police presence on the streets led to police encountering misery, vulnerability, and poverty more than any other professional involved in the crises (Kapoor, 2020). Police went out of their way to help the public by distributing masks and providing police vans in far-flung areas for buying ration essentials, and medical check-ups, and for those in serious conditions, the police staff provided them with medicines on their doorstep (BPRD, 2020). For instance, in Andhra Pradesh, the Curfew without Weapons model was seen where violators of the lockdown were requested with folded hands or given flowers to persuade them to follow the measures. Dharavi, Asia's largest slum, reported initial cases of the virus, the police used its domain experience in forensics and investigation for contact tracing which was later found linked to a religious congregation.

In Assam, a Police task force was made to bring back local people from other states, and social media campaigns urged people to wear a mask, and the importance of hygiene was emphasized. Police forces



also started feeding arrangements for the poor by either becoming the central point between the community kitchens organized by the government and charitable setups in distribution networks or by opening police organizations for feeding the needy in addition to their jobs (Kapoor, 2020). In addition to this, police were seen carrying out a variety of unconventional duties, including creating social awareness, busting fake news, daily inspection of people in isolation or quarantine, assisting the health department in contact tracing activities, performing raids on establishments involved in manufacturing fake medicines or sanitizers or masks production, helping migrant workers to enter shelters, and helping the needy persons to access medical, providing e-passes to the needy people travelling outside the curfew area and other essential services. As the lockdowns progressed, the role of the police in the pandemic extended to another huge area of responsibility, the assistance of the crisis-stricken section of society, the poor, and the vulnerable who required urgent help in transportation to hospitals, supply of food and essential commodities. The duty in some situations stretched as far as requiring the police to ferry the dead bodies and making arrangements for the last rites if no one was available to claim the dead body.

It was not like all the other issues that the police deal with on a daily basis (like matters of enforcement of law and order and crime control) came to a halt. In addition to the routine duties of the police, the covid-related responsibilities increased the daily workload and this increased their general duty hours. These extraordinary duties daily are almost equivalent to the duties of health

care workers who come in direct contact with suspected or positive cases and are also responsible for the management of such covid suspected cases which makes the performance of the job stressful. This materialized by reports of police getting infected with the virus while on duty, furthermore, the death of policemen due to infection was reported from all over the country.

Research Methodology

With vaccination, the impact of the pandemic has softened around the world but to be better prepared for future pandemics, the present paper is an attempt to address the gap between law enforcement and public health emergency by assessing the impact that pandemics/public health emergencies like Covid-19 can have on the role of the police force. In doing so, this paper is also an attempt to review and contribute to the limited literature available and offer recommendations for policing similar situations in the future.

Results and Discussion

The literature on police studies shows that the level of trust in law enforcement agencies and the attitude of the public towards their legitimacy has serious effects on the law-abiding nature of citizens in a society, their general satisfaction, and improving the perception of the rule of law (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2012; Jones, 2020; Mazerolle et al., 2013; Terrill et al., 2016). Jones (2020) talks about two possible directions that police response towards Covid-19 can take, the response can involve overly forceful enforcement strategies, that further deepen the rift between the public who are under quarantine, experience an increase in feelings of social isolation, loneliness, substance abuse, entrapment and a negative effect on the relationship as well, sleep disturbances,



anxiety, psychological distress (O'Connor & Kirtley, 2018; Khadse et al., 2020).

The other direction is for police to become more compassion-oriented towards the public and their helplessness and service while also keeping in mind their call for duty and the different roles and responsibilities the pandemic has brought on them (Kapoor, 2020). The concern about being infected by the virus due to increased exposure to the community increases the vulnerability of the families of the police and thus, this may be a potential source of fear.

The police forces assumed the responsibility that was way out of their work profile or the training that they have received like inspection of people in quarantine, social awareness, contact tracing, distribution of essentials, and so on, this stretched their working hours. This ambiguity in the role of people may result in job stress and burnout, which in past studies

have been defined as a source of occupational stress in the police force (Frank et al., 2017; Singh & Kar, 2015).

As per the statistics (dated: December 31, 2022) in Table 1 which shows the impact of Covid-19 on police, there were close to 4.2 lakh police who were infected with the coronavirus in India, Table 2 shows the different impact parameters (number of personnel which tested covid positive, number of quarantined personnel and the number of deceased personnel) of Covid-19 on police with a state classification. Table 3 makes a comparison of the infection rate (total cases reported /total population) between the general population (India) and the Indian police. Further, it shows that the police force is 13.82% more likely to get infected by Covid-19 compared to the general population which highlights the vulnerability of the police force and their families.

Table 1: Impact of Covid-19 on Indian Police Personnel

Particulars	
Number of police who tested positive	4,19,738
Number of police quarantined	33,902
Number of police who died	2745
Number of police injured in attacks	256

(Source: Indian Police Foundation)

Table 2: Covid-19 Impact Parameters in Top 5 States

Particulars		+ve Cases	Total Strength
Top five states with tested Covid+ personnel	Maharashtra	48,611	2,13,382
	Telangana	25,371	53,115
	Uttar Pradesh	21,424	2,94,495
	Andhra Pradesh	23,229	61,168
	Kerela	17,132	48,860



Particulars		+ve Cases	Total Strength
Top five states with the highest number of quarantined personnel	Maharashtra	11,128	2,13,382
	Uttarakhand	7196	22,555
	Madhya Pradesh	2000	1,01,751
	Kerala	1216	48,860
	Assam	1127	64,998
Top five states with the highest number of deceased personnel	Maharashtra	490	2,13,382
	Karnataka	261	89,009
	Andhra Pradesh	179	61,168
	Uttar Pradesh	162	2,94,495
	Madhya Pradesh	157	1,01,751

(Source: Indian Police Foundation)

Table 3: Comparison of Infection Rate in the Police Force to the General Population

Particulars	India	Police Force
Population	1,417,173,173	30,35,632
Total cases reported	44,679,413	4,19,738
% of the population affected	3.15	13.82

(Source: Indian Police Foundation and Worldometer)

Managerial Implications

From the perspective of the kind of work that police handle daily, professional counselling, positive health, and well-being enhancing protective measures are important, with ongoing crises these measures are all the more needed to combat them (Nagar, 2020). The pandemic has forced quarantine measures to contain the virus, but it has also contributed to the increase in the feelings of loneliness, social isolation, alcohol and substance abuse, entrapment, and relationship breakdown. (O'Connor & Kirtley, 2018). Psychological research conducted

during the outbreak of SARS indicated that quarantined individuals experienced immediate and short-term psychological consequences (Hawryluck et. al. 2004). It also reveals that social isolation was found to increase the feeling of isolation and depression and 29% of the people reported that other people avoided them after they had been in quarantine which indicates attachment to the social stigma which further contributed to the increase in mental distress following quarantine. A large number of empirical studies have unequivocally pointed out the negative effects of stress on



health (Schwarzer & Gutierrez-Dono, 2000). When used separately, problem-solving and emotional coping significantly benefit in reducing distress (Violanti, 1992). Depending upon the age of the police officer, coping strategies also differ, for instance, the younger officers rely more on social support than the older ones. To reduce the adverse effects of stressors supportive relationships with friends, family and acquaintances are beneficial (Baron & Kerr, 2003) and have been linked to different aspects of health and wellness. When it comes to problems that are uncontrollable and unpredictable like those who are already infected, problem-focused coping strategies are better than emotion-focused (Biggam et al., 1997). Police are required to coordinate and sometimes accompany doctors and medical staff who are all at the front line engaging with this pandemic thereby provision of proper PPE and psychological aid in the form of counselling or workshops to help the stressed personnel cope better with these stressful conditions can lead to the betterment of the physical and mental health of policemen (Nagar, 2020). The programs of short duration on stress management, counselling, and emotional intelligence will benefit. There is literature available that mentions risks associated with the laxity in the use of personal protective equipment (Lack of awareness, availability, adequate use, and disposal facilities) for COVID-19 prevention like masks and gloves substantially increasing the risk of virus exposure. In the era of technological advancements, training in gaining technical expertise is necessary as also observed in the ongoing crises like strengthening the cyber police wings for contact tracing and imparting knowledge of basic health protocols to the police, virtual forums, community surveillance through CCTV can help (Kapoor, 2020; Khadse, 2020). Police, in addition to their duty and in

fear of getting their family member infected have been away from their families, audio/video arrangements for their regular communication with families can help them provide a primary system of support and reduce the occupational stress level (Khadse et al., 2020). Psychiatric help to those with pre-existing conditions can also be encouraged at workstations so that the stigma attached to mental health problems can be reduced. Increased engagement with community/religious leaders in society can help overcome crises, not just the current pandemic situation but riots, etc. as well. Lastly realizing the value of law enforcement agencies in pandemic management and making provisions for their physical, mental, and emotional well-being is the need of the hour.

Recommendations

The pandemic has impacted the policing practices across India as there existed no manual to deal with a crisis of this scale and size. Based on the findings and the review of the literature, this section of the paper focuses on suggestions for police organizations so that they are better equipped to support their personnel to deal with and cope with occupational stress overall and particularly in a public health emergency like the Covid-19 pandemic in future:

- i. Designing a detailed plan to deal with public health emergencies that include actions to be taken when the pandemic event begins. This ensures continuity in operations if there is a sudden workforce shortage and rotation of personnel to critical areas. The plan should also include policies for sick leave, hardship allowances, family leave, remote work provisions, and the setting of virtual work formats to limit exposure of police and people during an outbreak.
- ii. The need of the hour is to focus on the



psychological well-being of personnel (Jennings & Perez, 2020). Education and training of personnel about public health emergencies, for instance about the disease, modes of transmission of communicable diseases, health and safety precautions, proper use of PPE kits, effective police response and practices in varied scenarios are critical for policing in a pandemic situation. The knowledge about the threat itself can go a long way in helping the police officers to educate the population about the problem and, at the same time ensure that they can protect themselves and their families.

- iii. It is of critical importance that police organizations maintain the inventories of PPE kits (masks, gloves, eyewear, hand sanitizer, gowns) and ensure their sufficient supply is maintained which may involve setting a relationship contract with PPE suppliers so that in case of emergency, supply chains are not disrupted.
- iv. To avoid the risk of getting their family members infected, police personnel isolated themselves and avoided visiting their close ones, hence suitable audio/video arrangements should be made to ensure continuous communication with their families in a pandemic-like situation due to its importance in preventing depression.
- v. Supportive leadership is also required that protect its field officers from excessive work overload, seeks to regulate their duty hours, and creates a culture in the department that is concerned for police health and encourages police officers to seek help.
- vi. To mitigate the psychological impact of such a crisis, stress management programs, interventions and professional psychological support should be encouraged first, on an individual basis and then on an organizational level. The leaders should take the initiative in breaking the social stigma attached to seeking professional mental support that persists in police circles due to its hypermasculine culture, this can be included in the standard training curriculum.
- vii. Law enforcement agencies should work with health departments, local hospitals, and other police agencies for pooling of their resources, cross training their personnel, improving public trust and thereby better protecting the community.
- viii. As the risk of infection and uncertainty is a major source of stress, PPE, and training to improve positive coping skills should be provided to the police officers to overcome stress without the build of side effects, for instance, burnout, and unhealthy behavior such as smoking and alcoholism.
- ix. Leaders in their training class can cite examples of successful coping, certain psychological traits or skills of other police agencies/departments/individuals that may have empowered a more effective and positive response to stressors during the pandemic. This will help in a future pandemic situation as well as in recruitment.
- x. Maintaining two-way and trust-based communication with citizens is of utmost importance and requires knowledge of social media platforms, to convey important messages, respond to public inquiries, provide updates and advisories to the public, and tackle fake news and misinformation. Lastly, social support from supervisors and colleagues should be encouraged as it is one of the most important factors in overcoming stress and also serves as a significant protective factor against post-traumatic stress disorder.



Limitations and Future Research Directions

The study has certain limitations. The study was limited to the scope of duty of police personnel in the Covid-19 pandemic, though the study has tried to include diverse literature on the topic, there are always chances some important research might not have been included. Hence future research can focus on the impact of the pandemic on the personal lives of police personnel like aspects of work-family conflict, anxiety, and coping strategies. The impact of the pandemic was widespread and its effects on occupational stress can be better studied within a longer time frame. The study provides a base to better understand the increased police officer stress resulting from the pandemic and hence planning interventions to reduce it. Also, the review provides an important rationale for analytical research in the future where the researcher can examine the impact of COVID-19 on officer well-being.

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