

# **WOMEN IN POLICING: THEIR GENDERED REPRESENTATION AND ENGENDERED POLICE SPACE INHIBIT THE PROGNOSIS BEHIND WOMEN POLICING**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper delves into the globally acknowledged necessity of women police for policing crimes involving women and children, the historical account of their entry into police space, gender disparity in their representation, gendered professional experiences and the state's failure to achieve the objective behind assimilating into the police system. The purpose of the paper is to present how gender ghettoization of women incumbents in the police space and masculinized professional culture is making them fish out of water that restricts their professional output. The methodological pluralism has been adopted in collecting and analyzing the data used in the paper. The paper concludes that women are being discriminated against joining policing and experience concealed gender ghettoization in the police in multiple forms with intense gravity. Consequently, the state is failing to actuate the expected output behind women policing, i.e. prevention and addressing crimes involving particularly women.

*Keywords:* Women policing, gender disparity, gender ghettoization

## **I. Introduction**

## **II. Police Culture**

## **III. Gendered Representation of Women in Policing**

## **IV. Indian Scenario**

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## **I. Introduction**

THE MANKIND gets through an epoch of contradictions i.e. globalization versus fragmentation, consolidation versus devolution and quiescent order and peace versus conflict and war. These tendencies make society susceptible to many social turmoil; one of the most repercussions being crime or deviance. To reconcile with these tendencies and to see the social order in the pink, all the societies on the globe have been engaging in some watch and ward systems, since the genesis of organized social life. In ancient times, these organizations were substantially elemental and

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had a circumscribed scope. Escalating socio-cultural involutions, technological revolution and elongation of the civilization have rendered these structures colossal, daedal and most importantly sophisticated. As per the viable records, the outset of policing, one such machinery is traced back to the Anglo-Saxon era.<sup>1</sup> However, police as a well-standardized and distinct administrative machinery is somewhat a neoteric development. Justice delivery begins with police, the front end of crime detection, the immediate institution of contact and the primary reference point, meant for identifying crime or deviance through stewardship and rectifying law violations through de jure violence or bringing those to the judicial scrutiny. Police personnel are engaged in administering the citizens through methodical patrolling, retrospective crime investigation, bringing the suspects to justice, enforcing arrests, administering fines, all these combining into prevention, administration and repression (PAR). This promotes public safety and upholds the rule of law.

Traditionally, policing was being surmised as a masculine task, ergo it was being accomplished by men. This robust masculinity intertwined with organisational apathy historically played a distal role in utterly distancing women from the profession in India, nay globally. But the current epoch demands police personnel to act more as change agents and torchbearers of societal well-being than simply guarding law and order. To achieve these emerging concerns of policing, empowering women and safeguarding women and children, now it is inevitable to induct women into and retain them in the profession. As a way forward, women are now being preferred in the profession and no doubt their number is upping in police space across years.

However, the indistinct gender circumscription is robust at the entry points and those who join are feeling like fish out of water in the organisation due to their gendered ghettoization. Gender discrimination with respect to recruitment, work assignment, promotion and suffering repercussions such as job-family role conflict, job stress, lack of women-specific amenities, apathetic societal attitude towards marginalises and perceived by them through and through. Against such backdrop, in this paper the author makes an effort to explore how gender is standing as a predicament during their entry, in their survival and thus the output, that the states

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<sup>1</sup> T. Newburn (ed.), *Handbook of Policing* (Routledge, London, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., 2008).

sought to procure out of women policing is not being adequately realized, leading to the failure of the wisdom and prognosis precluding women policing.

Against such a backdrop, this paper is subdivided into four subsequent parts. The second part presents the masculine police culture entrenched with danger and confusion. This dispels women aspirants as well as incumbents from policing. Due to these elemental rationales, women's representation in policing is colossally low and those who are joining are marginalized. This is sweepingly analyzed in the third part. In the fourth part, the author pours concentrated attention to the immediate reasons behind inducting women into policing in India, the recent trends of women policing in the country, inauguration and operation of one-off all-women police units and a reference to women and child desks in Odisha. In the fifth part, the author concludes that due to engendering and masculinization of the police space, the state is evidently failing to actuate the prevention and control of crime and deviance involving particularly women in the society. To address this, actionable recommendations are placed.

## II. Police Culture

The conventional perspective of police culture is that, it constitutes an array of professional attributes<sup>2</sup> nurtured and manifested in an ambiguous, authoritarian, dangerous and uncertain police environment.<sup>3, 4, 5</sup> The most established attributes comprise distrust or suspicion of citizens<sup>6, 7</sup>, aggressive policing strategies<sup>8, 9</sup>, a negative perspective of supervision<sup>10, 11</sup>, judicious

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<sup>2</sup> E. A. Paoline-III and W. Terrill, *Police Culture: Adapting to the Strains of the Job* (Carolina Academic Press, Durham, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> J. Van Maanen, "Working the street: a developmental view of police behavior" in H. Jacob (ed.), *The potential for reform of criminal justice* 83–130 (Sage, 1974).

<sup>4</sup> J.H. Skolnick, *Justice without Trial: Law Enforcement in Democratic Society* (John Wiley, New York, 1966).

<sup>5</sup> W. A. Westley, *Violence and the Police* (MIT Press, Cambridge, 1970).

<sup>6</sup> J. Rubinstein, "City Police" 4 *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 478-485 (1973).

<sup>7</sup> W. A. Westley, *Violence and the Police* (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1970).

<sup>8</sup> M. K. Brown, *Working the Street: Police Discretion and the Dilemmas of Reform* (Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1988).

<sup>9</sup> R. E. Worden, "Police officers' belief systems: A framework for analysis" 14 *American Journal of Police* 49 (1995).

<sup>10</sup> E. Reuss-Ianni, *Two Cultures of Policing: Street Cops And Management Cops* (Transaction Books, New Brunswick, 1983).

<sup>11</sup> R. E. Worden, "Police officers' belief systems: A framework for analysis" 14 *American Journal of Police* 49 (1995).

execution of law<sup>12</sup> and prioritising law enforcement.<sup>13, 14</sup> These attributes are shared among personnel.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Westley<sup>16</sup> argues that the police represent a tight-knit and secretive group; the incumbents often face violence while accomplishing job tasks. They stick together against potentially hostile and intimidating citizens. Jerome Skolnick<sup>17</sup> claims that a police officer's life in the streets is dangerous. These arguments harmoniously establish that the police personnel are to collectively comply with police norms and values in the face of the job strains and via their attitudes, which is concisely defined as police culture.<sup>18</sup>

Regrettably, the complete understanding of police culture is still vague like the idea of love. We tend to perceive the culture when we observe it but it means differently to different people in differing circumstances. This culture can be both frustrating and confusing from an empirical and theoretical standpoint. Police monolithic culture exposes the personnel usually to two environments; 1) organisational interactions with the supervisors and 2) occupational interactions with the service consumers. The dangerous occupational environment demands them to be bossy on the field and the organisational imperatives expose them to open-ended supervisory scrutiny and role ambiguities.<sup>19</sup> Both of these environments produce similar enormous anxiety and stress. To cope with the organisational stress, they lay low if the supervisor is punitive and eagle-eyed and to subsist against the role ambiguities, they maintain the edge while displaying coercion. Consequently, the officers become socially isolated from the public and grow suspicious and distrustful towards them and extremely loyal to the police administrators. Thus, the common themes of police culture include dangerous and ambiguous street environment, use of violence

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<sup>12</sup> M. K. Brown, *Working the Street: Police Discretion and the Dilemmas of Reform* (Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1988).

<sup>13</sup> Egon Bittner, *The Functions of Police in Modern Society: A Review of Background Factors, Current Practices, and Possible Role Models* (National Institute of Mental Health Center for Studies of Crime and Delinquency, Chevy Chase, 1970).

<sup>14</sup> P.K. Manning, *Police Work: The Social Organization of Policing* (Waveland Press, United States of America, 1977).

<sup>15</sup> E.A. Paoline III, "Taking stock: toward a richer understanding of police culture" 31 *Journal of Crime Justice* 199 (2003).

<sup>16</sup> W. A. Westley, *Violence and the Police* (MIT Press, Cambridge, 1970).

<sup>17</sup> J.H. Skolnick, *Justice without Trial: Law Enforcement in Democratic Society* (John Wiley, New York, 1966).

<sup>18</sup> E.A. Paoline-III, *Rethinking Police Culture: Officers' Occupational Attitudes* (LFB Publishing, New York, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> E.A. Paoline III, "Taking stock: toward a richer understanding of police culture" 31 *Journal of Crime Justice* 199 (2003).

and discretion, alienation from the general public<sup>20, 21, 22</sup>, bureaucracy, typical contact with undesirable others, engagement in dirty deals and dealing with conflicting and vague mandates.

The police culture in India is not an exception to these themes. These elements of police culture are widely and openly evident in the police space in India with a non-significant variation in their elemental nature. Though not justifiable, it is understandable and observable that in India the politicians seem to make the police dance to their tune. Moreover, there is a lack of agreement among the people of the society regarding what is expected from the police. Policemen are ridiculed the time they do not use discretion and are condemned while making discretionary judgments. They are damned if they do and are too damned if they do not.<sup>23</sup> They work in the organization with this confusion which is aligned with numerous dilemmas. Male and females in India are socialized to perform their gendered roles. This cultural norm is carried forward by the police personnel to their professional domain and it plays a deciding role behind gender inequality in Indian policing.<sup>24</sup>

It is understood from the above discussion that masculinised ethos are underpinning policing since the inception of the system; a continuity of the convention. Police work culture in India, nay globally does not seem to be in conformity with the basic gender norms and is not even making possible adaptation to the gender socialization and roles of the female recruits. The states across the globe acknowledge the increasing necessity of women in policing. But they are unsuccessful in executing ineluctable gender budgeting and gender sensitization training, particularly in India. Consequently, policing remaining as a masculine preserve produces dichotomization between womanly traits and the police professional imperatives and thus women are off scoured in the profession. This condition is re-inseminating, outstretching and holding on gender inequality in the police system. Thus women incumbents find themselves as

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<sup>20</sup> J. Liu, L. Zhang and S. F. Messner (Eds.), *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China* (Greenwood Press, Westport, 2001).

<sup>21</sup> H.M. Carter and O. Marenin, "Police culture in Nigeria: a comparative perspective" 15 *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 242 (1980).

<sup>22</sup> N. Srinivasan, and L. Hearn, "Policing in a multicultural society: a changing society, a changing police culture?" 3 *International Journal of Police Science and Management* 309 (2001).

<sup>23</sup> G.C. Singhv, "India's Contemporary Police Culture" 36 *Indian Journal of Public Administration* 580-588 (1990).

<sup>24</sup> Mangai Natarajan, "Police Culture and the Integration of Women Officers in India" 16 *International Journal of Police Science & Management* 124-139 (2014).

cultural aliens in the domain in various respects. Firstly, the rudimentary contradiction between their overmastering gendered socialization and the perception of police philosophy emphasizing aggressiveness, emotional indifference, competitiveness, and active persistence<sup>25</sup> set them apart from policing mandates. With such panorama, they find themselves in embarrassments and dichotomies with respect to the style and content of policing. Secondly, their integration into policing is neither normally accepted in the realm of their counterparts nor seriously acknowledged by their service consumers nor appreciated by the general public. Conclusively, finding themselves on the demesne of confusion and danger, they dwell between the devil and the deep sea that hinders the prognosis behind women policing.

### **Confusion and Danger Ingrained in Police Culture**

The ontology, deduced out of the author's empirical engagement with women police converged with the above interpretations offered by scholars across the globe; procure a consensual argument that police culture is overwhelmed with an unanticipated high degree of confusion and danger, ingrained in their professional role accomplishments and the organizational structure and processes. On the basis of an empirical study, Nayak and Mohanty<sup>26</sup> amassed a treasure of insights into the role conflicts, an issue of confusion that is quoted here. They experience role conflicts at two levels. Firstly, the conflict surfaces because of the discrepancy that exists between their perception of police roles and the attested execution of such roles. Most of them respond to criminals adeptly but there is a need to act strenuously in certain circumstances for robust policing. This conflict is coincident with their inadequate cognizance of the masculine aspect of police roles before entry and the indecorous internalization of such roles after entry due to the dearth of psychological training in their training module.

Another form of such conflict is that they perceive some inconsonance between their expertise for performing certain prescriptions and are carrying out some other. For example, they prefer desk jobs, as they are mentally well equipped as well as inclined for that but are coerced to accomplish field assignments accompanying their male colleagues as it is an organizational term of office. Secondly, conflict transpires while carrying through field assignments because the

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<sup>25</sup> C. F. Epstein, *A woman's place* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1970).

<sup>26</sup> R.C. Nayak and R.K. Mohanty, *Women Police in India: Job Challenges and Coping Strategies* 208-210 (Serials Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, India, 2021).

ways they enact their roles somehow diverge from the execution definition of such roles by the policemen. Policemen as well as the police organisation presuppose them to act like their male counterparts do because they are at par. However, they execute field assignments under the admonishment of either male colleagues or authorities, not on their own hook. The confusion is embedded in the organizational and work structure because the work pledge and its execution mandates, police accountability to multiple state agencies and their dual responsibility to the profession and domesticity put them to the pan of achingly arduous and even suicidal situations.

“Every day we see the policemen working; often we make allegations against them and criticise them. Some of the criticisms are justified, while some are not; but we forget how difficult their work is”, said Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. The danger is a close-knit component in accomplishing police roles and its intensity is skyscraping in the case of women incumbents because the masculine ethos, typically embedded in policing too, creates an impression among the deviants that women are incapable as police. Hence, they encounter numerous incidents in their professional space which earn dangers for their lives. Through the author’s empirical inquiry, it revealed that 18% of them have endured shooting, 4% vehicle crash, 55% attack by hardcore criminals, 1% attack from agitators armed with weapons, 13% involvement in controlling communal riots and 9% have faced no such incident. A maximum of them are attacked by hardcore criminals both verbally and physically. It has been exemplified by a highly ranked woman officer that once in a bus in Trichy, two robbers tried to snatch money from passengers. Fortunately, two lady constables from Tamil Nadu police who were travelling in the same bus tried to trap the robbers. The robbers attacked the constables with a sharp knife and weapons but they handled the situation tactfully and finally could control the robbers and handed them over to the local police.<sup>27</sup>

Based on the above findings, it is clear that the danger and confusion aligned with their allied disadvantages produce gender compartmentalization of male and female officers, the breeding ground of inequality. The gender amplitude of danger and confusion constrict their enthusiasm for and choice of a police career. Therefore, women feel inhibited at the entry points of policing

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<sup>27</sup> L. Saran, “It is Your Work that Matters .....Not the Gender” *Souvenir, 4th National Conference of Women in Police*, 4 Biju Pattanaik State Police Academy, Bhubaneswar, Odisha 64 (2010).

which results in their exiguous presence in policing even reservation is given to them particularly in most of the states in India. This exemplifies the exclusion of women in the police space and this exclusion dwells in an ambivalence. Reserving posts for women plays an attracting force towards policing and on the other hand the danger and confusion are combining into a discouraging or distracting force. Stuck in a dilemma between these polarised forces, most of the women do not prefer policing and a microscopic minority gets around the battle between the forces and joins policing. Again, who join, get exposed to the same sectionalization, job-family role conflict and are subject to multitudinous engendered discriminatory experiences, again leading to gendered representation of women in policing that I detail in the sections on deck.

### III. Gendered Representation of Women in Policing

Historically, women were disproportionately underrepresented in policing.<sup>28,29,30</sup> It took them many years to subdue male remonstrance<sup>31</sup> and organisational apathy<sup>32,33</sup>, the dominant deterrents in their way. The theoretical explanations that sought to unriddle male resistance<sup>34,35</sup> testify that policemen did not like to partake in power with women. When their values in dealing with cases involving women and children were ascertained, they broke the barrier. The United States first appointed them as police matrons in the late 1800, making them liable to oversee and leg up juveniles and women accused.<sup>36</sup> Then they were appointed in the Chicago police in 1893, having the responsibilities of visiting courts and abetting male detectives and dealing with cases subsuming women and children. By the turn of the century, the government was forced by women's groups to appoint more women in policing. However, women who were taken into the police department worked as social workers. In subsequent phases, more women were appointed in variant capacities but the duties were to deal with matters as to women and children. Women

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<sup>28</sup> M. Charles, "The performance and socialization of female recruits in the Michigan State Police Training Academy" 9 *Journal of Police Science and Administration* 209 (1981).

<sup>29</sup> J. Balkin, "Why policemen don't like policewomen" 16 *Journal of Police Science and Administration* 29 (1988).

<sup>30</sup> J. Belknap, *The invisible woman: Gender, crime, and justice* (Wadsworth, Belmont, CA, 2nd Edn., 2001).

<sup>31</sup> D.J. Bell, "Policewomen: Myths and reality" 1 *Journal of Police Science and Administration* 112 (1982).

<sup>32</sup> J. M. Brown, "Aspects of Discriminatory Treatment of Women Police Officers Serving in Forces in England and Wales" 38 *The British Journal of Criminology* 265 (1998).

<sup>33</sup> J. Brown, & S. Sargent, "Policewomen and firearms in British police service" 18 *Police Studies* 1 (1995).

<sup>34</sup> B. L. Berg & K. J. Budnick, "Defeminization of women in law enforcement: A new twist in the traditional police personality" 14 *Journal of Police Science and Administration* 314 (1986).

<sup>35</sup> J.C. Hunt, "The Logic of Sexism among Police" 1 *Women and Criminal Justice* 3 (1990).

<sup>36</sup> C.A. Archbold and D.M. Schulz, "Research on Women in Policing: A Look at the Past, Present and Future" 6 *Sociology Compass* 694 (2012).



police were appointed in sprinkling locations such as Portland Oregon in 1908 and Los Angeles in 1910. The expansion was accelerated during World War-I, essentially because of labour shortages<sup>37, 38</sup> in which they could demonstrate their capacity for police work. By 1920 over 200 American cities employed women in their respective police forces. Their appointments recurrently took place at a piecemeal pace. Initially, the number of pioneer women officers was limited and female recruits were mainly working as the assistants of male detectives. This cloistered environment gradually broke during the 1950s and 1960s when women officers joined school traffic squads and juvenile support units, eventually getting into mixed patrol groups during the 1970s.<sup>39</sup> In 1972 when the Equal Employment Opportunities Act (EEOA) was passed, all legal discriminations were removed and their number reached 10+% in progressive democracies by the 1990s.<sup>40</sup>

Great Britain was a little behind the United States in this respect. In 1907, the first woman police aide was appointed to record statements and to interrogate female victims of sexual assault for the London Criminal Intelligence Division. She did not have powers to arrest. World War-II stretched the realm of the functions of women police. Initially, the tasks apportioned to them were air raids, defence, convoying enemy or aliens and duties in detention cases. In Scandinavian countries like Sweden and Norway, the involvement of women in the police has still not been very propitious. France has an upswept adversarial attitude towards women's involvement in police work. Frenchmen believe that "Women are meant to be homemakers and mothers and should not be employed where there is physical danger". It shows that there is still no unanimity on the engagement of women in police work, across the globe. Even after the establishment of the International Women's Police Association (IWPA) in 1915, women have not been able to make much headway in the police systems of several countries. They are grossly under-represented in the policing of the most non-democratic countries or rising democracies.<sup>41</sup> In the countries having women in their policing, women are attested to be good officers, but are

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<sup>37</sup> J. Brown & F. Heidensohn, *Gender and Policing: Comparative Perspectives* (Macmillan, Houndmills, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> L. Jackson, *Women Police: Gender, Welfare and Surveillance in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2006).

<sup>39</sup> F. Heidensohn, *Women in Control: The Role of Women in Law Enforcement* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992).

<sup>40</sup> T. Prenzler and G. Sinclair, "The status of women police officers: An international review" 41 *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 115 (2013).

<sup>41</sup> M. Natarajan, *Women Police in a Changing Society: Back Door to Equality* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2008).

not taken earnestly. Likewise, the current research on women police undrape that the proportion of sworn women officers stands at or below a quarter in the police organisations of the most developed democracies, their number in administrative ranks being much lower and women from racial and ethnic communities are suffering from greater marginalisation in policing.<sup>42, 43</sup> All these show that woman police had to pass through a very difficult period before they could uphold themselves. There was a lot of discrimination experienced by women police until recently. However, Stuttgart in Germany employed an officially titled police woman in 1903. The number laggardly increased and during and after World War-II their services were harnessed for different purposes. In Japan, they entered into the police organisation as late as 1947 but by 1953 their number increased to 1,200 comprising over 3% of the entire police force. In Japan police, women enjoyed the same status and authority as their male counterparts.

When we look at the global picture with regard to women's participation in policing, three grounds of their gendered representation are apparent; 1) their awfully marginal ratio to the police population, 2) high dearth of women in higher police positions and 3) dispelling them from cutting-edge policing. This situation sufficiently certifies that they are at a distance or are distanced from the police space and those who are working in the system are seen as 'excluded others'. This argument is built on their low processional positions and engagement in soft police assignments, which openly questions equality of women in policing. Now the question is what underlying factors are directly responsible for it. The author postulates the reasons to be; 1) police men's non-acceptance to share power with them in a masculine space, 2) presumably their non-preference to step into a so-called masculinized terrain and 3) masculinity embedded in police role execution.

In spite of that some improvements are there in this regard, though negligible and not widely evident. Initially, they were assigned cosmetic police duties in the USA and to some extent core police tasks in Great Britain. Grounded on the same rationale, now their presence in the police space is increasing across the globe since the last few decades but at a snail's pace, though they

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<sup>42</sup> G. Cordner and A. Cordner, "Stuck on A Plateau? Obstacles to the Recruitment, Selection, and Retention of Women Police" 14 *Police Quarterly* 207 (2011).

<sup>43</sup> M.S. Stroshine and S.G. Brandl, "Race, Gender, and Tokenism in Policing: An Empirical Elaboration" 14 *Police Quarterly* 344 (2011).

are being proved as good officers. The research results put forth a fairly strong argument that increased females' participation in accomplishing police tasks will result in reduced complaints against police as well as reduced police misconduct including lesser belief in using force or coercion for policing. Women can make significant contributions in the undertaking of improving security in the developing nations through their participation in the peacekeeping missions<sup>44</sup> because they are the embodiments of patience, tolerance, empathy and gentleness. They can humanise the police by transforming it from police force to police service. Their presence in police, lends the police a human face; especially in relation to other women. This premise is encapsulated in the slogan, "Sisterhood is Powerful" which gained currency in the American feminist movement of the 1960s. Having women in policing too provides a substitute contact end for the victims, who are re-victimized in the hands of well-documented insensitivity projected by many policemen.<sup>45</sup>

In consonance with the above argument, in my study, 63%<sup>46</sup> of women police view that deviance involving women and children is fielded if a woman officer deals with the parties involved, 11% of them claimed that they can ensure security to women victims and 26% viewed that women and child victims express their issues in point of fact, fearlessly and openly in front of women officers. Here it is worth mentioning that initiated in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1985, most of the Indian States/UTs have thus now set up All Women Police Stations (AWPS) managed and run exclusively by women personnel to investigate crimes such as rape, bodily harm, battery, threat of battery, etc; committed against women and to provide services to female complainants.<sup>47</sup> Marion Levy in his functional analysis advocates the term "eufunction" to refer to positive or constructive consequences which contribute to the maintenance and survival of the social system.<sup>48</sup> Bearing a witness to the theory, my study displayed that the role of women police towards women and children are the "eufunctions" for the police system and the society at large.

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<sup>44</sup> United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, *Integrating Gender in Security Sector Reform Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation*, Santo Domingo (2007).

<sup>45</sup> National Center for Women and Policing, "Equality Denied: The Status of Women in Policing-2001" (Los Angeles, 2002).

<sup>46</sup> R.C. Nayak and R.K. Mohanty, *Women Police in India: Job Challenges and Coping Strategies* (Serials Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, India, 2021).

<sup>47</sup> C.M. Santos, "Engendering the Police: Women's Police Stations and Feminism in Sao Paulo" 39 *Latin American Research Review* 29 (2004).

<sup>48</sup> M. Levy, *The Structure of Society* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1952).

Still those women, who join the profession, have to survive with engendered perceptions and toil at the margin of the system. They are treated with a concealed prioritisation of their femininity.

#### IV. Indian Scenario

Although similar to the other countries, policing in India is treated as a males' domain, some authors<sup>49, 50</sup> claimed that women's engagement in police functions in India dates back to Kautilya's Arthashastra. But there was no record of their induction on a regular basis until the second quarter of the twentieth century. In the early 20th century, the British Government appointed them in police to aid suppression of brothels in 1919. Hereafter, the urgent need for women police was again felt during the labour strike in Kanpur in 1938. Women labourers laid down at the entrance of the factory for clogging the entry of the non-willing workers. The male police faced a delicate situation of lifting the women workers physically off the ground. To address any such eventuality in the future, police women were appointed in Kanpur in 1939.<sup>51</sup> In the same year, the Princely State of Travancore appointed one woman Head-Constable and twelve women Special Police Constables.<sup>52, 53</sup> It is reported that even before independence, a few women were appointed in the port cities of Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai for police frisking duty. Nair<sup>54</sup> held that women were inducted into police in Greater Mumbai in the year 1939 and subsequently in the districts of Pune, Sholapur, Kohlapur and Nasik in 1950.

After partition, several grief-stricken refugee women contacted the Prime Minister daily. Thus, for the Prime Minister's security, it was felt that women need to be there in the police forces. As a result, a woman sub-inspector and a few women constables were appointed in Delhi for providing security to the Prime Minister when refugee women in distress contacted him. At the same time, the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation also needed women police. Ghosh<sup>55</sup> writes, "The partition of India in 1947 in its wake brought endless misery, squalor and moral

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<sup>49</sup> P.D. Sharma, *Indian Police: A Development Approach* (Research Publications in Social Science, New Delhi, 1977).

<sup>50</sup> A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that Was India* (Sidgwick and Jackson, Fontanas, 1967).

<sup>51</sup> S. V. Rao, *Women police in India*. (Police Research & Development, New Delhi, 1975).

<sup>52</sup> G.R. Nair. "The Story of Women Police" 36 *Social Welfare* 14 (1989).

<sup>53</sup> A. Mahajan, *Indian Police Women: A Sociological Study of a New Role* (Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1982).

<sup>54</sup> G.R. Nair. "The Story of Women Police" 36 *Social Welfare* 14 (1989).

<sup>55</sup> S.K. Ghosh, *Women in Policing* (Light and Life Publishers, New Delhi, 1981).

degradation. Kidnapping, abduction and sex offences showed a marked increase. Relief camps had been started for unattached women, girls and children whose male members had been insensately killed and young girls kidnapped, raped, forcibly converted or sold on auction. Thus, the Ministry needed women police for recovery of abducted women and girls. Due to such circumstances, it was thought necessary to appoint women in the police. Moreover, the rationalisation of the need to have women in police at the national level can be attributed to the following factors which emerged during the national struggle for Independence and the post-Independence period.

1. During the national struggle for independence, women participated in several satyagrahas. When they were fielded against the male police, the national leaders reprehended them.
2. The freshly acquired independence, large-scale movement of people in search of shelter and work and snappily changing socio-economic scenario created a new dimension of policing. In several states, political agitations, strikes, linguistic and communal riots became frequent features. The participation of women in these events gave a tactical advantage to the agitators and this fact was fully exploited by the political parties. Furthermore, women's participation in these events was increasing daily, creating new challenges for a law enforcement agency, particularly, in view of the delicacy in handling women agitators.<sup>56</sup> It was realised that in such situations police-women were needed.
3. In the post-Independence years, the Government of India enacted a number of social laws, such as the Children Act, Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act (SITWGA), and had taken various other measures for the protection of women and children. These steps exposed the law enforcement agency to new types of roles for which they were unprepared. To deal with women and children, there was a growing realisation among the police administrators of the necessity to have women in the force.
4. Economic disadvantages forced a large number of women to search for remunerative employment. The Indian Constitution, training in formal education, new avenues of employment and the forces of urbanization and industrialization hastened women's participation in almost all walks of national life. Furthermore, the number of girls and women apprehended for juvenile

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<sup>56</sup> S. V. Rao, *Women police in India*. (Police Research & Development, New Delhi, 1975).

delinquency and crimes started increasing. The number of women arrested under I.P.C. crime jumped from 16,303 in 1971 to 23,939 in 1975 indicating an increase of 46.8%.<sup>57</sup> This increase prompted the government to have women in the police force to deal with the newly surfacing situations. By 1975 almost all the states in India inducted women into their respective police organisations.

No doubt women policing in other countries is meant for addressing crime and deviance involving women in essence. But if we analyse the immediate and distant reasons behind instituting and carrying forward women policing in India, it is understood that their participation is much more diligently intended to prevent and address crime against women and children than such engagement of women police in other countries. However, the outcome in India appears contradicts . If we look at the state attested present scenario of crime against women, it is astonishing to note that the overall crime graph against women has been alarmingly increasing in the last decades. These include sexual harassment, murders, kidnapping, rape, trafficking of women and girls, molestation, eve-teasing, honour killing, domestic violence, feticide, forced prostitution, inflating desertion, etc. The data on the total number of incidences of crimes against women in India according to IPC and Special Local Laws from 1992-2019 are depicted in Table 1.

formula for the mean of a population is

$$\mu = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

The formula for the mean of a sample is

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

Both of these formulas use the same mathematical process: find the sum of the data values and divide by the total. For the data values entered above, the solution is:

$$\frac{5647090}{28} = 201681.7857$$

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<sup>57</sup> M. L. Bhanot and S. Misra, *Criminality among Women in India* (Bureau of Police Research and Development, New Delhi, 1978).

**Table 1. Incidence of Crimes against Women in India According to IPC and Special Local Laws  
From 1992-2019<sup>58</sup>**

Year	Number of Crimes
1992	79037
1993	83954
1994	98948
1995	106471
1996	115723
1997	121265
1998	131338
1999	135771
2000	141373
2001	143795
2002	143034
2003	140601
2004	154333
2005	155553
2006	164765
2007	185312
2008	195856
2009	203804
2010	213585
2011	228650
2012	244270
2013	309546
2014	337922
2015	329243
2016	338954
2017	359849
2018	378277
2019	405861

The average of crime committed against women in India between 1992 and 2019, presented in Table 1 is calculated in the figure. The mean value reveals that the average rate of crime committed against women in these years is 20,1681.7857. Moreover, the cross-year trend shows that exceptionally the rate in 2003 and 2015 has receded by 2,433 and 8,679 respectively compared to 2002 and 2014. This oddity is not also free from doubt and debate because it is the state's official data . The average presents a pernicious state of affairs in the country with regards to the women population and endorses the failure of women police in specific crime prevention.

<sup>58</sup> National Crime Records Bureau, "Crime in India" (1992-2019).

If crime against women and the number of women police (*See* Table 2), both are increasing, we can claim that women policing in India is more a curative than a preventive. The efforts of the state and the police administration would be sluggish in equipping and engaging the women incumbents in preventing such crimes. This state questions the prognosis behind women policing.

Furthermore, the trend in rise of female criminality and increase in juvenile delinquency are some of the situations that not only make the presence of women in the police profession desirable but also mandate that expansion of women police in the future is essential and inevitable. The Government of India<sup>59</sup> highlighted the formative role that women police have to play in re-establishing and reforming delinquent girls, doing investigational work of crimes relating to women and children, handling rallies and demonstrations participated by women and giving sterling attention to the “service” aspects of police work. In this regard, a portion of a notification addressed to Chief Secretaries of all State Governments and Union Territories reads as, “Women police wherever available, should be engaged for dealing with women and in particular, for searching their person, escorting them to jails and keeping watch on them while in police lock-up”.<sup>60</sup> In addition, the commission suggested women policing for executing day time patrolling not only for locating deviants but also for interacting with the public which would improve the public image of the police. It further suggested the deployment of women police for traffic control operations near schools, fairs, festivals, etc.

The National Police Commission (NPC) suggested that the Police Act must be thoroughly assessed with regard to its pertinence to service-oriented police culture, embedding additional provisions suitable to the sine qua nons of gender justice and gender dignity.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, women now form a part of the police force of all states and Union Territories. Though some states had inducted women into their police systems before independence, notably it was only after independence that women were appointed in state/UT police forces on a regular basis.<sup>62,63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Government of India, “Vth Report of the National Police Commission” (Ministry of Home Affairs, 1980).

<sup>60</sup> Government of India, “Report of National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners” (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 1987).

<sup>61</sup> Government of India, “Delhi Statistical Handbook” (1987).

<sup>62</sup> G.R. Nair. “The Story of Women Police” 36 *Social Welfare* 14 (1989).

<sup>63</sup> A. Mahajan, *Indian Police Women* (Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1982).



As per the records at hand, they formally entered into Delhi Police in 1948, Bihar in 1952, Kerala in 1939, West Bengal in 1949, Andhra Pradesh in 1950, Himachal Pradesh in 1966, Tamil Nadu in 1973, Karnataka in 1960, Jammu & Kashmiri in 1965, Punjab in 1948, Assam in 1967, Nagaland in 1968, Haryana in 1966, Madhya Pradesh in 1956, Rajasthan in 1955, Uttar Pradesh in 1938, Odisha in 1961, Gujarat in 1948, Maharashtra in 1939, Manipur in 1961 and they entered into Chandigarh police in 1977.<sup>64</sup>

### Recent Trends of Women Policing in India

Due to persistently rising incidences of crime against women in recent years, it is a bright-line logic that the representation of a fair number of women in the police system is indispensable for downsizing women's vulnerability to and/or victimisation of crime.<sup>65, 66, 67</sup> However, the gendered representation of women in Indian policing is indisputably an abecedarian character of the system. Their stake in the police population being colossally low<sup>68, 69, 70, 71, 72</sup> makes the police response to supersizing crimes against women<sup>73, 74, 75, 76</sup> and women criminals<sup>77, 78</sup> damned arduous. Over and above, those women who are hired for executing policing are by and large entrusted with cosmetic police roles like security checks and so on, rather than deploying them at the cutting edge of police-public interface.<sup>79, 80, 81</sup> The practice of entailing all-women police stations in the structure of civil policing of the country commenced in 1973.<sup>82</sup> This was no doubt a productive development with respect to contending with crime against women and women

<sup>64</sup> S.K. Ghosh, *Women in Policing* (Light and Life Publishers, New Delhi, 1981).

<sup>65</sup> Bureau of Police Research and Development, "Data on Police Organization" 26 (2018).

<sup>66</sup> Bureau of Police Research and Development, "Data on Police Organization" 36 (2019).

<sup>67</sup> Bureau of Police Research and Development, "Data on Police Organization" 39 (2020).

<sup>68</sup> Bureau of Police Research and Development, "Data on Police Organization" 132 (2016).

<sup>69</sup> Bureau of Police Research and Development, "Data on Police Organization" 144 (2017).

<sup>70</sup> Bureau of Police Research and Development, "Data on Police Organization" 26 (2018).

<sup>71</sup> Bureau of Police Research and Development, "Data on Police Organization" 36 (2019).

<sup>72</sup> Bureau of Police Research and Development, "Data on Police Organization" 39 (2020).

<sup>73</sup> *Supra* note 69

<sup>74</sup> *Supra* note 70

<sup>75</sup> *Supra* note 71

<sup>76</sup> *Supra* note 72

<sup>77</sup> *Supra* note 71

<sup>78</sup> *Supra* note 72

<sup>79</sup> *Supra* note 68

<sup>80</sup> *Supra* note 69 at 145

<sup>81</sup> *Supra* note 70 at 27

<sup>82</sup> Sofia Amaral & Sonia Bhalotra & Nishith Prakash, "Gender, Crime and Punishment: Evidence from Women Police Stations in India" 9002 *CESifo Working Paper Series* 3 (2019).

criminality. Even so, there were nine states in the country with not even a single all-women police station by January 1, 2016.<sup>83</sup> Though the number of such police units in India increased by twenty-seven by January 1, 2017, the number of State/UTs not having such units too rolled up by one in 2017 compared with 2016.<sup>84, 85</sup>

Furthermore, the Committee on the Empowerment of Women recommended in its sixth report that 33 percent reservation should be given to women in the state government services. However, only fourteen States/UTs by 2016 and seventeen states by 2017<sup>86</sup> could implement it in their respective police service recruitments.<sup>87</sup> Seven States/UTs by 2016<sup>88</sup> and nine State/UTs by 2017<sup>89</sup> could not at all conform to the recommendation. The remaining States/UTs could cap such reservation between 3-20 percent by 2016<sup>90</sup> and 2017.<sup>91</sup> This state of affairs seems in conformity with more than thirty five decades back wisdom of the National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners (1987) which observed that the crunch of women police has typically caused the police to overpass the procedural directives on handling women. For a long-term and tenacious solution, the Committee further suggested that the strength of the women in the police force has to be augmented.

Consequent upon that discernment, the recent trends in women policing seems somehow positive. Their increasing embrative numbers (CIVIL + DAR + SPL. ARMED + IRB) from 2009 to 2020 are presented in Table 2. On top of that, the actual percentage of women at all levels (Civil+DAR+Armed) to the total actual police strength has been increasing. It was 7.10 percent by January 1, 2016;<sup>92</sup> 7.28percent by 2017;<sup>93</sup> 8.73percent by 2018;<sup>94</sup> 9.52percent by 2019<sup>95</sup> and 10.30percent by 2020.<sup>96</sup> Astonishingly, the incidence of crime against women has

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<sup>83</sup> *Supra* note 68 at 135-40

<sup>84</sup> *Supra* note 68

<sup>85</sup> *Supra* note 69 at 145

<sup>86</sup> *Supra* note 69 at 146

<sup>87</sup> *Supra* note 68 at 133

<sup>88</sup> *Supra* note 68 at 133

<sup>89</sup> *Supra* note 69 at 146

<sup>90</sup> *Supra* note 68 at 133

<sup>91</sup> *Supra* note 69 at 146

<sup>92</sup> *Supra* note 68 at 144

<sup>93</sup> *Supra* note 69 at 147

<sup>94</sup> *Supra* note 70 at 28

<sup>95</sup> *Supra* note 71 at 36

also increased in these years (See Table-1). This potential contradiction is associated with what? There are some most observable and possible answers to this question. Firstly, the ratio of women police to women population has remained arbitrarily less. For example, the women population per women police was 3,391.44 in 2019<sup>97</sup> and 3,026.89 in 2020.<sup>98</sup> Secondly, there is a glass ceiling between women incumbents and cutting edge levels of policing. Thirdly, women officers’ representation in managerial and/or elite police positions is abysmally meagre.<sup>99,100</sup> All these reasons establish their gendered representation and ghettoization in policing which is associated with the apparent failure of the rudimental objective behind inducting women into policing.

**Table 2. Number of Women in Indian Policing (CIVIL + DAR + SPL. ARMED + IRB) from 2009 to 2020<sup>101</sup>**

Year	Number of Women in Police
2009	56667
2010	66153
2011	71756
2012	84479
2013	97518
2014	105325
2015	110872
2016	122912
2017	140184
2018	169550
2019	629776
2020	215504

The number in only the civil policing in India was 1, 75407 in 2020. Still, the number is not congruously representative of the women population in the country<sup>102, 103</sup> and their significant

<sup>96</sup> *Supra* note 72 at 40

<sup>97</sup> *Supra* note 71 at 38

<sup>98</sup> *Supra* note 72 at 107

<sup>99</sup> *Supra* note 72 at 111-112, 117, 121-122

<sup>100</sup> *Supra* note 71 at 94-95, 99-100, 104-105

<sup>101</sup> Bureau of Police Research and Development, “Data on Police Organization” 95-96 (2020).

<sup>102</sup> M. Silvestri, “Disrupting the ‘heroic’ male within policing: a case of direct entry” 13 *Feminist Criminology* 309 (2018).

<sup>103</sup> G.P.M. Dick and B. Metcalf, “The Progress of Female Police Officers? An Empirical Analysis of Organizational Commitment and Tenure Explanations in Two UK Police Forces” 20 *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 81 (2007).

representation in key police positions is still awaited. This would have a link to why the state fails to materialise its objectives behind inaugurating women policing. The state-wise actual strength of women police in 2020 with their percentage to the total police population and ratio to the women population in India is presented in detail in Table 3.

**Table 3 Strength of Women Police and Women Population per Woman Police as on 1.1.2020**

S L N O.	STATES/UTs	Actual Strength of Total Police (CIVIL + DAR + SPL. ARMED + IRB)	Actual Strength of Woman Police (CIVIL + DAR + SPL. ARMED + IRB)	Percentage of Woman Police (CIVIL + DAR + SPL. ARMED + IRB)	Woman Population in Thousands (As on 1st October, 2019) Based on 2011 Census	Woma n Popula tion Per Woma n Police
1	Andhra Pradesh	59,553	3,483	5.85%	26,179	7,516.22
2	Arunachal Pradesh	12,546	1,087	8.66%	733	674.33
3	Assam	71,608	5,434	7.59%	16,932	3,115.94
4	Bihar	91,862	23,245	25.30%	57,833	2,487.98
5	Chhattisgarh	63,839	4,510	7.06%	14,426	3,198.67
6	Goa	7,907	836	10.57%	766	916.27
7	Gujarat	84,078	9,847	11.71%	32,593	3,309.94
8	Haryana	52,088	4,344	8.34%	13,580	3,126.15
9	Himachal Pradesh	17,623	3,375	19.15%	3,611	1,069.93
10	Jharkhand	64,938	4,635	7.14%	18,393	3,968.28
11	Karnataka	83,259	6,895	8.28%	32,573	4,724.15
12	Kerala	53,723	3,884	7.23%	18,316	4,715.76
13	Madhya Pradesh	99,496	6,001	6.03%	40,103	6,682.72
14	Maharashtra	2,14,776	26,890	12.52%	58,982	2,193.45
15	Manipur	29,410	2,676	9.10%	1,552	579.97
16	Meghalaya	14,760	851	5.77%	1,615	1,897.77
17	Mizoram	8,081	580	7.18%	593	1,022.41
18	Nagaland	28,113	2,739	9.74%	1,044	381.16

8						
19	Odisha	58,455	5,854	10.01%	22,436	3,832.59
20	Punjab	85,947	7,337	8.54%	14,224	1,938.67
21	Rajasthan	95,262	9,339	9.80%	37,767	4,044.01
22	Sikkim	5,678	458	8.07%	315	687.77
23	Tamil Nadu	1,12,745	20,861	18.50%	37,970	1,820.14
24	Telangana	48,877	2,500	5.11%	18,558	7,423.20
25	Tripura	22,791	1,169	5.13%	1,970	1,685.20
26	Uttar Pradesh	3,03,450	29,112	9.59%	1,08,499	3,726.95
27	Uttarakhand	21,106	2,578	12.21%	5,474	2,123.35
28	West Bengal	97,775	9,491	9.71%	47,574	5,012.54
29	A & N Islands	4,302	553	12.85%	188	339.96
30	Chandigarh	7,711	1,448	18.78%	543	375.00
31	D & N Haveli	801	49	6.12%	229	4,673.47
32	Daman & Diu	424	59	13.92%	132	2,237.29
33	Delhi	82,195	10,110	12.30%	9,350	924.83
34	Jammu & Kashmir	80,938	2,677	3.31%	6,301	2,353.75
35	Ladakh	1,673	309	18.47%	128	414.24
36	Lakshadweep	267	28	10.49%	33	1,178.57
37	Puducherry	3,431	260	7.58%	791	3,042.31
	<b>All India</b>	<b>20,91,488</b>	<b>2,15,504</b>	<b>10.30%</b>	<b>6,52,306</b>	<b>3,026.89</b>

Source for Population: Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India, Projected Mid-year Population  
 Source: Data on Police Organization in India as on 01.01.2020, BPR&D, pp-106-107.

The table depicts that at the States/UTs level the highest 29,112 women police personnel were working in Uttar Pradesh alone, supplanted by 26,890 in Maharashtra and 23,225 in Bihar.

**Mahila Thana (All-Women Police Station)**

The National Police Commission-1977 recommended establishing specialised police units in India to deal with sensitive crimes such as crime against women.<sup>104</sup> In this line of the move, because of proactive crime deterrence attitude of the state, now in India, we witness heightened disposition among women to report crimes committed against them. Most of the Indian States/UTs have thus set up women police stations managed and run exclusively by women personnel. These stations are staffed by deliberately trained female officers to handle gender grounded crimes/violence. They are executing designated tasks of dealing with women and children. All Women Police Stations (AWPS) bring forth opportune platform for aggrieved women and girls, willing to avail police support services. Greater female' representation is enhancing the quality as well as quantity of public services, desired by other women. These female officers are riveting on handling sensitive crimes such as domestic violence, rape and other forms of gender-specific offenses, committed against women.<sup>105</sup> In 2017, there were 613 women police stations in the entire country, out of which 203 (33.11%) were functioning in Tamil Nadu, followed by seventy one (11.5%) in Uttar Pradesh and forty (6.5%) each in West Bengal, Rajasthan and Bihar.<sup>106</sup> The state/UT wise number of AWPSs is presented in the table 4.

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<sup>104</sup> M. Natarajan, *Women police in a changing society: Back door to equality* (Routledge, London, 2016).

<sup>105</sup> M. Natarajan, *Women police in a changing society: Back door to equality* (Routledge, London, 2016).

<sup>106</sup> Bureau of Police Research and Development, "Data on Police Organisation" 160 (2017).

**Table 4 All Women Police Stations in India as on Jan. 01, 2017**

STATE	No. of AWP S	STATE	No. of AWPS	STATE	No. of AWPS	STATE	No. of AWPS
Andhra Pradesh	18	Himachal Pradesh	5	Odisha	06	Uttar Pradesh	71
Arunachal Pradesh	01	Jammu & Kashmir	2	Punjab	08	Uttarakhand	02
Bihar	40	Jharkhand	30	Rajasthan	40	West Bengal	40
Chhattisgarh	04	Karnataka	35	Sikkim	02	Chandigarh	01
Goa	01	Kerala	09	Tamil Nadu	203	Puducherry	03
Gujarat	38	Manipur	09	Telangana <sup>107</sup>	12	-	-
Haryana	22	Nagaland	04	Tripura	07	-	-
TOTAL							613

Source: Data on Police Organization, BPRD, 2017, pp-149-151

As the table shows, there were 613 all-women police stations in twenty-four states and two Union Territories of India. As per the available data, there were no such units in Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Delhi and Lakshadweep. In 2016, the number was 586 all over the country, 200 (34.12%) in Tamil Nadu, followed by seventy-one (12.11%) in Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar & Rajasthan having forty (6.82%) each. The national total of such units in 2015 was 535, an overwhelming majority of 199 (37.20%) being in Tamil Nadu followed by seventy-one (13.27%) in Uttar Pradesh and forty (7.48%) each in Bihar & Rajasthan. There were a total of 518 such units in India in 2014 with a similar chronology maintained as in 2015. In 2013 the number was 502, the highest being 196 in Tamil Nadu, followed by seventy-one in Uttar Pradesh and thirty-two each in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. These five years have seen a trend of the increasing number of women police stations in the country.

It is clearly evident that distinct police units have been instituted to address crime against women and women criminality. However, it does not seem to have a significant positive impact on the

<sup>107</sup> K.K.S. Hausing, "Telangana and the Politics of State Formation in India: Recognition and Accommodation in a Multinational Federation" 28 *Regional and Federal Studies* 448 (2018).

rate of crime against women. There may be multiple reasons behind it. The proactivism that the state has been maintaining for this institutionalisation is failing in implementation. For example, there are still states/UTs having not even a single all-women police station. Is it so that crimes are not committed against women in those states/TUs? The answer is no. There were no all-women police stations in Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, A&N Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Delhi and Lakshadweep by January 1, 2017.<sup>108</sup> However, as reported by National Crime Record Bureau, the total number of crimes against women pertaining to IPC and SLL has registered an amplifying trend in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya; an up-and-down trend in Assam, Mizoram, A&N Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and the trend being downscaling in Delhi and Lakshadweep between 2015-2017.<sup>109</sup>

Moreover, the Indian state of Odisha has achieved a step ahead with regard to women policing. To facilitate an integrated approach to crimes committed against women and children, all the police stations in Odisha have established specific booths called Mahila and Sisu Desks (MSDs) (Women and Child Desks) commencing with forty Police stations on an experimental basis. As per the provision, the desk officer, a key functionary, receives complaints lodged by or relating to women and children victims, entertains their grievances empathetically and warrants necessary legal action.

As per the directive, the officer must be a lady of S.I/A.S.I rank, aided by at least one lady constable,. The broad-brush supervision and control of the functioning of the desk remain with the IIC of the respective police station. The duties of the desk officers are registering the case if the complaint reveals cognizable offence, advising the victims to take other procurable recourse if the crime is not cognizable, ensuring proper execution of the laws appertaining to women and children, segregating and interrogating women and juvenile victims as well as accused in a separate space in the police station having respect to their privacy, maintaining decency with the victims and accused as well, respecting their dignity and honour, dealing with juveniles and child victims with sympathy, counselling the victims and sending them to institutions meant for a short

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<sup>108</sup> *Supra* note 69 at 149-151

<sup>109</sup> National Crime Record Bureau, "Crime in India" 195 (2017).



stay if necessary, facilitating NGO and medical services to the victims, not revealing the names of the victims to media, prohibiting obscene representation of women and preventing crimes against women during community celebrations.

Unlike the global scenario, organised policing in India is a twentieth century development correspondingly. Furthermore, their underrepresentation and gender ghettoization are similar to what happens to the genre globally. However, we identify a hairline divergence with regard to the work accomplishments of women police in global and Indian contexts. In the countries that inaugurated women policing, women officers are engaged in dealing with cases involving women and children together with some cosmetic police jobs. However, in India their role was exclusively linked to cases involving women incipiently which got further extended to the protection of children and currently, they are engaged in protecting the rights of women and children by and large. In this line of the argument, it is worth mentioning women police are no doubt debasing many maladies associated with policing, though it is not adequate. This wisdom is supported by a recent incident that took place in Odisha. The incident reads as follows:

*A thirteen year old minor girl from a peripheral village under Biramitrapur Police jurisdiction, Sundargarh district of Odisha had come to Biramitrapur to visit a local fair on March, 25 2020. But the fair was canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions; the girl could not go back home due to some reasons or the other and she was roaming near Biramitrapur bus stand. It came to the police notice. Biramitrapur police brought her to the police station and confined there. The male IIC of the station calculatedly shifted her to a room upstairs in the station. The preliminary inquiries divulged that, the IIC raped the girl on the same day and carted her back home next day. Thereafter, he intermittently called the girl to the police station in the eventual three months and had been raping her and it is alleged that the other male officers of the station kept on having physical relationship with the minor. As the repercussion the girl fell ill one day, came to Biramitrapur hospital for treatment and was imminently found pregnant. The IIC came to know this. He got intimidated and executed the abortion in Biramitrapur PHC in consultation with a doctor over there. After abortion, they gave her a pair of dress and Rs.2000/- and sent her back home. On the next day, the bleeding became dreadful. One of the relatives of the girl thus took her to Rourkela Government Hospital, Odisha for treatment and the issue got unwrapped. Then*

*the district child welfare officer and the child line intervened in the matter. The girl explained everything to the child line personnel and a case has been lodged under Protection of Children from Sexual Offence Act, 2012, Section VI.<sup>110</sup> With the recommendation of the lady DIG of west police region, the DGP of Odisha suspended<sup>111</sup> the IIC and a team under the leadership of a lady DSP was appointed for the investigation of a matter.<sup>112</sup>*

The incident captured above is a media report. The exact details about the case have not yet been made public by any certified judicial authority. If the incident is critically probed in the line of the essence of a media report, there arise different tentative assumptions. Firstly, a minor village girl going out to visit a fair alone without being accompanied by any guardian or near and dear ones is not convincing. Even if it is so, the second assumption is that if she did not come back home on the same day, the parents would have made a search with due earnestness. If they did not do that, they had to try to know where she stayed last night, with whom she stayed, and other explicit details.

Again it is hard to believe that the fact could be revealed only after the girl fell ill and was hospitalised. The parents had every possible chance to know it during the three months when the girl was being called to the police station and was being raped. The parents' part of the incident would be taken better care, if community policing involving women would be implemented. If the incident is seen from the police angle of current policing practice, the questions arise that; a) were there any women officers in the station? b) if yes, did all these happen beyond their knowledge? c) if no, why and how did they not know? Or d) if they knew it, did the IIC burke them not to pay attention to, or what else. All these questions question the objective behind institutionalising women policing. This situation again questions the pragmatism in the state's prognosis on; a) actuating women empowerment, b) achieving the objective behind reservation for women in organised employment, c) ensuring the rights guaranteed to women and children in the constitution of Indian and finally d) protecting their human rights.

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<sup>110</sup> Editorial, "Minor Girl is Raped in the Police Custody" *The Dharitri*, June 27, 2020.

<sup>111</sup> Editorial, "Biramitrapur Police Station IIC Suspended" *The Dharitri*, June 26, 2020.

<sup>112</sup> Editorial, "Minor Girl is egregious: Hopitalised in RGH Hospital" *The Dharitri*, June 25, 2020.

## V. Conclusion and Suggestions

The incessant gendered distancing of women from policing is no doubt thinning and their essentiality in present-day policing and contribution thereupon is increasing. However, there is colossal ignorance, indifference, apathy and even miseducation about their problems, predicaments, frustrations, deprivations, dilemmas and limitations during entry and thereafter. Keeping in view the potential incompatibility between the nature and structure of police accountability, concealed gender ghettoisation and domesticity, women are still not likely to seek policing unless they are forced by compelling circumstances and even those who are contrived to opt are likely to face a variety of inauspicious consequences which are endangered. Under these circumstances, if police roles are offered to women, they are not likely to be attracted because of certain social handicaps; (a) the nature of duties demands them to play instrumental roles whereas the cultural definitions expect them to play expressive roles, (b) the police functioning is ceremoniously structured in such a fashion that exposes women to relatively greater contacts with their male counterparts at odd hours, (c) the police roles interfere with familial role obligations because the professional expectations are such that they should treat themselves on duty round the clock which create problems in time-scheduling for them and their families and (d) assuming a stigmatised role would imply bad reputation for the role incumbents. It reveals from all these that gender plays a robust role in obstructing them while making a choice for policing and during entry.

Moreover, those who join the profession are susceptible to multitudinous concealed gendered disadvantages with regard to basically work assignments and their execution, progression opportunities, promotion, getting basic facilities and experience of multiple job challenges like job stress, harassment, hideous societal attitude towards them, role conflict and many more. This proves their gendered entry and engendered survival in policing, a dual disadvantage. Owing to all these, it is observed that the intent behind inducting them into policing is not being served up to anticipation because obviously, they are losing the sense of involvement and interest in the police profession. Consequently, the state prodded output out of women policing is not being obtained up to mark, failing in the prognosis behind women policing.

Therefore the author proposes a roadmap to the government and police administrators to work sensibly for a transformative re-conceptualization of policing, embedded in the norms of pro-activism, equality, inclusion and diversity through women confirming policy framework and gender sensitive work culture. Based on our substantive groundwork, the future researchers might undertake action researches with exclusive attention to their job conflict, gender discrimination, job stress and derogatory societal attitude towards them, accommodating them in experimental group and policemen, police administrators, general public and policy framers in the control group. The future researches can engage triangulation and multi stage ten seed methodological practices in this exercise. The research output would largely supplement pragmatism in the police formation, which would help in achieving the prognosis.