



# Gender Dynamics In Law Enforcement Agency: Analysing The Underrepresentation Of Women In Police Force Within Gwalior City.

1<sup>st</sup> Author, Prerna Priya<sup>1</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Author Prof. Vivek Bapat<sup>2</sup>

1 Assistant Professor, Dept. of Women Studies, ANDNNM College, Harsh Nagar, Kanpur

2. Head, SOS in Lifelong Education Extension and Social Work, Jiwaji University, Gwalior

Women are undisputedly underrepresented in the Police force across India. The numbers are skewed at the entry level as well also at officer level. According to India Justice report, 2019, Madhya Pradesh Police had only 4.4% women in the Police force in the year 2017 which is way below the current national average of about 11%. Utilising a comprehensive analysis of demographic data of the current ratio of male and female in Stations within Gwalior city this study highlights significant underrepresentation of women in Police. It examines the social, and institutional factors contributing to this imbalance and evaluates the consequences on women working in this male dominated profession. By addressing these issues, the study aims to contribute to a more equitable and effective law enforcement system. The paper investigates the Police force of Gwalior city which has 21 Police stations within its jurisdiction. The low representation of women in the police force can be attributed to several interrelated factors like cultural and societal norms where in traditional gender roles and societal expectations often discourage women from pursuing careers in law enforcement, persistent gender biases within police institutions also create an unwelcoming environment for women, lack of female-friendly policies to support women in policing, such as child care, and work-life balance measures can deter women from entering or staying in the profession, women may also face specific safety concerns, including harassment, lack of adequate provisions can impact their decision to join or continue working in the police force, work environment and culture within the male-dominated profession is challenging for women, with potential issues including exclusion, bias, and a lack of mentorship and support networks.

**Key words: Women in Police, Underrepresentation of Women, Women in Workforce, Gender Equality, Gender Empowerment, Skewed Gender Ratio in Police, Police Reforms**

## INTRODUCTION

As outlined in India Justice Reports 2018, 2020 and 2023 an initiative of Tata Trusts in collaboration with Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause and Commonwealth Human Rights Initiatives despite being the second most populous nation in the world, India has one of the lowest police to population ratios in the world. Police in India is over burdened and is completely off track when it comes to work life balance, highly skewed towards men in police force right from the entry level till senior positions. Police in India faces several challenges that contribute to their overburdened status. Some of the reasons for the same are delved here : **High Population Density:** With over a billion people, the sheer number of citizens puts a strain on law enforcement agency. **Teeth to tail ratio:** Refers to the median ratio of police officers to constabulary is not adequate. **Limited Resources:** Many police departments are underfunded, leading to insufficient personnel recruitment, equipment, and technology. **Wide Range of Responsibilities:** Police are tasked with a variety of duties, from maintaining public order to investigating crimes, managing traffic, and dealing with civil disputes. **Rising Crime Rates:** In some areas, increasing crime rates demand more attention and resources, further stretching the force thin. **Lack of Training:** Inadequate training can hinder effective policing, leading officers to struggle

with complex social issues. **Poor Infrastructure:** Separate facilities for men and women for changing, sleeping and sanitation are available in large urban centres, but less common in rural or remote areas, which is a barrier for deploying women. **Poor Work Life Balance:** Difficult for women to combine family life with a career as a policewoman.

These factors combined definitely create a challenging work environment indicating an urgent need for overhauling the police department. Undeniably, the police remains a male-heavy profession in most parts of the world. While women's representation in the police has been growing in recent years, the pace of increase remains staggeringly slow.

### Reviewing the numbers

In the ASEAN region, for example, the share of women in police varies anywhere between 6 percent in Indonesia to 20 percent in Lao People's Democratic Republic. While the percentage of women in the Swedish Police was as high upto 38% (2022) in comparison to their Asian counterparts. Together, they made up only 10.5 percent of all police officers in the country. While women's representation has been growing in recent years, the pace remains slow: their share has grown less than 6 percent since the year 2010. Available data shows women made up only 10.5 percent of all police officers in India as of January 01, 2021. The numbers specific to Madhya Pradesh are worth mentioning to highlight the situation of women Police. As per the IJR report in January 2017 there were 4.4% women in Police while 6.4% was the share of women in Police Officers. By January 2020 there were 6% women in Police while 10.6% was the share of women in Police Officers. This percentage increased to 7.4% and 11.5% respectively by January 2022. So, one can positively say that the percentage share is definitely increasing but it is still far away from the desired 33%.

Police is a state subject, meaning the respective state governments have exclusive power to legislate on matters relating to these items. As deliberated upon in The Conferences of the Chief Secretaries & DGPs of States / UTs in April, 2013 the all India average representation of women in the police forces is only 5.33% or 84,479 police women reckoned against the actual strength of 15.85 lakh police force in the country. It averages a low of 4% when compared to the sanctioned strength of 21.24 lakh of the police force. Around 15% is the international average percentage of women in the police forces in the middle income as well as in the high income countries of the world.

Benefits of having more number of women in the police force cannot be denied. In a randomised controlled trial covering 180 police stations serving 23.4 million people in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Sukhtankar, Kruks-Wisner and Mangla (2022) found that police officers in stations with women help desks were more likely to register cases of gender-based violence and other complaints filed by women. This was particularly true when women officers were assigned (randomly) to run these desks. The study saw a notable increase in FIRs registered for women's cases, and the researchers note that the increase was driven almost entirely by help desks run by women police personnel. It also helps in building community trust. Police are responsible for the maintenance of public order, protection of people, and enforcement of the law. They must therefore understand and be able to address a range of security threats facing the communities they serve, recognising that men and women are affected by violence and discrimination in different ways. Members of the public, including victims and witnesses of crime, may not approach or engage with law enforcement if they do not perceive such authorities to be responsive to their experiences and concerns, as one female officer from Cambodia explained: The role of women in the community is to bring peace and security and it is important to have them in the police. Female police stay close to the community and when they are in the street women feel more confident to speak with the police officers. Emphasising the link between gender diversity and an inclusive workplace, the theme for the inaugural UN International Day of Police Cooperation in 2023 is 'Women in Policing.'

### OBJECTIVE

Highlighting the urgent need for increasing the number of women in police force. Despite the numerous provisions by the government for ensuring a decent number of women police force in the country the numbers depicting women is staggering. Women still don't make one third of the police force let alone being at par with men in terms of numbers. The numbers also see a downward trend as one approaches the officer level.

The purpose of the study is to enquire the current number of women in police in Gwalior city to offer a clear picture of the situation and what measures must be taken in order to increase women in police drastically. The purpose of this study is highlighting that few number of women in the police force is a grim reality and gender equality is a distant dream especially when it comes to the police force. The paper further delves into discussing the causes behind this highly skewed profession and its impact on the workforce culture. The paper aims at highlighting the need for increasing the number of women in police force.

## METHODOLOGY

Gwalior is located in northern region of the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh 300 km from Delhi. As per the official Census 2011 released by Directorate of Census Operations in Madhya Pradesh Gwalior, both urban and rural area had a population of 2,032,036 of which Males constituted 53% of the population with 1,090,327 in numbers and females were 47% with 941,709 in numbers making it one of the major cities in the state. As per Census, 2011 Gwalior city had a population of 1,054,420 with. The urban population is 1,273,792 while rural population is 758,244, child population is 261,418 and sex ratio (Per 1000) is 864. The average literacy rate is 84.14%, higher than the national average of 74%. Male literacy in Gwalior is 89.64% and female literacy is 77.92%. Literacy rate of the district in totality is 76.65%. About 11% of the population is under 6 years of age. The total geographic area of Gwalior is 4560 Sq Km with forest area spread across 1193 Sq Km. The city's metropolitan population, which includes the commuter town of Morar Cantonment, was 1,102,884. Gwalior Police, after the reconstitution of the State of Madhya Pradesh was established on November 1, 1956. There are 21 police stations within the urban area of Gwalior city. Data for the current study was collected from all 21 Police Stations. These police stations are located within the bounds of six circles namely Morar Circle, Maharajpur Circle, University Circle, Gwalior Circle, Indarganj Circle and Lashkar Circle. The information gathered is from all 21 Police Stations located in Gwalior urban area. The collected data was examined in a numbers spreadsheet clearly showing the percentage of females in each police station.

## FINDINGS

The present study aimed at providing a clear picture of the actual status of representation of females in police department. As of August 2023 a total of 1397 police personals are posted of which only 161 are females. The percentage of women in the force comes to a total of 12.06%. The ratio is highly skewed towards more number of males in all the Police Stations. There is only one station which has more than 33% percent of females is Mahila Police Station.

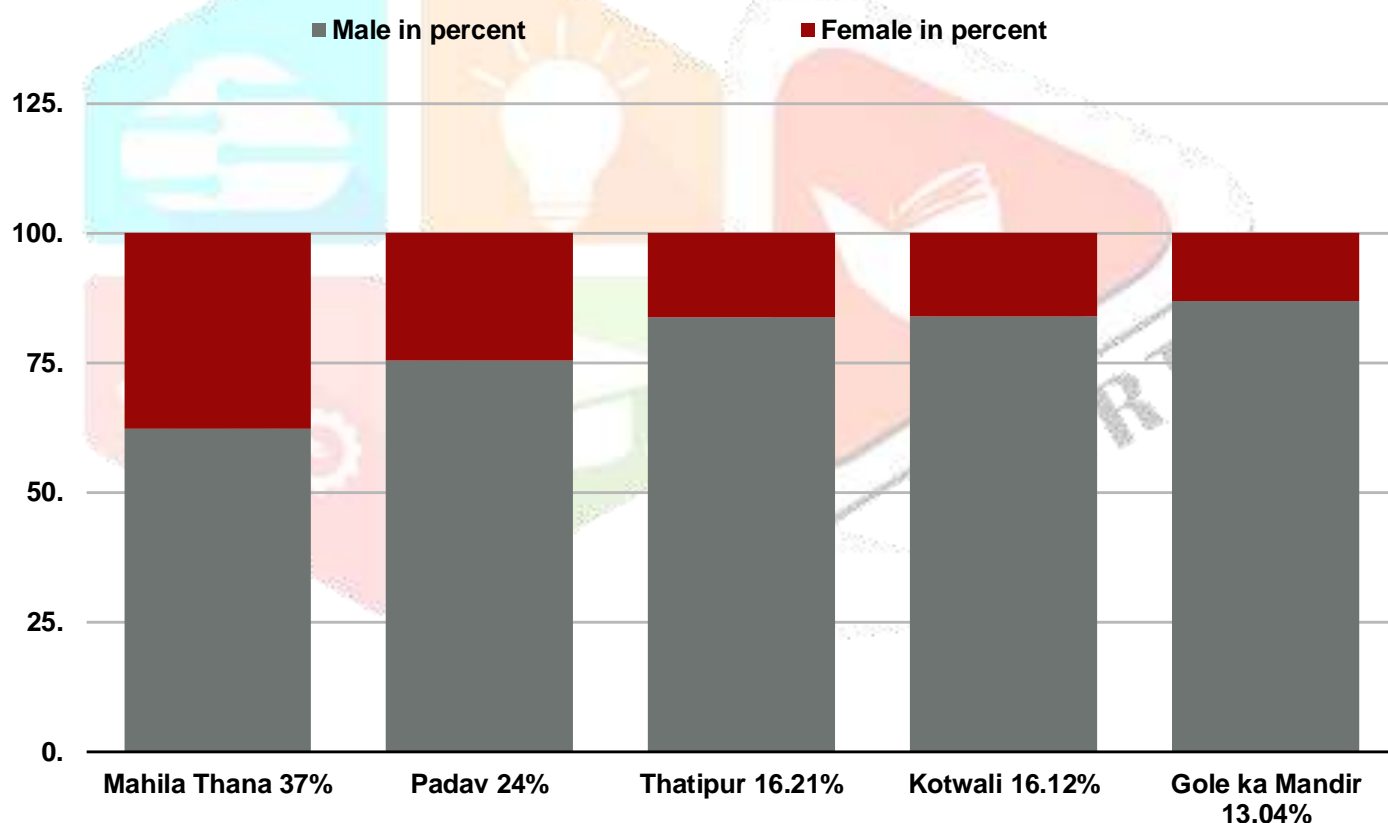
Table 1

**Table 1: Police Stations Demographics (in ascending order of the percentage of females per police station)**

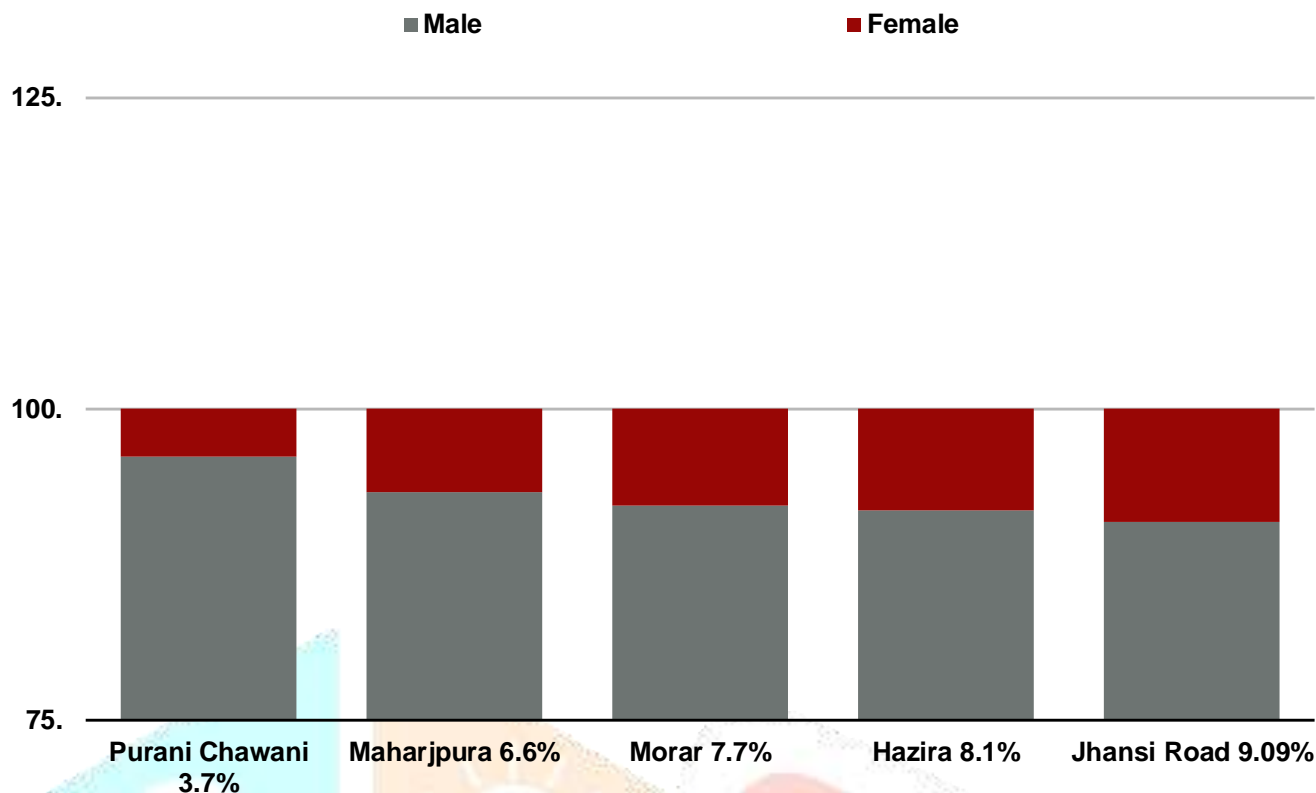
Name of the Police Station	Total Number of Females	Total Number of Males	Total Strength	Ratio (Female : Male )	Female Percentage
Purani Chawni	3	76	79	3:79	3.79%
Maharajpura	6	84	90	6:90	6.66%
Morar	7	83	90	7:90	7.77%
Hazira	6	68	74	6:74	8.10%
Jhansi Road	6	60	66	6:66	9.09%
Indarganj	6	60	66	6:66	9.09%
Kampoo	7	69	76	7:76	9.21%
Tighra	2	19	21	2:21	9.52%
Crime	6	56	62	6:62	9.67%

Janakganj	12	92	104	12:104	11.53%
University	7	47	54	7:54	12.96%
Gwalior	10	67	77	10:77	12.98%
Girwai	7	49	56	7:56	12.50%
Bahodapur	14	101	115	14:115	12.17%
Sirol	6	40	46	6:46	13.04%
Gole ka Mandir	9	60	69	9:69	13.04%
Kotwali	10	52	62	10:62	16.12%
Thatipur	12	62	74	12:74	16.21%
Padav	17	52	69	17:69	24.63%
Mahila Thana	17	28	45	17:45	37.77%

**Figure 1 Bar graph shows the top 5 police stations with highest percentage at 37.77%**



- Mahila Police Station is the best performing station with 37.77% percent. It is the only station with more number of females than men since it is the only all women's police station. Two Police stations with equal number of females (17) is Mahila Thana and Padav. However, due to varying number of males the percentage of females varies in both the stations. Next station with high percentage of females but still below the desired 33% after Mahila Thana is Padav under Padav Circle where total number of female police is 17 whereas males are 52 in number making women 24.63% of the workforce.
- Thatipur police station within the Morar Circle with a total 12 females against 62 males rounds up with 16.21% women police.
- At fourth position stands Kotwali police station is under Lashkar Circle with 10 females to 52 males which is 16.12% of the entire workforce.
- Gole ka Mandir police station with 9 females and 60 males stands at 13.04%

**Figure 2 Bar graph shows the data of 5 police stations with lowest percentage of females.**

- Purani Chawani police station located in Maharjapura circle has the lowest percentage of females at a meagre 3.76%. This station performs poorly since there are only 3 females against 76 males.
- At second last position is Maharjapura station with 6 females and 84 males taking the percentage of females at 6.66%.
- Just above is Morar Police Station at 7.77% females. The number of females is 7 against 83 males.
- There are 6 females and 68 males posted in Hazira police station. So, the percentage of females in this station 8.1%.
- Next comes Jhansi road Police Station in University circle with 6 females and 60 males rounding to 9.09% females.

It is to be noted here that of the five poor performing police station three stations namely Purani Chawani, Maharajpiura and Hazira all come under the Maharajpur circle. This circle is in the Gwalior - centre division.

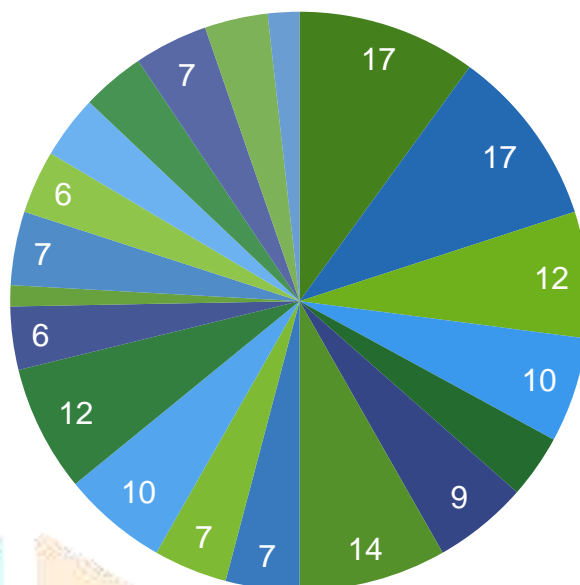
### **Analysing the causes behind poor representation of female in police workforce**

Low representation of females in the police workforce often reflects broader social and systemic issues. Some key aspects that it indicates are the following.

**Gender Bias and Stereotypes:** Low female representation in policing highlights persisting gender biases and stereotypes about women's roles and capabilities. Such biases might suggest that policing is a male-dominated profession, potentially discouraging women from pursuing careers in this field. **Structural and procedural barriers** can also play a role. These might include discriminatory recruitment practices, physical fitness tests perceived as biased, or lack of supportive infrastructure like adequate maternity leave and childcare facilities. **Societal Norms** In many societies, traditional gender roles and expectations can influence career choices and opportunities. If societal norms dictate that policing is

**Figure 1: Pie chart mentioning the number of females per station.**

primarily a male profession, this can impact both the number of women who apply and also retention in the



■ MAHILA THANA	■ PADAV	■ THATIPUR	■ KOTWALI	■ SIROL
■ GOLE KA MANDIR	■ BAHODAPUR	■ GIRWAI	■ UNIVERSITY	■ GWALIOR
■ JANAKGANJ	■ CRIME	■ TIGHRA	■ KAMPOO	■ INDARGANJ
■ JHANSI ROAD	■ HAZIRA	■ MORAR	■ MAHARAJPURA	■ PURANI CHWANI

force. **Workplace Environment** also has an impact on the number of females in the system. Since Police department is already male dominated it might appear to be unwelcoming or unsupportive of female staff as well as female officers. This could also include issues related to workplace culture, harassment, or lack of mentorship and career development opportunities for women. Low representation reflects gaps in policy or implementation regarding gender diversity. Effective policies and practices to encourage and support women in policing is not lacking in India but is definitely insufficiently enforced.

Lack of gender diversity can impact the effectiveness of police work. Diverse teams can bring varied perspectives and approaches, which is beneficial for addressing a wide range of issues and also improving community relations. Addressing these issues involves not only recruiting more women but also creating an inclusive, supportive environment where they can thrive and advance.

Multiple committees have been formed in order to bring about reforms in the Police services since Independence. Few of the recommendations have been by multiple committees. The most repeated recommendation is increasing the percentage of women police across the nation and increasing it to 33%. Following are the recommendations of selected committees

### 1. Standing Committee Report on 'Police - Training, Modernisation and Reforms', 2022 Summary

The Standing Committee on Home Affairs presented its report on 'Police - Training, Modernisation and Reforms' on February 10, 2022. In the past four decades, several commissions have been set up to examine police reforms which include the National Police Commission, 1977, Chaired by Mr. Dharma Vira, Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System, 2003, Chaired by Dr. V.S Malimath, and the Committee on Restructuring of Police, 2000 under Mr. K. Padmanabhaiah. In addition, the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) has also made several recommendations in the past to improve the policing system. Key observations and recommendations of the Committees include:

- **Police training:** There is a need to develop soft skills and bring a behavioural change in the police personnel, and train them on understanding and using new technology to solve crimes.
- **Linkage with universities:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) may advise states to link a cluster of police stations to a particular university. MHA may collaborate with state governments to open more

police universities. These universities can take up research on regional issues related to crime, criminal justice, public safety, and security.

- **Common training module:** A common minimum standard of police training must be maintained. Digital libraries of central and state police training academies must be created to make them available across the country.
- **Vacancies in state police forces:** There is a nearly 21% shortfall against the sanctioned strength of 26.2 lakh in state police forces. This leads to overtime work for personnel in stressful situations and affects the efficiency of the force. It is recommended that the MHA may advise states/UTs to conduct police recruitment drives as a concentrated mission and remove the administrative bottlenecks for the recruitment of police personnel at different ranks.
- **Adoption of Model Police Act, 2006:** The Model Police Act had been forwarded to all the states in 2006. Since then, 17 states have either enacted the Model Act or amended their existing Police Acts. Feedback from the remaining states and pursue them on the adoption of the Act must be taken. Further, MHA may collaborate with the 12 states and UTs that have not implemented the recommendations of the Mooshahary Committee on police reforms to furnish their current status on those recommendations.
- **Independent police complaint authority:** It is noted that 31 states/UTs have constituted Police Complaints Authorities (PCA) at the state as well as district levels for looking into complaints against police officers. The Committee stated that it is necessary that PCA is established outside the police force for a bias free trial of anyone in question. Therefore, it is recommended that the MHA along with the Ministry of Law and Justice, may collaborate with states to ensure an independent composition of the PCA. The PCA should comprise of retired High Court Judges, retired senior civil servants, and eminent jurists with the representation of women. The MHA may advise states that the internal grievance redressal cell of police should work in a time-bound manner to ensure that the grievances of aggrieved police personnel are addressed in time.

## 2. Second Administrative Reforms Commission Report

It must be noted that equal representation of women in the police was described as a “necessary ingredient for good governance” by Ministry of Home Affairs back in 2013. India has been aiming to ensure at least one woman in every three police officers for years now. Based on the recommendations of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2005 the Central government has been issuing advisories from time to time asking states to increase the representation of women in police to 33 percent of the total strength. Yet, despite this push from the top, that target looks like a far fetched dream. It has been pointed out in many a public fora that, based on empirical evidence and research that low representation of women in police forces create both psychological and a visible barrier to women to approaching police stations when a crime is committed against them. It is also stated that sensitisation programmes for police forces do not compensate for poor representation of women in the police forces. In the urban areas, the increase in representation of women in police will ensure a sense of safety in the public spaces which are frequently used by women. Recruitment of women in the police forces will inevitably lead to the improvement of the image of the police forces and make the police station not just appear a gender sensitive place but will also actually be gender sensitive for grievance redressal and a catalyst for an improved community.

## 3. Fifth National Conference of Women

It was held in 2012 recommended that there should be at least four women per station in all rural areas and even higher in urban areas. Action taken to increase the representation of women in the police forces in all categories is required to be taken on priority by amending the service rules accordingly.

### International commitments

- All ASEAN Member States including India have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Article 11 specifically refers to eliminating discrimination in employment, and women having free choice of profession, and equal employment opportunities, selection criteria and benefits.
- Achieving gender equality meets commitments in United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, which, “Urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women

at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict” made by India on similar front of ensuring gender equality obligates the nation for follow the norms and increase the women in police.

## Conclusion

Improving women’s representation in the police is important by itself. Women should be equally represented in all areas of public life as a matter of equal rights and just representation. Additionally, gender-equal work-force enhances the capability of law enforcement agencies to build trust and legitimacy, better adherence to the mandate to combat and prevent crime, safeguard social order and serve communities (INTERPOL, UN Women and UNODC, 2020).

One cannot deny that more and more women are participating in the development initiatives both in the public in private sectors of the economy and the ratio of the women in work force is increasing correspondingly in both the urban and rural layer in the country. The presence of women in all types of leadership positions from the panchayats to the parliament is increasing in visible numbers. It is imperative that equal opportunities for women in the police force becomes a consistent reality. It is a necessary ingredient for good governance. Law enforcement agencies that are inclusive and support women officers to work at all levels and in all capacities are more representative of the communities they serve.

Based on empirical evidence in research low representation of women in police force create both psychological barrier to women to approach police stations when a crime is committed against them. It is evident that sensitisation programs of police forces do not compensate for poor representation of women in the police forces. In the urban areas the increase in representation of women in the police forces will ensure safety in the public places which are frequently used by women. Recruitment of women in the police force will definitely lead to improvement in the image of the police force and make the police stations a catalyst for an improved community. Creating institutional mechanisms for reform like mentoring and supporting diverse future generations of police leaders can definitely move towards accomplishing a decent share of women in the force. The efforts require structural and societal norms changes which will make a path to lasting institutional change. From specific training courses to inclusion in rapid response teams, awareness campaigns and programmes addressing gender-based violence, it must be understood that have there is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution to achieving representation. It is about time that the policy recommendations by various committees which have been repeated again and again are implemented without further delay.

Overall, one cannot deny that while progress is being made, increasing the number of women in the police force and addressing the challenges women face remains an ongoing process. The number of women in police forces across Indian states has been increasing, but there are still significant challenges and opportunities for growth.

## References

<https://prsindia.org/policy/report-summaries/police-training-and-reforms>

[https://indiajusticereport.org/files/IJR\\_Recommendation\\_for\\_Police\\_Reforms\\_in\\_India.pdf](https://indiajusticereport.org/files/IJR_Recommendation_for_Police_Reforms_in_India.pdf)

[https://oda.oslomet.no/oda-xmlui/bitstream/handle/10642/8424/FemaleattritionPolice\\_Fekjaer-Alecu.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://oda.oslomet.no/oda-xmlui/bitstream/handle/10642/8424/FemaleattritionPolice_Fekjaer-Alecu.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-11/4Establishment\\_11112022%5B1%5D.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-11/4Establishment_11112022%5B1%5D.pdf)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/womens-representation-in-indian-police-falls-short-of-33-target-home-ministry-report/articleshow/105762632.cms>

<https://hindi.economictimes.com/news/mp-govt-increase-police-recruitment-quota-reservation-for-women-from-30-to-35/articleshow/103128084.cms>



[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/AdvisoriesonincreaseofWomeninpolice\\_30062021.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/AdvisoriesonincreaseofWomeninpolice_30062021.pdf)

*Munjal Diksha, What does the India Justice Report say about India's police forces?*

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/representation-of-women-in-india-police-forces/article666708337.ece>

**SANSAD TV: COMMITTEE REPORT: POLICE- TRAINING**

*Madhavankutty Pillai 2024 She's Unstoppable* [https://openhemagazine.com/cover-stories/shes-unstoppable/#google\\_vignette](https://openhemagazine.com/cover-stories/shes-unstoppable/#google_vignette)

*Godavari Patil, Prof. Vijaya B. Korishetti, Police Women in India - Covid-19 Pandemic*

*Rahul Tripathi, 2013 Ensure 30% women in police force: MHA*, <https://indianexpress.com/article/news-archive/web/ensure-30-women-in-police-force-mha/>

*Do Women Prefer In-Group Police Officers? Survey and Experimental Evidence From India Nirvikar Jassal Sharon Barnhardt 2023*

<https://www.coursehero.com/file/p6jqgg9/Transmission-of-social-heritage-values-e-Opinion-moulding-These-functions/>

<https://ceda.ashoka.edu.in/genderstats-13-womens-representation-in-indias-police-force/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gwalior#Demographics>

<https://gwalior.nic.in/en/demography/>

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/657949/share-of-women-in-leading-positions-in-the-swedish-police/#:~:text=In%202022%2C%2038%20percent%20of,percentage%20points%20compared%20to%202012.>

[https://www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/archive/documents/Publications/2020/women\\_in\\_law\\_enforcement\\_in\\_the\\_asean\\_region\\_full.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/archive/documents/Publications/2020/women_in_law_enforcement_in_the_asean_region_full.pdf)

<https://nikk.no/en/difficult-for-women-to-combine-family-life-with-a-career-as-a-policewoman/>

<https://indiajusticereport.org/indicator/107/ijr-3/large-states/map>

<https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2023/Policing-with-a-gender-perspective>

<https://indiajusticereport.org/state/MP/ijr-3/hr>

<https://www.interpol.int/en/Our-partners/International-organization-partners/INTERPOL-and-the-United-Nations/UN-International-Day-of-Police-Cooperation-7-September/2023-Theme-Women-in-policing#:~:text=The%20first%20UN%20International%20Day,>

*Women in Law Enforcement in the ASEAN Region* <https://www.interpol.int/content/download/15571/file/Women%20in%20Law%20Enforcement%20in%20the%20ASEAN%20Region%20WEB.pdf>

**ADVANCING DIVERSITY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT** <https://www.eeoc.gov/advancing-diversity-law-enforcement>