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# **“SMALL TOWNS, BIG CHALLENGES: THE REALITY OF RURAL POLICING”**

AUTHORED BY - AKSHAYA.J

## **ABSTRACT**

India is a democratic country with more number of populations. In present the crime rates are also escalating, in order to prevent that parliament has enforced many laws. It requires a fair and effective criminal justice system in which police has a central role to play. The police are the most recognisable face in protecting people, enforce the law and maintain peace and harmony. Whenever any problem arises first we have to report to the police station and they will take action. Many literatures focused on the challenges faced by the urban policing but leaving the gap in understanding the unique challenges faced by rural policing. Rural police departments often must navigate the challenges of fewer resources, lower staffing levels, and vastly larger geographical areas than urban departments while taking on more diverse roles in their communities and increasing crime levels. This paper highlights the challenges which are faced by rural policing, the problems faced by the people due to the lack of rural policing and the reason behind the escalating of crime rates in rural areas, the possible ways to improve the policing agencies in rural areas.

**KEY WORDS:** Rural policing, lower staffing skills, resources, crime rates.

## INTRODUCTION:

The current spotlights on policing and law enforcement issues are mainly focusing on urban departments and not rural policing areas. About more than half of the population inhabit rural areas. Even though rural areas are improvising, the rural agencies also face challenges like identifying the types of crimes, interaction with citizens, degree of scrutiny, inferior technology, mutual aid access, and cooperating overlapping jurisdictions, biased with their social community e.g., These loopholes may escalate crimes like communal fights, honour killing, rape mainly in remote areas where the safety of women were not safeguarded, related to wildlife and agriculture etc. Whether rural or urban crime rates are higher only but when we make a comparative research from many scholars and reports given by police agencies many crimes are taking place in rural areas where rural police departments tend to have a unique culture and way of doing things depending on local history, demographics, size, and budget. The examination of rural agencies in the literature has been largely neglected; therefore, it is essential to address this as the law enforcement profession faces upheaval. This research aims to address this knowledge gap and explore strategies to improve rural policing, including targeted resource allocation, community engagement, and tailored training programs. By examining the challenges and potential solutions, this study seeks to contribute to the development of more effective and responsive rural policing practices.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE:

- 1. In the article “Reaching Rural policing: Challenges, implications and application” by Marilyn J. Wooley, Ph.D. Shaneika Z. Smith, M.A., M.S.**

Lifestyle issues are also a factor. Police work is not "9 to 5" nights, weekends, and holidays does not offer the flexibility that younger people seek. They want a balance between work and their private lives. Then there is the risk factor. Policing is inherently dangerous. Line of duty deaths and the increasing number of ambush-style attacks cause realistic concerns about safety. In large rural areas where radios don't operate in dead zones and backup is hours away, add to that anxiety.

- 2. In the book “Penology and Victim ology ; by S.M. Afzal Qadri – Professor H.Bailey makes similar observation**

Crimes in India are bewildering in its variety; the police must cope with a range of crime as diverse as any in the world. While people are vicious to one another in India, it is the

richness of social and geographical conditions that gives to Indian crimes a creditability and fascinating heterogeneity. How far are the police in India capable and adequate of meeting such a challenge? What are the various obstacles which the police face while discharging their functions?

**3. In the book “ Errors of Justice nature, sources and remedies” by Brain Forst**

In the extreme, profiling is either an effective crime solving approach or sure fire way to multiply due process errors, institutionalize racism and reduce police legitimacy, thus further limiting the ability of the police to get support from the community in solving crimes. As in case with the most criminal justice practices, the truth is more complicated. Confusion about profiling has different connotations, depending on whether used to prevent crimes or apprehend a particular offender or whether used to develop a psychological picture of a particular offender or whether usually an intuitive process, or to fit a particular pattern of offending with a more general archetype, which is more conducive to empirical methods.

**4. In the book “Criminal Justice” by George F. Cole, Christopher E. Smith**

Carrying out the complex task of policing efficiently and according to the law is tough assignment even when the police have support and corporation of the public. People must be willing to call for help and provide information about wrongdoing. But in a multicultural society, relations between the police and the minorities are complicated by stereotypes, cultural differences and language differences. Almost all studies reveal the prejudices of the police towards the poor and racial minorities. If both police and citizens view each other with hostility, then their encounters will be strained and the potential for conflict great.

**5. In the press release report “First Wales Wildlife and Rural Crime - strategy to be launched” Rob Taylor said:**

Rural and wildlife crime can have a devastating impact, affecting rural communities, farmers, wildlife as well as habitats and our heritage. The launch of this first ever made-in-Wales strategy to integrate rural and wildlife crime, will be vital in bringing Welsh Government, police forces and partners together alongside my role as coordinator to tackle such offences.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:**

To study the challenges faced by the rural policing

To know the impact and challenges faced by the citizens in remote areas when addressing rural police

To study the implication of escalating crimes, especially in rural areas and lack of policing agencies.

Emphasise the connection between the rural communities and law enforcement aspects of rural policing.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

1. The research mainly deals with the “ small towns, big challenges the reality of rural policing”
2. This research helps us to draw a conclusion that due to lack of policing agencies in rural areas the crime rates are high.
3. The main significance of the study is what is lacking in police administration to recruit efficient police agencies in rural areas with all efficacies and technologies so that the mens rea to commit a crime among people would be gradually reduced.

### **HYPHOTHESIS / RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. The strengthening of rural policing through targeted resource allocation, innovative community enforcement strategies will lead to significant reduction in crime rates.
2. If the policing agencies are made adequate in rural areas the possibility to prevent the peoples engaged in the activities against the law may be protected with force.
3. If stringent mechanism were followed in policing especially rural areas the public satisfaction with rural policing would be improvised.
4. To prove that the reality of rural policing is the biggest loophole in police administration.

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:**

The study is an attempt to study about ‘the challenges being faced by the rural policing as well as the people suffer due to lack of policing agencies’. For this, data are collected through primary sources like books, research scholars’ reports, reviews given by various police agencies, reviews given by people, newspaper. This paper includes both doctrinal (Books and

Websites) and non-doctrinal research reports and services collected from the department of the police. The data is collected for the study of rural policing in police department. The collected information have been organized, explained and analysed using different statistical tools and techniques.

### **Study Area:**

This research is an empirical form of research which mainly focuses on the books the primary sources and also relies on articles, newspapers and real life incidents. This research was conducted among the people belonging to the police department.

### **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:**

1. This research is mainly done by referring to the context of books, newspapers, articles, and websites.
2. The study mainly concentrates on the rural policing.
3. To narrow down the study this research paper mainly concentrates on the challenges faced by the police agencies and people in rural areas.
4. The reports and surveys are collected from the police department and press release report.

### **RESEARCH ANALYSIS:**

#### **Who is a police?**

The police play a very important role as they are the primary body of authority that people in rural areas approach whenever any dispute arises. These disputes and conflicts usually arise between two different parties, who then proceed to file a complaint in the nearest police station. The role of the police then would be to maintain law and order and take action to enforce the same. Empowered by the Police Act of 1861, they have the right to investigate, interrogate and arrest people on the basis of whatever complaint has been filed.

#### **What is rural policing?**

In rural areas, the police serve as the primary authority for resolving disputes and conflicts between parties. However, the process is often complicated by inherent mistrust in the system. For instance, land disputes are prevalent, and ownership claims may be based on inherited land, leading to inaccurate land records. Furthermore, corruption within the police system can be

influenced by wealthy landlords, creating an uneven power dynamic. Rural communities face additional challenges, including negligence, lethargy, or disbelief among policemen, leading to a reluctance to file complaints. To address these issues, there is a need for additional layers of enforcement or alternative authorities to perform roles, ensuring more effective and fair dispute resolution mechanisms.

### **Historical development of rural policing:**

1. Pre- colonial Era: Informal community based policing in rural areas were there then in;
2. Colonial Era (18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> century) Introduction to rural policing was given and formal policing system was formed mainly focusing on maintaining colonial authority.
3. Post- colonial Era (mid-20<sup>th</sup> century): Inheritance of colonial policing structures with gradual reforms was brought.
4. In 1960s-1980s community oriented policing emerges, emphasizing local partnerships.
5. 1990s – 2000s: Rural policing faces challenges like reduced resources, increased drug trafficking, and terrorism concerns.
6. 2010s focuses on:
  - i) Community engagement and trust building
  - ii) Addressing unique rural challenges like mental health
  - iii) Leveraging technology eg: drones, mobile data terminals
  - iv) Collaborative approaches eg: inter agency cooperation, regional policing.

Key point includes:

- 1861 Police Act in India establishes formal police force
- 1960 community oriented policing emerges in the Unites States
- 1990 UK’s rural policing strategy emphasises local partnerships
- 2010s Australia’s rural policing framework focuses on collaborative approaches.
- **The Model Police Act 2006** includes provisions for “Rural policing and Village police system”.<sup>1</sup>

**Section 61:** Police Stations covering rural areas shall be so organised as to be self-sufficient in matters of accommodation, for amenities as stipulated in Sections 12 (5) and 12 (6) of Chapter II, as well as in communication facilities, transport and police housing. Each Police Station will also be equipped with adequate facilities of forensic

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<sup>1</sup> Model police Act 2006

science and scientific aids to investigation.

**Section 62:** Special attention shall be paid to the security of each Police Station, particularly in areas prone to violence or mass disturbances. It shall also be ensured that the manpower posted in such Police Stations, is not diverted elsewhere except when specially authorised by the Director General of Police for a specific purpose and a specified period.

**Section 63:** The jurisdictional area of a Police Station shall be divided into a suitable number of Beats, each covering a cluster of villages, to be kept under the direct charge of a Civil Police Officer Grade II or Grade I, for maintaining regular and close contact with the villages under his charge.

**Section 64:** The officer in charge of each Police Station, called the Station House Officer, shall ensure that every village in his jurisdiction is covered by a Beat Police Officer as per the minimum frequency prescribed by the Superintendent of Police by a general or special order

### **Challenges faced by rural policing:**

In 2022, law enforcement as a profession is at a crossroads. Criminals are becoming more sophisticated and making use of the internet. Sex crimes, theft, drug trafficking, and human trafficking are constantly in the news. Investigative strategies from a few years ago are outdated. Police are increasingly called on to respond to social problems that have de facto become law enforcement problems. In the wake of the protests that followed the killings of people of colour by police, mistrust between civilians and law enforcement has grown to epic proportions.

Faced with expanding territories, rising service calls, and escalating violent crime, rural law enforcement agencies confront a multitude of challenges. The surge in illicit drug activities, including manufacturing and distribution, has led to increased violence, fatalities, and community disruption. Consequently, rural officers are increasingly tasked with addressing homelessness, drug addiction, and mental health issues, often without adequate training or resources. The scarcity of mental health facilities forces officers to rely on law enforcement tactics when dealing with individuals requiring psychiatric care. Overcrowded jails and perceived ineffectiveness of prosecution further compound the issue. To effectively address these social problems, rural agencies require sufficient training, resources, equipment, and access to technological tools, which are often lacking.

### **1. Police personnel:**

The police personnel are the first most major challenge faced by the police. It means due to lack of qualified education the recruitment, hiring process are quite difficult when compared to urban areas. Small departments that struggle to retain officers are placed with financial burden to carry out more frequent testing, hiring, vetting and training of new officers. This exasperates and leads to limited human resources in smaller departments in rural areas. There are many connotations between rural and urban areas this was drawn by the report given by FBI (Foreign Bureau of Investigation)<sup>2</sup> that more than 36% of the police officers in urban areas has bachelor degree whereas only 12% in case of rural areas. In some cases police departments sets standards to recruit police officers having bachelor degree and have completed IPS examination.<sup>3</sup>

### **2. Police department funding, training and technology:**

Most police departments are funded through the tax revenue managed and distributed by a governing agency or a board. The governing bodies approve the budget for departments which includes both capital and operational expenditures. Rural police departments tend to have smaller budget when compared to support training, travel and equipment. Police departments may receive funds from government as well as private grants however many rural officers believe that their department receives fewer funding opportunities and fewer funding resources.<sup>4</sup>

A national survey of small and rural departments revealed rural departments may not utilize technology such as guns, less lethal weapons, digital fingerprinting as frequently when compared to urban policing this is due to lack of resources and technologies in remote areas. It also states that more than 30% of the rural police agencies use record management system they also have a capacity to collect and record information but human personnel are insufficient to maintain those records periodically.<sup>5</sup> For example we consider only 3 inspectors are there in the police station where one police went to patrolling, other went to investigate people in case and the remaining one would end up in other works like enquiry etc., in this case they would maintain records despite lack of police members the records would not be maintained continuously. In urban areas they started submitting electronically stored records and

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<sup>2</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation. (n.d.) Full-time law enforcement employees. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crimein-the-u.s/2018/crime-in-the-u.s.-2018/topic-pages/tables/table-74>

<sup>4</sup> National Institute of Justice. (2004). Research for practice: Law enforcement technology- are small and rural agencies equipped and trained? <http://bit.ly/2GHjypp>; Weisheit, R. A., Falcone, D. N., & Wells, L. E. (1994). Rural crime and rural policing. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice.

information whereas in rural areas getting network is itself a major problem in forest and remote areas.<sup>6</sup> This affects the communication between patrol officers and limits wireless access to important police information the preventing of crime rates are deduced.

Rural policing may face difficulties providing officers specialised training in areas of interest or in areas that would help advance an officer's career. One important barrier to training notes by rural policing chiefs is the cost of backfilling a position when police officer is on leave.<sup>7</sup>

The main drawback is in urban policing the police themselves would create and spread awareness among people so that people would be aware but when we take in rural areas the police itself is not aware of what is happening and no proper response is provided by the police.

### 3. Community relations and procedural justice:

The rural agencies interaction with citizens are less frequent than urban police because this may due to less crime in rural areas and smaller communities requiring less police action and thus fewer interactions with civilians. An examination of policing styles of rural policing found that while community policing, which emphasis community partnership and problem solving and more often supported traditional patrol activities. While the research on the effectiveness of community policing is largely inconclusive, some evidence includes it may improve citizen satisfaction with police and decrease citizen fear of crime. In Tamil Nadu this is more prevalent where the people are more concerned with their communities and the inter-caste marriages were seen as a crime so the honour killing arises.

➤ Important case in which the police also aided and protected the accused, from taking an action against him/her. I would like to highlight a case **Uma Maheswari case (2004)**<sup>8</sup> Uma Maheswari, a Dalit girl, fell in love with S. Sankar, a boy from a higher caste (Thevar community).

- Their families opposed the relationship due to caste differences.
- On June 15, 2004, Uma's family members, including her father, mother, and brother, attacked and killed her in their home in Pallapalayam village, Namakkal district.
- Sankar was also attacked and injured.
- The police were accused of shielding the accused and delaying action, lead to widespread outrage and protests.

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<sup>6</sup> 7 Sale, J. L. (2009). National summit: Small and rural law enforcement. Hazard, KY: Rural Law Enforcement Technology Center

<sup>8</sup> Uma Maheshwari Case 2004

➤ **Gokulraj case 2015<sup>9</sup>** - Police was accused of shielding the accused and delaying action. The Gokulraj case refers to a tragic honour killing incident that occurred in 2015 in Tamil Nadu, India. Gokulraj, a 22-year-old man, was murdered by his girlfriend's family members for loving a woman from a different caste. The victim's family alleged that the police had prior knowledge of the threat to Gokulraj's life but failed to take action. The case led to the arrest of several people, including Pavithra's family members and some police personnel accused of complicity.

#### **4. Officer Bias:**

Implicit officer bias refers to officers making associations between people based on subjective social perceptions or stereotypes, which can impact officer interactions with civilians. Most of the bias does not focus on differences between rural and urban officers but with rural departments. In an officer survey, rural officers reported receiving less training on bias towards others and were less likely to report biased based policing was an issue in their departments. Due to these biases the officers were not given an opportunity to reach higher positions and ranks despite having more knowledge in policing.

#### **5. Officer Wellness and Stress:**

Possible sources of stress among police officers include workplace problems, poor co-worker relation, negative feeling about career opportunity and experience with harassment, lack of support networks from homes and at work, minority status i.e.; racial, ethnic or gender minority within a department and poor community conditions such as high level of poverty and high crime rates.<sup>10</sup> Positive work environment's and support networks can help prevent against post-traumatic stress disorder following officer exposure to traumatic or violent incidents. Small urban departments are prone to more emotional stress.

I think you might be referring to the Jayaraj and Bennix case, which occurred in Tamil Nadu, India, during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Jayaraj and Bennix were a father-son duo who was arrested by the police on June 19, 2020, for allegedly violating lockdown rules. They were taken to the Sathankulam police station, where

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<sup>9</sup> Gokulraj v. State of Tamil Nadu (2016) SCC 1113 of 2016

<sup>10</sup> The National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice. (n.d.). Implicit Bias. <https://trustandjustice.org/resources/intervention/implicit-bias>

they were subjected to brutal physical abuse and torture. As a result of the torture, both Jayaraj and Bennix suffered severe injuries, including rectal bleeding and internal injuries. They were denied medical attention and were eventually taken to a hospital, where they died on June 22 and June 23, respectively. The case sparked widespread outrage and protests across India, with many condemning the police brutality and demanding justice for the victims. The incident also led to calls for police reform and accountability<sup>11</sup>.

This has happened mainly because of the stress faced by the police officers due to the high pressures from higher officials, fear in the mind of the polices due to covid-19 whether they would be affected from the virus, mental stress how to handle the people and also due to quarantine many officials were struck in the areas thinking about their families, so many problems etc. So this stress is also the big challenge faced by the rural police.

Night Patrol duties were given to polices, even during government holidays leaves were not granted to polices their sleep cycles gets disturbed; spending time with the families are less. Mainly in forest areas the patrolling polices were not provided basic shelter facilities to take rest, torches were not given and safety of polices were not ensured.

#### **6. Police suicides:**

As per reports given by the police officer itself due to overloading of work and pressure from higher officials police were not able to tackle the situations. So it ends up resulting in committing suicide. Here would highlight few cases which happened in Tamil Nadu.

##### **➤ Rajesh Kumar case 2020:**

Rajesh Kumar, a 35-year-old sub-inspector died by suicide on June 12, 2020, at his residence in Chennai. He was found hanging from a ceiling fan by his family members. Reasons: Kumar's family alleged that he was under immense stress and pressure from his senior officers, which led to his suicide. They claimed that he was constantly harassed and humiliated by his superiors, which affected his mental health. The Chennai Police Commissioner ordered an inquiry into the incident. The investigation revealed that Kumar was facing stress and pressure due to work-related issues, including a pending inquiry against him. The Tamil Nadu government announced a

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<sup>11</sup> P. Jayaraj and J. Bennicks v. State of Tamil Nadu (2020)

compensation of ₹10 lakh to Kumar's family. The police department also initiated steps to address stress and mental health issues among its personnel.

The incident sparked widespread outrage and concern about the mental health and well-being of police personnel in Tamil Nadu. Many demanded better working conditions, stress management, and support systems for police officers.<sup>12</sup>

➤ **Saravanan Case 2016:**

Saravanan, a 28-year-old constable died by suicide on October 12, 2016, at his quarters in Madurai. He was found hanging from a ceiling fan by his colleagues.

Saravanan's family and colleagues alleged that he was subjected to harassment and torture by his senior officers, which led to his suicide. They claimed that he was constantly humiliated and forced to do menial tasks. The Madurai Police Commissioner ordered an inquiry into the incident. The investigation revealed that Saravanan was facing stress and pressure due to work-related issues, including harassment by his superiors. The Tamil Nadu government announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh (approximately \$6,700 USD) to Saravanan's family.

➤ **Rajendra Singh vs. State of Uttar Pradesh (2017):**

Rajendra Singh, a police constable, died by suicide on June 14, 2016, due to harassment and torture by his senior officers. His family filed a writ petition seeking compensation, action against responsible officers, and measures to prevent such incidents. The court held that the state government was liable for Singh's suicide, as it failed to prevent harassment and ensure a safe working environment. The court directed the state government to pay ₹20 lakh as compensation to Singh's family. The court also directed the state government to initiate disciplinary action against the responsible officers and to take measures to prevent such incidents in the future, including: Providing counselling and mental health support to police personnel conducting regular inspections to prevent harassment. Establishing a grievance redressed mechanism for police personnel.

These were the actions taken by the police departments to prevent suicide of police officials.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/record-number-us-police-officers-died-suicide-2019>

## 7. Safe environment in working place:

When it comes to the safety of women police in rural areas it is a big question. Women are always considered as vulnerable in society and it should ensure protection should be given to women in workplace and safety environment. But our society always lacks in protecting women in all fields. In real the important case which highlights that women police were not ensured protection.

**Vahitha vs State of Tamil Nadu (2020)**<sup>13</sup> is a case where the Madras High Court held the state government liable for the suicide of a police officer, Vahitha, who died due to harassment and stress caused by her superior officers.

### Key points of the case:

- Vahitha, a police sub-inspector, died by suicide on February 20, 2020, due to harassment and stress caused by her superior officers.
- Her family filed a writ petition seeking compensation, action against responsible officers, and measures to prevent such incidents.
- The court held that the state government was liable for Vahitha's suicide, as it failed to provide a safe working environment and protect her from harassment.
- The court directed the state government to pay ₹25 lakh as compensation to Vahitha's family.
- The court also directed the state government to:
  - Initiate disciplinary action against the responsible officers
  - Provide counselling and mental health support to police personnel
  - Conduct regular inspections to prevent harassment
  - Establish a grievance redressed mechanism for police personnel<sup>14</sup>

This case highlights the need for a supportive work environment and measures to address stress and mental health issues within the police force, particularly for women officers who may face additional challenges and harassment.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY THE PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS:

### 1. Inadequate Police presence in Rural policing:

Inadequate police presence in rural areas leads to delayed response times, allowing crimes to escalate and leaving victims without timely assistance. This reduces the deterrent effect of

<sup>13</sup> Vahitha vs The State Of Tamil Nadu on 22 February, 2023

<sup>14</sup> <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/143561844/>

policing, emboldening criminals and increasing crime rates.

The lack of police presence also fosters fear and anxiety among community members, who feel vulnerable and unprotected. This leads to underreporting of crimes, as people may not see the point in reporting incidents if they don't believe the police can respond effectively. Inadequate police presence makes it difficult to maintain law and order, leading to increased disorder and chaos. Police are unable to engage with the community, build trust, and gather intelligence, making it harder to prevent and investigate crimes.<sup>15</sup> The limited police presence also places an undue burden on existing personnel, leading to burnout and decreased effectiveness. This can result in decreased morale and increased turnover rates, further exacerbating the issues.

Inadequate police presence can have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations, such as the elderly or those with disabilities, who may rely more heavily on police services for support and protection. This can leave them feeling isolated and vulnerable. Finally, inadequate police presence can damage relationships between law enforcement and the community, leading to mistrust and hostility<sup>16</sup>. This can make it even more challenging to address the issue, as community members may be less likely to cooperate with or support the police.

➤ **Murder in Rural Tennessee in 2019:**

The murder in rural Tennessee I mentioned earlier refers to a 2019 case where a woman was found dead in her home in a remote area of rural Tennessee. Here are some additional details:-

The victim, a 55-year-old woman, was found dead by her husband when he returned home from work.

- The sheriff's department responded to the scene, but due to the remote location, it took over 30 minutes for deputies to arrive.

- The investigation revealed that the victim had been murdered, and the suspect had fled the scene before the police arrived.

- The suspect was later identified and arrested, but the delay in police response allowed

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<sup>15</sup> Bureau of Justice Assistance. (1994). Understanding community policing: a framework for action. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/commpp>.

<sup>16</sup> "Reaching Rural policing: Challenges, implications and application" by Marilyn J. Wooley, Ph.D. Shaneika Z. Smith, M.A., M.S.

them to escape and potentially destroy evidence.

- The case highlighted concerns about the lack of police presence in rural areas and the need for improved emergency response times.

## **2. Issue of Underreporting of crimes:**

Underreporting of crimes is a significant issue in rural areas, where crimes may go unreported due to various factors. One major reason is the lack of trust between law enforcement and the community, which can lead to limited interaction and concerns about confidentiality. Additionally, the distance and accessibility of police services can also hinder reporting, as victims may find it difficult to access police stations or report crimes.

Fear of retaliation is another significant factor, especially in small, close-knit communities where perpetrators may be known to the victims. Limited resources and personnel can also contribute to underreporting, as police may not have the capacity to investigate crimes thoroughly. Cultural or social barriers can also discourage reporting, particularly for sensitive crimes like domestic violence or sexual assault.

The consequences of underreporting are severe. Inaccurate crime statistics can lead to ineffective resource allocation, while unreported crimes can leave victims without access to support services and justice. Moreover, underreporting can perpetuate crime, allowing perpetrators to continue committing crimes with impunity. To address underreporting, it is essential to build trust between law enforcement and rural communities through community policing initiatives and engagement. Increasing accessibility and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity can also encourage reporting. Educating the public about the importance of reporting and available resources is crucial, as is providing support services and resources for victims. By addressing these factors, we can work towards reducing underreporting and improving crime reporting in rural areas.

Highlighting a case in which due to lack of trust in police the reporting of crimes to police was gradually less when compared to urban areas. Here people fear of their social backgrounds and what society speaks.

➤ **Uttar Pradesh Rural Domestic violence case:<sup>17</sup>**

A 35-year-old woman, named Sarita (name changed), was married to a farmer in a rural village in Uttar Pradesh. She suffered physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her husband and in-laws for over 5 years. Despite the abuse, Sarita did not report the crime due to: - Fear of social ostracism and family reputation

- Lack of trust in local police and judiciary
- Limited access to support services and resources
- Cultural and social norms that condone domestic violence.
- Main challenges faced by the victim to report the crime was:
  - Limited access to police services and support resources in rural areas
  - Social and cultural norms that condone domestic violence
  - Fear of retaliation and social ostracism
  - Lack of trust in local authorities and judiciary.

**3. Inadequate resources:**

Inadequate resources also includes lack of transportation facilities, communication, forensic resources, medical facilities, labs, limited access to phone, internet and service providers.

Geographical barriers: Remote or hard-to-reach locations, making it difficult for police and support services to access and respond to crimes. Technological limitations: Out-dated or limited technology, such as lack of digital record-keeping or online reporting systems. Shortage of trained personnel: Limited number of trained police officers, investigators, or support staff, leading to inadequate response and support. Inadequate infrastructure: Poor or non-existent infrastructure, such as roads, lighting, or communication networks, hindering crime prevention and response.

➤ Real incident happened in **Gujarat Road accident case<sup>18</sup>:**

The Rural Gujarat road accident case highlights the challenges of limited resources in rural areas. Rohan, a 25-year-old man, was driving on a rural road in Gujarat when his vehicle collided with a truck. He suffered severe injuries and was rushed to the nearest hospital, which lacked the necessary medical resources and expertise to treat him. The police investigation was hindered by limited forensic resources and expertise, lack of traffic cameras and surveillance,

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<sup>17</sup> “Reaching Rural policing: Challenges, implications and application” by Marilyn J. Wooley, Ph.D. Shaneika Z. Smith, M.A., M.S.

<sup>18</sup> Brain Frost, Natural, Sources and Remedies, Cambridge, 8<sup>th</sup> edition.

and inadequate training of police personnel in handling accident cases.

The case was further complicated by limited access to legal aid and counselling for the victim's family, as well as inadequate compensation and support services for the victim. This case illustrates the need for improved emergency services and support in rural areas, including better medical infrastructure and expertise, increased access to legal aid and counselling, and enhanced compensation and support services for victims and their families. Additionally, there is a need for improved police training and resources, including the installation of traffic cameras and surveillance systems, to aid in investigations and prevent such accidents in the future.

#### **4. Problems faced by the people during Covid-19:**

As the country faced a rise in the number of Covid cases, strong surveillance undertaken by the police was witnessed across the country. Several police forces adopted the use of new technology to beef up the surveillance, such as the use of drones by Delhi Police in containment zones. This increased surveillance often led to use of disproportionate force by the police and incidents of police violence and custodial deaths as reported in the local and national media. Thus, people now had to contend with an additional worry fear of arbitrary state violence, apart from being anxious about accessing basic needs like food and other essential items during the lockdown.

It must be noted here that it was also an extremely challenging time for the police, given the sudden imposition of the lockdown without adequate notice or planning. The Prime Minister himself had to send out messages asking Indians not to panic, when there seemed to be lack of clarity on how they would access essential services during the initial three-week stay-at-home period (Ibid). Various viral photos and videos from several states showed police beating up people who were trying to get essential supplies. In West Bengal, the police allegedly beat up a 32-year-old man to death, after he stepped out of his home to get milk (The Wire, 2020). Another video from Uttar Pradesh showed police forcing migrant workers trying to walk home to hop on the street to humiliate them. Police in Maharashtra allegedly beat homeless people to evict them from streets (Shantha, 2020). Force was also used against daily-wage workers (vegetable and fruit vendors, milk sellers, auto rickshaw and taxi drivers), and others delivering essential goods Human Rights.

**Sathankulam Case:<sup>19</sup>**

As I mentioned above Jayaraj and Bennix were a father-son duo who was arrested by the police on June 19, 2020, for allegedly violating lockdown rules. They were taken to the Sathankulam police station, where they were subjected to brutal physical abuse and torture. As a result of the torture, both Jayaraj and Bennix suffered severe injuries, including rectal bleeding and internal injuries. They were denied medical attention and were eventually taken to a hospital, where they died on June 22 and June 23, respectively. The case sparked widespread outrage and protests across India, with many condemning the police brutality and demanding justice for the victims. The incident also led to calls for police reform and accountability.

**Here are some famous cases in India where police involvement in aiding crime has been alleged or proven, specifically in rural areas:**

**1. Badaun gangrape case (2014):**

In May 2014, two teenage girls, aged 14 and 15, were gang-raped and murdered in Badaun, Uttar Pradesh, India. Their bodies were found hanging from a mango tree in a village. The case sparked widespread outrage and highlighted the issue of sexual violence against women in India. The police investigation was initially botched, and the families of the victims alleged that the authorities were trying to cover up the crime. The case led to the arrest of five men, including two police officers, and resulted in a nationwide debate about women's safety and the need for police reform. The incident was widely condemned, and it led to changes in the way police handle cases of sexual violence in India.

**2. Sohrabuddin Encounter Case (2005):**

The Sohrabuddin Encounter Case was a high-profile fake encounter case in India, where Sohrabuddin Sheikh, a suspected gangster, was killed by the Gujarat Police in 2005. The police claimed that Sohrabuddin was a terrorist and was killed in an encounter, but investigations later revealed that the encounter was staged and Sohrabuddin was actually abducted and murdered. The case also involved the killing of Sohrabuddin's wife, Kausar Bi, and the disappearance of a key witness, Tulsiram Prajapati. The case led to the arrest of several high-ranking police officers, including the then-Deputy Inspector General of Police, D.G. Vanzara, and the then-Minister of State for Home, Amit Shah. The case highlighted issues of police brutality, fake encounters, and political corruption in India.

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<sup>19</sup> P. Jayaraj and J. Bennicks v. State of Tamil Nadu (2020)

### 3. Vyapam Scam (2013):

The Vyapam Scam, also known as the Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board (MPPEB) scam, was a massive admission and recruitment scam uncovered in 2013 in Madhya Pradesh, India. The scam involved the manipulation of entrance exams for medical and engineering colleges, as well as recruitment exams for government jobs, with the goal of securing seats and positions for undeserving candidates. The scam was perpetrated by a network of officials, politicians, and middlemen, who used various methods, including bribery, impersonation, and forgery, to influence the results. The scam led to the arrest of over 2,000 people, including high-ranking officials, politicians, and businessmen, and resulted in the deaths of at least 50 people, including witnesses and accused individuals. The Vyapam Scam highlighted issues of corruption, nepotism, and the exploitation of power in India's education and recruitment systems.

There are numerous cases in which police officials themselves aid in committing crimes so that people are feared to address the police to report any crimes which have happened to them. I would like to highlight **Mathura Rape case**<sup>20</sup> in the year 1972 where the Mathura rape case was a highly publicized incident in India that occurred in 1972. Here are some key facts about the case:

Mathura, a 16-year-old tribal girl, was raped by two policemen, Constables Ganpat and Tukaram, inside a police station in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra. The incident occurred on March 26, 1972, while Mathura was in police custody for allegedly being with her boyfriend, who was accused of theft. The police officers claimed that Mathura had consented to sex, but she alleged that she was forcibly raped. The case was initially dismissed by the lower court, but was later taken up by the High Court and then the Supreme Court. In 1979, the Supreme Court acquitted the accused policemen, sparking widespread outrage and protests across India. The case led to significant changes in India's rape laws, including the insertion of Section 114(A)<sup>21</sup> in the Indian Evidence Act, which presumes that a woman did not consent to sex if she is raped by a person in authority. The case also led to the formation of the Indian women's movement and highlighted issues of police brutality, gender bias, and the need for legal reforms to protect women's rights.

Even today crimes against women like rape, harassment and sexual offence are increasing and

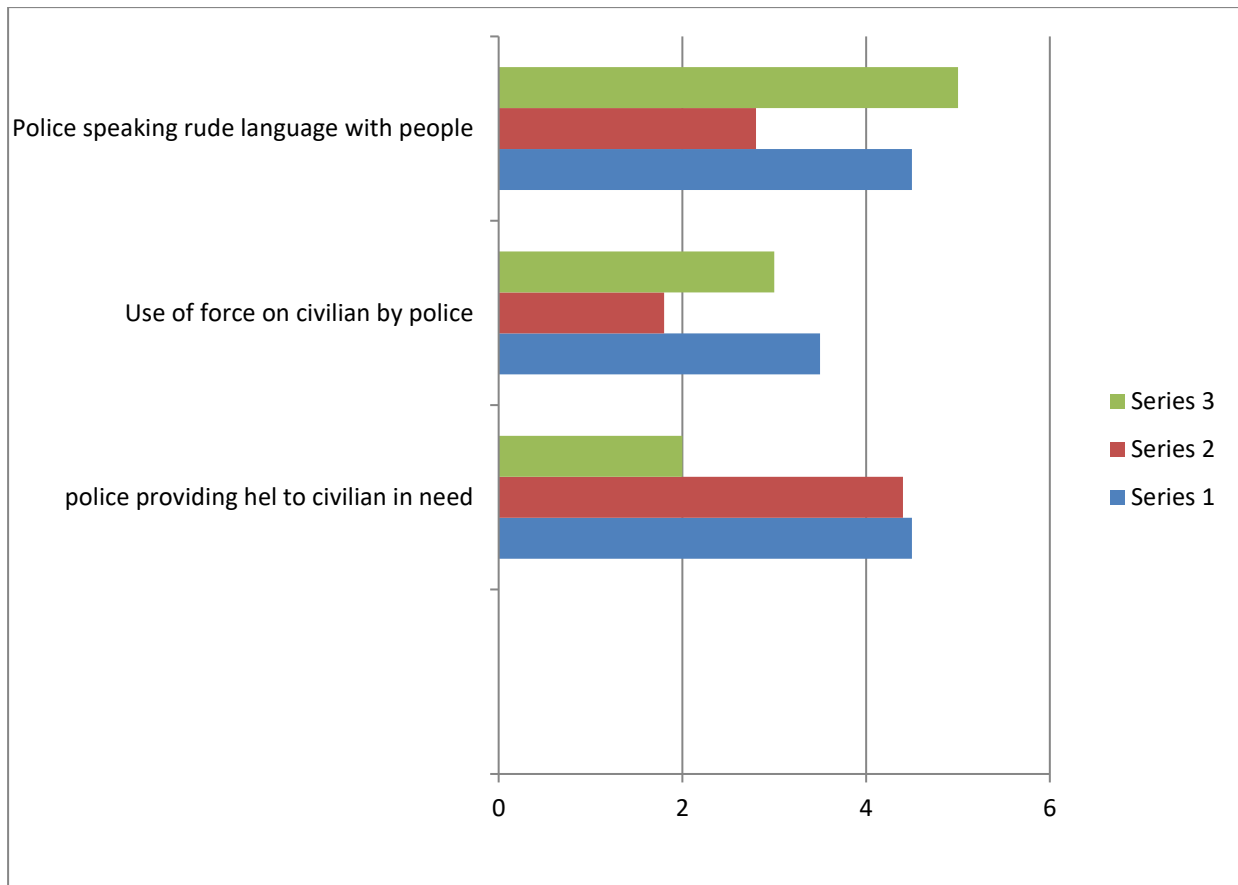
<sup>20</sup> Tuka Ram And Anr vs State Of Maharashtra on 15 September, 1979 AIR 185, 1979 SCR (1) 810

<sup>21</sup> Indian Evidence Act 1872

where police itself aids in doing so. So in this modern society people have to set in mind that when something bad happen police would come and protect us but now police itself is indulged in the activities of crime.

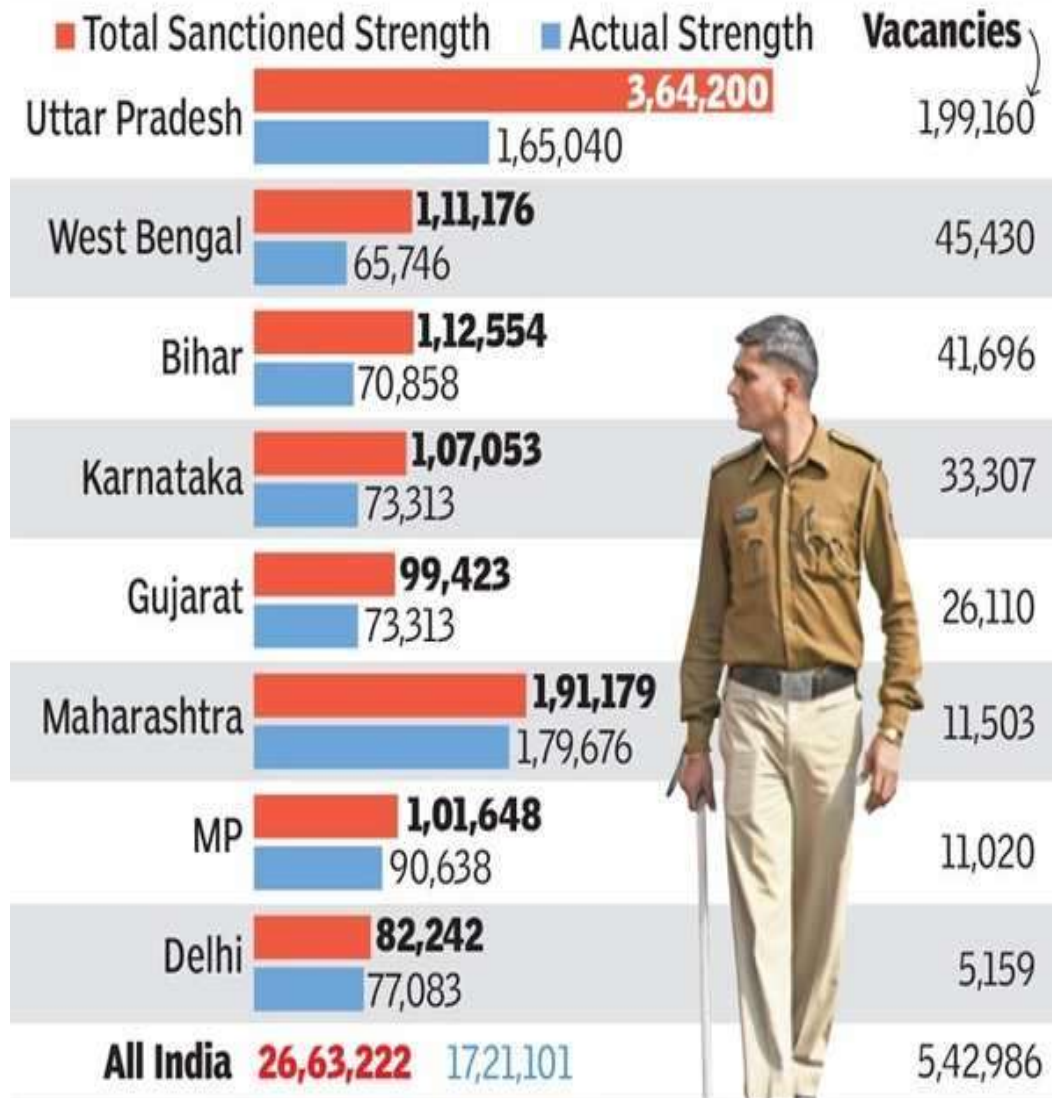
### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The data shows that the public displayed a mixed response, based on what they saw and experienced. The second section of the chapter delves into the different kinds of fears and apprehensions of the general public during the time of the lockdown.

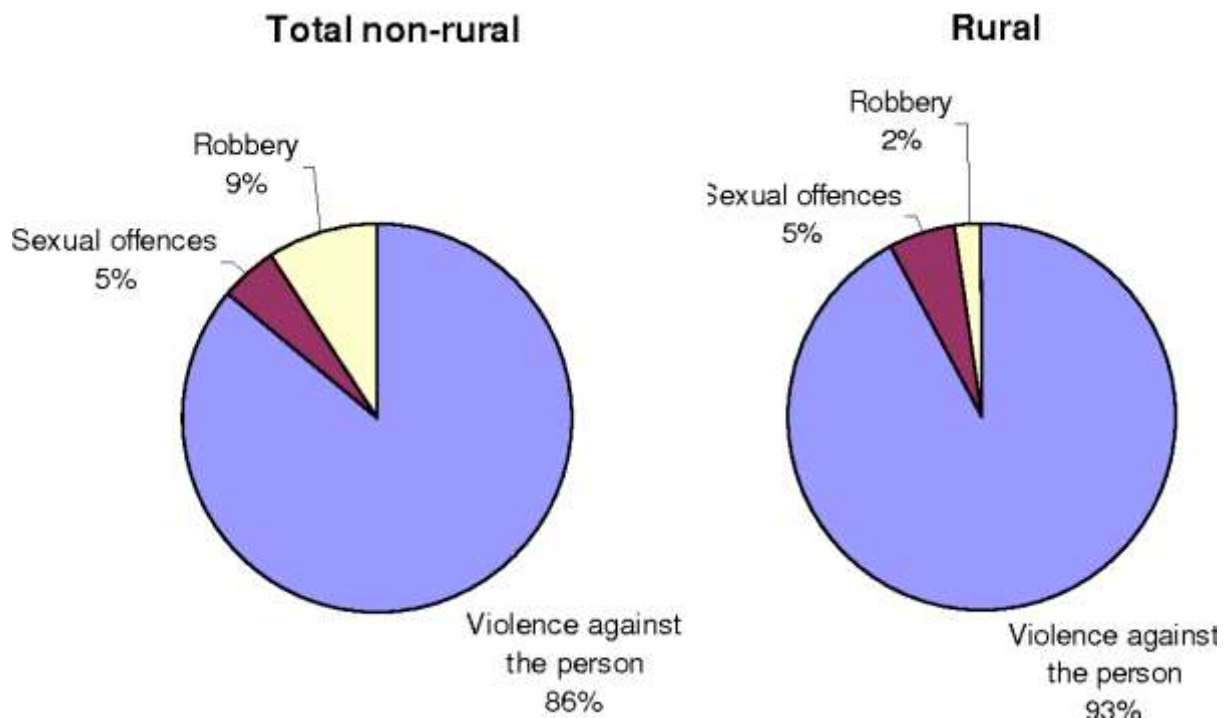


### THE STRENGTH OF THE RURAL POLICING:

## WEAKENED FORCE



**CRIME RATES BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS:**



**DISCUSSIONS:**

Even though in rural and urban area the crime rates are increasing. When you narrow down violence against the person in rural areas are at 93%. Here it comes, that crimes like poaching, hunting of wildlife animals, smuggling of woods in forest, crime against women and children are high in rural areas. Mainly this happens because of the lack of policing force and control. In remote areas the police station would be far away and the residential area would be at some other place. So it would be easier for the perpetrator to commit a crime without any fear in the mind and also police is also lacking technologies to find the accused and they also escape from the part of the crime scene. This creates a lethargic in the mind of the criminal to commit the offence and act as he wish to live in the society. So it is in the hands of the law and the enforcement department that stringent laws should be made for both people and rural policing. Now the Model Police Act of 2006 has included provisions related to rural policing .So effective steps should be taken in rural areas to develop infrastructure, training staffs and stringent laws.

## **SUGGESTIONS:**

The research narrow down the challenges faced by rural policing. This paper highlights both the problems of polices as well as the people suffering. The police are a person who should be there always to protect the people wherever the place might be. In the present dynamic society the trust which is kept on the police is diminishing. In order to stabilise the trust the polices in the rural areas should be recruited on the basis of training; their mind should not go in a wrong way to aid people to commit crime and get corrupted. To avoid this the law should adequately meet the essentials of polices in both rural as well as urban areas to give them safe environmental workplace, good communication, network facilities in remote areas, shelter facilities and regular payment if we satisfy the needs of the polices they will not have pressure and anger towards the society. They by themselves work for the society and protect the people and catch the culprit and put them behind the bars. Awareness should be given to the people as well as to the policies so that there would be a friendly relationship to enforce law.

## **CONCLUSION:**

“Small Towns, Big Challenges: The reality of Rural Policing” - I would like to conclude this research paper that even though many provisions, stringent laws are there but the crime rates are kept increasing only. In rural areas the possibility to escalate crimes are there in order to eradicate that the legislative should take effective measures, proper training to police personnel shall be provided and safe environment to the women in workplace. Now the on-going incident, which happened in Kolkata where the doctor was brutally raped and murdered. Doctor is a person who saves everyone's life but there was no body to save the doctor at the date of the incident. Here comes to the light the higher officials were also involved, no CCTV camera setup, at the incidence of crime no police cops were found, the crime scene was not marked and the police did not report the place of crime and they acted negligently on seeing all these it is creating fear in the mind of the civilians that whom to believe and whom not. Even the police officers are involved in crime. Then another case in which Pollachi rape case many women were tortured and raped by the sons of politicians in which the police itself got money from the officials and did not take any action in arresting the culprits. From viewing all these we could not come to a conclusion that all policies are like this. Many humane polices are there and stringent laws should be framed to eradicate crime rates in India.

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