Beyond Recruitment: Supporting Gender Integration in Policing*

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Abstract

Women worldwide face hurdles integrating into male-dominated professions. This problem is acute in India, where women's labor force participation remains strikingly low. Barriers are pronounced in policing, where female officers navigate professional isolation, inhospitable conditions, and unequal domestic burdens—all while carrying out essential frontline roles, especially regarding gender-based violence. This study evaluates interventions to support female constables in India, where the police remain 90% male. Combining a randomized controlled trial and qualitative research across 322 police stations, we examine two treatments: posting new female constables either in pairs to facilitate peer support, or singly with an assigned senior mentor. We find that both interventions reduce isolation and improve emotional wellbeing. Mentorship also strengthens new recruits' self-efficacy and observable agency in the workplace, as well as job satisfaction and career aspirations. Across treatments, stations receiving additional female officers are more responsive, registering more cases of gender-based violence; however, male officers may become more gender biased.

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1 Introduction

Women worldwide face significant hurdles integrating into male-dominated professions, be it finance, technology, economics, politics, the military, or law enforcement (Goldin, 2014; Fox and Lawless, 2014). Difficult and inhospitable work environments often prevent women from advancing in such workplaces, or may even cause them to drop out (Torre, 2014; Flory et al., 2015). The under-representation of women is not just an issue of equity but also of efficiency and efficacy, as talent is misallocated and diverse perspectives are lost across key sectors of the economy and service provision (Hsieh et al., 2019).

Policing offers a particularly important and difficult case for studying women's integration into male-dominated work. Police organizations are hierarchical, physically demanding, and often built around masculinized workplace cultures, making them especially challenging environments for women. At the same time, female officers play crucial roles in frontline policing. Existing evidence suggests that women's presence can reduce use of force (Ba et al., 2021), increase reporting of sexual assault (Meier and Nicholson-Crotty, 2006; Miller and Segal, 2019), and improve the recording and processing of women's cases (Sukhtankar et al., 2022). These potential benefits have not gone unnoticed: police agencies worldwide are now seeking to recruit, retain, and better support women officers, through initiatives such as gender-equity campaigns, and internal mentorship or support programs.[1]

India is a critical setting in which to examine issues of women's integration in the police. Whereas women's labor force participation has risen in much of the world, rates have stagnated in India and remain among the lowest globally (Klasen, 2019; Fletcher et al., 2019; Jayachandran, 2021). Most workplaces are heavily male-dominated, creating environments that can be isolating and hostile for the few women who do enter. Women in such workplaces face particularly acute barriers due to restrictive gender norms (Jayachandran, 2021), weak institutional protections (Rabb et al., 2021), and high levels of sexual harassment (ILO, 2019).

Meanwhile, India also faces high levels of gender-based violence (GBV), deep underreporting of such cases, and a severely understaffed police system. Female officers make up only about 10% of the police, even though Indian law and policing practice require their presence for key tasks, including searches and procedures involving women complainants or accused persons. In response, many Indian states, including our study site,

[1]We describe initiatives in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Dubai in section 2.

have adopted quotas or reservations for women in police recruitment. Yet increasing numerical representation does not in itself address the central organizational challenge: how can newly recruited women be supported, integrated, and retained once they enter police stations that remain overwhelmingly male?

This study evaluates the impact of interventions designed to support women in one such setting: the police force in the state of Madhya Pradesh (MP) — a state in central India home to 90 million people. The police force in MP is over 90% male, and close to 30% of female recruits drop out before even completing training.[2] All officers must contend with long and unpredictable hours, lack of basic facilities, and a rigid hierarchy. Female officers must additionally contend with social and professional isolation, gendered skepticism from male colleagues, and expectations that they shoulder domestic responsibilities at home, along with harassment, safety concerns, and a lack of basic amenities like toilets for women. These burdens are particularly acute for female constables, who enter at the very bottom of the police hierarchy and are often one of only a few women in their assigned stations.

In partnership with the MP Police (MPP), we design and evaluate two interventions focusing on strengthening support for newly recruited female constables—who are triply marginalized by their low rank, junior status, and gender. The first intervention posts a single new woman recruit to a police station and assigns her a designated senior mentor within the station, creating a vertical professional tie. The second assigns two new recruits to the same police station, creating a horizontal tie through a same-gender peer. Conceptually, our study draws on literature suggesting that social networks and workplace role models are critical for career advancement. A rich body of literature in management studies suggests that women may benefit from mentorship in the workplace (Burke and McKeen, 1996; Higgins and Kram, 2001; De Janasz et al., 2003). Similarly, peer support can reduce professional isolation and provide a mechanism for information sharing and emotional buffering (Stoddard et al., 2020). These effects may be especially important in male-dominated organizations, where women often have fewer informal ties, less access to workplace knowledge, and fewer opportunities to learn how to navigate unwritten rules.

We ask two questions. First, can strengthening workplace ties—whether horizontal ties to peers or vertical ties to senior mentors—improve women's on-the-job experiences,

[2]Note that the female dropout rate is not necessarily different from the male dropout rate at this stage. However, because women remain such a small share of the force, drop outs are paricularly consequential for efforts to increase women's representation.

emotional well-being, and career aspirations? Second, looking beyond the experiences of female officers themselves, how does the assignment of additional women to police stations affect policing practice, particularly with regard to gender-based violence?

Our empirical approach relies on a large-scale randomized controlled trial across 322 police stations in 17 districts serving roughly 35 million people. Stations were randomly assigned to one of four arms: a base group that received one new female recruit and status quo onboarding; a mentorship group that received one new female recruit with a designated mentor in her station; a peer group that received two female recruits assigned together; and a control group that received no new female recruits. The total number of new constable recruits assigned to each station — male plus female — was held constant across arms: stations assigned fewer new female recruits received correspondingly more new male recruits. This generates experimental variation in the gender composition of the new-recruit cohort at each station, independent of overall staffing levels, which we use to identify the effects of female-officer presence on male colleagues' attitudes and on station-level policing outcomes.

We leverage a rich set of data to evaluate the impact of the two support interventions and of the impact of female constables on policing outcomes. This includes a baseline survey of new recruits, midline and endline surveys of officers at treated and control stations, administrative data on officer transfers and crime registration, and sustained qualitative research at the station level.[3]

Our first set of results focuses on the well-being and professional outcomes of newly posted female constables. We find that both the mentorship and peer support interventions significantly reduce social and workplace isolation and improve mental health outcomes. Qualitative evidence reinforces this: constables describe their peers as close sources of everyday support, and refer to their mentors in familial terms (e.g. as mother, big sister, father, uncle). Mentorship in particular has broader effects on workplace experiences and outcomes. Specifically, mentored women express higher levels of confidence and self-efficacy. They also exercise more agency in the workplace, observed in (successful) requests for housing and transfers. Mentorship also strengthens job satisfaction and career aspirations, including stated desire to remain in the police after marriage (a key point of drop out). At the same time, mentored women are more likely to name gendered problems within the police like lack of toilet facilities and workplace harassment, while

[3]In integrating qualitative research throughout the course of experiment design, data collection, and analysis (including the Pre-Analysis Plan), we provide a methodological demonstration of how such efforts can enrich our understanding and analysis.

also demonstrating greater resilience in the face of those problems. This suggests that mentorship may not be about "smoothing" the path as much as it is about equipping women to handle its roughness. Notably, these results persist whether a woman is mentored by a female or male mentor, suggesting the importance of a professional – rather than simply gendered – tie. The peer intervention, in contrast, has limited effects on workplace agency and career aspirations, but proves effective in offering companionship, resource-sharing, and burden-sharing: peers share meals, housing, transportation, domestic tasks, and at times cover for one another on the job, enabling more time off and reducing everyday isolation.

Our second set of results examine what an increase in female personnel means for police station performance with regard to gender-based violence. We find that stations receiving new female recruits are more responsive to women's security concerns, visible in a significant increase in police registration of gender-based violence complaints. There appears, however, to be a perverse effect on male colleagues. Male officers randomly assigned to stations jointly with more new female constables are less likely to believe and more likely to blame victims of rape. Both survey responses and qualitative research suggest that this does not reflect backlash against their female colleagues, but rather a shift in beliefs about female complainants. A possible mechanism is that the presence of additional female constables enables a more gendered allocation of work as women are assigned to work on women's cases, thereby reducing male officers' direct exposure to female complainants; this distancing from women's real experiences may allow skeptical narratives about "false" GBV cases (a framing prevalent within the police) to become more salient.

These findings contribute to debates about the impacts of efforts to increase female representation. Within high-income contexts, studies have documented the effects of quotas and affirmative action in corporate leadership and public institutions (Miller, 2018; Bertrand et al., 2019). In India, a large literature examines the effects of women's political representation on policy priorities, crime reporting, and social norms (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Iyer et al., 2012; Beaman et al., 2012; Prillaman, 2023; Goyal, 2024). We extend this literature from elected office to the public-sector workplace, where numerical representation must be translated into everyday integration, retention, and wellbeing.

Our findings suggest that while quotas can increase the numerical representation of women, they are insufficient on their own to ensure integration. Relatively low-cost interventions like ensuring women are not posted alone or providing structured mentorship

can yield substantial benefits for female recruits' mental health, workplace agency, and career aspirations. We build on research, largely from advanced industrial settings, on mentorship, peer support, and social networks in gendered organizations. Existing work shows that role models and mentors can shape women's aspirations, confidence, and career advancement (Porter and Serra, 2020; Ginther et al., 2020), while peer networks can reduce isolation and support persistence in male-dominated fields (Stoddard et al., 2020). We provide experimental evidence from a high-stakes public-sector workplace in a lower middle-income country, while isolating the effects of horizontal peer ties from vertical mentorship ties.

At the same time, our findings point to the need for more holistic reform. Supporting women in the police is essential, but cannot substitute efforts to institutionalize gender-sensitive policing across the broader organization. Our earlier work in Madhya Pradesh shows that female officers can improve police registration of women's cases (Sukhtankar et al., 2022). Our findings in this paper extend the research agenda, by showing both the promise and limits of increasing women's presence: female constables can make police stations more responsive to women complainants, but their integration can also reshape task allocation and male officers' beliefs in unintended ways. Understanding how to support women officers, while also changing organizational norms around gender-based violence, is therefore central to building more inclusive and effective frontline states.

2 Context

2.1 Women in the workplace worldwide

Despite significant progress over the last century, women worldwide face significant barriers in the workplace (Goldin, 2014; Blau and Kahn, 2017). These can take various forms, including but not limited to gender gaps in labor force participation and pay (Blau and Kahn, 2017); "glass ceilings" and other obstacles to promotion (Bertrand, 2018); and outright hostility and harassment at the workplace (McLaughlin et al., 2012; Folke and Rickne, 2022). Such problems may lead women to leave jobs or drop out of the workforce entirely (Folke and Rickne, 2022; Goldin, 2014).

Gender inequalities are exacerbated in certain professions that are traditionally male-dominated, for example, science and technology, finance, and policing (Bertrand, 2018; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Zajac et al., 2024). In corporate, financial, and STEM sectors, these barriers frequently manifest as a glass ceiling, a structural disadvantage that keeps women severely underrepresented at the top of the earnings

distribution and limits their access to senior executive roles (Bertrand, 2018); compounded by unequal pay, limited mentorship, and the disproportionate burden of unpaid caregiving responsibilities (Gallen, 2023; Zajac et al., 2024). Similarly, in high-stakes environments like law enforcement, women often encounter an entrenched culture of hegemonic masculinity, facing heightened levels of bias and an occupational structure that rewards traditionally masculine traits while undermining women's authority (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Todak, 2024).

In many of these sectors – particularly in policing, the focus of this paper – women play important roles. Existing evidence suggests that women's presence in law enforcement profoundly alters operational outcomes. Using administrative, shift-level data from the Chicago Police Department, Ba et al. (2021) demonstrate that female officers use significantly less force than their male counterparts and make fewer discretionary arrests. Meier and Nicholson-Crotty (2006) establish that law enforcement agencies with higher proportions of female officers see corresponding increases in both the reporting and arrest rates for sexual assaults. Miller and Segal (2019) leverage the demographic integration of U.S. police departments to show that female representation not only increases the reporting of domestic violence but also significantly decreases the likelihood of domestic violence escalation and repeat victimization. Finally, Sukhtankar et al. (2022) provide evidence from a large-scale randomized controlled trial in India, finding that deploying female personnel to dedicated women's help desks significantly improves the formal registration and institutional processing of gender-based violence cases.

Recognizing the importance of women in policing, governments and agencies worldwide are working to improve recruitment and retention of women, as well as to provide increased support to women in the force. In the US, the 30x30 initiative aims to increase women's representation in police forces nationwide to 30% by 2030.[4] UK policing notes concrete steps in increasing women's representation in the police, producing annual "HeForShe" reports detailing progress.[5] In Dubai, the police are committed to providing women opportunities in various police departments.[6]

But whether these initiatives succeed in improving outcomes for women – both the police officers themselves as well as citizens – is still open to question. Much of the rigorous evidence is from rich country settings, in particular the US (Meier and

[4] https://30x30initiative.org/

[5] https://www.heforshe.org/en/uk-policing-launches-seventh-annual-heforshe-gender-equality-report

[6] https://www.khaleejtimes.com/uae/dubai-police-overcome-challenges-of-women-representation-in-department?

Nicholson-Crotty, 2006; Miller and Segal, 2019).[7] Moreover, the question of whether increased hiring of female officers will result in backlash by male officers remains open, particularly in highly gender-unequal settings.

2.2 Women in India

Workplace barriers for women are accentuated in India, ranked 131/148 in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap report 2025. Women in India face high levels of sexual harassment and gender-based violence (ILO, 2019). Female labor force participation rates are some of the lowest in the world. The ILO estimates the most recent 2025 rate to be 32, which albeit an increase from the low of 26 in 2020, still lies 30 points below the fitted curve for its per capita GDP.[8] These participation gaps partly reflect persistent social norms around women's mobility and the acceptability of paid work outside the home, particularly in rural areas (Bernhardt et al., 2018).

Policing in India provides a particularly revealing lens on these dynamics, given how the institution combines gendered barriers with acute resource constraints. Policing is a difficult work environment for anyone regardless of gender, characterized by severe understaffing (Figure 1) and resource constraints. India's police-population ratio stands at approximately 1.5 per 1000, well below global averages, and vacancy rates hover around 25% of sanctioned strength. The institution is extremely hierarchical and bottom-heavy, with constables forming the vast majority of the force but having little decision-making power. Working conditions are notoriously poor, with officers often having no weekly days off and being deployed in remote areas without adequate infrastructure.

With most formal workplaces in India already heavily male-dominated, policing is no exception — women made up less than 10% of the force nationwide in 2025.[9] Those who do enter the police find already-difficult conditions compounded by gendered barriers: they are frequently sidelined to desk jobs or work on "women's issues," which are perceived as low priority. At the same time, they are often overburdened because their presence is mandatory for certain procedures. Under Section 46 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, arrests of women may only be made by female officers, and Section 100 similarly requires female officers to be present during searches of women. Yet the

[7] Within the United States and other high-income country contexts, several studies have also documented the effects of quotas for women in corporate leadership positions on enterprise outcomes and on the employment of more junior women (Miller, 2018; Bertrand et al., 2019; Ferrari et al., 2022).

[8] Data obtained from the World Bank, `https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?locations=IN`. Fitted curve values from Jayachandran (2021).

[9] `https://indiajusticereport.org/`

broader institutional culture rarely translates this operational necessity into commensurate recognition or resource allocation.

Severe resource scarcity frequently induces rationing behavior among frontline officers, who may consequently overlook or dismiss complaints from socially marginalized actors. For gender-based violence specifically, an institutional reluctance to formally register complaints is compounded by the distrust and discomfort that survivors may feel approaching a heavily male institution. Together, these dynamics drive a massive wedge between actual victimization and official statistics; comparing national household surveys with administrative crime records reveals that 96 to 99% of sexual violence incidents remain unrecorded (Neville et al., 2015).

Addressing this gap has become an explicit policy priority: amongst many other gender-targeted interventions including women-only police stations (Jassal, 2020) and women's help desks at police stations (Sukhtankar et al., 2022), states across India have instituted quotas for women (usually 30–33%) in new police recruitment. While direct evidence from policing contexts is limited, the broader literature on female representation suggests these quotas could have far-reaching effects. Existing work has examined the effects of quotas for female political representation on policy choice and economic outcomes (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004) and on crime (Iyer et al., 2012). Beaman et al. (2012) further show that increasing the presence of women in government councils generates positive spillover effects on the aspirations of young women, suggesting that representation may shape not only immediate outcomes but longer-run social norms. Yet, despite the widespread adoption of gender quotas in public sector employment across India and several other South Asian contexts,[10] we know little about how to integrate these newly hired women or what happens after they are hired.

2.3 Women and policing in Madhya Pradesh

MP is a large, north-central state with a population of 87 million (in 2024) that is broadly representative of the over half a billion people who live in Northern India (Figure 3). It has high rates of GBV and low rates of reporting of these cases. MP ranks right in the middle of policing capacity metrics,[11] but is increasingly at the forefront of evidence-based policing initiatives, with a research lab to encourage collaboration

[10]For example, Nepal reserves 33% of positions in its civil services for women (Civil Service Act-2049 1993), while Pakistan reserves 10% of positions in its civil services for women (Rules for Competitive Examination 2009).

[11]`https://indiajusticereport.org/rankings/ijr-4/police/large-states/map`

between academics and the police.[12]

In line with other initiatives across India that respond to the increasing political salience of women's issues, MPP has also introduced numerous gender-targeted programs. These include "Nirbhaya" vehicles that are staffed by women officers and patrol public crime hotspots, and women-only police stations that are also staffed entirely by women officers and cater only to women (Jassal, 2020; Amaral et al., 2021). Most closely related to our work are Women's Help Desks (WHDs) instituted at police stations across MP (Sukhtankar et al., 2022; Kruks-Wisner et al., 2026).

The WHDs cater to women victims and provide dedicated physical spaces, standard operating procedures with officer training, community outreach, and in some stations, the assignment of female officers to run them. An impact evaluation based on a large-scale RCT found that these help desks increase the registration of civil cases of domestic violence, and the registration of criminal cases (First Information Reports, or FIRs) of GBV – the latter only when women officers were assigned to manage the desk. Given the importance of case registration for access to justice in India – in criminal GBV cases nearly 99% of registered FIRs go to trial – the RCT results indicate a meaningful role for women's representation in frontline policing (more details in Sukhtankar et al. (2022); Kruks-Wisner et al. (2026)). Female constables–the focus of our current study–play a critical role in the day-to-day functioning of the WHDs; they carry out crucial first-contact intake procedures, accompany victims for medical and court reports, and are often observed to informally manage the WHDs in the absence of senior officers.

2.4 Constable recruitment and workplace conditions

MP ranks at the very bottom of large Indian states in terms of the share of women in the police (`https://indiajusticereport.org/indicator/107/ijr-4/large-states/map`). At baseline, the median police station in our sample had only 2 female constables and 11 male constables (Table A1). To address this issue, the MP Police has instituted a 33% quota for women in new hiring of police.

In 2022-23, the MPP undertook a large recruitment drive for 6,000 constable positions. The drive was highly competitive, with over 1.2 million applicants. The resulting cohort of female recruits is young (median age 24), mostly single (92%), and highly educated (98% have at least a BA), despite the position only requiring a 10th-grade education. However, historically, about 30% of female recruits drop out before completing training, often to take other government jobs, highlighting the retention challenge.

[12] `https://www.parimal.org/`

Our baseline survey and qualitative work reveal the struggles these young women face in the workplace. In a highly hierarchical setting, newly recruited women constables are triply disadvantaged by their seniority, gender, and rank (constables are the lowest police rank). In the vast majority of police stations in the status quo, they would be the only individual in their position, without any formalized support. The isolation they face is illustrated by these quotes from female constables: *"I feel very lonely and completely isolated. In the Police Lines [during training] we were all together, but now [after being posted to the station] I felt very bad."* (H_T1_C_F); *"I am not particularly friendly with anyone . . . in the thana they treat me like the youngest girl in a family. . . "* (F_T1_C_F).[13]

In addition to isolation, female constables must deal with stress (*"I cannot visit home often and this in itself a mental stress.... here in the police we do not even have a weekly off"* (G_T1_C_F new)); inhospitable work environments, including the lack of toilets (*"We have to search for bushes to get privacy for toilets ... Worst is sudden periods onset during duties, as we cannot leave nor do not know how to leave the place"* (H_T1_C_F)); and lack of respect (*"They address us as 'ladki' [girl] and not by name. The salary slip has written as 'dear Sir and Madam,' but in reality we are neither dear nor madams. Even the public who knows the ranks disrespects us"* (FGD at police training, Bhopal 13.11.24)). They must also contend with highly masculinalized cultures within the police station, where "vulgar" and gendered language (e.g. "*madarch*d*" [motherf**ker] or "*bhench*d*" (sisterf**ker)) is commonplace. Female recruits report high discomfort, e.g. often leaving the room when their male colleagues are speaking in these terms.

Combined, the isolation, stress, inhospitable conditions, and lack of respect result in many women considering leaving the police force. For example, one new female constable noted: *"I had an image in my mind before joining the police...but in actual practice after joining police I am only undergoing physical and mental stress. Therefore, I feel that if I get into any other government job I will immediately leave"* (H_T1_C_F). Constables also foresaw difficulties in combining their jobs with family responsibilities in the future: *"Presently I am not married yet, but I do not know how will I balance home and work after getting married as in-laws would have more expectations from me as a daughter-in-*

[13]In the section below we describe more fully how we collect our qualitative data, including how we categorize and cite it. Interview citations use anonymized codes that identify the district, police station, officer designation, and officer sex. For example, F_T1_C_F refers to a female constable in station T1 in district F. These codes preserve relevant contextual information while protecting respondent and station anonymity.

law" (G_T2_C_F_Mentee). This sense of familial duty as well as pressure from parents and in-laws was a common theme in interviews, in which female constables also spoke of the pressures of having to carry out domestic tasks (cooking, cleaning, childcare) while also contending with long and unpredictable policing hours. For example, *"In the case of men, they get help from their wives. But for females balancing home and work is difficult. I do so much work still I get scolded"* (G_T2_C_F_Mentee).

3 Experimental Design

3.1 District and Station Selection

Our study was conducted in collaboration with MPP. We selected 17 districts to include in the study sample out of a total of 55 districts in the state (Figure 3). District selection was guided by two main criteria. First, we excluded districts with very few police stations, as these would not be cost-effective for research and survey operations. Second, we excluded districts at either extreme of the distribution of new female recruits relative to the number of police stations since a sufficiently balanced ratio (roughly 1:1) was necessary for our research design to be feasible. The selected districts are spread across all major geographical and socio-economic regions of the state, and are broadly representative of the state; they include 33 million of the state's population of 87 million.

Within the 17 study districts, there are a total of 349 police stations. Of these, 27 were omitted from the sample because district officers deemed them too remote to post women, or because they serve as centers for specialized operations (e.g., anti-insurgent activities), leaving a final sample of 322 police stations across the 17 districts.

3.2 Randomization and Treatments

Our unit of randomization is the police station. We randomly assigned the 322 stations to one of four experimental arms (Figure 4):

1. **Base (T0)**: 77 stations received one new female constable and followed status quo onboarding.

2. **Mentorship (T1)**: 74 stations received one new female constable who was assigned a senior mentor.

3. **Peer (T2)**: 73 stations received two new female constables (batchmates).

4. **Control (C)**: 98 stations received no new female constables.

Crucially, the total number of new recruits assigned to each station—male and female combined—was held constant across all arms, ensuring that differences in outcomes across arms reflect changes in the gender composition of new recruits rather than differences in overall staffing levels.

Randomization was conducted within strata defined at the district level. Within each of the 17 study districts, we stratified police stations by the first principal component of a vector of station-level baseline characteristics: the total number of existing officers, the share of officers who are female, and the number of senior female officers. Treatment was then randomly assigned within these strata.

3.3 Interventions

3.3.1 Background and Development

This study builds on our longstanding research partnership with the MPP, which, like other police departments in India, has implemented quotas for hiring female officers across ranks in recent years. The study focuses on the most recent recruitment and training drive for 6,000 constable posts conducted in 2022–2023, with thirty-three percent of vacancies reserved for women.

The design of the interventions emerged organically from this partnership. In 2023, senior MPP officers and our research team held internal discussions about the need to better support newly recruited female constables, collectively exploring different models of support. The mentorship intervention drew upon existing mentorship initiatives already in place for mid-level and senior MPP officers, and its practical need was further validated through conversations between MPP senior leadership and district police administration, as well as by qualitative observation of informal mentorship practices in several stations. The peer intervention, meanwhile, was inspired by prior informal efforts within the MPP to create support networks among officers (Mangla and Kapoor, 2024).

3.3.2 Implementation Timeline

In January 2024, senior MPP officers convened a video conference with the top officers from the 17 study districts to orient them on the proposed interventions and the randomized assignment of newly recruited female constables. This was followed by a series of focus group discussions between the research team and district-level officers on areas of need, program design, and implementation. District officers also provided guidance on which stations would be appropriate for posting female constables; stations

deemed inappropriate were excluded from the study sample. These discussions led to the formation of a dedicated Working Group on the mentorship intervention, comprising committed officers from different ranks as well as representation from the MPP's Training Department.

In February 2024, the randomized assignment of female constables to police stations was officially communicated to the 17 study districts, and postings began later that month. The Working Group subsequently developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the mentorship intervention, including detailed guidelines for mentors, mentees, and station chiefs, which were finalized in April 2024—by which point all postings had been completed.

Rollout of the mentorship program coincided with India's 2024 General Elections, during which field officers across the MPP were engaged in election duty. Nevertheless, the MPP undertook a major effort in April 2024 to train officers on the mentorship program and its SOPs. Training followed a cascading model: senior trainers with expertise in mentorship were first identified by the Training Department and trained by senior MPP officers; they then conducted local-level training for designated mentors at the study police stations, as well as for district staff responsible for supporting the initiative. Training of field officers was completed by the end of April 2024.

3.3.3 The Mentor and Peer Interventions

The *female mentor* intervention was designed to provide newly posted female constables with access to a more senior female officer who could offer guidance, support professional development, and help navigate the challenges of integration into a historically male-dominated institution. This design is motivated by evidence that female mentors can be particularly effective in supporting junior women: studies from academic and professional settings show that access to senior female role models and mentors increases retention (Ginther et al., 2020), motivation and confidence (Dennehy and Dasgupta, 2017), and career advancement (Porter and Serra, 2020).

Qualitative research further suggests that mentors can facilitate "status-leveling" between women and men in male-dominated professions, helping to reduce entrenched institutional hierarchies (Cardador et al., 2022). Conversely, evidence that women are less likely to be promoted under male managers—partly due to the greater ease with which male employees can socialize with male supervisors (Cullen and Perez-Truglia, 2023; Kunze and Miller, 2017)—underscores the potential value of same-gender mentorship in settings like ours. To the best of our knowledge, however, no existing evidence

speaks to the impact of same-gender mentors or role models in the workplace in a low-income country context, making this intervention of particular interest. A female peer may also serve as a role model, shifting new constables' perceptions of possible career trajectories and modeling successful behaviors (Serra, 2022).

The *mentorship intervention* was designed to provide female constables with institutional support within their designated police stations. Mentors were identified within the police stations based on the availability of a senior officer who could provide regular, structured guidance and feedback. Preference was given to including more senior officers who were more experienced as well as for female officers to serve as mentors. After their selection, the designated officers went through a training program that provided orientation and guidance on the program's objectives and structure, how to carry out mentorship duties, conducted regular feedback meetings with the mentee and how to extend support where needed.

The mentorship program itself was designed over 24 weeks, involving a series of weekly tasks and follow up meetings between the mentor and female constable. These tasks included a general orientation of routine policing work within the station, an orientation on the catchment area and communities residing outside of the station, along with an array of more specific topics, such as the process of serving summonses, court duties, emergency response, visiting incident sites, assisting senior officers with investigations and various activities for supporting female complainants, such as how to conduct witness statements. The structured nature of the program, routine feedback and exposure it gave female constables to a range of different tasks was a significant departure from the status quo, which involved comparatively little exposure or structured guidance from senior officers.

The *female peer* intervention was designed to test whether the presence of a same-gender cohort-mate can improve workplace outcomes for newly posted female constables. This design responds to evidence that women who are among the first to integrate a previously all-male environment face particular risks: their opinions are discounted and they receive less credit for group work (Stoddard et al., 2020). In our study setting, where strong gender norms dictate separation between women and men and where social networks tend to be segregated along gender lines (McPherson et al., 2001; Brands et al., 2022), having a same-gender peer may be especially important for reducing isolation and providing access to relevant workplace information. The intervention is further motivated by evidence from the Indian context that women benefit from undertaking new activities—such as business training—alongside a female friend (Field et al., 2016).

Beyond their direct effects on newly recruited female constables, both interventions may also generate broader changes within the station. In a setting where 64% percent of new male constable recruits agree that sensitive cases should be assigned to male rather than female constables,[14] the presence of additional women—whether through mentorship or peer support—may itself shift the allocation of tasks and the gender attitudes of existing officers and, in doing so, alter how female colleagues – as well as women members of the public – are treated more broadly.

3.4 Compliance

Implementation was conducted at scale. While there was some deterioration between assignment and endline due to transfers, compliance remained reasonably high. Table 1 details the compliance rates across arms; initial compliance ranged from 89-96% while 6-month compliance rates ranged from 81-90%.

4 Data and Empirics

4.1 Quantitative Data Collection

Our primary quantitative data come from three rounds of original surveys with new police constable recruits, supplemented by surveys of senior officers, mentors, and existing constables, and by a station-level infrastructure audit.

Baseline Survey We conducted a baseline survey of new constable recruits between September and November 2023, while recruits were stationed at training academies during their nine-month mandatory induction training prior to their first station posting. We surveyed 2,932 recruits in total, of whom 835 were women and 2,097 were men. District assignment had been completed by the time of the baseline, but station assignment had not; because the final list of study districts had not yet been finalized, we surveyed all new recruits present at the academies at the time of fieldwork.[15]

The baseline instrument covered: (i) perceptions of workplace conditions, roles, and responsibilities expected upon posting; (ii) career aspirations, including expected duration in the police, plans for promotion or for outside government exams, and expected implications of marriage and family life for their police career; (iii) for women, modules on marriage and fertility goals; and (iv) beliefs about women's capacity for constable work, women's role in society more generally, and gender-based violence and its victims.

[14] This figure comes from our baseline survey of new male constable recruits.

[15] The study sample was finalized later in collaboration with MPP leadership; see Section 3.

Baseline data are used both to establish balance across treatment arms and as controls in the post-treatment analyses.

Midline Survey Postings of constables to their stations began in February 2024 (see Figure A2 for details on timeline of the intervention). We conducted a midline survey between November and December 2024, six to seven months after new constable recruits were posted to their study stations. The midline reached 2,214 respondents across study police stations, comprising:

- All new female constable recruits posted to study stations (reached $n = 282$ of 297 sampled);
- 1-2 new male constable recruits per study station, depending on availability at the time of the survey ($n = 372$);
- Two existing female constables per station where present, drawn from constables and, when fewer than two existing female constables were posted, higher-ranked female officers ($n = 442$);
- Senior station officers — the Station House Officer (SHO) and the Head Constable Moharrir (HCM) — at each study station (combined $n = 644$);
- The assigned mentor, in mentorship-arm stations ($n = 67$).

The new-recruit module of the midline covered the same domains as the baseline, with several additions: a support-networks module capturing work and social ties within and outside the station; modules on workplace conditions, agency, and decision-making at the station; for women, a module on decision-making with family and spouse; and a short anxiety-and-depression module. The senior-officer survey was a brief instrument focused on station leaders' perceptions of new female constables' capabilities and station-level integration. The mentor module asked about satisfaction with the mentorship program, suggested improvements, and the mentor's perceived impact on the mentee. While at study stations for survey administration, surveyors also conducted a short infrastructure audit, recording the adequacy of toilets, electricity, and basic facilities, and the presence and functioning of a women's help-desk.

Endline Survey We conducted an endline survey between September and October 2025, roughly 16 months after initial posting. The endline targeted all new constable recruits previously interviewed at midline, plus mentors, and reached 701 respondents

in total.[16] Endline interviews were conducted in person at study stations where possible and by phone where in-person interviews were infeasible due to transfers or respondent location. Senior station officers and existing male and female constables were not re-interviewed at endline. The endline instrument retained the time-variant modules of the midline and added a tracking module on professional status (current posting, transfers since the prior survey, leave taken).

4.2 Qualitative Data Collection

The experimental study was accompanied by sustained qualitative research designed to contextualize the interventions, trace mechanisms, and identify dynamics that would be difficult to observe through survey and administrative data alone. Prior to station postings, we conducted qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with new recruits during training, and observed training sessions to better understand recruits' expectations, concerns, and early understandings of police work. After postings, we carried out station-level fieldwork across four districts, selected to capture variation in geography, policing context, and intervention assignment. Within these districts, we studied 15 police stations across the three treatment-relevant arms: status quo stations with one newly posted female constable and no additional formal support (T_0); mentorship stations with one newly posted female constable assigned to a senior mentor (T_1), including cases with both female and male mentors; and peer-posting stations with two newly posted female constables assigned together (T_2). We did not include pure control stations, since our qualitative research focused on understanding the experiences of women newly entering police stations and the organizational dynamics produced by their presence.

Within each station, we conducted multiple semi-structured interviews with newly posted female constables, male constables, assigned mentors where present, and senior station officers, including Station House Officers and Head Constables. In all, the qualitative research included 68 interviews and more than 100 hours of conversation, following a semi-closed interview guide that allowed us to ask comparable questions across sites while leaving space for respondents to raise unanticipated themes. Interviews were complemented by structured observations of station layout, where female constables sat and worked, the presence and use of Women's Help Desks or other women-facing spaces, toilet facilities, and everyday social dynamics such as lunch, tea, and the integration of

[16] At endline, we reached 274 out of 282 female constables and 361 out of 372 male constables we interviewed at midline. The remaining 66 endline respondents were mentors.

female officers into station life. We analyzed the qualitative material through iterative thematic coding, moving between open coding of field notes and interviews, discussion of emerging patterns across the research team, all done independently from the qualitative analysis, and — later — direct comparison with quantitative results. This mixed-methods approach allows us not only to assess whether the interventions changed measured outcomes, but also to understand explore mechanisms, nameley: how new social and professional ties shaped women's workplace experiences, how station-level actors interpreted and implemented the interventions, and how the presence of female constables affected broader gender dynamics within the police station. It also allowed us to identify unanticipated effects beyond those specified in the pre-analysis plan, including the ways mentorship shaped mentors' own workplace experiences, how informal mentoring emerged outside the formal intervention, and how women's increased presence altered gendered task allocation within stations.

4.3 Empirical Approach

Our analysis compares outcomes across police stations assigned no female constable (Control; C); one female constable ($T0$); one female constable with mentorship ($T1$); and, two female constables ($T2$). We employ Intent-to-Treat (ITT) estimates.

Our primary specification for female constable outcomes separately estimates the impact of each support intervention, comparing effects relative to the status-quo ($T0$) and to one another ($T1$ vs. $T2$). For female constable i from police station p, we estimate:

$$Y_{ip} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 T1_p + \beta_2 T2_p + \boldsymbol{X}_{ip} + \boldsymbol{M}_p + \theta_s + \epsilon_{ip} \tag{1}$$

We also present results pooling across the two support interventions:

$$Y_{ip} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 T_p + \boldsymbol{X}_{ip} + \boldsymbol{M}_p + \theta_s + \epsilon_{ip}, \tag{2}$$

where Y_{ip} references a female constable's work experience outcome, T_p is a dummy equal to one if the police station is in either the mentorship or peer treatment arms, $\boldsymbol{X}_{ip}$ is a vector of baseline controls for individual i and $\boldsymbol{M}_p$ is a vector of police station-level controls, both selected via a double LASSO approach. θ_s are station stratification dummies and ϵ_{ip} is the idiosyncratic error term, clustered at the police station level.

For male constable and station-level outcomes, we compare Control (C) stations to those with any female constable ($T0, T1, T2$). We also estimate impacts separately for stations that receive one new female constable (pooling across $T0$ and $T1$) or two new female constables ($T2$):

$$Y_{ip} = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 T_p^{0,1} + \gamma_2 T2_p + \theta_s + \epsilon_{ip} \tag{3}$$

Table A2 reports station-level balance across treatment arms on size, gender composition, and rural location; Tables A3 and A4 report balance on baseline characteristics of new female and new male recruits, respectively. We find no systematic differences across arms, consistent with the random assignment of stations to treatment.

5 Results

We organize results around the two principal questions of the study. Section 5.1 examines impacts of the mentorship and peer interventions on the workplace experiences of newly recruited female constables. Section 5.2 examines how the presence of female constables affects the quality of policing in cases of gender-based violence (GBV) and the gender attitudes of male colleagues.

5.1 Impacts on New Female Constables' Workplace Outcomes

We begin with the impact of each support intervention on new female constables' own workplace outcomes, estimating impacts separately for mentorship (T_1) and same-gender peer assignment (T_2), each relative to the status-quo base arm (T_0, one new female constable with informal onboarding). Across all outcome families we report effects on an aggregate index (following Anderson 2008) alongside its components, and report the p-value on the test of equality between the two treatment arms. To interpret and further interrogate the results, we draw on our qualitative engagements in stations across all three treatment arms (T_1, T_2, T_0). As noted above, isolation, stress, and inhospital workplace conditions are among the primary concerns and complaints of those in T_0. In what follows, we examine whether and how the peer and mentorship interventions reshaped the experiences of newly posted female constables, relative to those posted on their own without any formalized support.

Emotional well-being A primary goal of both the mentorship and peer interventions is to improve female constables' mental and emotional well-being in light of the tremendous stress and isolation they express. Table 2 shows that both treatments mean-

ingfully impact this dimension of female constables' work experiences. Column 1 of Table 2 reports impacts on an aggregate mental health and loneliness index and columns 2-4 reports impacts on its three components: whether the constable reports having no one to turn to for emotional support; a depression index; and a station-level isolation index. Mentorship improves the aggregate mental health index by 0.26 standard deviations ($p < 0.05$), and peer support shifts it by 0.35 standard deviations ($p < 0.01$); we cannot reject equality of the two effects ($p = 0.40$). These gains in well-being persist despite imperfect physical co-presence at endline. Roughly 55% of mentors are no longer posted at the same station as their mentee at the time of the endline survey, though most mentees report continued contact. Eighty-seven percent of peer-assigned women remain co-posted at endline.

One third of new female constables in status quo thanas (T_0) report that they have no one to turn to for emotional support within the station. Both interventions, in contrast, expand women's support networks: mentorship reduces the likelihood that women report that they have no one to turn to by 11 percentage points and the peer intervention reduces it by 14 percentage points (Column 2 of Table 2). Qualitative results strongly support these findings. Both interventions appear to have produced strong bonds that extend beyond the professional arrangements of "peer" or "mentor-mentee." Many peer-posted constables, for example, described their peers as being very close, for example: *"My peer is my immediate family now in this far off place from my own home*" (H_T3_C_F_Peer). Both mentor and mentee repeatedly described their relationships in familial terms — *e.g. "mother-daughter", "elder sister-younger sister,"* or used nicknames (e.g., *"Nimmi," "my kitten"*) to express closeness (E_T2_F_HC-female mentor). As one mentee described, "*My mentor didi* [elder sister] *is very nice and keeps my morale high. She is like a mother figure to me and has much knowledge about policing.*" (E_T2_F_C). Another with a male mentor reflected, "*My mentor Sir is very fatherly to me. He calls us to sit for lunch with him. He gets food from home and offers me too.*" Another mentee expressed, "*Earlier I felt alone in the thana, but after regular interaction it feels like family*" (E_T2_F_C).

Quantifiable effects on depression are more mixed across the treatments. At both midline and endline, we administered the PHQ-2 (Kroenke et al., 2003), a two-item instrument widely used to screen for depressive symptoms. The two items ask respondents how often, over the past two weeks, they have been bothered by (i) little interest or pleasure in doing things, and (ii) feeling down, depressed, or hopeless. Among women in the base (status-quo) group, 27.4% qualify as depressed based on the PHQ-2 scale. In

column 3 of Table 2, we show that the peer treatment leads to a 0.24 standard deviation decrease in women's scores on the depression index; while the mentorship coefficient is smaller in magnitude and not statistically distinguishable from zero. Qualitatively, we cannot directly assess levels of depression. We can, however, hear female constables talk about their emotions and mental health in their own terms. As a peer-posted constable noted, "*We* [my peer and I]*speak about each and every thing... We both are a pillar of support for each other...* [which makes] *every tension half*" (H_T3_C_F_Peer). Another stated: "*My batchmate and I rely on each other for moral support, shift adjustments, and emotional well-being. This peer support helped us to adapt faster and feel less isolated" (G-T3-Peer F C).*

Last, column 4 of Table 2 shows results on a standardized index of loneliness within the thana; it measures the frequency with which female constables report feeling like they (a) lack companionship, (b) feel left out, or (c) isolated. While impacts are negative and large in magnitude for both treatment arms, they are imprecisely estimated and not statistically significant. Isolation, however, is a major theme in female constables' accounts in status quo stations, and both peer-treated and mentored officers spoke at length about their social engagements resulting from the interventions. For example, peers noted, "*We go home together and come back together... we prepare dinner together and eat together*"; and "*We eat together, study together, and divide our housework. It feels like I am not alone here*" (H_T3_C_F_Peer). A female mentor directly described the intent: "*With the help of mentorship there should be an easy access for the constables to ask any type of doubts and they can feel less isolated in the beginning...*" (E_T2_F_HC-female mentor).

Awareness, resilience, and efficacy The mentorship program was designed to build mentees' problem-solving skills through on-the-job learning, complementing the formal induction training that new recruits receive at the police academy. In practice, this learning is embedded in the daily routine of the station: mentors and mentees describe sitting side-by-side, reviewing tasks together, accompanying each other on duty, and using tea breaks for discussion and feedback. Mentees report being able to "directly talk to madam" when problems arise, and mentors describe a similar closeness. As one female mentor put it: "*we both are free and frank... she discusses any personal problem also with me... as if I would be speaking with my own daughter*" (E_T2_F_HC, female mentor).

Qualitative evidence suggests that this one-on-one guidance translates into greater confidence on the job. One mentee, for instance, reported that "*my seniors trust me...*

SHO sir tells that when I have been given the charge to complete the task, he is sure that it will be done" (H_T2_C_F_Mentee). The survey data show a parallel pattern: as Table 3 reports, mentored women score significantly higher than base-arm women on an aggregate self-efficacy index, with gains in both problem-solving and coping. The peer arm produces a positive but smaller effect that is not statistically distinguishable from zero. The qualitative data, however, suggest that peers engage in a different, more practical mode of collective problem-solving and coping — covering for one another when they have their periods, sharing housing and domestic tasks, and giving each other rides. As one constable put it: "*having my peer in this thana helps me a lot... We are a mental support for each other. During periods we exchange outdoor duties*" (G_T3_Peer F C).

An important corollary to mentees' growing confidence is their willingness to articulate problems in the workplace. We asked respondents about two specific challenges that our qualitative research had identified as central to new female constables' day-to-day experience at the station: hearing harassing or inappropriate language from colleagues, and difficulty obtaining permission to step away from duty to use the toilet. As Table 4 reports, mentored women score 0.36 standard deviations higher than base-arm women on an aggregate problem awareness index; women in the peer arm score no higher than base-arm women, and we reject equality of the two treatment effects ($p = 0.04$). The pattern is sharpest for the question on inappropriate language — mentored women rate it as 0.28 standard deviations more important of an issue than base-arm women do. The measures of difficulty obtaining permission for toilet use are similar in sign but less precisely estimated. Because stations were randomly assigned, the difference is unlikely to reflect differences in underlying station conditions; rather, mentorship appears to make women more willing to recognize and voice workplace problems they would otherwise internalize or overlook.

Workplace conditions and agency The interventions also affect concrete dimensions of workplace agency, although the patterns differ across the two arms. We asked about a set of concrete workplace conditions that base-arm women themselves identify as among the most challenging features of their first year on the force: finding adequate housing, securing days off, managing long and unpredictable hours, and being posted far from home. Table 5 reports impacts of mentorship and peer assignment on five corresponding outcomes: whether the constable secured accommodation through police channels (column 1); whether she took any days off in the past month (column 2); average hours worked per day (column 3); whether she has been transferred from her original station (column 4); and whether she had wanted to transfer (column 5).

Mentorship produces substantively meaningful improvements in housing and transfer outcomes, but has no detectable effect on hours worked or days off. Mentored women are 14 percentage points more likely than base-arm women to have found accommodation through police channels — either via referral by police colleagues or by living in police quarters — consistent with mentors helping newly posted women access institutional housing options in unfamiliar towns. Mentorship also roughly doubles the probability of having been transferred from one's original station and doubles the probability of having actively wanted to transfer. New recruits' assigned postings are typically far from home, and securing a more desirable transfer requires navigating the layered station and district hierarchy, a task for which a senior mentor's institutional knowledge appears especially valuable. Qualitatively, we observe a plausible mechanism for this greater agency: mentors gave new constables practice in approaching and navigating police hierarchy. Mentees described mentorship as creating a direct channel for questions and requests. As one put it, "*When there is any problem, I can directly talk to madam*" (E_T2_F_C), while another explained, "*Initially I used to feel very nervous while speaking in front of seniors, but now I feel comfortable*" (E_T2_F_C). Mentors similarly framed the relationship as giving new constables "*easy access*" to "*raise doubts*" (E_T2_F_HC, female mentor). Senior officers also recognized this process: a Station Head Officer, for example, described mentorship as helping new constables "adopt the police working culture," so that "learning would be better and a comfortable atmosphere [is] given through mentor" (H_T2_SHO_M). Taken together, these accounts suggest that mentorship may help women learn how to make requests within the institution—whom to approach, how to ask, and how to follow through.

While the peer arm produces no effect that is statistically significant at conventional thresholds, the coefficient on having taken any days off in the past month is large in magnitude and approaches significance ($p = 0.106$). Together with qualitative evidence that peers actively cover for one another at the station and share burdens outside it, we read this as suggestive evidence that peer assignment lightens the everyday workload of new female constables. As one peer-posted constable described the arrangement: "*My peer is also my roommate and we were much assured that we two were together, which made every tension half and economically burdened became half and also work wise*" (H_T3_C_F_Peer). We cannot reject equality of mentorship and peer effects on any individual measure.

Career aspirations Retention is a long-standing concern for the police force. The improvements in wellbeing, self-efficacy, and agency documented above may strengthen

women's attachment to a career in the police, helping to reduce drop-out. Our follow-up period is too short to measure long-term retention, but we can ask whether women in the treated arms express stronger commitment to remaining in the force.

Table 6 reports impacts on an aggregate work aspirations index and its four components: whether the respondent is not actively searching for other jobs; whether she is not studying for entrance exams for other government positions; whether she envisions herself in the police long-term; and whether she prefers to continue in the police after marriage. Mentorship raises the aggregate work aspirations index by 0.33 standard deviations ($p < 0.05$); the peer effect is essentially zero, and we reject equality of the two coefficients at the 1% level ($p = 0.003$). Mentorship also reduces the probability that a recruit is studying for other government exams by roughly 12 percentage points ($p < 0.10$).

The strongest single component is the post-marriage attachment outcome: mentored women are 16 percentage points more likely than base-arm women to prefer continuing in the police after marriage (control mean 0.67), and the difference between the mentorship and peer effects on this component is highly significant ($p < 0.001$). A natural channel for these findings is exposure to a senior female role model. Eighty percent of the female mentors in our sample are themselves married, compared with only 8% of new female recruits at baseline. Seeing senior women combine a long career in the police with marriage and family may make this trajectory more concrete and credible to mentees, making them more likely to envision continuing in the police after they themselves marry.

5.2 Impacts on the Quality of GBV Policing

We turn now to the second principal question of the study: how does the assignment of female constables to a police station affect the quality of policing in cases of gender-based violence? We answer this question both at the station level – via administrative data on FIRs filed – and at the level of individual officers, via measured gender attitudes and self-reported task assignment. We report results both pooling all female-constable arms ("Any New Women") and separately for the one-woman arms ($T_{0,1}$, combining base and mentorship) and the two-women (peer) arm.

Baseline beliefs about GBV Before turning to treatment effects we briefly describe baseline beliefs about GBV among new male and female recruits, which provide context for the results that follow. Figures A3 and A4 report the distributions, by gender, of two key items: how common a problem the recruit believes false GBV reporting to be;

and how helpful or harmful the recruit believes formal FIR filing to be for women in domestic-violence cases.

Both items reveal a substantial gender gap. Male recruits are considerably more likely than female recruits to believe that false GBV reports are very common, and considerably less likely to believe that filing an FIR is helpful for the complainant. These gaps echo a well-documented reluctance to register GBV cases, with officers instead prioritizing "protecting families" through informal reconciliation rather than formal action (Sukhtankar et al., 2022). Women's presence in the station could plausibly shift either or both of these dimensions; we now ask whether it does.

GBV First Information Reports The assignment of female constables to a station leads to a sharp increase in the number of FIRs filed in GBV cases. Figure 5 plots point estimates and 95% confidence intervals from a regression comparing pure control (no new female constable, C) stations to stations assigned to receive at least one new female constable (pooling T_1, T_2, and T_0) as well as a regression comparing pure control to stations that received 1 versus 2 women, respectively. The outcome is number of FIRs on GBV cases filed in the year following new constable posting.

Stations assigned at least one new female constable file 24% more GBV FIRs than control stations (control mean: 57.28 FIRs). The point estimates for the one-woman and two-women arms are similar in magnitude, indicating that the bulk of the gain comes from moving from zero to one female constable rather than from the marginal second woman. The result is consistent with prior evidence that female officers are more responsive to female complainants and more willing to formally register GBV complaints despite institutional pressure not to do so (Sukhtankar et al., 2022; Miller and Segal, 2019).

The qualitative evidence helps explain why even a single additional female constable can increase the registration of GBV cases. Formally, constables do not file FIRs on their own; senior officers must authorize and record them. Yet female constables are often essential in the chain of actions that makes registration possible. Police procedures, as noted, require women officers to be present when women's cases are handled, and female constables are routinely called upon for intake, statement-taking, medical escorts, court-related work, and other follow-up tasks. New female constables, moreover, are working against the backdrop of the Women's Help Desk initiative, described above in Section 2, which has created dedicated spaces, procedures, and expectations around women's cases. Our fieldwork suggests that female constables often play a central role in keeping WHD spaces and practices active: they receive complainants, manage routine desk work,

accompany women through procedural steps, and, in some stations, have become the defacto managers of the desks in the absence of more senior officers. In one peer-posting station, for example, the two newly posted constables occupied and repurposed the WHD room, painting and maintaining it as a recognizable women-facing space within the station. They also expanded its work to include a child-safety focus, creating a dedicated play area for children. Thus, the increase in FIRs likely reflects not only senior officers' decisions to register cases (shaped in part by the WHD intervention), but also the everyday labor through which female constables make women's complaints more visible, administratively actionable, and harder to displace.

Male officers' gender bias We now turn to investigating how the presence of women impacts their male colleagues' gender beliefs. The same exposure to female colleagues that raises GBV case filings appears to raise male officers' bias against GBV complainants. Table 7 reports impacts on an aggregate GBV bias index and three components: the share of rape cases the respondent believes to be false; the share of rape cases the respondent believes to be "caused by" the woman; and agreement with the statement that GBV cases reported to the station are often false.

Newly recruited male officers in stations assigned one female constable score 0.15 standard deviations higher on the GBV bias index than male officers in pure control stations ($p < 0.10$); the effect rises to 0.35 standard deviations in stations assigned two female constables ($p < 0.01$). The two-women effect is large enough that we marginally reject equality of the one- and two-women coefficients ($p = 0.06$). The component-level estimates show that the bias index is driven by movements in all three measures of beliefs about GBV cases: new male constables assigned to stations with two new female constables believe that a larger share of rape cases is false, that a larger share of rape cases is caused by the behavior of the female victim, and that false GBV cases are common.[17] For reference, Table 8 reports the analogous estimates for new female constables, comparing mentorship and peer arms to the base arm. None of the GBV-bias outcomes shift significantly under either treatment.

We are limited in our ability to interpret this result, in part because our qualitative research did not extend to controls stations without any new female constables. However, interviews with male and female officers across the treatment arms suggests a possible indirect mechanism, namely: the additional presence of female constables may impact male constables' gender beliefs by reducing their direct exposure to gender-

[17]We find no clear evidence of backlash in general gender attitudes (e.g., support for quotas).

based violence victims. In stations assigned new female constables, male officers handle a smaller fraction of GBV cases themselves (Table A5).[18] In the absence of this direct contact with female complainants, male officers may find it easier to embrace heuristics, like widely circulating narratives about "false cases," when considering women's complaints in the abstract. In addition, the narrarive of false cases appears to extend to male officers' fears that they themselves could be falsely accused by women. In interviews, male officers emphasize that the presence of female constables shields them from needing to interact directly with victims of gender-based violence, which they view as potentially risky. For instance, one male constable stated that "*for CAW [Crimes Against Women] work, women police are a great help for the male officers... Nowadays, women complainants are not very truthful...; if they find something not to their liking, they may put allegation on the male officer and hence a female officer's presence is very helpful as a witness*" (G_T1_C_M). Another man reported that "*without women officers, men are totally handicapped to handle CAW because women officers are like eyewitness to safeguard a male officer while a female complainant is giving her statement.*" The increase in gender biased views among male officers therefore does not appear to reflect bias or backlash against female officers, but rather a hardening of stereotypes about women in the public.

6 Discussion

The results demonstrate that relatively light-touch interventions can improve the workplace experiences of newly recruited women in a highly masculinized police force. Both peer posting and mentorship reduce isolation and improve mental well-being, while mentorship has broader effects on women's self-efficacy, workplace agency, and career aspirations. Yet the mechanisms at work are not reducible to whether a female constable has another woman (peer or mentor) present in the station. Qualitatively, we observe that what matters is the nature of the tie that is created: whether it is emotionally resonant, useful, and the types of institutional access it affords.

Mentorship creates a vertical professional tie. The qualitative evidence suggests that mentors help new constables learn how to ask questions, approach seniors, interpret workplace rules, and navigate problems that would otherwise feel overwhelming. Mentorship does not necessarily make the police station less demanding. Instead, it

[18]This could indicate a "pigeonholing" effect where these tasks are offloaded to female recruits. Female task assignment data (Table A6) shows, however, that both mentored and peer station women are less likely than status quo women to work on GBV cases.

appears to make the institution more legible and navigable. Mentored women become more willing to name problems, but also more able to cope with and solve them.

Crucially, the impacts mentorship does not rest on gender alone; it is effective when the mentor — regardless of gender — is accessible, knowledgeable, respected in the station, and able to help the mentee navigate the institution. Female mentors often provided distinctive forms of support, especially around menstruation, bodily needs, domestic pressures, and navigating gendered expectations. In one female mentor's account, "*When she has any personal problem, like periods, I helped her... I took over her assigned duty*" (H_T2_C_F_Mentor). Another female mentor explained, "*We both are free and frank... she discusses any personal problem also with me... as if I would be speaking with my own daughter*" (E_T2_F_HC). But older male mentors could also become trusted "father figures," where age, rank, and demeanor made the relationship both socially comfortable and professionally legitimate. At the same time, younger male mentor-female mentee pairings often remained formal and thin, as both parties remained wary of being seen as too close or having an inappropriate relationship. This shows how gender interacts with age and authority to shape whether mentorship becomes a meaningful source of support.

The qualitative work also reveals unanticipated effects. One example is the impact of mentorship on mentors themselves. Female mentors in particular often described the role as giving them a sense of responsibility, leadership, and pride—or a source of "institutional recognition" (Kruks-Wisner et al., 2026). One explained: "I*t is exciting as it gives me a leadership role and makes me feel important. I feel it like my personal achievement when my mentee performs well. A strong connect among us has developed, which never happened in police before*" (E_T2_F_HC). Another reflected that the act of teaching increased her own confidence: "*I like the mentorship work so much... my own confidence level increases when I am able to answer*" (H_T2_C_F). In these accounts, mentorship is not only a transfer of knowledge from senior to junior officer. It is also strengthens mentors' own confidence and professional identity. This is especially important in a bottom-heavy police organization where constables and head constables have few formal opportunities to exercise leadership or gain professional recognition.

A second unanticipated insight is that mentoring itself often became reciprocal. One female mentor described the relationship as an exchange that: "*Made my life easier as she* [the mentee] *is great in computer, she does my computer job and learns [policing] simultaneously... She asks questions about the matter she is typing and I explain it to her. It is like we both are benefitting*" (E_T2_F_HC, female mentor). This kind of

mutual exchange breaks from a purely top-down model of instruction. It also reveals why mentorship—above and beyond formal training—may be especially useful in police stations, where learning often occurs through observation and experience rather than formal classroom instruction.

Peer posting offers a horizontal tie. Peer-posted constables share rooms, meals, transport, domestic tasks, emotional burdens, and sometimes duties. Peers also provide practical forms of collective problem-solving. For example, one explained: "*During [our menstrual] periods we exchange outdoor duties*" (G_T3_Peer F C). These forms of companionship and burden-sharing are central to the mental-health effects we observe. Peer-posting may also reduce workload through sharing tasks, making it possible for constables to secure precious days off—something that mentorship could not effectively enable. But peers are all new recruits with low standing in the station and police hierarchy. They can help each other endure and adapt, but they cannot substitute for someone like a senior mentor with greater institutional knowledge and authority. Peer posting therefore provides companionship and mechanisms for collective coping, while mentorship enables institutional navigation. These insights help to explain why the peer intervention had more limited effects on workplace agency and career aspirations.

The qualitative research also highlights the importance of station leadership. Senior actors like Station House Officers (SHOs) and Head Constables (HCMs) influence whether new women feel comfortable asking questions, requesting leave, learning new tasks, or speaking up about difficulties. One HCM observed of a mentee, "*Her learning, confidence and bonding with the station members have been very good*" (G_T2_HCM). A SHO described the goal of mentorship as helping a new constable "*adopt the police working culture*," so that "*learning would be better and a comfortable atmosphere [is] given through mentor*" (H_T2_SHO_M). Leadership also mattered in peer-posted stations. A senior male constable observed that "*Peer posting has helped in faster adjustment*," but also emphasized his own role: "*I leave them for home on time and answer every doubt all the time they ask. This adds to their motivation to work*" (E_T3_C_M). These accounts suggest that both peer and mentor ties are most effective when embedded in a station-level culture that treats women's learning, wellbeing, and professional development as institutional responsibilities. They also reveal that informal mentorship already existed in some stations. The mentorship intervention did not invent support from scratch; rather, it formalized and sought to institutionalize a practice that sometimes emerged organically.

Last, our broader station-level findings further underscore that gender integration

reshapes not only female officers' experiences, but also organizational routines and beliefs. That stations receiving newly posted female constables register more cases of gender-based violence suggests that women's presence can improve institutional responsiveness to female complainants. Yet this improvement coexists with a troubling shift, as male officers in treated stations become more likely to endorse gender biased beliefs about female complainants. Qualitative accounts suggest that this is not a backlash against women colleagues within the police. Far from it, as new female officers come to handle more women-related cases, male officers may increasingly come to see those female officers as safeguards against reputational or legal risk in environments where they fear being accused of inappropriate behavior towards women citizens. Thus, women's presence can expand access to the state for women citizens, while also reinforcing gendered task allocation among officers, and enabling skeptical narratives among male officers.

7 Conclusion

Increasing women's representation in male-dominated public institutions is both normatively important and practically difficult. In policing, the challenge is not only to recruit women into the force, but to ensure that they are meaningfully integrated, supported, and retained once they enter. This paper studies that challenge in the Madhya Pradesh Police, a hierarchical and highly masculinized organization in which newly recruited female constables enter at the bottom of the institution, often as one of only a few women in their station.

We evaluate two low-cost interventions designed to strengthen female constables' workplace support: assigning single-posted women a senior mentor within the station, and posting new women recruits in pairs to facilitate peer support. Both interventions improve women's mental well-being and reduce isolation. Mentorship has broader effects, increasing women's confidence, self-efficacy, willingness to name workplace problems, observable agency in requesting transfers and resources such as housing, and aspirations to remain in the police, including after marriage. Peer posting, by contrast, primarily operates through companionship, collective coping, and burden-sharing.

The results also show that increasing women's presence can change how police stations respond to citizens, increasing registration of gender-based violence. Stations receiving additional female constables register more cases of gender-based violence, consistent with the idea that women officers can improve responsiveness to female complainants. Yet women's presence also has unintended effects, as male officers in stations

receiving new female personnel become more likely to express biased beliefs about female complainants.

The policy implications are twofold. First, numerical representation does not automatically translate into integration or well-being. Institutions must also attend to the social and professional ties through which women learn, cope, and imagine a future in the organization. Ensuring that women are not posted alone, and creating structured mentorship opportunities, can generate meaningful improvements in women's workplace experiences. Second, supporting female officers must be accompanied by broader organizational reforms that institutionalize gender-sensitive policing among all officers. Otherwise, female officers may become better integrated into police stations that continue to systematically underserve women citizens.

More broadly, our findings contribute to debates about representation, workplace integration, and state capacity. Adding women to male-dominated public institutions can change both the experiences of women workers and the behavior of the state toward female citizens. Professional ties can help women endure, learn, and advance within difficult institutions. Whether those institutions become more equitable and responsive, however, requires reforms that reshape not only women's position within the organization, but the gendered norms and routines of the organization itself.

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Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Policing in India vs World

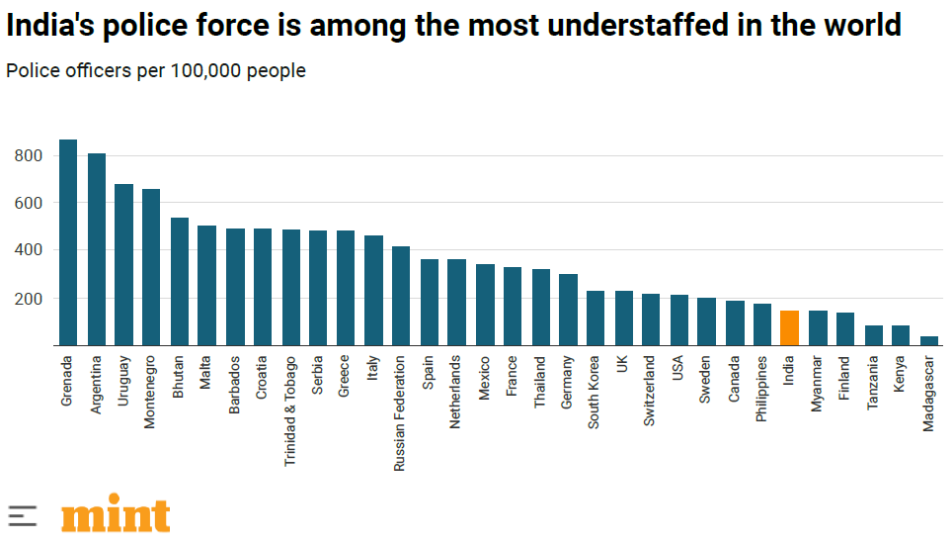


Figure 2: Female Labor Force Participation Rates

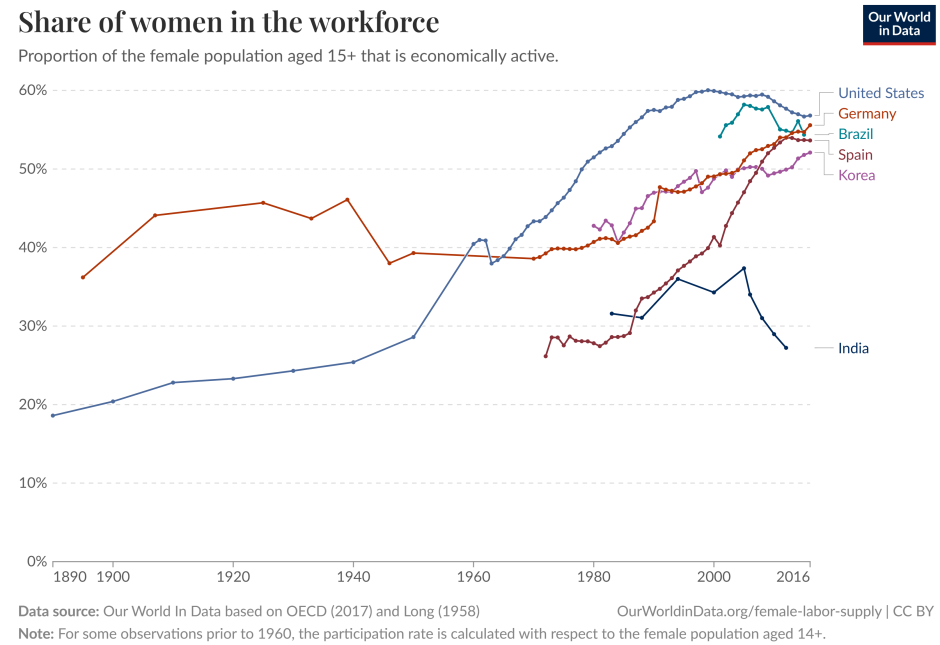


Figure 3: Study Districts in Madhya Pradesh

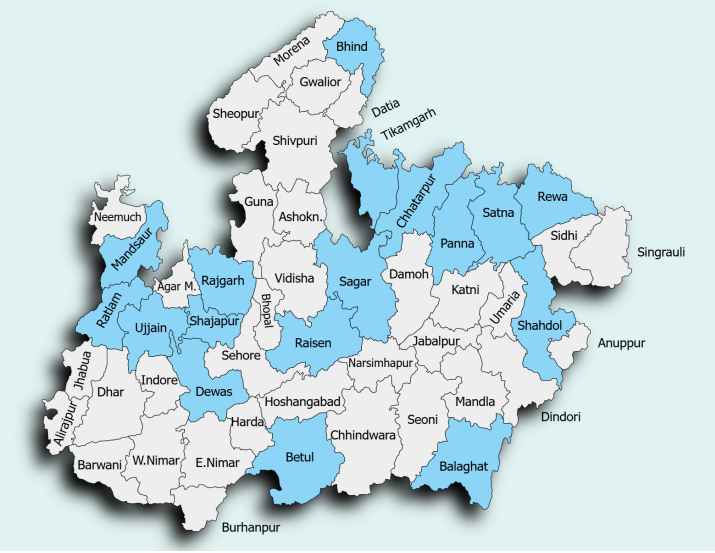


Figure 4: Experimental Treatment Groups

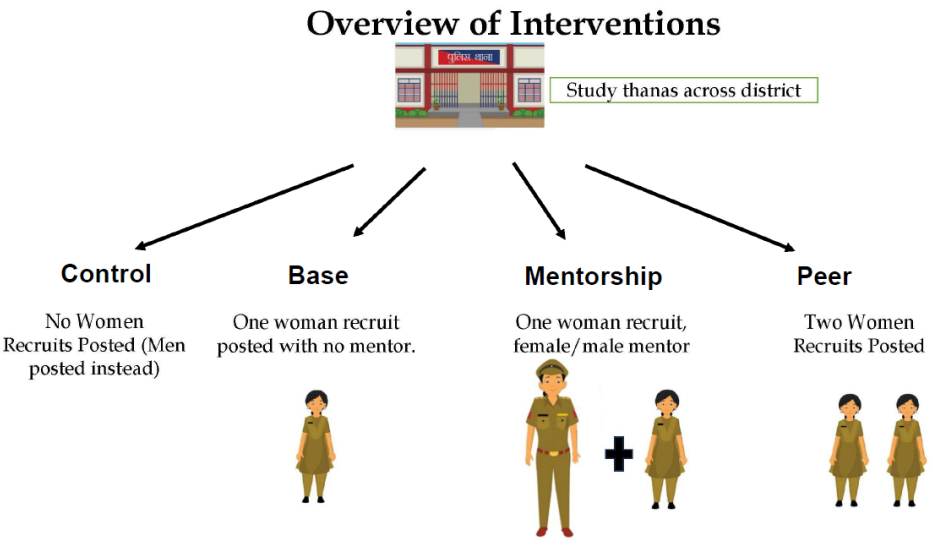
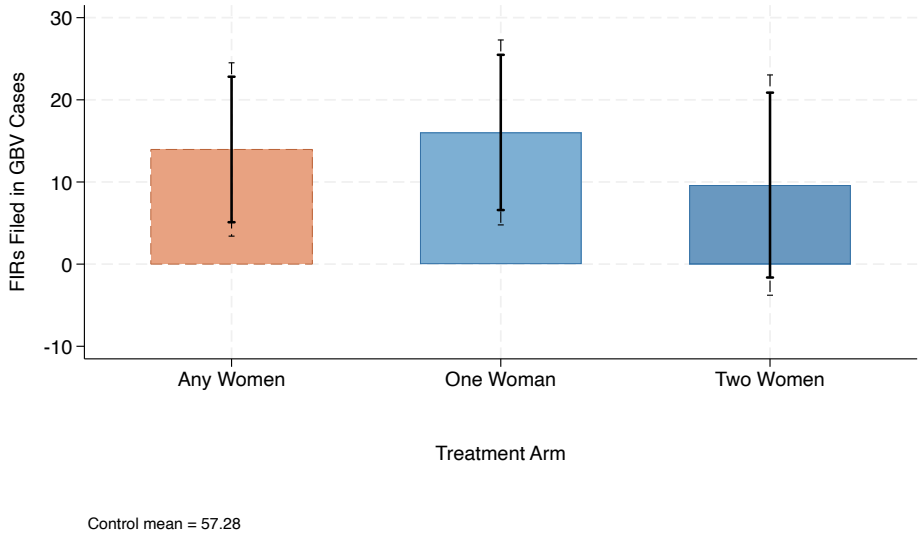


Figure 5: Impact on Number of GBV First Information Reports Filed



Notes: This figure plots coefficient estimates and 95% confidence intervals from station-level regressions of the number of First Information Reports (FIRs) filed in gender-based violence (GBV) cases in the year following the posting of new constable recruits. Estimates are reported as incremental GBV FIRs relative to pure-control stations. "Any Women" pools the three female-treatment arms (Base, Mentorship, and Peer); "One Woman" covers stations assigned a single female recruit (Base and Mentorship arms); "Two Women" covers stations assigned two female recruits (Peer arm). All regressions include strata fixed effects, with controls selected via double post-LASSO; standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust. The control-station mean is 57.28 GBV FIRs.

Table 1: Compliance with Treatment Assignment

Group	**Randomized**	**Initial compliance %**	**6-mth compliance %**
Base	77	93.7	88.6
Mentorship	74	89.2	81.1
Peer	73	91.8	82.2
Control	98	95.9	89.8

This table reports compliance with the randomized treatment assignment, measured at the police-station level, across the four experimental arms. "Randomized" is the number of stations assigned to each arm. A station is coded as compliant if its actual configuration of new female constables matches its randomized assignment: Base and Mentorship stations are compliant if they received exactly one new female constable (with Mentorship additionally requiring an active assigned mentor), Peer stations if they received exactly two, and Control stations if they received none. "Initial compliance %" reports this measure at the time of initial posting (February–April 2024); "6-mth compliance %" reports it approximately six months later, at the time of the midline survey (November–December 2024), reflecting subsequent deviations from assigned status due to transfers or other station-level changes.

Table 2: Impact on Mental Health

	(1) Aggregate Mental Health Index	(2) No One for Emotional Support	(3) Depression Index	(4) Isolation in Thana Index
Any Treatment	-0.311***	-0.128***	-0.197**	-0.062
	(0.102)	(0.044)	(0.096)	(0.107)
Mentorship	-0.264**	-0.113**	-0.131	-0.062
	(0.126)	(0.054)	(0.123)	(0.130)
Peer	-0.353***	-0.138***	-0.244**	-0.091
	(0.106)	(0.047)	(0.102)	(0.115)
Obs.	556	556	556	556
Ctrl mean	0.000	0.331	0.000	0.000
p-value: T1=T2	0.400	0.606	0.324	0.804

All outcome variables, with the exception of "No one to turn to for emotional support," are standardized to have mean zero and standard deviation one. All columns include fixed effects for police station, surveyor, surveyor gender, and survey wave.

Column (2) is based on the survey question: "Who do you turn to if you are simply feeling frustrated or sad while at work?" The outcome is coded as an indicator equal to one if the respondent reported having no one to turn to for emotional support, and zero otherwise.

Column (3) reports an index constructed from responses to the questions: "How often do you experience little interest or pleasure in doing things?" and "How often do you experience feeling down, depressed, or hopeless?" Responses are coded on a four-point scale: 0 = "Not at all," 1 = "Several days," 2 = "More than half the days," and 3 = "Nearly every day."

Column (4) reports an index constructed from responses to the questions: "How often do you feel that you lack companionship in your thana?", "How often do you feel left out in your thana?", and "How often do you feel isolated from others in your thana?" Responses are coded on a three-point scale: 1 = "Hardly ever," 2 = "Some of the time," and 3 = "Often."

Column (1) reports a composite index constructed from the measures presented in Columns (2), (3), and (4).

Table 3: Self-Efficacy and Resilience

	(1) Aggregate Self-Efficacy Index	(2) Can Solve Most Problems	(3) Can Remain Calm by Relying on Coping Strategies
Any Treatment	0.166*	0.087	0.233*
	(0.086)	(0.089)	(0.129)
Mentorship	0.255**	0.213**	0.222
	(0.104)	(0.108)	(0.159)
Peer	0.126	0.038	0.197
	(0.092)	(0.096)	(0.136)
Obs.	556	556	274
Ctrl mean	0.000	0.000	0.000
p-value: T1=T2	0.172	0.076	0.855

All variables have been standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. All columns include fixed effects by police station, surveyor, surveyor gender, and survey wave.

Column (2) reports responses to the question: "Can you solve most problems if you invest the necessary effort?", while Column (3) reports responses to the question: "When you are confronted with a problem, can you usually find several solutions?" Responses to both questions are coded on a four-point scale: 1 = "No – completely," 2 = "No – somewhat," 3 = "Yes – somewhat," and 4 = "Yes – completely."

Column (1) reports a composite index constructed from the measures presented in Columns (2) and (3).

Table 4: Awareness of Problems in Police

	(1) Aggregate Problem Awareness Index	(2) Harrassing or Inappropriate Language in Thana	(3) No Permission for Toilet: Male Supervisor	(4) No Permission for Toilet: Female Supervisor
Any Treatment	0.192*	0.105	0.120	0.217*
	(0.104)	(0.098)	(0.106)	(0.111)
Mentorship	0.357***	0.282**	0.201	0.274*
	(0.127)	(0.117)	(0.130)	(0.145)
Peer	0.104	0.011	0.077	0.186
	(0.114)	(0.104)	(0.116)	(0.121)
Obs.	556	556	556	556
Ctrl mean	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
p-value: T1=T2	0.037	0.008	0.302	0.530

All variables have been standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. All columns include fixed effects by police station, surveyor, surveyor gender, and survey wave.
Column (2) reports responses to the question "Female officers sometimes face the challenge that colleagues in the thana employ unprofessional language. If a new female constable joined your thana, do you think she would report this as an important issue?" Responses are coded on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 = Not an Issue at All and 10 = Very Serious Issue.
Column (3) reports responses to the question "Imagine a typical workday when you have a lot of work to do while standing outside (e.g., election duty; law and order duty). If you need to use a toilet, how challenging would it be asking your male supervisor for a break to do so?" Similarly, column (4) reports responses to the question "Imagine a typical workday when you have a lot of work to do while standing outside (e.g., election duty; law and order duty). If you need to use a toilet, how challenging would you feel asking your female supervisor for a break to do so?" Reponses are coded on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 = Not Challenging at All and 10 = Extremely Challenging.
Column (1) reports a composite index constructed from the measures presented in Columns (2)-(4).

Table 5: Workplace Conditions

	(1) Housing Referral By Police	(2) Any Days Off Last Month	(3) Hours Worked Per Day	(4) Transferred Station	(5) Wanted Transfer
Any Treatment	0.095	0.062	-0.142	0.066*	0.049
	(0.058)	(0.047)	(0.230)	(0.040)	(0.038)
Mentorship	0.143**	0.041	-0.190	0.102**	0.088*
	(0.070)	(0.057)	(0.284)	(0.051)	(0.051)
Peer	0.066	0.081	-0.136	0.050	0.031
	(0.063)	(0.050)	(0.249)	(0.042)	(0.039)
Obs.	282	556	553	274	274
Ctrl mean	0.633	0.599	8.793	0.103	0.090
p-value: T1=T2	0.247	0.415	0.829	0.263	0.197

Column (1) reports responses to the question "How did you find accomodation?" Reponses are coded as 1 = Police Colleagues or Living in Police Quarters, 0 = Else.
Column (2) reports responses to the question "How many days off have you had in the past month?" Responses are coded as 1 = Any Days Off, 0 = Else.
Column (3) reports responses to the question "On average, over the past 7 days, how many hours did you work per day?"
Column (4) reports responses to the question: "Are you still posted in your original station?" where responses are coded as 1 = No and 0 = Yes.
Column (5) reports responses to the question "Did you want to transfer?" where responses are coded as 1 = Yes and 0 = No or Not Applicable.

Table 6: Impact on Career Aspirations

	(1) Aggregate Work Aspirations Index	(2) Not Looking for Other Jobs	(3) Not Studying for Other Exams	(4) Envision Myself in Police Long-Term	(5) Prefer to Continue in Police After Marriage
Any Treatment	0.097	0.026	0.052	-0.001	0.050
	(0.112)	(0.047)	(0.051)	(0.054)	(0.049)
Mentorship	0.327**	0.084	0.121*	0.055	0.164***
	(0.137)	(0.060)	(0.065)	(0.066)	(0.055)
Peer	-0.029	-0.000	0.017	-0.029	-0.019
	(0.119)	(0.051)	(0.055)	(0.058)	(0.054)
Obs.	556	556	556	556	556
Ctrl mean	-0.000	0.306	0.331	0.669	0.669
p-value: T1=T2	0.003	0.142	0.081	0.149	0.000

Columns (2), (3), and (4) all include baseline controls. All columns include fixed effects by police station, surveyor, surveyor gender, and survey wave.

Column (2) reports responses to the survey question: "Are you currently actively looking for other jobs?" where responses are coded as 1 = No and 0 = Yes.

Column (3) reports responses to the question "Are you currently preparing for entrance exams for government services other than the police?" where responses are coded as 1 = No and 0 = Yes.

Column (4) reports responses to the question "Now I want you to think about your future employment. If you imagine yourself ten years from now, do you envision yourself working within the police force?" where responses are coded as 1 = Yes and 0 = No.

Column (5) is an outcome combining both implicit and explicit preference to continue in the police after marriage. It is coded as 1 if the respondent has ever been married or if they are single AND answered "Stay in Your Current Position" to the question "In the future, if you were to get married, would your preference be to continue working in the police force in your current position at a thana or to find another suitable job?".

Column (1) reports a composite index constructed from the measures presented in Columns (2) through (5).

Table 7: Impact on Male Gender Bias

	(1) Aggregate GBV Bias Index	(2) Share of Rape Cases False	(3) Share of Rape Cases Caused by Woman	(4) Agreement: GBV Cases Often False
Any Women	0.201**	0.070***	0.026	0.120
	(0.083)	(0.023)	(0.029)	(0.087)
1 Woman	0.145*	0.060**	0.011	0.056
	(0.088)	(0.024)	(0.030)	(0.091)
2 Women	0.346***	0.092***	0.062*	0.212*
	(0.109)	(0.032)	(0.036)	(0.117)
Obs.	732	360	358	732
Ctrl mean	0.000	0.504	0.476	0.000
p-value: 1=2	0.058	0.296	0.119	0.167

Column (4) includes a baseline control and has been standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. All columns include fixed effects by police station, surveyor, surveyor gender, and survey wave.

Column (2) reports responses to the question "Out of 10 cases where a woman says she was raped by man like this, how many such complaints are false?" Responses are coded the number of cases / 10.

Column (3) reports responses to the question "Out of 10 cases like this, in how many cases the woman faced such a situation because she did not behave in a socially acceptable manner?" Responses are coded as the number of cases / 10.

Column (4) reports responses to the question "Based on your current knowledge, how common a problem do you think it is for women to report false cases about crimes committed by men?" Responses are coded as 1 = Very uncommon problem, 2 = Uncommon problem, 3 = Common problem 4 = Very common problem.

Column (1) reports a composite index consutrcuted from the measures presented in columns (2)-(4).

Table 8: Impact on Female Gender Bias

	(1) Aggregate GBV Bias Index	(2) Share of Rape Cases False	(3) Share of Rape Cases Caused by Woman	(4) Agreement: GBV Cases Often False
Any Treatment	0.138	-0.041	0.047	0.119
	(0.099)	(0.031)	(0.038)	(0.103)
Mentorship	0.167	-0.040	0.045	0.106
	(0.123)	(0.039)	(0.046)	(0.122)
Peer	0.126	-0.039	0.050	0.065
	(0.105)	(0.033)	(0.041)	(0.106)
Obs.	556	274	273	556
Ctrl mean	0.000	0.569	0.382	0.000
p-value: T1=T2	0.711	0.972	0.915	0.698

Column (4) includes a baseline control and has been standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. All columns include fixed effects by police station, surveyor, surveyor gender, and survey wave.

Column (2) reports responses to the question "Out of 10 cases where a woman says she was raped by man like this, how many such complaints are false?" Responses are coded the number of cases / 10.

Column (3) reports responses to the question "Out of 10 cases like this, in how many cases the woman faced such a situation because she did not behave in a socially acceptable manner?" Responses are coded as the number of cases / 10.

Column (4) reports responses to the question "Based on your current knowledge, how common a problem do you think it is for women to report false cases about crimes committed by men?" Responses are coded as 1 = Very uncommon problem, 2 = Uncommon problem, 3 = Common problem 4 = Very common problem.

Column (1) reports a composite index consutrcuted from the measures presented in columns (2)-(4).

A. Appendix Tables and Figures

Figure A1: Mentorship Training Content 2

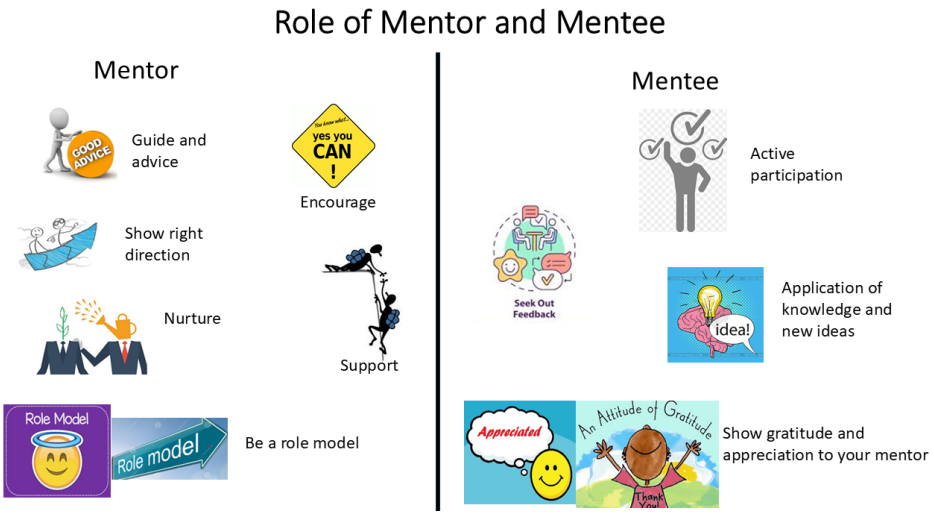


Figure A2: Study Timeline

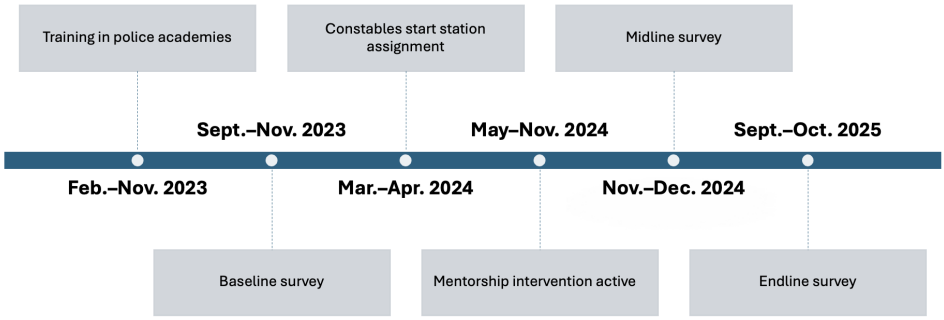
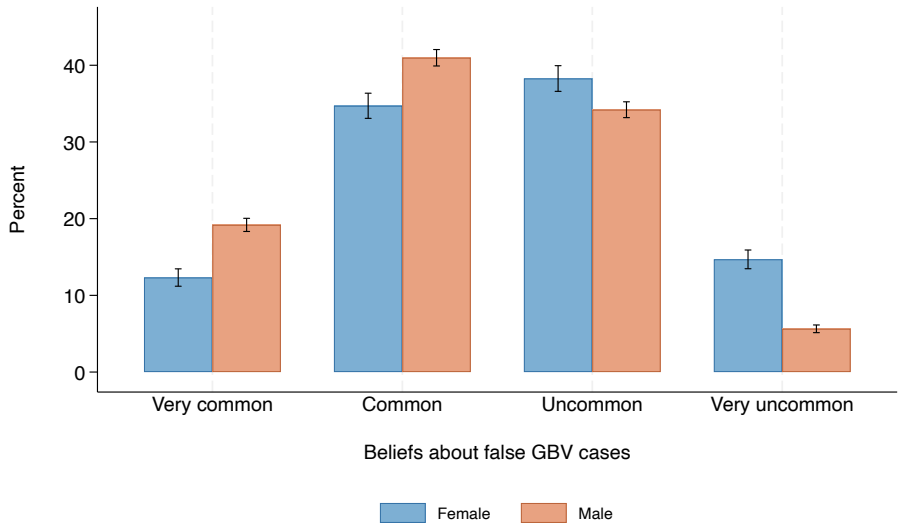
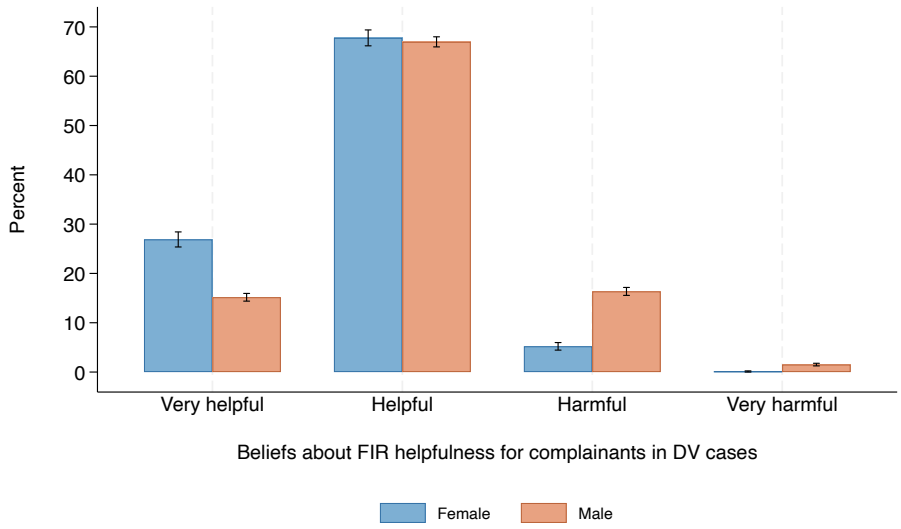


Figure A3: Baseline Beliefs about False Reporting in GBV Cases



Notes: This figure plots the distribution of new constable recruits' baseline beliefs about the prevalence of false reporting in gender-based violence (GBV) cases, separately for female and male recruits. Respondents were asked: "Based on your current knowledge, how common a problem do you think it is for women to report false cases about crimes committed by men?" Bars show the percentage of respondents within each gender selecting each of the four response categories: Very common, Common, Uncommon, Very uncommon. The baseline survey was conducted at training academies between September and November 2023, prior to the assignment of new recruits to study police stations.

Figure A4: Baseline Beliefs about FIRs in Domestic Violence Cases



Notes: This figure plots the distribution of new constable recruits' baseline beliefs about whether filing a First Information Report (FIR) is helpful or harmful for a female complainant in domestic-violence (DV) cases, separately for female and male recruits. Following the framing "In DV cases, officers can be worried that taking action on a woman's complaint could cause the family to break apart," respondents were asked how helpful or harmful they considered FIR filing to be for the complainant. Bars show the percentage of respondents within each gender selecting each of the four response categories: Very helpful, Helpful, Harmful, Very harmful. The baseline survey was conducted at training academies between September and November 2023, prior to the assignment of new recruits to study police stations.

Table A1: Station-Level Gender Distribution at Baseline

Rank	**Gender**	**0th**	**25th**	**50th**	**75th**	**100th**
Constable	Male	3	8	11	17	46
	Female	0	0	2	3	10
Head Constable	Male	0	4	6	10	24
	Female	0	0	0	1	4
Asst. Sub-Inspector	Male	0	2	4	5	20
	Female	0	0	0	0	2
Sub-Inspector	Male	0	1	2	3	8
	Female	0	0	0	1	2
Inspector	Male	0	0	1	1	1
	Female	0	0	0	0	1

This table reports the distribution of male and female officers at each rank across the 322 sample police stations. The gender composition is captured at baseline, prior to assignment of the new round of recruits.

Table A2: Balance on Station Characteristics

	(1) Size	(2) Percent Female	(3) Rural
Any Women	-0.234	0.003	0.015
	(0.906)	(0.673)	(0.774)
One Woman	-0.378	0.005	0.007
	(0.856)	(0.460)	(0.903)
Two Women	0.064	-0.002	0.032
	(0.979)	(0.784)	(0.628)
Obs.	322	322	322
Ctrl mean	30.908	0.099	0.735

This table reports balance tests for police station characteristics across treatment assignments.
Column (1) reports the total number of staff in the station.
Column (2) reports the share of femable constables in the station.
Column (3) reports an indicator for whether the station is located in a rural area.

Table A3: New Female Recruit Balance

	(1) General Caste	(2) Hindu	(3) Education	(4) Age	(5) Ever Married
Any Treatment	-0.012	-0.025	0.039	0.048	0.004
	(0.830)	(0.025)	(0.694)	(0.879)	(0.925)
Mentorship	-0.026	-0.045*	0.124	0.357	-0.024
	(0.694)	(0.079)	(0.189)	(0.418)	(0.627)
Peer	-0.008	-0.015	0.013	-0.172	0.017
	(0.891)	(0.178)	(0.864)	(0.628)	(0.684)
Obs.	280	280	280	280	282
Ctrl mean	0.218	1.000	13.218	24.615	0.114

This table reports balance tests for baseline characteristics across treatment assignments in the new female constable sample. Column (1) reports an indicator for belonging to a general caste category, Column (2) reports an indicator for being Hindu, Column (3) reports years of education completed, Column (4) reports age, and Column (5) reports an indicator for ever having been married.

Table A4: New Male Recruit Balance

	(1) General Caste	(2) Hindu	(3) Age	(4) Education	(5) Ever Married
Any Women	0.003	0.005	-0.055	-0.256	-0.002
	(0.956)	(0.814)	(0.381)	(0.345)	(0.964)
1 Woman	0.003	0.004	-0.062	-0.238	-0.015
	(0.954)	(0.859)	(0.360)	(0.403)	(0.711)
2 Women	0.002	0.008	-0.032	-0.312	0.039
	(0.980)	(0.780)	(0.726)	(0.451)	(0.506)
Obs.	366	366	366	366	372
Ctrl mean	0.233	0.958	13.083	25.333	0.154

This table reports balance tests for baseline characteristics across treatment assignments in the new male constable sample. Column (1) reports an indicator for belonging to a general caste category, Column (2) reports an indicator for being Hindu, Column (3) reports age, Column (4) reports years of education completed, and Column (5) reports an indicator for ever having been married.

Table A5: Male Officer Task Assignment

	(1) Woman-Related Tasks Index	(2) Medico-Legal Case in Top 3 Duties	(3) Victim Support in Top 3 Duties	(4) Medico-Legal Case in Last 2 Days	(5) Victim Support in Last 2 Days	(6) Medico-Legal Case in Last 7 Days (Admin Data)
Any Women	-0.136	0.017	-0.014	-0.021	0.012	-0.010
	(0.133)	(0.621)	(0.406)	(0.457)	(0.272)	(0.187)
1 Woman	-0.105	0.042	-0.005	-0.010	0.003	-0.011
	(0.256)	(0.264)	(0.772)	(0.757)	(0.768)	(0.156)
2 Women	-0.229*	-0.055	-0.042**	-0.059*	0.040*	-0.008
	(0.051)	(0.251)	(0.047)	(0.073)	(0.084)	(0.385)
Obs.	732	732	732	360	360	316
Ctrl mean	0.000	0.208	0.045	0.082	0.016	0.018

Columns (2) and (3) report responses to the question "Can you tell me your top 3 primary duties as a constable?" Responses are coded as 1 = Medico-Legal Case / Victim Support in Top 3 Duties for columns (2) and (3) respectively, and 0 = Else.
Columns (4) and (5) report responses to teh question "What are the tasks you have done in the last two days?" Responses are coded as 1 = Medico-Legal Case / Victim Support was a task in the last two days and 0 = Else.
Column (6) reports what fraction out of seven days did a constable work on Medico-Legal cases. This was collected from administrative data.

Table A6: Female Officer Task Assignment

	(1) Woman-Related Tasks Index	(2) Medico-Legal Case in Top 3 Duties	(3) Victim Support in Top 3 Duties	(4) Medico-Legal Case in Last 2 Days	(5) Victim Support in Last 2 Days	(6) Medico-Legal Case in Admin Data
Any Treatment	-0.239**	-0.086*	-0.039	-0.069*	-0.195***	-0.014
	(0.012)	(0.069)	(0.332)	(0.081)	(0.000)	(0.285)
Mentorship	-0.180*	-0.063	-0.054	-0.009	-0.176***	-0.011
	(0.056)	(0.310)	(0.254)	(0.859)	(0.002)	(0.445)
Peer	-0.273***	-0.099**	-0.031	-0.101**	-0.205***	-0.016
	(0.008)	(0.046)	(0.475)	(0.015)	(0.000)	(0.230)
Obs.	556	556	556	274	274	234
Ctrl mean	0.000	0.618	0.344	0.115	0.218	0.029

Columns (2) and (3) report responses to the question "Can you tell me your top 3 primary duties as a constable?" Responses are coded as 1 = Medico-Legal Case / Victim Support in Top 3 Duties for columns (2) and (3) respectively, and 0 = Else.
Columns (4) and (5) report responses to teh question "What are the tasks you have done in the last two days?" Responses are coded as 1 = Medico-Legal Case / Victim Support was a task in the last two days and 0 = Else.
Column (6) reports what fraction out of seven days did a constable work on Medico-Legal cases. This was collected from administrative data.