



# Evaluating The Effectiveness of Police Responses to The Crimes Against Women And Children: Challenges and Best Practices With Special Reference to Sagar District

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Sharique hussain khan<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Rajeev nain singh<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Law, Swami Vivekanand University, Sagar, MP

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of law, Swami Vivekanand university Sagar, MP

## Abstract

The “primary purpose of this research” is to evaluate the effectiveness of police responses to crimes against women and children, specifically assessing the impact of legal requirements, institutional challenges, police training, legal awareness, and proposed legal reforms. The study investigates whether police practices align with legal standards, the influence of institutional challenges on police performance, and the relationship between legal training and compliance with protective laws. It also explores the role of legal awareness among victims and the potential impact of legal reforms on enhancing police responses. The research concludes that significant gaps exist between legal standards and police practices, which hinder the effective response to “crimes against women and children” in Sagar district. The study highlights the importance of addressing institutional challenges, enhancing police training, and increasing legal awareness among both law enforcement personnel and the public. Additionally, the study emphasizes the potential for legal reforms to improve the police response system and ensure better protection for women and children. The findings suggest that a multifaceted approach, including policy changes, enhanced training, and greater community involvement, is essential for improving the overall effectiveness of police responses to these crimes.

**Keyword:** Police response, crimes against women, crimes against children, safety, justice, law enforcement.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Crimes against women and children have long been recognized as some of the most severe violations of human rights. The victims and their families are profoundly affected by the psychological, emotional, and physical abuse that is a common component of these crimes. Perpetrators often target women and children in many venues, including homes, offices, schools, and public spaces, since they are seen as more susceptible. Public safety, societal stability, and the legal system are all jeopardized by the worldwide occurrence of these crimes. [1]

There is a significant problem in society throughout the world with crimes committed against children and women [2]. Among these transgressions include acts of sexual and physical assault, as well as psychological and financial exploitation. Such actions have devastating and long-lasting effects on the victims, their loved ones, and the communities in which they live. Instances of human trafficking, child abuse, domestic violence, and other types of exploitation disproportionately affect women and children because of their perceived vulnerability. [3]

### 1.1. The Role of Police in Addressing Crimes Against Women and Children

For vulnerable members of society to have access to justice, safety, and protection, the police must take an active role in investigating and prosecuting crimes committed against women and children. Every one of these crimes—from

“sexual assault and domestic violence to human trafficking and child abuse”—has a huge effect on people and places. An integral part of the criminal justice system, the police department is the first point of contact for victims who are seeking compensation.

### 1. Legal Framework and Police Responsibilities

The “Indian Penal Code (IPC)” and various special laws form the backbone of addressing crimes against women and children. Some key provisions include:

- **“Section 376 IPC”:** Deals with rape and outlines stringent punishments for offenders.
- **“The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005”:** Requires police intervention in cases of domestic abuse.
- **“The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012”:** Establishes a robust “framework for protecting children from sexual abuse”.

Under these laws, the police are entrusted with responsibilities like registering FIRs (First Information Reports), conducting investigations, protecting victims, and ensuring that justice is served.

### 2. Challenges in Police Response

Despite the legal provisions, the police face several challenges in addressing crimes against women and children:

- **Social Stigma:** Victims often face societal backlash, leading to underreporting of crimes.
- **Insensitive Handling:** Instances of victim-blaming by law enforcement create additional trauma.
- **Resource Constraints:** Lack of infrastructure, such as women-friendly police stations, hampers effective response.
- **Training Deficiencies:** Many police personnel lack training in gender-sensitive handling of cases.

### 3. Training and Capacity Building

To improve the police's effectiveness, comprehensive training programs are essential. These programs should focus on:

- **Gender Sensitization:** Educating officers about the unique needs and rights of women and children.
- **Legal Knowledge:** Enhancing understanding of laws and judicial processes.

- **Victim-Centered Approach:** Emphasizing empathy and support for victims during investigations.

### 1.2. Responsibility of Police towards Women

- Some protections for women are included in the Code of Criminal Procedure (1973), such as the duty of a husband to support his wife and the ability for a female police officer to arrest a woman.
- For the sake of her privacy, a sexual assault survivor has the option to record her statement either alone or in the presence of a female police officer before the district magistrate during the trial.
- Women are granted the option to submit virtual complaints by email or to write them down and mail them to a police station from a registered postal address, according to the legislation. To add insult to injury, the SHO sent a police policeman to her location to document her grievance.
- A Zero FIR may be transferred to the Police Station that has jurisdiction over the matter at a later date, however it can be first filed at any police station, regardless of the location or exact jurisdiction the event happened in.
- The goal of having 33% female police officers was reaffirmed in 2013 by the Ministry of Home Affairs, who also called for ten female police constables and three female sub-inspectors at every police station to guarantee that female help-desks are manned continuously.
- The idea of establishing Investigative Units for Crimes against Women (IUCAW) at police stations in states with high crime rates was first up by the government in 2016.
- An online reporting system for sexually explicit material was established by the Indian government in 2018.
- The plan to provide funding to states and union territories to establish women's support desks at all police stations was authorised by the Ministry of Home Affairs in August 2020.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Under the POCSO statute, 52,836 females were victims of criminal activities, which is about five times more than the 1,038 male victims. Sexual offenses against children were most common in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, with 98.18 cases per 1,000 residents. Criminals prey on children because they are innocent and lack the ability to discriminate between right and wrong. Reliable information

is crucial for exposing these heinous acts in our society and successfully fighting them. Methodological and ethical challenges are just two of many issues that affect data accessibility. Because many youths are too timid or ashamed to come forward, many offenses go unreported. It is easier to report certain crimes than others. [4]

Crimes perpetrated against women and children can only be adequately addressed if police prioritize the needs of victims. According to research, victims' ability to pursue justice is greatly affected when law enforcement officials demonstrate compassion and assistance. Victims are more likely to have faith in the system and participate actively in legal processes if they get sympathetic treatment from police. As part of this strategy, you should go to work right away gathering evidence and making sure the victim is protected so you can have a better case against the criminal. When female police officers are present during contacts with female victims, it has been shown that the victims feel more comfortable and are more likely to speak up about their experiences. Victims' faith in the court system and the possibility of positive legal results are both enhanced by a victim-centered police approach. [5]

Modules on learning to see the warning indications of abuse, comprehending the mental toll it has on victims, and developing an unbiased perspective are commonplace in training programs. There will be fewer cases of secondary victimization due to insensitive conduct if officers are educated in these areas to react to victims with empathy and professionalism. Higher rates of case resolutions and convictions are the result of well-trained officers' enhanced ability to do comprehensive investigations, rigorously maintain evidence, and collaborate with other agencies. Improving the overall response to crimes against vulnerable groups requires investing in the continued training and development of police officers. [6]

Victims of crimes committed against children and women face a formidable barrier to justice due to the pervasive gender prejudice within the police force. Research shows that some police officers deeply held patriarchal beliefs cause them to be dismissive or critical of victims, which discourages them from seeking justice. This prejudice often shows itself as victim blaming, when the victim is wrongfully held responsible for the crime. The fear of not being believed or scrutinized is a factor in why gender-based violence is underreported, and these attitudes play a role in that. According to studies, the only way to eradicate these prejudices is for the police force to undergo radical changes, with a focus on holding officers responsible for their

discriminatory acts. Transforming the culture inside law enforcement institutions also requires educational activities that promote gender equality and challenge preconceptions. If police are to respond in a fair and impartial manner that prioritizes the victim's rights, eliminating gender prejudice is an absolute must. [7]

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objectives of this study are to:

1. Analyze the legal framework governing police responses to crimes against women and children in Sagar district.
2. Evaluate the extent to which police actions align with legal mandates and standards.
3. Identify the legal and institutional challenges that hinder effective police responses.
4. Assess the role of legal training and awareness among police personnel in ensuring compliance with laws.
5. Propose legal reforms and recommendations for strengthening police responses to crimes against women and children.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design to systematically assess the effectiveness of police responses to crimes against women and children in Sagar district. The design focused on evaluating how well the police adhere to legal standards and identifying any gaps in their responses. By using a survey-based approach, the study aims to gather detailed insights from victims and their families. The primary data for this study was collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to capture a range of information. Quantitative analysis was involved statistical techniques to identify patterns and relationships, such as correlations between responses on the Likert scale and demographic information. Sagar District was selected as the study area for this study.

#### 5. Data analysis and interpretation

Data Analysis and Interpretation provides a thorough examination of the survey data, focusing on the effectiveness of "police responses to crimes against women and children" in Sagar district.

### Age group

Age group					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 years to 30 years	69	12.1	12.1	12.1
	31 years to 40 years	233	40.9	40.9	53.0
	40 years to 50 years	159	27.9	27.9	80.9
	above 50 years	109	19.1	19.1	100.0
	Total	570	100.0	100.0	

### Gender

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	375	65.8	65.8	65.8
	Female	195	34.2	34.2	100.0
	Total	570	100.0	100.0	

### Area of Residence

Area of Residence					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Urban	399	70.0	70.0	70.0
	Rural	171	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	570	100.0	100.0	

### Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary or below	73	12.8	12.8	12.8
	Secondary	191	33.5	33.5	46.3
	Graduate	282	49.5	49.5	95.8
	Postgraduate and above	24	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	570	100.0	100.0	

### Role in Society

Role in Society					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Law enforcement	56	9.8	9.8	9.8
	Victim/survivor	69	12.1	12.1	21.9
	Family of Victim/survivor	107	18.8	18.8	40.7
	Community member	338	59.3	59.3	100.0
	Total	570	100.0	100.0	

## 5.2. Descriptive Statistics of the responses of the respondents

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Legal provisions for protecting women and children are comprehensive and clear.	570	1	5	3.04	1.543
The legal framework provides adequate guidelines for police actions in sensitive cases.	570	1	5	2.11	1.291
Laws concerning crimes against women and children are effectively communicated to law enforcement agencies.	570	1	5	2.05	1.276
Legal procedures ensure that victims' rights are protected throughout the investigation process.	570	1	5	2.09	1.284
The legal system provides sufficient support to police in handling cases of crimes against women and children.	570	1	5	2.42	1.492
Police responses often lack consistency with the procedures outlined in the law.	570	1	5	2.91	1.364
Timely actions are frequently not taken by police in cases involving women and children.	570	1	5	2.21	1.240
Complaints of crimes against women and children are often inadequately addressed.	570	1	5	1.84	1.118

Police investigations are sometimes lacking in transparency.	570	1	5	2.15	1.297
Officers do not always display professionalism during interactions with victims.	570	1	5	2.39	1.463
Resource limitations often compromise the quality of police responses.	570	1	5	2.80	1.436
Delays in the legal system frequently hinder effective police action.	570	1	5	2.22	1.297
Coordination between police and other legal bodies is often insufficient.	570	1	5	1.95	1.226
Institutional policies do not adequately support effective crime responses.	570	1	5	2.22	1.295
Infrastructure constraints frequently impact the efficiency of police investigations.	570	1	5	2.30	1.378
Support services provided to victims are often inadequate.	570	1	5	2.61	1.645
Police measures rarely deter crimes against women and children effectively.	570	1	5	2.30	1.521
Police interventions have limited impact on victim safety.	570	1	5	2.13	1.335
There is often a lack of follow-up on registered cases.	570	1	5	2.40	1.252
Community feedback on police responses is seldom incorporated.	570	1	5	2.15	1.272
Police officers are not always well-versed in laws concerning women and children.	570	1	5	3.05	1.478
Training programs often fail to equip police with skills for handling sensitive cases.	570	1	5	2.08	1.163
Periodic legal training updates are inadequate in improving officer performance.	570	1	5	1.83	1.028
Knowledge of relevant legal frameworks is not consistently applied in practice.	570	1	5	1.89	1.109
Training initiatives do not always help officers manage complex cases effectively.	570	1	5	2.52	1.533
Policies for protecting women and children are not always strictly enforced.	570	1	5	2.58	1.454
Case handling often lacks adherence to legal standards.	570	1	5	2.16	1.292
Victims do not always feel secure under police protection.	570	1	5	2.13	1.409
Laws are sometimes misinterpreted during investigations.	570	1	5	2.27	1.319
Regulatory compliance by the police does not always enhance trust in the system.	570	1	5	2.20	1.306
Lack of awareness of rights often prevents victims from seeking justice.	570	1	5	2.32	1.374
Victims often do not receive adequate information on legal procedures.	570	1	5	2.15	1.214
Families are often unaware of the police's role in the legal process.	570	1	5	2.36	1.330
Limited awareness reduces the likelihood of collaboration with the police.	570	1	5	2.39	1.282

Awareness programs are often ineffective in empowering victims to report crimes.	570	1	5	2.25	1.346
Investigations rarely lead to actionable legal outcomes.	570	1	5	2.57	1.481
Resolution timeframes for cases are often too long.	570	1	5	2.19	1.292
Investigative processes frequently do not align with established legal protocols.	570	1	5	2.14	1.317
Police often fail to provide sufficient evidence for legal proceedings.	570	1	5	2.15	1.312
Victims' experiences often reflect dissatisfaction with investigation outcomes.	570	1	5	2.18	1.314
Suggested reforms often fail to address gaps in current practices.	570	1	5	2.31	1.332
Policy changes rarely streamline the investigation of sensitive cases.	570	1	5	2.14	1.172
Reforms often do not improve coordination among legal stakeholders.	570	1	5	2.28	1.204
Structural changes often fail to enhance officer accountability.	570	1	5	2.38	1.290
Implementation of reforms does not always lead to better crime prevention.	570	1	5	2.27	1.341
Crimes are rarely reported due to fear of retaliation.	570	1	5	2.54	1.577
Police initiatives often do not address specific challenges in Sagar district.	570	1	5	2.30	1.402
Community members perceive little progress in handling such crimes.	570	1	5	2.09	1.188
Cases of repeated offenses are often not effectively managed.	570	1	5	2.15	1.245
Focused campaigns have minimal impact on reducing the prevalence of crimes in the district.	570	1	5	2.38	1.430

The issues revealed by the survey responses go beyond technicalities and reflect deeper institutional challenges within law enforcement. The effectiveness of police responses is shaped not only by the adherence to legal protocols but also by the broader institutional context in which those protocols are applied. Key factors such as legal challenges faced by police institutions, the level of legal training among officers, and the availability of necessary resources all influence the overall effectiveness of police work. Additionally, public perception of the police, their accountability, and their commitment to legal standards significantly impact the success of law enforcement in tackling crimes, especially those involving vulnerable groups. Thus, addressing these institutional issues is crucial to improving the functionality of the criminal justice system and ensuring that police responses are both effective and legally sound.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of police responses to crimes against women and children in Sagar district. It explored a range of factors affecting law enforcement practices, including the compliance of police with legal requirements, institutional challenges, the role of training and legal reforms, the handling of evidence, and the overall outcomes of police investigations. By analyzing the data gathered from the respondents, the study has provided a comprehensive understanding of the current state of police responses, revealing significant gaps between the theoretical legal frameworks and the actual practices in place, along with highlighting institutional barriers that hinder effective law enforcement.

The study showed that the failure to adhere to legal requirements is compounded by a lack of proper evidence collection and handling. Many respondents expressed concerns about the insufficient evidence gathered during investigations, which severely impairs the ability to secure



convictions in court. This inadequacy of evidence, coupled with insufficient follow-through by the police, often leads to cases being dismissed or not pursued with the necessary urgency. The inability to properly collect and preserve evidence compromises the integrity of the investigations, making it difficult for the legal system to deliver just outcomes. The survey respondents were clear in expressing their dissatisfaction with the investigation process, highlighting the importance of improving evidence handling and case documentation as a critical step toward enhancing the effectiveness of police responses.

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