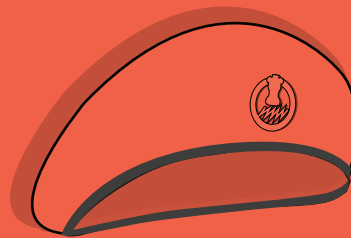
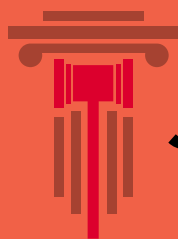


INDIA JUSTICE REPORT



Beyond Vacancies:

Rebuilding Trust in Police Recruitment



**India
Justice**
Report | 2025

Beyond Vacancies: Rebuilding Trust in Police Recruitment

This study on police recruitment analyses how states have worked to fill vacancies in the civil police force over the years. Using data from 2019 to 2023, it examines recruitment patterns, shortfalls, diversity, and systemic challenges in hiring police personnel at the constable and sub-inspector levels across 18 states.

The study based on government publications and data contributes to public understanding of recruitment gaps, diversity targets, and hiring challenges and sets the basis for dialogues that enhance the chances for systemic improvements in recruitment cycles, workforce planning, and representation within the police force, ensuring that law enforcement agencies are better equipped, more inclusive, and responsive to public safety needs.

Published in April 2025 by India Justice Report

About India Justice Report

The India Justice Report is a first of its kind national periodic reporting that ranks the capacity of states to deliver justice. Through the filters of human resources, infrastructure, budgets, workload and diversity it assesses the capacity of 4 core pillars of the justice system to deliver to mandate: police, prisons, judiciary and legal aid. Importantly, by comparing data over a five-year period, the IJR assesses efforts governments make year on year to improve the administration of justice. This trend analysis helps discern each state's intention to improve the delivery of justice and match it with the needs on the ground.

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Maja Daruwala

Chief editor, India Justice Report

Key Findings

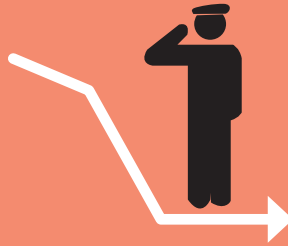
2-3 years:

average time taken for completing recruitment in most states.

Tamil Nadu stands out as the only state that could complete its recruitment process within a year



In 2021, **50%** of states showed an increase in constable shortfall.



Only five states — **Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu** and **West Bengal**—have introduced either reservations or given relaxations for transgender candidates.



The ideal **SI-to-constable ratio** of **1:4²** is rarely achieved. In 2021 ratios ranged from **1:31** in Rajasthan to **1:2** in Bihar.



Between 2018 and 2021, only **seven states¹** managed to reduce their **vacancies in SI rank**, ranging from **2%** in Chhattisgarh to



47% in Tamil Nadu.

In 2023, only **four states** — **Bihar, Punjab, Tamil Nadu** and **West Bengal**, called for recruitment for both SI and constable ranks



1. Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and West Bengal

2. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Summary of Recommendations made by the Padmanabhaiah Committee on Police Reforms. Available at: https://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/programs/aj/police/india/initiatives/summary_padmanabhaiah.pdf

Introduction

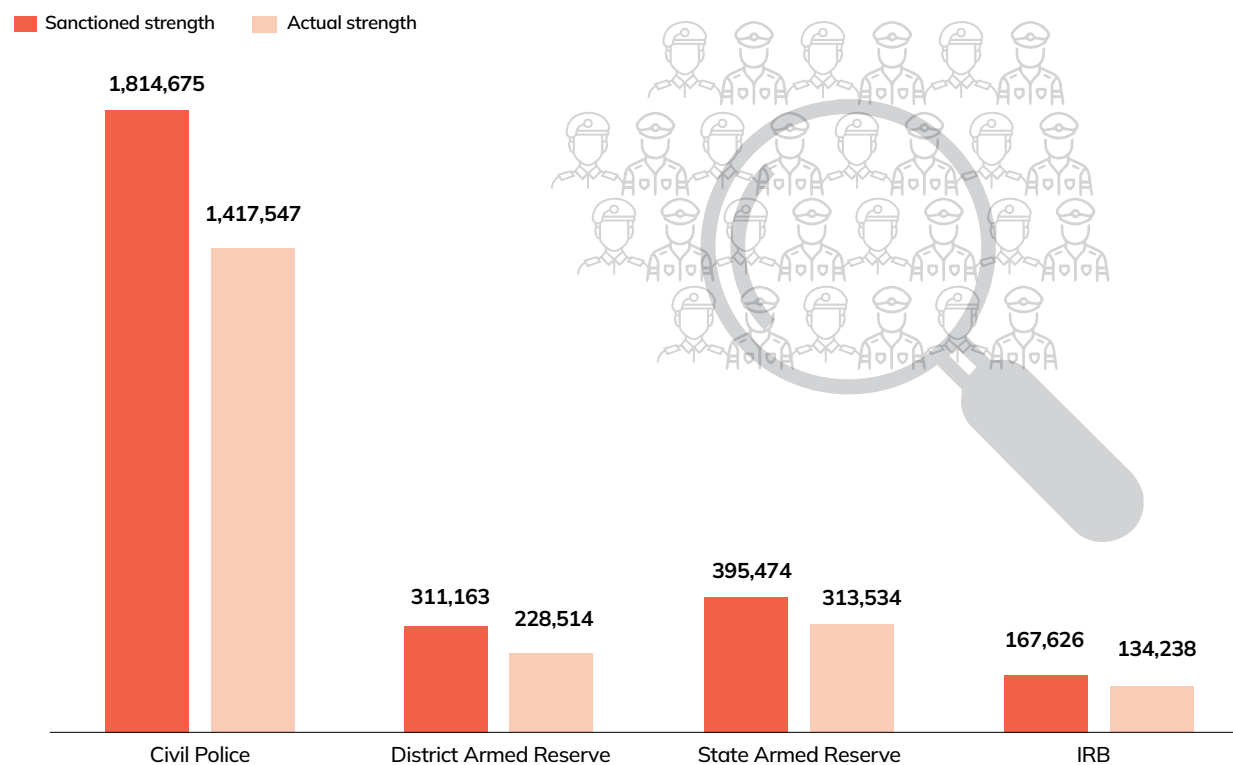
Are there too few or too many police in India vis-à-vis the population? It all depends on what is expected of the police. Law and order is a state subject under India's constitution. Civil police are those the public see on the streets, and approach at police stations. Their tasks include ensuring public safety and maintaining order, managing traffic, preventing and detection of crime, carrying out judicial orders, and maintaining police station records. Other formations like the District Armed Police (DAR), State Armed Police (SAR), and the India Reserve Battalion (IRB) "assist the civil police in dealing with group protests and violent disturbances".¹

Policing capacity depends to a significant extent on whether the strength of policing is adequate to needs. This study explores the recruitment processes for civil police personnel between 2019 and 2023, and identifies some of the main challenges faced, such as vacancy, reducing the prolonged recruitment cycle,

increasing diversity, and applying technology and a TRP (transparent recruitment process) to reduce malpractices. The study focuses on the ranks of police constable and sub-inspector, based on data from 18 states² with populations of over 10 million (1 crore) each garnered from state websites, public notices, and announcements along with information from Data on Police Organisations (DoPO), Bureau of Police Research & Development) 2019 and 2022. Unless otherwise mentioned, all references in this study to police and police personnel refer to the civil police.

States review the requirement of police personnel, armed and civil, on various factors. 'Sanctioned strength' is determined as the requirement for each administrative unit—the police station, office of the Superintendent of Police, etc. 'Actual strength' is the number of police personnel on the rolls at any given time.

Figure 1: Sanctioned and Actual Strength of Civil Police, DAR, SAR, and IRB 2022



Source: DoPO 2022, BPR&D

¹ The Model Police Act, 2006, Ministry of Home Affairs. Available at https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ModelAct06_30_Oct_0.pdf

² In India, 18 large and mid-sized states have populations above 10 million. These are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal; 7 small states have populations below 10 million (IJR).

Official Definitions of Constable and a Sub-Inspector³

A constable has maximum interface with the public. As the most accessible person for the public, he is expected to protect the needy, rescue people from danger, apprehend offenders and assist in securing prompt help and justice.

The sub-inspector in charge of a police station is fully responsible for the police administration of his charge. His duties include managing the staff and work of the police station in accordance with the law and rules and making the police station a place where the public gets necessary and immediate response.

Civil police organisational structure

Almost 70 per cent of the total police force comprise the civil police⁴, consisting of gazetted officers and non-gazetted officers. Gazetted officers from the Indian Police Service or State Service cadres hold supervisory roles, while junior officers (including inspectors, sub-inspectors (SIs), assistant sub-inspectors (ASI), head constables (HC), and constables) are responsible for executing most field-level police functions. Within the civilian police, 58 per cent⁵ are constables.

On 1 January 2022, the sanctioned strength of the police force across the country cumulatively totalled 196.23 per 100,000 population, while the actual strength was 152.8 per 100,000 population, a shortfall of 22 per cent.

Within this, the sanctioned civilian police strength was 18,14,675 or 132 per 100,000 population, but its actual strength was 14,17,547 or 103 per 100,000 population, a shortfall of 22 per cent. Similarly, the DAR shortfall was 27 per cent and the SAR was 21 per cent.

In 2018 Data on Police Organisations first began to disaggregate data on the civil police from other police units, revealing that civil vacancies fluctuated between 23 per cent and 22 per cent in 2022. Rank-wise, in January 2022, sub-inspector (SI) vacancies totalled 56,893 or 35 per cent and constable-level vacancies were 1,83,148 or 18 per cent.

The Recruitment Process

Typically, constable positions are all filled through direct recruitment, while SI appointments take place through a combination of direct recruitment and in-service promotions. This too varies from state to state. For example, Karnataka reserves 10 per cent of its direct recruitment at the SI rank for in-service candidates, such as constables/HC/ASIs. In Kerala,⁶ vacancies are distributed among the categories, open market, the ministerial wing⁷ and the constabulary wing.⁸

Many states do not have a dedicated police selection board, with police recruitment undertaken by bodies such as the State Public Service Commission, Staff Selection Commission, or Subordinate Service Commissions, or remains with the police department itself.

There are different boards/committees for SI and constable-level recruitments. Earlier, district SPs were responsible for constable recruitment; now in most states, the Public Service Commission or recruitment boards, which earlier used to recruit only SIs and DySPs, also oversee and conduct constable recruitment. States like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan still have separate boards for SI and constable recruitment. While specific recruitment procedures vary by state, the trend is towards centralised recruitment for constables.

³ "Functions, Rules and Duties of Police General", BPR&D, Available at: <https://www.bprd.nic.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/file/6798203243-Volume%202.pdf>

⁴ As of 1 January 2022 (DoPO, BPR&D)

⁵ That is, there are 8,21,026 constables in the civilian police.

⁶ <https://www.keralapsc.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-01/noti-572-574-23.pdf>

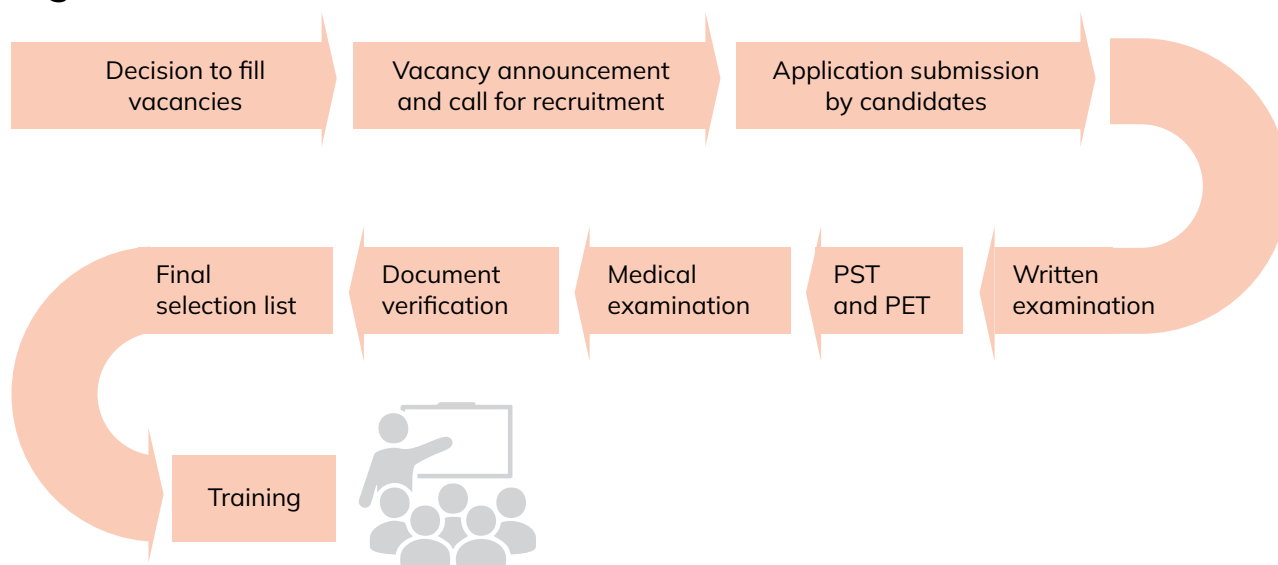
⁷ Graduate ministerial staff of the police and vigilance department, fingerprint experts, fingerprint searchers of the fingerprint bureau who have completed two years of service in the police/vigilance department.

⁸ Graduate police constables, head constables and officers of corresponding ranks in the police and vigilance department.

Table 1: Sub Inspector and Constable Recruitment Board

PLVs deployed as a share of PLVs trained (%)		
State	Police Constable	Sub Inspector
Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh State Level Police Recruitment Board	
Bihar	Central Selection Board of Constable	Bihar Police Subordinate Service Commission
Chhattisgarh	Chhattisgarh Police Department	Chhattisgarh Professional Examination Board
Gujarat	Gujarat Lokrakshak Recruitment Board	Gujarat Police Recruitment Board
Haryana	Haryana Staff Selection Commission	Haryana Public Service Commission
Jharkhand	Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission	Jharkhand Public Service Commission
Karnataka	Karnataka State Police	
Kerala	Kerala Public Service Commission	
Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination board	
Maharashtra	Maharashtra Police	Maharashtra Public Service Commission
Odisha	Odisha Police State Selection Board	Odisha Police Recruitment Board
Punjab	Punjab Police	
Rajasthan	Rajasthan Police	Rajasthan Public Service Commission
Tamil Nadu	Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board	
Telangana	Telangana State Level Police Recruitment Board	
Uttar Pradesh	Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotional Board	
Uttarakhand	Uttarakhand Subordinate Service Selection Commission	Uttarakhand Public Service Commission
West Bengal	West Bengal Police Recruitment Board	

Figure 2: Phases of Police Recruitment



Recruiting a large number of people is a lengthy and layered process. It can only commence when the pivotal decision to fill a certain number of vacancies in a particular recruitment cycle is made. It is then followed by a call for applications. Inevitably, there are far more applicants than there are places to be filled. For example, in the December 2023 recruitment cycle in Uttar Pradesh, 700 times the number required applied for 60,244 vacancies.

A call for applications is typically posted in the press and on police websites; candidates can apply for a particular post once registration opens on the official website. The application notification mentions the number of vacancies, application process, the time period for application, where to send the application, how selection is done, and eligibility criteria such as age, educational qualification, reservation, and gender. The application form has to be accompanied with a state-prescribed application fee, which is subsidised for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and

Other Backward Caste candidates (hereinafter SC, ST and OBC, respectively). An applicant's candidature is considered only if all the eligibility criteria are satisfied and the modalities of the selection process have been followed.

Eligibility criteria vary across states. Graduation is the minimum qualification required for a SI in every state. However the educational qualifications for constables vary. Some states accept grade 10 pass while others require grade 12. Various committees⁹ have recommended that the minimum educational qualifications should be uniform across all states: higher secondary for constables and graduation for sub-inspectors. The Padmanabhaiah Committee of 2000 recommended that the minimum educational requirement for constables be grade 10 pass, and that the age limit be 20 years¹⁰. Some states, including Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, still continue to use grade 10 pass as the eligibility criterion for constables.

Table 2: Age and Education Eligibility Criteria (General Category)

	Police Constable (years)		Sub Inspector (years)		Education	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Police Constable	Sub Inspector
Andhra Pradesh	18-26	18-26	21-29	21-29	12th pass	Graduation
Bihar	18-25	18-28	20-37	20-40	12th pass	Graduation
Chhattisgarh	18-28	18-28 ¹¹	21-34	21-34	Tenth/12th	Graduation
Gujarat	18-33	18-38	21-35	21-40	12th pass	Graduation
Haryana	18-25	18-25	21-27	21-27	12th pass	Graduation
Jharkhand	18-25	18-28	21-35	21-38	Tenth Class	Graduation
Karnataka	19-25	19-25	21-26	21-26	12th pass	Graduation
Kerala	18-26	18-26	20-31	20-31	12th pass	Graduation
Madhya Pradesh	18-33	18-33	18-33	18-33	Tenth	Graduation
Maharashtra	18-28	18-28	19-31	19-31	12th pass	Graduation
Odissa	18-23	18-28	20-25	20-30	Plus Two	Graduation
Punjab	18-28	18-28	21-28	21-28	Plus Two	Graduation
Rajasthan	18-23	18-28	20-25	20-30	Plus Two	Graduation
Tamil Nadu	18-26	18-26	20-30	20-30	Tenth	Graduation
Telangana	18-25	18-25	21-28	21-28	Plus Two	Graduation
Uttarakhand	18-22	18-22	21-28	21-28	Plus Two	Graduation
Uttar Pradesh	18-23	18-26	21-28	21-28	Plus Two	Graduation
West Bengal	18-27	18-30	20-27	20-27	Plus Two	Graduation

⁹ Gore Committee Report on Police Training (1971-73), Mooshahary Committee (2005), Soli Sorabjee Committee (2005-06), and the National Police Commission Fifth Report (1977-81).

¹⁰ Ministry of Home Affairs, March 11 2023, from <https://archive.pib.gov.in/release02/yr2003/mar2003/11032003/r1103200322.html>

¹¹ The upper age limit will be relaxable up to 10 years for women who are local residents of Chhattisgarh state

Most states relax the criteria for SC, ST, and OBC candidates. Illustratively, in Andhra Pradesh SI candidates must be graduates, but SC and ST candidates need only have a higher secondary-level education. While constables in general require a minimum educational qualification of intermediate or the equivalent, SC and ST candidates may require only SSC or its equivalent. In Kerala, SC and ST candidates who have passed intermediate or pre-university can apply for the SI quota reserved for them in the absence of candidates with graduate qualifications.

The Soli Sorabjee Committee (2005-06) recommended 18 as the minimum age for constable recruitment, a recommendation that all states have instituted.¹² Upper age limits vary for recruitment: in general, the recruitment age begins at 18 years but can go up to 33 (Gujarat); this went up to 34 years in the general category due to the covid hiatus. The applicant must have attained the eligibility age on the last date fixed for the receipt of applications mentioned in the notification.

In all cases, upper-age limits are relaxed for women, transgenders, and SC/ST/OBCs. Illustratively, in Rajasthan, while the upper-age limit for general candidates at the rank of constable is 23 years, it goes up to 28 years for OBC, SC/ST men. For women ST/SC/OBC candidates the age limit goes up to 34. Kerala provides a five year relaxation to SC/ST candidates and a three year relaxation to OBCs, while in Madhya Pradesh, women, SC, ST and OBC candidates are given a five year relaxation above the general category limit.

In Telangana, for SIs, the minimum and maximum ages in the general category are 21 and 28 years respectively but for SC, ST and OBCs the upper limit goes up to 35. In Bihar, while the minimum age for general category SIs is 20 and the maximum is 37, a three year age relaxation is given for female and OBC applicants and five years for SC and ST candidates.

The selection process is fairly standard across states, but there are some variations. All levels must go through a written examination, a physical standard test (PST), physical endurance test (PET), document verification, and medical examination. Some states also conduct interviews for SIs.

PST and PET

PST, the physical standard test, measures a candidate's physical attributes, such as height, weight, and chest circumference, but the criteria for selection vary according to the category of the candidate. In Bihar, for example, the minimum height required for general and OBC men is 165 cm, while for SC/ST men it is 160 cm and for women from all categories it is 155 cm.

PET, the physical efficiency test, measures a candidate's physical ability to perform tasks required for selection, which include racing, high jump and long jump.

Written exams for recruitment also vary by state and rank: Karnataka has two papers in the written examination for SIs, one objective (multiple-choice questions) and the other descriptive. Constable recruitment has only an objective multiple-choice examination.

Most states hold written exams in both English and the local language: the medium in Andhra Pradesh is English, Urdu, and Telugu, while Uttar Pradesh holds exams in both English and Hindi; the medium in Odisha is English, however there are also some questions particularly written in Odia and must be answered in that language.

In most states, physical tests are conducted after the written examination. Karnataka, in contrast, holds the written examination after both the PST and PET. After these tests, aspirants go through medical tests and document verification.

At the end of this process, the list of finalists is adjusted to ensure compliance with the regulatory caste and gender quotas.

After their recruitment, police personnel are trained at institutions like police academies and training schools/colleges within their state; SIs undergo a year-long training programme, while constables typically complete their training in 9-10 months. The pay scale

¹² Bhavya Kapoor (n.d.), *Police Reforms Police Reforms in India*. India Justice Report. Retrieved May 7, 2024, from https://indiajusticereport.org/files/IJR_Recommendation_for_Police_Reforms_in_India.pdf

for SI ranges from Rs 32,100¹³ to Rs 1,42,400¹⁴ and constables from Rs 18,000¹⁵ to Rs 80,910.¹⁶

Recruitment Cycles

A look at the pattern of police induction shows that states do not recruit annually nor regularly, and that the Covid hiatus lengthened recruitment durations. The Covid pandemic significantly disrupted recruitment in several states, with candidates experiencing delays of over two years to receive their final results. States like Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, and Karnataka had to extend the upper age limit due to their inability to conduct exams in that period.

An examination of recruitment cycles based on available information indicates that on average, from start to finish, each cycle could take two to three years: Madhya Pradesh's 2020 cycle of recruitment which began in October 2020¹⁷ ended in November 2022, and Bihar's recruitment drive which began in November 2020 ended in September 2022. States do not announce the next call for recruitment until the earlier recruitment cycle is completed.

Tamil Nadu stands out as the only state that could complete its recruitment process within a year: its 2022 recruitment for SIs and its 'common recruitment' (constables, firemen, and jail wardens) was completed in March 2023.

Recruitment of Constables

Police headquarters typically sends proposals to fill vacancies in sanctioned strength to the state home department. The actual number approved for recruitment is finalised after internal deliberations between the police department, home and the finance department, based on the police department's manpower needs, the state's budget constraints, and limitations like training capacity.

In 2018, the national shortfall between the sanctioned and actual strength of constables was 22 per cent¹⁸, but by 2021 sanctioned strength increased by 3 per cent and the gap had reduced to 18 per cent.¹⁹ Overall, in these four years the ratio of civil police constables on the ground to population increased only marginally, from 58.09 per 100,000 population to just 60 per 100,000. Across states, the shortfall between the personnel needed and the actual number ranged from 5 per cent²⁰ to 49 per cent²¹.

In January 2022, Madhya Pradesh had 6,206 vacancies. The state began recruiting 3,862 general duty constables in October 2020—a cycle that eventually concluded in November 2022. In June 2023, it advertised for 4,444 more positions which, together with the earlier recruitment, should have completely filled the vacancies. But, while this was meant to bring the state closer to full staffing levels, vacancies persisted well into 2024, when the latest cycle concluded. Likewise, in 2023 Chhattisgarh, while needing 7,190 constables to bring its force up to its sanctioned strength, called for only 5,967 new recruits.

Tamil Nadu presents an interesting scenario: While its constable shortfall percentage dropped from 65 per cent in 2018 to 13 per cent in 2021, this was largely due to a 44 per cent reduction in sanctioned strength, which in turn led to an 88 per cent reduction in vacancy numbers. Despite the reduction in sanctioned strength, the ratio of police per 100,000 population increased from 30 in 2018 to 39 in 2021, while actual strength on the ground increased from 21,401 to 29,939.

Even when the call for personnel appears to take into account all vacancies, the duration of the process, coupled with the training time, ensures that vacancies persist into the future. Given that the recruitment-plus-training process can take at least two years, and vacancies continue to accumulate, shortfalls are perpetuated.

13 West Bengal

14 Uttarakhand

15 Gujarat

16 Andhra Pradesh

17 https://esb.mp.gov.in/advertisement/ADV_2020/PCT_2020_Advt.pdf

18 In 2018, the sanctioned strength for constables was 9,74,349, while the actual was 7,58,958 (DoPO;BPR&D).

19 In 2021 the sanctioned strength for constables was 10,04,174, while the actual strength was 8,21,026.

20 Rajasthan

21 Bihar

States where constabulary shortfall was reduced to some extent between 2018 and 2021 include Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. However, states like Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu appear to have reduced their shortfalls by reducing their sanctioned strength.

In all these cases, the real question is whether the recruitment cycles in fact improve the police constable-to-population ratio. In some states there has been only minimal improvement; in some there has been an actual decrease in the ratio. However, other than Kerala²² and Uttar Pradesh,²³ no state has been able to improve its police constable-to-public ratio.

Table 3: Ratio of Sub-Inspectors to Constables in 2022

State/UT	Sub-Inspector	Constable	Constable per SI	
			Up to 4 constables per SI	Above 4 constables per SI
Andhra Pradesh	2,583	30,357	11.8	
Arunachal Pradesh	285	4,791	16.8	
Assam	2,117	13,012	6.1	
Bihar	8,428	14,439	1.7	
Chhattisgarh	1,278	30,502	23.9	
Goa	319	3,757	11.8	
Gujarat	1,942	36,389	18.7	
Haryana	2,216	36,520	16.5	
Himachal Pradesh	445	9,367	21.0	
Jharkhand	4,082	33,259	8.1	
Karnataka	2,998	48,841	16.3	
Kerala	1,739	38,128	21.9	
Madhya Pradesh	4,649	61,385	13.2	
Maharashtra	7,195	111,697	15.5	
Manipur	1,073	12,819	11.9	
Meghalaya	729	3,801	5.2	
Mizoram	337	1,985	5.9	
Nagaland	379	4,165	11.0	
Odisha	2,365	18,606	7.9	
Punjab	1,933	52,922	27.4	
Rajasthan	2,247	70,502	31.4	
Sikkim	123	1,912	15.5	
Tamil Nadu	8,053	61,379	7.6	
Telangana	3,020	28,638	9.5	
Tripura	547	4,897	9.0	
Uttar Pradesh	26,401	207,922	7.9	
Uttarakhand	1,180	9,366	7.9	
West Bengal	8,758	35,618 ^A	4.1	
Union Territories				
A&N Islands	150	2,380	15.9	
Chandigarh	297	3,335	11.2	
DNH and Daman & Diu	36	600	16.7	
Delhi	6,718	52,796	7.9	
Jammu and Kashmir	1,974	36,334	18.4	
Ladakh	41	771	18.8	
Lakshadweep	4	246	61.5	
Puducherry	155	1,651	10.7	
Total	106,796	1,085,089	10.2	

²² From 59.15 constables per 100,000 population in 2018 to 67.98

²³ From 59.15 constables per 100,000 population in 2018 to 67.98

A only constable

Sub-Inspector (SI) Recruitment

Ideally, as recommended by the Padmanabhaiah Committee on police reforms, the so-called teeth-to-tail ratio between a sub-inspector and constabulary²⁴ should be 1:4.²⁵ In 2021, this was 1:10 nationally, and across states it ranged from 1:2²⁶ to 1:31.²⁷ Shortages at these levels have an impact across the board, on ground administration, supervision, discipline, crime prevention, community liaison, and detection.

On 1 January 2022, the sanctioned strength of SIs across the country was 1,63,689, an increase of 9 per cent from the 150,010 positions sanctioned on 1 January 2019. But in 2021, actual strength decreased slightly by 2 per cent, from 1,09,351 in 2018 to 1,06,796, indicating once again the consequences of the lengthy and irregular recruitment process as well as internal delays in promotions.

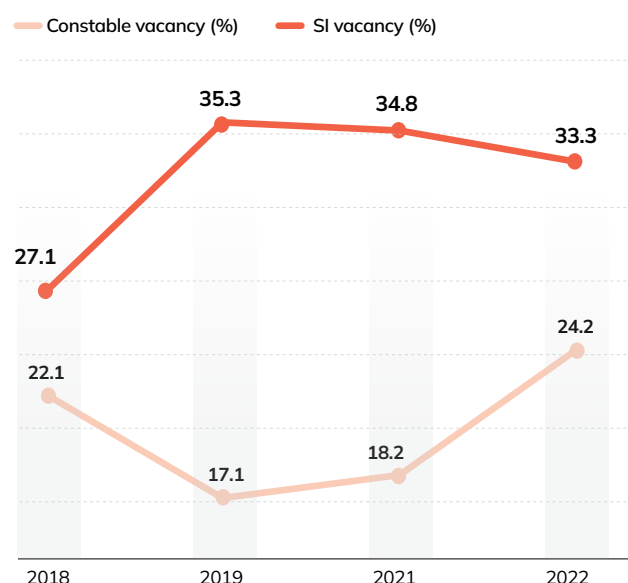
In the same year, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh decreased their sanctioned strength, while Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal increased theirs. Even so, vacancies persist everywhere.

In 2023, eight²⁸ of the 18 states initiated recruitment drives for constables, but only five²⁹ states had drives for SIs. The widening gap between the escalating SI vacancies and the slow pace of recruitment continue to pose significant challenges in light of the surge in constable recruitment outpacing the hiring of SIs.

Between 2018 and 2021, only seven states³⁰ managed to reduce their SI vacancies, with varying success, ranging from 2 per cent in Chhattisgarh to 47 per cent in Tamil Nadu. Elsewhere, vacancies against sanctioned strength increased.

More importantly, only Bihar has come close to SI-to-constable ratio, or reaching the teeth-to-tail ratio of 1:4.

Figure 3: Gap between SI and Constable Vacancies per cent, 2018-21



Source: DoPO 2019, DoPO 2020, DoPO 2022: BPR&D

Uttar Pradesh, had one SI for every four constabulary in 2018, but it could not maintain that ratio, and over a span of four years this has increased to 1:8. Even though Rajasthan has reduced its constable vacancies over the years, the proportional SI composition remains low, with one SI for every 31 of the constabulary. In fact, Bihar with one SI for every 2 constables, appears to be best placed in this regard, but its police-to-population ratio remains the lowest among the states, with only 12 police per 100,000 population.

Diversity

The Second Administration Reforms Commission Fifth Report emphasised that: “It is important that the composition of the police force should reflect the composition of the society it is required to serve.”³¹

²⁴ Includes both head constable and constable

²⁵ Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Summary of Recommendations made by the Padmanabhaiah Committee on Police Reforms. Available at: https://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/programs/aj/police/india/initiatives/summary_padmanabhaiah.pdf

²⁶ Bihar

²⁷ Rajasthan

²⁸ Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal

²⁹ Bihar, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal

³⁰ Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and West Bengal

³¹ Government of India. (May 2009). *Second Administration Reform Commission*. Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances. Available at: https://darpg.gov.in/sites/default/files/Second_AR_Summary.pdf

Gender Diversity

It has taken 15 years, from 2006 to 2021, for the share of women personnel³² in the total armed and civil police to rise from 3 per cent to 12 per cent.³³ Although all ranks are open to men and women, there remains a large disparity in the representation of women. Women are reluctantly accommodated and frequently seen as unable to take on field assignments compared to their male counterparts.³⁴ Data from the Report on the Status of Policing in India (2019) confirms that “women are least likely to be posted at the officer level, compared to all other categories of personnel.”³⁵

On 1 January 2022, across the country there were only 1,38,616 (16 per cent) women constables and 12,593 (14 per cent) women SIs in the civil police. Though the pace of inclusion has increased in recent years, each state has set its own overall quota for women in their force, as well for the intake of women in a particular recruitment cycle. No state had yet met its targets for the women’s quota, at either the SI rank or at the constable rank.

Earlier there were separate recruitment announcements for men and women, which listed the specific number of women to be inducted into the service. Since early 2000, the announcements have merged, and states have not articulated a clear strategy or time-line for increasing female representation or achieving their own targets. For instance, a police station can have a sanctioned strength rank-wise but not gender-wise, and without the latter the recruitment and deployment of women across ranks remains concentrated in only some geographies.

Most states mention that “In the event of non-availability of eligible and suitable women candidates, the vacancies reserved for them shall not be carried

MHA Advisory on Women Recruitment

In a bid to promote gender diversity, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) occasionally issues advisories to state governments to raise the representation of women police officers to 33 per cent of the total strength.³⁶ Nine states³⁷ have a target of 33 per cent. Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka, with targets of 20 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively, stand out as the only states with less than 30 per cent reservation for women in the police. On the other hand, Bihar is the only state that has 35 per cent reservation for women and a specific quota of 3 per cent for women from the backward classes.

Further, in 2013, the MHA advisory³⁸ has also advised states to carry out special recruitment drives to induct women at all levels in a time-bound manner and to convert vacant posts for male constables into posts for women constables. Along with other measures for addressing and preventing crimes against women, the MHA has also recommended ensuring one-third female representation in investigative units for crimes against women to assist local police with investigations relating to heinous crimes against women.³⁹

forward for the succeeding recruitment and shall be filled up by men candidates of respective communal category,”⁴⁰ and that reservation will be horizontal.

According to the Section 4(3)⁴¹ of the Bihar Act 3, 1994, women can also be appointed on the basis of merit. Tamil Nadu’s police constable advertisement states that women candidates can compete in the general

32 Both civil and armed

33 DoPO 2007 and DoPO 2022; BPR&D

34 Randhawa, G. and Narang, K. (2013), ‘Women in Police: Employment Status and Challenges’, *ASCI Journal of Management*, Vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 38–51.

35 Common Cause. (2019). *Status Of Policing in India Report 2019*. Common Cause & Lokniti – Centre for the Study Developing Societies (CSDS). Available at: https://www.csds.in/uploads/custom_files/1566973059_Status_of_Policing_in_India_Report_2019_by_Common_Cause_and_CSDS.pdf

36 Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 701 dated 8 February 2023. Available at: <https://pgars.nic.in/annex/259/AU701.pdf>

37 Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim.

38 Ministry of Home Affairs (2013). Available at: <https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/AdvisoryWomenPolice-290513.pdf>

39 Srivastava, D., Boleyada, L. K., & National Law School of India University. (2022). *Policewomen in India: Legal Mandate and Policy Guidelines for Exclusive and Preferable Functions*. National Law School of India University. Available at: <https://www.nls.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Explainer-Note-English.pdf>

40 State-Level Police Recruitment Board Andhra Pradesh. (2022). *State-Level Police Recruitment Board Andhra Pradesh, Mangalagiri, Guntur District*. Available at: https://slprb.ap.gov.in/Pdfs/Slprb_ap_pc_notification.Pdf

41 Government of Bihar (2013). ‘Notification.’ In *Bihar Police Manual*. Available at: <https://bpssc.bih.nic.in/Orders/4111-29-05-2013.pdf>

category of 70 per cent vacancies along with men,⁴² implying that women are not restricted from applying only in the segment reserved for them.

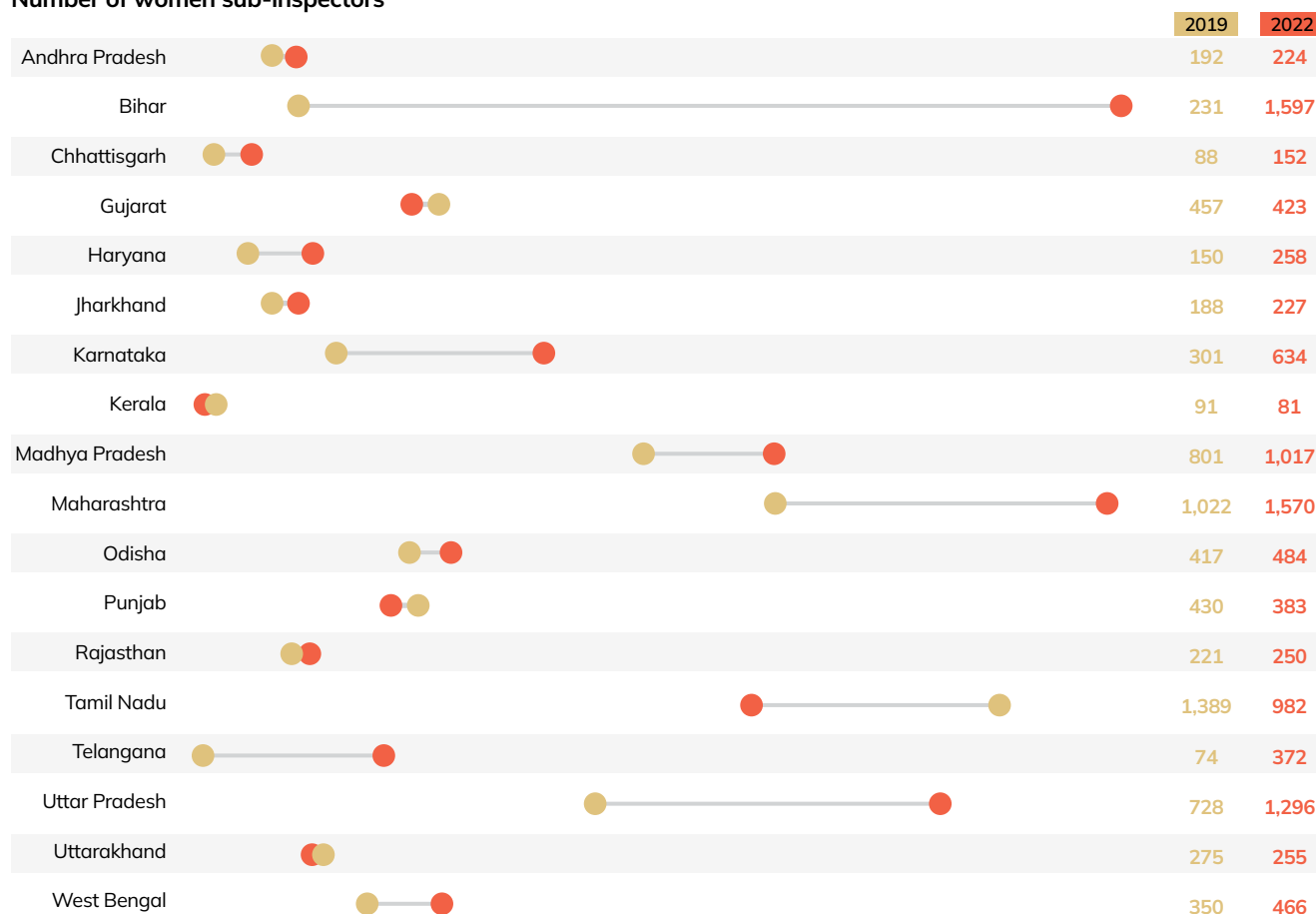
The Andhra Pradesh State and Subordinate Service Rules 1996 state that for reserved categories, the “final selection shall be considered for the remaining appointments which shall be filled on the basis of open competition; the number of appointments reserved for that category shall in no way be affected during the period the reservation for that category is in force.”⁴³ This implies that women can be taken in as part of the general category rather than being restricted to applying only under the ‘women’s quota’.

Apart from the desirability of having a diverse and representative police force, specific legal requirements compel the hiring of more women into the force. Several legal provisions require that only women personnel can perform certain functions, such as searches of women,⁴⁴ registering complaints of women related to sexual offences, and arrests in cases involving women.⁴⁵

Women Sub-inspectors (SIs): Five⁴⁶ states saw a fall in the number of women SIs between 2018 and 2021: Tamil Nadu saw a decline of 29 per cent, Punjab and Uttarakhand of 11 per cent, Kerala 10 per cent, and Gujarat 7 per cent. In contrast, Bihar stands out as it witnessed a significant growth in the number of women

Figure 4: State-wise Number of Women SIs, 2018 and 2021

Number of women sub-inspectors



Source: DoPO 2019, DoPO 2022; BPR&D

42 Tamil Nadu Uniformed Service Recruitment Board, 2022 (July 3). *Direct Recruitment for the Post of Sub-Inspector of Police (Taluk and AR)*. Available at: <https://www.tnusrb.tn.gov.in/pdfs/informationbrochuresubinspectorofpolice.pdf>

43 Andhra Pradesh State and Subordinate Service Rules – Revised Rules 1996. (n.d.). Available at: https://gad.ap.gov.in/documents/service-rules/andhra-pradesh-state-and-subordinate-service-rules-1996-with-amendments_22.pdf

44 S. 51 (2), CrPC “Whenever it is necessary to cause a female to be searched, the search shall be made by another female with strict regard to decency”.

45 S. 46 (4), CrPC “Save in exceptional circumstances, no woman shall be arrested after sunset and before sunrise, and where such exceptional circumstances exist, the woman police officer shall, by making a written report, obtain the prior permission of the Judicial Magistrate of the first class within whose local jurisdiction the offence is committed or the arrest is to be made”

46 Gujarat, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand

SIIs over this period—the numbers surging from 231 in 2018 to 1,597 in 2021.

Women Constables: The growth of women constables was slow in some states between 2018 and 2021: In Kerala it only increased by 5 per cent, while in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh the increase was 6 per cent; and in four states—Odisha, Bihar, Punjab, and Uttarakhand—the strength of women constables actually decreased. No states have met their reserved quotas, and eight states⁴⁷ could not fill even half the quota: Madhya Pradesh, for example, filled only 27 per cent of its 33 per cent quota and Haryana only 31 per cent. Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh are the only states which have met more than 90 per cent of the

quota reserved for women constables.

Transgenders

In its judgement in *NALSA v Union of India* 2014,⁴⁸ the Supreme Court directed the central and state governments to include transgenders within the category of socially and educationally backward classes by extending to them reservations in educational institutions and public employment. The court held that the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right to self-determination of one's gender identity, and that there can be no discrimination on the basis of gender identity, which could be male, female, or transgender.⁴⁹

Figure 5: State-wise Number of Women Constables, 2018 and 2021

Number of women constables

	2019	2022
Andhra Pradesh	2,424	2,588
Bihar	4,317	3,925
Chhattisgarh	2,611	2,961
Gujarat	6,348	7,414
Haryana	2,002	2,979
Jharkhand	4	1,286
Karnataka	4,908	5,702
Kerala	2,940	3,082
Madhya Pradesh	3,472	4,047
Maharashtra	19,434	21,397
Odisha	3,253	2,956
Punjab	5,442	5,305
Rajasthan	6,986	7,418
Tamil Nadu	5,343	7,768
Telangana	1,450	3,065
Uttar Pradesh	19,941	29,328
Uttarakhand	1,927	1,919
West Bengal	6,663	8,440

Source: DoPO 2019, DoPO 2022; BPR&D

47 Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Telangana.

48 Radhakrishnan, K. (2014, April 15). 'National Legal Ser. Auth vs Union Of India & Ors on 15 April, 2014.' *Indian Kanoon*. Available at: <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/193543132/>

49 Transgenders are slowly being accepted into the police force. As of January 2023 states like Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu have transgender in their force.

Not all states have introduced reservations for transgenders in the police, some only have a relaxation of qualifying criteria. Karnataka was the first state to reserve 1 per cent of its horizontal reservation for the transgender community. Tamil Nadu has merged transgenders into its 30 per cent women's reservation. Bihar reserves one post for transgenders for every 500 posts. Maharashtra and West Bengal have relaxed the criteria for transgenders, but have no reservation. States like Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan have included them in the OBC category. Odisha's stance on this has been to say that "transgenders can also apply for the post in their respective category".⁵⁰

Following the Supreme Court's directions in *K. Prithika Yashini Vs. The Chairman, Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board*,⁵¹ the Tamil Nadu government included transgenders within the 'Most Backward Classes (MBC)' category. However, a petition is pending consideration at the Madras High Court, which seeks a 1 per cent horizontal reservation for transgenders across all caste categories.⁵²

A recent Tamil Nadu police constable recruitment notice mentions that: "The transgender candidates may decide any of the genders such as man or woman or third gender for the PMT, PET. If transgender candidates apply under third gender, they will be treated like women candidates. The 30 per cent reservation for women will apply to them."⁵³ In the absence of a quota in the state, transgenders are treated as part of the general category in the gender they choose to be identified with, but are given an upper age-limit relaxation of five years.⁵⁴ In *Saratha vs The Member Secretary* (2022), the Madras High Court stated that "the failure to provide any kind of reservation for transgenders in the male category and placing them on par with the

general category candidates, is violative of Articles 14 and 16 (1) and is not only unconstitutional, but is also illegal since it defies the direction to provide reservation in public employment, as ordered in *NALSA*."⁵⁵

On similar lines, the Odisha police constable recruitment notification reads: "...transgenders can also apply for the post of constable (civil) if they fulfil the eligibility criteria. Candidates will be asked to give the option of whether they want to appear in the physical test as per male or female standard and accordingly they will be allowed. On final selection they will be posted against a post not reserved for women in their respective category (SC, ST, SEBC, UR)."⁵⁶

Bihar's March 2022 notification mandating the appointment of transgenders as constables and SIs included a quota announcement that specified the appointment of one transgender individual for every 500 constable and SI posts. Its 2023 recruitment advertisement for 21,391 constables for the Bihar Police and special armed police reserved 56 posts for transgender candidates.⁵⁷ Since the state clubs the recruitment of transgenders with OBCs, in the absence of transgender candidates, vacancies can be filled by OBC candidates.

By contrast, West Bengal's Police Recruitment Board provides for a separate PET and PST for transgender candidates. The Kolkata Police Notification of 2022 has also relaxed the upper age-limit for transgender recruitment by three years.⁵⁸

Transgenders encounter significant hurdles in the recruitment process. For example, despite legal changes in their names and gender in official documents like Aadhar cards and voter IDs, the application process often demands information based on the gender mentioned in their class 10 certificates. Typically, government notification calling for applications mentions age, weight and other

50 Detailed advertisement for recruitment of constable(civil) in Odisha Police. (2022, December 30). Odisha Police. Available at: https://odishapolice.gov.in/sites/default/files/PDF/Advertisement%20of%20Constable%20Civil%2023.11.2022%20%282%29_0.pdf

51 Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020

52 Mahaseth, H., & Mahaseth, M. (2024, January 17). 'Madras HC suggests 1% horizontal reservation for transgender person in TN.' The Leaflet. Available at: <https://theleaflet.in/madras-hc-suggests-1-percent-horizontal-reservation-for-transgender-persons-in-tn/>

53 Tamil Nadu Uniformed Service Recruitment Board. https://tnusrb.tn.gov.in/pdfs/InformationBrochure_en.pdf

54 All transgender candidates will be treated on par with SC/ST candidates only regarding age relaxation criteria.

55 M S, R. (n.d.). *Saratha vs The Member Secretary* on 2 March, 2022. Indian Kanoon. Available at: <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/185840002/>

56 Detailed advertisement for recruitment of constable(civil) in Odisha Police. (2022, December 30). Odisha Police. Available at: https://odishapolice.gov.in/sites/default/files/PDF/Advertisement%20of%20Constable%20Civil%2023.11.2022%20%282%29_0.pdf

57 Advt. No. 01/2023: For Selection of Constables in Bihar Police, Bihar Special Armed Police and Other Units (9 June 2023). Central Selection Board of Constables. Available at: <https://csbc.bih.nic.in/Advt/Advt-01-2023-Constables.pdf>

58 Recruitment to the Post of Constable/Lady Constable in Kolkata Police, 2022 (16 March 2023). WBPRB. Available at: <https://prb.wb.gov.in/uploads/recruitment/167895807095751.pdf>

specifications pertaining to only men and women, disregarding their identity as a distinct third gender.

The challenges faced by transgender individuals in police recruitment are exemplified by the Maharashtra police recruitment process in 2022. In an effort to promote inclusivity, the government had directed all departments to include the 'third gender' option in job applications. However, the recruitment approach, based on self-identification as 'trans male' or 'trans female' raised concerns among transgender candidates, as the assessment and selection was based on the two genders specified in the 'open category'. Thus, even though 73 transgender candidates applied, they either did not attain the requisite marks in the written test or could not meet the physical fitness requirements.⁵⁹

Caste⁶⁰ Quotas

Unlike the requirement to include women and transgenders in the police recruitment process, the mandate to fulfil caste quotas has been underwritten by legislation that has been on the books for decades. While states make concerted efforts to honour these special quotas in their police recruitment process, inevitably, they have been more successful in filling constabulary quotas rather than those at the SI rank. Even so, official data⁶¹ indicates that by and large, SCs, STs and OBCs continue to be under-represented in the force.

The percentage of SC, ST, and OBC reservations in each state is based on the respective proportions of these populations in the state. Thus, each state has different quotas for each caste category and has formulated preferential policies relaxing physical, educational and age criteria for application. Their success in filling these quotas varies widely.

According to 2021 figures, only four states—Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka and Maharashtra—had met or surpassed their quotas for all categories in both the SI and constable ranks. Uttarakhand was at the other end of the spectrum, having not met its quotas for SIs in any

of the categories.

Scheduled Tribes (STs): Only seven states⁶² could fulfil or exceed their ST quotas at both the constable and SI levels. Uttar Pradesh has an overall 2 per cent ST target at constable and SI ranks, but managed to only fill 22 per cent of that at the SI level and 81 per cent at the constable level.

Scheduled Castes (SCs): Only seven states met their SC quotas for both ranks. All other states met their targets to varying degrees, while Rajasthan and Haryana could not meet their targets in either rank; four states⁶³ fell short at the constable level and nine states⁶⁴ at the SI level.

Other Backward Castes (OBCs): States have been relatively more successful in filling OBC quotas: 14 states have met their quotas at the SI rank and 15 at the constabulary level. Maharashtra and Jharkhand went beyond their quotas, recruiting more than twice the reserved number at the SI rank, while Andhra Pradesh and Odisha exceeded their quota at the constable level. Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal did not meet their OBC quotas for either ranks.

As with the persisting gender gap, the reasons for not filling reserved of various castes and tribes in a recruitment cycle need closer scrutiny. The extent to which factors such as gaps in caste-related documentation of candidates, corruption and bias in recruitment practices, and societal discrimination prevent people from backward communities from availing of such opportunities merits deeper study. This would help determine future changes in the recruitment criteria, relaxations, and other affirmative measures (such as targeted recruitment drives) could help police departments fulfil their legal mandate.

Challenges & Way Forward

The process for determining how many people should be recruited in a cycle is linked to sanctioned strengths, and budget allocations for 'wages & salaries' for the

59 All 73 transgender candidates for police jobs fail to make cut. (2023, May 26). The Times of India. Available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/all-73-transgender-candidates-for-police-jobs-fail-to-make-cut/articleshow/100515531.cms>

60 Separate data for the civil police is not available from the DoPO.

61 India Justice Report (2022). *India Justice Report: Ranking States on Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid*. Tata Trust. https://indiajusticereport.org/files/IJR%202022_Full_Report.pdf

62 Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra and West Bengal

63 Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan.

64 Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh.

police which are based on actual strength. Long-term planning, the basis and regularity of reviews related to sanctioned strength all require to be systemic if police capacity is to match requirements.

Given the changing inter-temporal patterns of crime, and population shifts, only regular consultations with field police units can determine personnel requirements. The Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission, in its second report in 2022⁶⁵ highlighted the example of Davangere district, which reorganised the posts of constables, head constables, assistant SIs and SIs based on area, population covered, and number of crimes registered. A regular review of sanctioned posts for each police station, using a combination of demographics, safety, and crime parameters, will help rationalise the recruitment and deployment of personnel.

Experience shows that the entire recruitment process—from the submission of proposals for filling vacancies, to government approval, through recruitment, verification, and finally appointment—can take well over two years. This must then be followed by training, which could take up to a year. The absence of a multi-year calendar for recruitment means that the process gets bunched up, with a large number of personnel recruited in some years, and few or none in others. Apart from other drawbacks, this throws training capacity out of gear. To regularise recruitment cycles, the central government could set up a review process and work with states when vacancies exceed 10 per cent of sanctioned strength.

Malpractice, scams, and irregularities have also often been the cause of large-scale disruptions and delays. Investigations prompted by specific complaints have resulted in departmental inquiries, suspensions, dismissals, and criminal charges, sometimes even involving the highest officers of state police forces, including senior officers of the rank of Additional Director General of Police.⁶⁶ Illustratively, Karnataka is one state where the recruitment process for SIs

has faced substantial disruptions. An examination held in October 2021 to fill 545 SI posts began with a government notification in January 2021. The results were published in January 2022. Some candidates raised objections citing irregularities in the awarding of marks and alleged cheating at various levels in the form of blank OMR sheets filled in by insiders, the use of blue-tooth devices during the exams, and invigilators providing answers. CID investigations also revealed that some exam centres lacked essential amenities. Eventually an ADGP rank officer was arrested, but in the interim the government halted all new recruitment until the probe was completed. This left more than 54,000 aspirants in limbo. The Karnataka High Court in November 2023 backed the state government's decision to cancel the recruitment cycle and to hold fresh examinations, leaving Karnataka's police with a shortfall of more than 1,000 SIs.⁶⁷

In another recent example, in June 2023, the Central Selection Board of Constables (CSBC) in Bihar initiated the recruitment of over 21,391 constables, Bihar Special Armed Police and personnel for other units. However, the examination scheduled for October 2023 was cancelled due to widespread cheating⁶⁸; when it was rescheduled for August 2024, it was also halted due to fraudulent activities. This will result in a shortfall of over 9000 posts.

These types of fraudulent practices and forms of corruption adversely affect both individual aspirants and the department: vacancies accumulate, and thousands of aspirants are left stranded, with many facing the unfortunate reality of falling outside the age eligibility criteria.

Related to this, the National Police Commission⁶⁹ set up by the central government in 1977, highlighted in its Fifth Report that: “of late, political interference and money power have begun to play a big role in constable and SI recruitment” and that it was “keen that the recruitment procedures for the police should

65 Karnataka Administrative Reform Commission 2. (2022, January). Government of Karnataka. Retrieved from <https://dparar.karnataka.gov.in/storage/pdf-files/Report2Eng.pdf>

66 ‘Senior IPS Officer Arrested In K’taka Psi Recruitment Scam,’ Bengaluru News. (2022, July 5). Times of India. Available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bengaluru/senior-ips-officer-arrested-in-ktaka-psi-recruitment-scam/articleshow/92662974.cms>

67 ‘Karnataka HC cites the purity of exams to uphold the state’s move to conduct fresh police recruitment exam.’ (11 November 2023). The Indian Express. Available at: <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/bangalore/karnataka-hc-upholds-state-move-to-conduct-fresh-police-recruitment-9022907/>

68 ‘Bihar Police Constable exam 2023 cancelled due to massive cheating scandal’ (3 October 2023). Times of India. Available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news/bihar-police-constable-exam-2023-cancelled-due-to-massive-cheating-scandal/articleshow/104131501.cms>

69 The National Police Commission (NPC) was constituted in 1977 by the Indian government to study the problems of the police and undertake a comprehensive review of the police system at the national level. The NPC produced eight reports between 1979 and 1981.

be made as objective as possible”.⁷⁰ Along with several other recommendations in the same vein by the Second Administrative Reforms Commission,⁷¹ the Fifth Report concluded that the hiring process should be “transparent and free from any stigma of corruption, casteism, gender, communalism, and similar other biases”. Even if this has not succeeded in truncating the recruitment process or changing it from merely eliminating candidates to selecting the most suitable, over the years there have been considerable efforts to safeguard the integrity of the process by minimising the possibility of influence peddling, subjectivity, and bias. The Supreme Court, while hearing a petition filed by the NGO Lokniti Foundation,⁷² issued a notice to the central and state governments to implement a transparent recruitment process to check corrupt practices and political interference in police recruitment.

Most states have also set up separate police recruitment boards that often function independently of police headquarters, and report directly to the Home Department. Given the persistence of vacancies in various states, the need for each state to have a permanent recruitment board cannot but be attended to.

Integrating technology into the process has been one means of keeping the selection process objective. This was the finding of the BPR&D in its study Recruitment Procedures for Non-gazetted Ranks in Police Forces in India⁷³ and the project Transparent Recruitment Process (TRP)⁷⁴ which recommended that technological advancements would be able to deal with many of the issues outlined above, and ensure a fair and efficient selection process. The BPR&D study suggests that the widespread introduction of electronic machines, which record height measurements, would be a reliable means of assessing this metric. Once recorded, even if a candidate undergoes multiple processes that require measurements to be recorded at different stages of the process, the recorded height remains unchanged and eradicates the possibility of manipulation by

field recruitment staff. To counteract the possibility of impersonation, integrating biometric systems in PET and written examinations would add an extra layer of security, as they would ensure that the person undergoing the eligibility and physical tests is the same one taking the written examination.

To reduce malpractices in the recruitment process, the TRP suggested that the adoption of Optical Mark Recognition (OMR)⁷⁵ answer sheets would not only expedite the grading process but also reduce subjectivity in assessments. Its recommendation was: “the candidate will fill the OMR answer sheet and retain a carbonless copy of his solved answer paper. The answer key will be uploaded on the website within 2 hours of the examination so as to facilitate the candidates to assess their own performance. The answer papers are scanned using OMR scanners by the outsourced agency and the key is finally given to be fed into the database.” In line with this, the Tamil Nadu Uniformed Service Recruitment Board has adopted OMR-based written examinations, along with CCTV cameras which video record physical tests, GPS tracking of vehicles carrying examination materials, etc.⁷⁶

The same BPR&D study also suggested video recording the entire written examination process and publishing the examination result within seven days of the examination being completed. It also recommended doing away with personality tests and interviews for constable positions and basing the selection process entirely on a written examination and PE&MTs. Recruitment for SI posts could include a personality test and interview, “but this personality test must not have a weightage of more than 10 per cent of the total marks.”⁷⁷ West Bengal is the only state that still conducts interviews to recruit constables.

Other recommendations along the same lines come from the Gore Committee, which suggested that the selection

70 Vira, D. C., Reddy, N. K., Rustamji, K. F., Sakseena, N. S., & Gore, M. S. (1980). *Fifth Report of the National Police Commission, 1980*. Government of India, New Delhi.

71 Second Administrative Commission, Fifth Report (2007)

72 Gaurav Pathak. (2014, November 4). ‘Transparent Recruitment Process for Police Hiring, SC Issues Notice to Centre and all States.’ Live Law. Available at: <https://www.livelaw.in/transparent-recruitment-process-police-hiring-sc-issues-notice-centre-states/?infinite-scroll=1>

73 *Recruitment Procedures for Non-Gazetted Ranks in Police Forces in India*. (2 August 2016). BPR&D Ministry of Home Affairs. Available at: <https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/201608020503392423196Report.pdf>

74 Renuka Mishra. (1990). Project TRP: *Transparent Recruitment Process*. BPR&D. Available at: <https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/201608090101044662166TRPFINAL-31Pages.pdf>

75 *Recruitment Procedures for Non-Gazetted Ranks in Police Forces in India*. (2016, August 2). BPR&D Ministry of Home Affairs. Available at: <https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/201608020503392423196Report.pdf>

76 The RTI response from TNUSRB is attached in the Annexure.

77 Ibid.

process would benefit from appropriately developed psychological tests administered by competent psychologists, and the Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Fifth Report (2005) which says that: “emphasis on testing of aptitude, psychological screening including IQ/EQ” in the recruitment process.

In summation, the path forward demands prioritizing transparency, efficiency, and integrity. Future efforts must focus on establishing predictable, multi-year recruitment calendars, leveraging technology to minimize malfeasance, and implementing objective, psychometric-informed selection processes. Regular, data-driven reviews of sanctioned strengths, coupled with proactive measures that ensure representation

and merit are vital. The process must be designed to optimise the battle against corruption and political interference. This is crucial to building a police force that is both capable and trusted, ensuring public safety and upholding the rule of law in a diverse and evolving societal landscape. The issue of better recruitment is not merely about filling vacancies but selecting those most suitable to be the very bedrock of the rule of law.

Maja Daruwala, India Justice Report

Nidha Parveen, India Justice Report

Annexure

TNUSRB RTI Response

Minimisation of Malpractices

- i. Use of OMR sheets for written examinations and physical tests
 - ii. The entire physical tests are video graphed candidate-wise and test-wise and stored for future reference.
 - iii. Every candidate is frisked before the written examination.
 - iv. To avoid impersonation: The admission card has details of the candidate, such as her/his photo and signature, which is tallied with the physical face of the candidate, as well as with any other government-issued photo ID.
 - v. To avoid copying: Four sets of exam booklets are prepared by randomising the questions, and the seating arrangement is such that no adjacent candidates get the same exam booklet.
 - vi. Preparing the question papers: A large question bank is prepared by requisitioning teachers from the school education department. A few days before the examination, another set of teachers is tasked with taking out five sets of questions for each subject, which are kept in sealed covers. On the day of setting the final examination paper, the Chairperson of the board picks question sets randomly from the five sets in each subject. Hence nobody knows which questions were eventually chosen for the question paper sent to be printed. When ready, the printed question papers arrive packed centre-wise, and these are sent in trunk boxes under police escort in GPS-tracked vehicles. The key to these trunks is carried in sealed cover by a DSP-level officer in a separate vehicle.
 - vii. The examination: CCTV cameras are provided in every examination hall for the SIs examination. For departmental candidates writing the exam, their examination centre is outside the range in which they serve. The invigilators are Gr. I PCs and above. An undertaking is taken from them that "Nobody's relative is writing any exam anywhere in Tamil Nadu." Peripheral arrangements are made so that nobody other than the candidates are allowed inside the examination centre campus. After the examination, the OMR sheets are packed and sealed and sent back to TNUSRB under proper escort in GPS-tracked vehicles.
- The papers are scanned at TNUSRB and results generated with the help of a computer system; these are then published on the TNUSRB website.
- viii. The interview (for SIs only): Each interview board is headed by an ADGP-level officer, deputed by DGP (HoPF). Each board is constituted through a lot system every morning. Similarly, each candidate chooses her/his board through a lot system, so no one knows which board they are going to.
- Each member of the interview board awards marks independently. The members are advised to consult each other before assigning their marks on the OMR sheet, so that the difference in the marks awarded is not be more than 3. The OMR sheets are collected and sealed after each interview.
- ix. General: All information regarding recruitments is available on the TNUSRB website, www.tnusrb.tn.gov.in. The website also publishes the marks to promote transparency. The board does not entertain requests for favouring any candidate at any stage of the recruitment.

This study on police recruitment analyses how states have worked to fill vacancies in the civil police force over the years. Using data from 2019 to 2023, it examines recruitment patterns, shortfalls, diversity, and systemic challenges in hiring police personnel at the constable and sub-inspector levels across 18 states.

The study based on government publications and data contributes to public understanding of recruitment gaps, diversity targets, and hiring challenges and sets the basis for dialogues that enhance the chances for systemic improvements in recruitment cycles, workforce planning, and representation within the police force, ensuring that law enforcement agencies are better equipped, more inclusive, and responsive to public safety needs.

About India Justice Report 2025

The India Justice Report (IJR) 2025 is India's first and only comprehensive quantitative index which uses government data to rank the capacity of 'pillars' of the formal justice system. First published in 2019, it continues to track improvements and persisting deficits in each state's structural and financial capacity to deliver justice based on quantitative measurements of budgets, human resources, infrastructure, workload, and diversity across police, judiciary, prisons, legal aid, and Human Rights Commissions for all 36 states and UTs. The IJR is a collaborative effort undertaken in partnership with DAKSH, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Common Cause, Centre for Social Justice, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and TISS-Prayas.

Visit <https://indiajusticereport.org> for the main report, data explorer and more.

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