

CIVIL LINES POLICE STATION, RAIPUR
CHHATTISGARH

... pages
from
a diary



Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

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*... pages
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a diary*

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Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative has been working in the area of police reforms in Chhattisgarh since 2003. This police diarization process looks at the real conditions under which policing services are delivered to the population from close quarters. The process of documentation required CHRI's team to spend five days at the police station, interview officers at their work place, and observe and document their activities. In doing all this we had the cooperation of an array of people within and outside the police organisation. We are obliged to all of them.

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Civil Lines Police Station Raipur

Chapter 1: Introduction



1.1: The State and Police

That Indians are not satisfied with their police is clear. Police-public relations are marked by mutual distrust and suspicion. But the political executive and the police leadership have for a long time condoned the underperformance and malpractices widely associated with policing today and have been instrumental in cultivating discord between the police and the public. All over the country the police are perceived as corrupt, inefficient and abusive.

It is widely believed that police stations are no longer the places for addressing grievances but a necessary evil which are to be avoided at all costs or approached with extreme caution when absolutely necessary.

But if the public have their grouses against the police, the police have their own problems. Without benchmarks for performance, appropriate leadership or stable internal structures, under-trained and under-resourced forces are expected to perform in extremely difficult circumstances and in a system which has been designed to discourage innovation, self-expression, bravery and honesty. It is based on a mix of feudal and colonial hierarchy which belong to the bygone era of the British Raj and has little purpose or use today.

This study was conducted in Chhattisgarh, a state where the complex interplay of socio-economic conditions makes policing even more challenging and perilous both to the police themselves and to the public.

Chhattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh in 2000. The state has 16 districts that formerly comprised the south-eastern region of Madhya Pradesh. The population of Chhattisgarh is quite young with 33.2% below the age of 15 years. There is a lot of cultural diversity in the state and 40% of the population belong to the scheduled castes (11.6%) and scheduled tribes (31.8%). The scheduled tribes (STs) are concentrated in the southern, northern and north-eastern districts, the highest being in Bastar.

Chhattisgarh has a total strength of 20,350 personnel, both civil and armed police, out of which 11,841 is the actual strength of the civil police (including both men and women) and 8,509 are of the armed police. However, the composition of the Chhattisgarh police force is not reflective of its demographic structure. Women make up only 5.10% of the force. Scheduled castes account for 6.24%, 18.18% are members of scheduled tribes, 0.97% are Muslims while the rest of the 74.59% are made up of others. The state has a total of 21 police districts, 88 police subdivisions and 313 police stations out of which 210 are rural while 103 are urban in nature.

Policing reality in Chhattisgarh¹

- In Chhattisgarh there are 15.1 policemen per 100 sq. km as against an all-India average of 41.1 police personnel per 100 sq. km.
- In Chhattisgarh, 59 policemen serve nearly 1 Lakh population while the all-India average is 137. The UN norm for minimum police strength is about 222 per 100,000.
- In Chhattisgarh, one investigating officer handles more than 143 cases at a time against the all-India average of 42 cases.
- In the ranks from Deputy Superintendent of Police to Senior Superintendent of Police, the personnel deficit in Chhattisgarh was 29.9 per cent while at the rank of Sub-Inspector (SI) and Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI), it was 36.6 per cent.

Since the formation of the State, there has been sustained violent resistance by non-state actors on ideological grounds. The violence and counter-violence has escalated since the middle of 2005 with 92 police personnel losing their lives that year. This has led to an atmosphere of civil war in many regions of the state and is presently a major challenge to democratic life. A large number of policemen and civilians are killed or injured every year in the crossfire, to which the public remains largely uninformed.

The State has a relatively poor and vulnerable population who are also strongly disadvantaged by being unlettered. The indigenous population is particularly vulnerable to human rights violations and very few of them approach the state's redressal institutions. Despite this, 1,517 complaints were registered against Chhattisgarh Police in 2004.² There have been alleged cases of custodial deaths over the past couple of years especially in 2004. The victims belonged primarily to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It is important to note here that in 2004, the only two policemen who were convicted of deaths in police custody in India (of persons not remanded to police custody by court) belonged to Chhattisgarh Police.³

While the public are aware of the relationship between political expediency and how the police are managed, what is less often appreciated are the background infirmities of management, manpower and infrastructure within which policing operates. For example, police leadership often excuses poor performance by complaining that political interference mars their effective management of the force. However, that same leadership exhibits little concern for the difficult day-to-day conditions under which the majority of the lower ranking constabulary is forced to function. They are also reluctant to admit to their own complicity in perpetuating ancient and ineffective management systems.

Those involved with policing in Chhattisgarh are aware of the compromises made in the attempt to deal with an antiquated system that is poorly managed, ill-equipped and possessed of seriously understaffed station houses. This study seeks to highlight some of the ground conditions under which the police are asked, or rather ordered, to function.

1.2 The Study:

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative has witnessed the challenges faced by the police and the public from close quarters. In a 2005 survey conducted by CHRI on “People’s Perceptions of the Chhattisgarh Police”, citizens suggested that in order for policing to be effective police personnel need to be more visible and prompt. They also expressed a keen desire to know whether their police planned out their steps in advance when they conducted an investigation or before they interviewed suspects.

In addition, during CHRI organised police training programs across the state, the police consistently indicated that their main problem has been the paucity of time to execute all the official duties expected of them as there are constant unofficial expectations of them from various sources such as senior police personnel, politicians and the public which they are unable to resist. Without a basic time management structure available to them, the daily duties of personnel get subverted to private interests. As a result, efficiency, competitiveness, and professional conduct are sacrificed.

The present study is based on the activities at the Civil Lines police station at Raipur, Chhattisgarh, and is a continuation of our effort to advocate for approachable, transparent, accountable and efficient policing. The study concerns itself with the observations of one police station that many critics would argue is not representative of a police station located in a conflict area. However, the Civil Lines police station is illustrative of typical police working conditions that can be found throughout the country. The study sheds light on the working conditions of police personnel employed at the station level. These conditions are often deplorable. The study analyses the activities of the personnel both within and outside the police station, the workload, the subcultures, emergency situations and entirely extraneous obligations imposed on the police by a variety of actors. The study raises questions about police leadership and executive responsibility that for years has refused to pay adequate attention to training and appropriately provisioning the police so that they may carry out their duties. The power structures of the police seem content to permit the rank and file members, who make up the majority of the force, to continue to work in substandard environments.

1.2 (a) Objectives

The primary aim of the study is to identify gaps that exist in how police personnel function so that better and more visible policing can be achieved. Besides suggesting practical recommendations, the study will concentrate on providing policy makers and the public with a comprehensive understanding of:

- what is involved in the conduct and performance of a typical police station;
- the police subcultures; and
- what round the clock policing activities look like.

1.2 (b) Methodology

The study is based on fieldwork at one police station in Raipur (Civil Lines police station) over a five day period. As the study was done with the knowledge and cooperation of the police department, when analysing the activities and attitudes of station house personnel one must factor that they were undoubtedly on their best behaviour. The study was conducted through an interview schedule, case studies, informal discussions and observations made at the police station and by following the different staff members as they performed different duties. The data was analysed keeping in mind various factors, including:

- The duties of police personnel in maintaining law and order and public safety;
- Responsibilities regarding patrolling;
- The guarding and escorting of VIP's, accused persons and others; and
- The conduct of investigations.

The above factors were observed and an assessment was made as to whether the police conduct conformed to the standards prescribed under the Madhya Pradesh Police Regulations, the Police Act of 1861 and other laws and directives that are binding on all the state governments of India.

1.2 (c) Field Work:

April 7, 2005: A preliminary visit to the police station was made in order to introduce the researchers and explain CHRI's presence over the coming week to the station house officer and staff. The team also took a tour of the police station and its jurisdiction area and recorded the sanctioned and actual strength, the population, the area/radius, the number of vehicles, the availability of telephone/wireless sets and any other special features of the police station or area.

April 8, 2005: Between 10AM-1PM three researchers conducted interviews (see Appendix I) of the staff. Between 2PM-8PM one investigator observed and recorded the activities at the police station. Two field investigators in 30 minute

slots took special note of the reader at the police station while the others followed the patrolling unit.

April 9-10, 2005: Observed and recorded the activities of the police station over the following shifts: 6AM-1PM and 7PM-1AM.

April 10-11, 2005: Four field researchers observed and recorded the activities performed by officers in the normal course of their duties. The duties were tracked in 30 minute slots for the SHO, ASI, armed head constable and constable.

1.2 (d) Research targets:

The activities of all the officers at the police station (i.e. the SHO, ASI, armed head constable and constable) were studied and documented. The three police personnel who were posted at the outposts were also examined. It was intended that all the activities would easily slot into specific sets for each rank of officer. However, the reality of policing meant that roles blurred, functions overlapped, and activities spilled over time and space.

1.3 Conclusion:

The study is intended to bring into focus, especially for policy makers, bureaucrats and civil society activists, the broad gaps that exist between the legislative mandates given to the police and the stark reality of their real life working conditions. By diarising the daily working schedule of the police officers and constables (i.e. their regular tasks, the way they manage their time, their working conditions and the atmosphere inside a police station), the study aims to pinpoint for early repair, the problems that explain why the police so often fail to perform their enumerated duties.

The study is primarily meant to inform the police establishment and the political executive about priorities that need urgent attention. However, it is also intended to inform the public about some of the issues that make satisfactory performance unnecessarily difficult to achieve. We hope this study will provide reformers with an evidentiary foundation for their advocacy. As well, we hope that by highlighting the constraints that police work under, some of the negative relations between the police and the public will diminish. If the complaining public is better informed of the issues that confront police, and the police itself become more willing to be transparent about their operations, then greater respect and cooperation between the two may be forged.

The report does not condone police misbehaviour or poor performance nor does it agree with the standard defence that poor conditions result in police atrocities and underperformance. The case studies in the report are not intended

to empathise with police personnel, but rather to report on the information provided to researchers. These case studies are not mere stories that have been presented, interpreted and judged by the storyteller in a particular manner. Instead, the research attempts to link specific cases to the larger social realities of policing in India. The value of the study lies beyond the one police station we examined as most police stations across the country have similar, if not identical, issues and obstacles.

Civil Lines Police Station Raipur

Chapter 2: The Police Station and its Personnel



The Civil Lines Police Station⁴ is one of 21 stations located in Raipur, capital of Chhattisgarh. It serves a population of approximately 100,000 people over an area of 7 sq. km. Since the top management of the police chose this station for our study, in all probability it is one of the better stations in Chhattisgarh.

2.1 Location and the building

A heterogeneous population in a single jurisdictional area is a mark of urban policing in India and Civil Lines Police Station is no exception. There are two slums of mainly migrant labourers from Orissa⁵ and several middle income colonies comprising government servants, traders and small businessmen. At the top end, there are bungalows of high income residents. But more importantly, the jurisdiction has the official residences of the governor, the chief minister, home minister and several other members of cabinet and senior bureaucrats. The police station is located at the better end of the locality and abuts a cabinet minister's house. It is a few hundred meters from various VIP houses, just under a kilometre from the main road and about 1.5 km from where the slums begin.

The station house stands in the centre of the U-shaped compound that is divided into two. The police station also houses the District Police Control Room and the Office of the City Additional Superintendent of Police. There are also two separate buildings in the compound housing the Cyber Police Station and the Narcotics Department. A one-storied barrack, reserved for armed police who come in for emergencies, occupies the rear of the compound. The station has two sanctioned outposts: one at Raja Talab with a staff of three and the other at Rajen Nagar which was unoccupied at the time of study.

At first glance it was evident that the police station was too small to house the sanctioned strength of the personnel. At one end of the structure the Station House Officer's (SHO)⁶ room and the Reader's⁷ room, with its unlocked toilet, were separated by a long corridor from the main working end which consisted of 8 small rooms. The entire area was no more than 2000 sq. ft. At the entrance a relatively large reception area housed the duty officer. It had a desk for the officer in charge and a wooden bench for visitors against the wall. In the nearby room sat the *Munshi*.⁸ Some filing cupboards, a rifle rack with seven .303s and all twelve *Takhtis*'s⁹ as required by law, were hung on the walls. To its credit the police station had prominently displayed in Hindi the thirteen D. K. Basu¹⁰ guidelines that inform visitors of their rights during arrest and detention along with a poster of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

A narrow corridor led to the back of the police station. Small rooms facing each other were lined up on either side. On the right were two dark and poorly ventilated empty lockups with their built in open squat toilets. Further down adjoining the lock up was a *Malkhana* (strong room) used to safeguard goods

recovered in search operations and evidence. A row of squat toilets and urinals lined up at the end at right angles to the rest of the rooms. On the left, the corridor ended in the investigating officer's room. The investigation unit, which had a staff of seven, was full of tables and benches, leaving little room to move. No more than four people could have been accommodated in the room at any given time. All the current records were locked inside a closed cabinet while the old documents were neatly piled on shelves tied in red cloth. It would be a hard task putting these old records to any use because the paper had become so brittle that any handling would only cause it to be severely damaged. Across the station lighting arrangements were extremely poor.

By contrast, the SHO's 216 sq. ft room was a well ventilated room and had a TV, a large writing table, bookcase and cooler. The SHO's room also had a small adjoining store room which staff grinningly referred to as an "interview room". It was newly painted, well furnished, had a fridge, a little china tea set and a dressing table. The SHO mentioned that he sometimes "interviewed" people more discretely here. He admitted that the furniture was part of the seized goods or items recovered during an investigation of crime. Markings of the case number on the furniture clearly validated his claim.

2.2 Infrastructure

2.2 (a) Equipment:

The equipment across the station was either very basic or in short supply. At the time of our visit the station had one telephone line with two phones, one of which was in the SHO's room and was not functioning. The staff told us that only Rs 500 was granted for telephone use each month. It was extremely difficult to meet the growing demands in the police station on this amount. However, calls were made and received quite casually and the phone log book was not strictly maintained. The station wireless set was new and the walkie-talkies given to assistant sub-inspectors and above were in good working order.

2.2 (b) Stationary:

The documentation requirements were considerable. However, stationary such as files, folders, forms, *challans*, log books, investigation books, case diaries, receipt books, carbon papers, and pens were all in short supply and so grossly inadequate that police were frequently compelled to ask complainants to bring their own carbon and writing paper. Papers that were required to be presented in court in multiple copies posed a particular difficulty.

2.2 (c) Documents:

There were various registers and documents which were maintained and were necessary for the functioning of police station. These documents may be classified into four heads:

i) Police Station lists¹¹: Also known as *Takhtis*. All the 13 *Takhtis* as mentioned in the MP Police Regulation were hung in the *Munshi's* room. When we crosschecked with the staff we were told that much of the information was outdated and few refer to them.

ii) Police Station Registers¹²: The researchers found that those registers falling in the A-general category, which includes the general diary, case diary, FIR book, and history sheets, were updated on a regular basis. Category B registers, which includes the cash book, the ledger and establishment registers, were under the jurisdiction of the Writer and regularly updated. However, the registers falling under Categories C (Arms and Excise Acts) and D (Miscellaneous) were not shown to us.

iii) Police Station forms¹³: There are 24 forms under this list. The staff complained that supplies of these forms are often short and sporadic. Many did not even know about forms like receipt for diet money or abstract of contingent expenditure. They mentioned that only a few important forms like post mortem examination were available and used. The rest had fallen into disuse or irregular use.

iv) Books at police station¹⁴: A copy of the IPC, CrPC and The MP Police Regulations must be available in the vernacular language. When we asked to see the books the *Munshi* dusted them off before handing them over, clearly indicating that they do not get much use at all. The staff admitted as much saying that there was no time available to refer to the niceties of laws or regulations. They explained that all that they had learned about the law was through practice and observation of senior officers. This meant that there was not a strong foundation in upholding the law or following the procedures that ensure that their work is done within legislated parameters.

2.2 (d) Vehicle:

The police station had a jeep in good working order but no official driver had been provided. Fuel was another issue. Police stations are each entitled to around 100/120 litres of fuel per month for patrolling. Getting extra fuel depends on the discretionary powers of the Superintendent of Police (SP). To get official work done, personnel routinely used their personal vehicles (motorbikes) for travelling or patrolling for which they were seldom reimbursed.¹⁵ Some police officers informed us that the claim process was so tortuous that they avoided it.

The car diary was also not maintained by the officer in charge of the police station and movements were not recorded.

2.2 (e) Lock up:

The two lockups at the police station were tiny, dark and dingy and there was no cross ventilation. The women's lockup had been converted into a storeroom and the men's was not used. The research team was informed that fear of accusations of custodial deaths meant that in reality the lockups were left unused. Instead, a practice had developed of trying to release suspects before nightfall or, when unavoidable, suspects were made to sit (with or without restraints) on a piece of burlap in the corridor outside the lockups. There was also no separate space set aside for interviewing suspects.

2.2 (f) Reception:

A wooden bench was in place for the complainants at the *Munshi's* office. Not more than four people could sit there at a time. No other arrangement was available and visitors were often seen roaming around the police station in search of attention. There was also no separate meeting place for visitors of the prisoners. At the entrance there also hung a board stating there was a separate women's desk available, although no officer was given any such charge. The board was removed a couple of days after a research team member inquired about it.

2.2 (g) Toilet:

The toilets had no lighting and personnel explained that they did not expect a better standard as there was not any separate budget for such facilities. The toilets seats were cracked and encrusted with years of filth and the uneven floor was covered with brown pools of liquid. There did not appear to be any separate arrangements for male and female personnel or for visitors and suspects. Poor drainage, leaky rusted pipes and stagnant water made the whole rear end corridor of the police station reek of urine.

2.2 (h) Recreation:

No recreation or rest area was available at the police station. However on 19th March 2006 when the research team again visited the police station the personnel informed the team that a recreation room had been set up for the women personnel and those visiting the police station. It had three plastic chairs and the rubble of the construction of the building was dumped there. There was also a small toilet attached. However, the toilet was choked with rubble, paper and trash confirming that the building was in disuse. But a

plaque on the outside mentioned that the building had been inaugurated in January 2006.

2.2 (i) Malkhana:

Like the rest of the station, the 288 sq. ft. strong room was badly lit and devoid of any sentry guarding it.¹⁶ The keys lay with the duty officer. The property count was never examined by the relieving duty officers. Items that had accumulated over the years had now spilled over into the women's lock up and into another small room occupied by the cash department.

2.2 (i) Arms:

Service revolvers were provided to the officers at the grade of ASI, SI and SHO. The arms maintained at the police station (i.e. rifles and *lathis*) are required to be kept in the storage room. Instead, seven .303s rifles were stacked in the *Munshi's* room right next to the visitors' bench and just a few metres away from the place where the detainees were held. No one seemed to pay much attention to them.

2.3 Personnel

2.3 (a) Strength:

Civil Lines police station has a sanctioned strength of 112. Of these the actual staff availability at the time of research was less than 50% of the sanctioned number (see the table below). Three personnel, one each of the rank of Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI), Head Constable (HC) and Constable (C), were permanently deputed at the Raja Talab outpost and another three constables that were posted in the crime squad further depleted the strength in the main police station. Staff had resigned itself to the fact that they would not get any more personnel in the near future. There were only two women officers, one each of the rank of head constable and sub inspector.¹⁷

Strength	RANK					Total
	TI	SI	ASI	HC	Constable	
Sanctioned	1	5	7	17	82	112
Actual	1	5	4	8	32	50
Deficit	-	-	3	9	50	62

Given that staff work in shifts and have multifarious tasks of investigation, escort duty, court attendance, VIP duties¹⁸ and patrolling outside the station, there were never more than 7 or 8 personnel on duty at the station at any given time even between the peak hours of 12 pm to 2pm and 8pm to 10pm.

2.3 (b) Leave:

According to the police regulations police personnel are entitled to 30 days of earned leave, 16 days of casual leave (with not more than 8 days casual leave allowed at a time),¹⁹ 90 days of medical leave and 15 days of special leave. Leave is usually earned by duty at a rate of 1/11th of the period spent on duty.²⁰ However, the maximum amount of leave on average pay, which is granted at present, is four months at a time without medical certificate and eight months on production of medical certificate.²¹ Additionally, the present police regulations provide that the hospital or medical leave given to police officers of the rank not higher than head constable is for a total period of six months in three years. This leave may be taken in one period or in instalments. This can also be granted on full average pay for the first three months and on half average pay for the remaining three months²². Public holidays, which fall within the casual leave, are also calculated separately.

However in spite of such directions, in practice, the personnel rarely have time and opportunity to avail themselves of leave entitlements. All personnel of ASI/ SI ranks mentioned that they were tied up with their work and even though they had been sanctioned leave, most of them had not been able to use it beyond one or two days, except for one person who mentioned that he had been able to take leave for almost 7 or 8 days. Leave grants were not given as of right or even-handedly, but were routinely refused or subject to VIP movements, festivals and the whims of the senior officers. The rank and file have little opportunity to relax and are seldom given leave on holidays such as Dipawali, Dussehra, Id or Good Friday. Several incidents of being denied leave were recounted and there was a great deal of bitterness and resentment at perceived unfairness of senior management officers who it was felt have no interest or understanding of the problems faced by the personnel. Illustratively, an ASI had been punished for taking leave to take care of family members suffering from chicken pox. The discretionary nature of time off, combined with a lack of adequate nearby accommodation, means that many personnel do not spend time at home with their families on a regular or consistent basis.

2.3 (c) Salary Structure:

The table below provides the basic salary structure. Personnel expressed frustration and difficulty in running families on what they considered to be

meagre salaries. The fact that salaries were not on par with those in Delhi and Maharashtra was also a cause for comment.

Ranks	Basic salary	Salary in hand
SI	6250	10500
ASI	5500	8000
Head Constable	4900	7300
Constable	4200	7000

2.3 (d) Housing:

Most of the police personnel of the rank of ASI/SI were in their late 40s, with at least 15 years of service. With the exception of two ASI officers and one SI officer, all were married. All the constables, many of whom were over 40 years of age and with at least 12-15 years of service, were married. Many mentioned they were unable to meet their families on a daily basis. Housing was in short supply. Both free housing and houses on rent/lease are provided to the upper subordinate ranks but this only covered 40% of such staff (data based on sanctioned strength). Only around 33% of the constables were provided free government housing or houses on rent/lease (based on sanctioned strength).

Housing Allowance provided to the personnel

Rank of the personnel	Amount of housing allowances in Rs.
SI.....	340/400
ASI.....	340
Head Constable.....	180
Constable.....	Free housing if available

2.3 (e) Family Background:

Most personnel came from joint families and a rural background. Several mentioned that they owned land but the needs of service prevented them from taking care of it on any regular basis. It was evident that there were strong attachments to their hometowns and that they bore responsibilities to parents, siblings and their own nuclear families. While some mentioned that they had joined the police service for the glamour and respect accorded to the uniform, others admitted that the power accorded to police was what attracted them to the profession. However, others had joined the service not for glamour or desire

for power but because of familial influence or because they simply sought gainful employment. Having worked in the profession for a number of years, most did not feel a sense of purpose or fulfilment. Rather, they consoled themselves with the feeling that the uniform still commanded some respect from the population at large.

Conclusion:

The physical and working conditions at what must be regarded as a 'VIP' station were by no means adequate, even for the comparatively lighter tasks that the police in such a middle class locality would be asked to perform. Lack of resources and poor working conditions have their own manifold repercussions.

Lack of infrastructure and manpower resources, as well as the knowledge that things were going to remain the same way in the foreseeable future, provided ample excuses for underperformance, taking shortcuts and making arrangements to suit the moment rather than keeping to the necessary legalities required of policemen. Illustratively, lack of carefully supervised usage and regular record-keeping meant that movements were not properly logged and vehicles could be used for other than policing purposes. This was so common that it was hardly considered a digression. Similarly, over time, the accuracy of registered goods in the strong room was questionable. The fact that evidence in court cases and/or proceeds from theft were openly used at the station indicated a breakdown in following proper protocol. Uncertainty of how goods are stored and recorded also means a breakdown in the chain of evidence, which will likely be fatal to a court case.

In addition, knowledge that leisure time was not going to be respected as a workplace value allowed personnel to adopt a lackadaisical pace at work and justified, in their own minds, taking time off to do personal errands. Despite the camaraderie of officers and staff engendered by the feeling that 'we are all in it together', the distance between them - in status especially - was evident in the contrasting conditions between the SHO's office and the area where all the rest worked. It was clear that little attention was being paid by the leadership to ensure that even such essentials as sanitary conditions or proper facilities for female staff were being attended to. Worst of all, the lockups, though thankfully not in use, were typical of thousands across the country which have no light shining into them, and are dark, dingy, filthy places of intimidation and fear. The conditions are dehumanising to both the suspects occasionally lodged in them as well as those who have become hardened to their presence. The conditions of the lockups also indicated a lack of knowledge and respect for the minimum legal standards required for keeping persons in custody. Simple steps to remedy the situation (i.e. a command of relevant procedures and

regulations) had not been taken for so long that the deplorable conditions were seen as normal when they are decidedly not.

Undoubtedly, some of the shortfalls in infrastructure and improvements at work require the infusion of funds, more manpower and better equipment. However, there is scope for many improvements that require no such outside intervention. Remedies for addressing the dysfunction lie in rationalising procedures to suit present day conditions. For example, the following steps could be taken:

- A review of procedures pertaining to documentation could cut down on duplication and increase the accuracy of essential records
- Cleanliness requires little but regular attention
- Staff morale would increase vastly along with performance if leave rosters could be pre-planned with certainty and time off was respected and did not rely on whims
- Vehicle logs properly maintained would eliminate the practice of using the vehicle to pander to outside interests at the cost of official work
- Regular short sessions to remind staff of police procedures and the court's minimum requirements for custodial conditions would reduce the risk of infringing a detainee's rights and would also reduce the public's automatic suspicion of police wrongdoing

Present conditions force police personnel to constantly create false excuses in order to defend themselves against public accusations of poor performance. The conditions also provide the police with a justification for bypassing legal standards. With time this defensiveness has taken the shape of a subculture that has created a great distance between the police and the community. As a result, the police station has become a bastion isolated from the community. The colonials needed it this way but this relationship cannot be the premise for policing a democracy where safety, security and the efficacy of the police lies in meeting the expectations of the public and providing them with a responsive police service.

Civil Lines Police Station Raipur

Chapter 3: Police Subculture and Management Practices



3.1. Police Subculture

It was quite clear that the station house had been informed of our impending visit and was on its best behaviour. However, five days of close interaction and the presence of a sympathetic audience of young and engaged people created candour beyond the cosmetic courtesies of the first few hours. The SHO was careful to sprinkle his polite responses with words like 'public service', but most pretence soon vanished as staff became used to our round the clock presence at the station. At first, hesitant and cynical of the value of our work, police personnel who are rarely asked their views opened up and enjoyed the opportunity to talk.

The differences in attitude, behaviour and social environment between the lay public and people used to working in a system which has long ago sacrificed logic and efficiency to a rigid hierarchy and expediency was palpable. We here refer to it as 'police subculture' because it is entrenched, reinforced by peers and expected by senior officers. It is very distinct from the non-policing world and its logic and pervasiveness colour all police responses. Most importantly, it informs how the police will in fact perform in any given situation.

Police personnel readily acknowledged that there was a special subculture within the ranks. They did not examine it or attempt to understand its consequences. Rather, they were resigned to it believing it was justified in their circumstances. They were comfortable in the belief that their collective behaviour, with all its shortfalls in norms and standards, stemmed from stressful working conditions, lack of resources, low pay, political interference, having to provide every kind of service (legal or otherwise) to seniors, and the unrealistic expectations of an often hostile public.

3.1 (a) Fear:

An unexpected finding was the effect of fear on the minds of police personnel. While it is usual for the general public to fear the police, we observed that the police themselves are vulnerable to fear as well. We found them afraid of the media, lawyers, complainants, accused and witnesses if they had connections with senior officers and/or anyone else who was 'higher in status' than themselves. Amongst the lot, the police seemed most fearful of the ruling political leaders and of their seniors. Displeasing them could be life threatening as it could mean a transfer to Naxalite regions. The police shared with us that this fear had the effect of robbing them of all initiative on the one hand and made it easy to engage in wrongdoing on the other. Interestingly, their biggest in-house fear was that of custodial death. After a series of alleged custodial death cases in Chhattisgarh, and years of bad publicity, their fear of having a dead

body in the environs of the police station had increased tremendously. In fact, lockups were left unused for this very reason.

3.1 (b) Self defence:

Across rank and file, self-defence and survival in the system resurfaced repeatedly and easily as the most deep seated concerns in police subculture. Most striking was the uniform belief among all personnel that the police are victims of the system which is bigger than each individual and which is so entrenched that it cannot possibly be changed through individual endeavour. Rather, it must be paid obeisance and homage to and must remain intact somehow - anyhow. At the same time they wanted change - particularly of other actors in the criminal justice system. They were highly critical of the rest of the criminal justice system, particularly the judiciary, despising it for its corruption and frustrated by its power to act as a check on their activities. They were fearful of politicians, scornful of bureaucrats and mistrusting of the public at large. They used their sense of victim hood to justify every kind of misbehaviour and all poor performance. It is this sense of shared martyrdom and low self image, mixed with collective power, which perhaps informs their responses to the public. As they explained – “Where will the public go after all? In the end, when they are in trouble, they have to come to us.”

Their isolation from the community, and the sense of being the few against the many, governs police perceptions of the public. They were fearful and threatened by the rich and suspicious and judgmental of the poor. While patrolling around the slums it was frequent to hear them say: “*Is basti mein sabhi chor hain*” (Everybody is a thief in this slum.). Such prejudice and stereotyping existed across the ranks. They believed that their cynicism was rooted in experiences which were nearly always negative.

3.1 (c) Seniors and juniors:

Their cynicism was not only towards the public but also for their own department. Most personnel said that although they respected our efforts they were sure nothing would come of it because they felt that neither government nor seniors were particularly interested in change or concerned for the betterment of the rank and file. The general consensus was: “It will just remain as yet another report gathering dust.” Though there was little genuine respect for senior officers, subservience to them was unquestioning and uniform, albeit superficial. Their obsequiousness remained only while the senior officer was physically present. Once he left then scorn and abuse for seniors flowed freely.

Moreover, senior officers did not appear to mentor junior officers or garner respect through principled actions. Instead, they took the helplessness of juniors

for granted and took advantage of the disparity in power to lord it over people whose lives and career paths they knew they had full command over. Throughout our observation period seniors would routinely order juniors to run demeaning errands outside the professional course of duty. They felt that such treatment is instrumental in maintaining 'discipline'. Several times throughout the day constables would leave their duties to perform some petty command or to do a personal errand. There were frequent orders to produce tea, cigarettes, *paan*, snacks or meals. No money was given. No account was kept. No recompense was expected.

Behind their backs, juniors complained bitterly about being constantly humiliated by seniors and for having to find money to satisfy these purchases and services. Of course they followed suit and passed the costs down the line to the local shopkeeper or petrol station owner with the effect being a culture of inappropriate *quid pro quo* favouritism. It was inconceivable for them to imagine that they could be part of the problem or that they were capable of challenging or changing the system. The present structure did not let them question their seniors and they were clear that if they were foolish enough to attempt it, it would adversely affect their future.

There were too many well known instances where the slightest challenge or disobedience to the established chain of command had proved disastrous. A constable - who the visiting team and his own peers saw as one of the most dedicated to his job – told his own story that exemplified the situation. One time long ago, he had asked for leave because his brother had died suddenly. Though properly approved by the Senior Superintendent of Police the Station House Officer refused to grant it. He went back to the Superintendent but the man was out of station. Though he tried catching up with the Superintendent he kept missing him as he travelled outside the area. So in this emergency he decided to go off to his family home for the funeral anyway. When he reported back with the death certificate, there was an order awaiting him asking him to explain his absence. Notwithstanding his explanations, his small challenge to the hierarchy was held against him and he was repeatedly passed over for promotion. His name was in top 14 in the list of promotion to ASI rank in the year 2003 but all others were promoted except him and another person. Soon after he wrote many applications to the higher authorities but nothing happened. Thus, he petitioned the High Court in November 2003 for his promotion. He got a decision in his favour on April 2005 which ordered the government to give him a promotion within seven days from the judgment date. But when one of our team members met with him a month after that on May 6, 2005, he informed us that he had not received the promotion letter from the authorities even though he knew from an unnamed source that the order had been made.

Similar stories from others reiterated that personal grudges and unfettered discretion were endemic and a frequent cause for losing out on rank, postings and money. A constable recalled that when his daughter had died a few years ago he had been denied leave. He believes that he is doubly discriminated against because of his Christian identity. He pointed out that while his colleagues were given leave on a rotation basis during their festivals he was denied leave every Christmas. Nothing, we noticed, was done to allay misgivings about callousness or discrimination. Other demonstrations of discrimination and disrespect were evident in the way that seniors ordinarily addressed their juniors and the easy use of threat and profanity scattered throughout every sentence. This created an atmosphere of constant intimidation which is so embedded in the culture of the station that unless very extreme it draws little comment.

The anger, resentment and lack of confidence in senior officers ran right through the establishment. The higher ranking officers felt similarly antagonistic towards their bosses and politicians. They believed that subservience, contacts and patronage, and not efficiency or merit, were keys to promotion. They easily provided instances and names of officers who knew their way around the influentials and by serving their needs were given the most lucrative posts and rewarded with high honours, whereas the honest officers were likely to languish for years in danger zones like Bastar. In this dysfunctional atmosphere no one seriously considered honesty or efficiency a realistic way to cut through the morass. Rather, the complaint was about being an unequal part of the spoils system.

Everyone recognised that their behaviour toward each other is justified under the convenient blanket of adherence to the archaic British model of strict discipline and hierarchy. Nevertheless, that perennial whipping boy, the British and their 1861 law, were routinely trotted out as the root cause that explained present shortfalls in policing. This ritualistic reference to 'The British' by people who probably know very little about pre-independence policing appeared to give some comfort even though they were doing very little to improve policing. It had the merit of shifting blame far away, to vague historical factors, and avoided any self reflection or critical analysis of present day wrongs. Even if they did recognise their deficiencies few seniors were empathetic towards their junior staff and most accepted that they were comfortably co-opted into the vicious cycle of poor performance and wrongdoing.

3.1 (d) Violence:

The police station is a rough place and the police justify their frequent resort to violence with ease. The sense of the world being against them, combined with the knowledge of power and protection when rules are bent, creates an environment where violence is not unusual. We did not see any gratuitous violence, but it was close to the surface and there was no hesitation to use it

when tolerances snapped. However, no one denied that there was violence. No one voiced any doubts that it was wrong. Several officers mentioned that they would *prefer* to use violence to solve a case and this was expected of them. They explained that being sandwiched between the pressures of senior officers, politicians and the public they had no reason to act otherwise. Verbal abuse, coupled with threats of violence and incarceration, were scattered throughout conversations among themselves and towards visitors, witnesses and accused. Senior officers were the most egregious offenders of what is normally considered unacceptable behaviour.

3.1 (e) Condoning law:

Public ignorance of the law is often exploited by the police and informs how they conduct their work. On the first day of our study three minors (names changed) were detained in the police station for over 24 hours. While Monu and Satish were accused of attempt to murder u/s 307 IPC, Lochan was there for no offence at all. His brother Mantri (not a minor) was the third accused, but since he was absconding, the police found it convenient to detain his brother. The feeling was that this would pressure the absconding brother to ultimately surrender himself to the police. After dinner, the ASI investigating the case decided to use the assistance of Monu in the investigation and took him to search for the absconding accused. They returned after a few hours but without any success. Sometime later the patrolling staff had picked up another minor, named Jittu, another brother of the accused Mantri. They threatened to put him in lockup if he did not divulge details of his brother's whereabouts. That night the local corporator reached the police station. He asked the police to release one of the boys (Lochan) immediately. In return, he gave the police an assurance that Mantri would surrender within the next couple of days. The next day Monu was handcuffed²³ and taken along with the ASI in search of Mantri. They could not find him. Later that evening innocent Jittu was allowed to go home.

The next morning Mantri came to the police station along with the local corporator. However, the police decided to produce all the accused before the Magistrate the next day as paperwork and formalities needed to be completed. Arrest memos were drawn up, the body search *panchnamas* were filled up, and all items of the detainees were taken away, marked and entered into the register and then put away into the *almirah*.²⁴ The next evening, two persons having details about this case were supposed to report to the police station. However, since they did not turn up the ASI went to the nearby Oriya Colony to make inquiries. He met one person there and asked him to bring 2-3 persons to the police station to identify the accused persons. Thereafter he went to the Kali Temple and spoke to three boys, one of whom was supposedly the eyewitness. He ordered them to report at the police station within the next 10 minutes. With the identification complete all formalities were over. The detainees were produced

before the court the next day. The Magistrate ordered two boys, who were minors, to be taken to the Juvenile Home and the other two boys to be sent to judicial custody. The disposal was quick. The magistrate did not make an effort to check the veracity of the arrest memo. The court was not informed of the process whereby innocents were detained. It seemed these practices were understood and illegal processes were seldom questioned.

At every step the police invoked the law, but no one (not the boys being held for attempted murder without any reasonable grounds, not their parents and not the corporator) questioned the excessive use of police powers or sought an explanation of how and why those powers were utilised. The team observed several such cases of illegal detention. It was assumed that the police were the law, that they knew all about the law, and that there was no right to challenge anything that the police were doing. The police explanation was that their methods were practical and well rooted in realities.

One officer remarked that the law requires the police to produce a detained person before a magistrate within 24 hours or release him. However, if the policeman precisely follows the letter of the law then there is a high chance that complainants will see this as a deliberate act done to defeat justice or make money. On the other hand, if the accused is produced before a magistrate and there is not enough proof to hold him/her, the magistrate will order judicial custody and this may end up making matters even worse for the accused who would subsequently get entangled in the coils of a system where delay is notorious. The accused may end up staying in custody much longer than he otherwise would while he waits for his guilt or innocence to be established.

The police have also devised a method to bypass the interruption of the interrogation process. It is common practice to keep a suspect in custody and interrogate him for two or three days until the truth of the matter becomes clear. At that point a decision is made as to whether to book and produce the accused before a magistrate or to release him. By using this approach they feel that the least amount of harm is done to the suspect in the event that he is innocent, and in the event that the suspect is guilty he will get his “just deserts”. In fact, there was a feeling that things could become much worse and that the police were actually being quite benign. The guidelines given in Supreme Court in *D.K Basu vs. State of West Bengal* are a nationally recognised safeguard against the routine practice of illegal detention. The guidelines were all blatantly ignored. During our five day observation, neither the persons already in custody, nor those who were brought in, were read their rights, had their presence recorded in the daily diary, or were produced before the magistrate in a timely manner. Once a case had been made out, and there was sufficient evidence for the police to show reasonable grounds for an arrest, the memo of arrest was made and everything became as per the rules.

3.1 (f) Interference:

The police subculture also demands that there be unquestioning obedience to the wishes of superiors and those that are powerful. Our observations over three days reconfirmed the public perception that politicians and outsiders have far too much undue influence over policing. In one case the crime branch raided a video library, seized pirated videos and picked up ten people. We were later told that due to intervention of a cabinet minister all the accused were let off. We cannot validate what exactly happened. It is highly likely that money exchanged hands and the cabinet minister interference may have just been an excuse. However, the fact is that undue political interference in policing is now an axiom. In an earlier case study we saw a corporator intervening and getting the innocent juvenile released from police custody. Although his intervention was for a good cause, the incident highlighted the fact that since the system is so open to influence, it seems highly probable that abuses will occur.

The interplay of money/power and soliciting services was very evident in a case where a lawyer living outside the jurisdiction sent a letter to the SP, with a copy to the IG at Raipur, asking him to inquire into what was purely a matter of customer dissatisfaction. He had bought a TV and it had developed problems. He asked the Raipur based service centre to repair it. Their representative went to Bastar district and found that the TV's seals had already been opened up and others had tampered with it. With that the service centre's liability ceased and they refused to proceed with the repairs. This was the background. However, an influential police officer based at Raipur passed the letter to the civil lines staff to inquire in the matter. Now, all the police officers through whom the matter went must have known at a glance that this had nothing to do with the criminal law or policing. Nevertheless, each acted to address a request from a lawyer outside their jurisdiction in a dispute where perhaps even the consumer court would not have entertained the matter. It is not clear whether the prompt response was due to the profession of the complainant, a courtesy provided, or due to his link to someone influential. Regardless of the reason, one could not escape the thought that this was above and beyond the call of duty.

3.1 (g) Visiting service:

The law requires that the police check out the facts of an incident that is brought to their notice. The team observed that even though the police always say they are a very busy and understaffed force, it was not unusual for them to make inquiries at the premises of the complainant. On at least two occasions they preferred to take time out to make inquiries at their premises rather than calling people to the station. In one incident, where the complaint was that a deregistered university had not removed its nameplate from public view, the police went to

the premises to take a statement from the administration instead of calling them in to the police station. Similarly, when another person made a complaint that his consignment of mobile phones worth Rs 1,12,700 had been missing the police went off to the home of the courier in order to make inquiries (perhaps to remove any notion that there had been foul play). The general perception of the team was that visiting services were used mostly in economic matters rather than criminal matters.

3.1 (h) Personal services:

Police provide personal service to different clients. Such people build their relationship over years. In such cases intervention can be very quick, even if rough and ready. In one case (all names have been changed) a woman named Devi came to the police station, crying vehemently, in order to lodge a complaint against her neighbour, Jagat, who had beaten her and broken into her house. This woman was well known to all the staff of the police station because she ran a tea stall near C.M. House. The police station staffs were her non-paying customers. ASI, SI and a constable accompanied the woman in the police jeep to locate Jagat; they found him in a drunken state and enquired about the break-in of Devi's home. The policemen brought the man to the police station and sent him for a medical examination. The accused Jagat was booked under Section 151 of Criminal Procedure Code and was sent to SDM court along with a constable. The woman was content with the action and tried giving Rs.100 each to the ASI and SI but both of them refused to take the money. They were embarrassed at her offer, probably because of our presence, and instead asked the woman to just get tea for them.

The service provided was quick and customer friendly but it left many questions unanswered. Why was Jagat detained u/s 151? It is used for persons likely to cause trouble whereas in this case he had beaten her and destroyed her property. We discovered that this is a very frequent practice adopted by the police. Instead of booking him under the relevant sec of causing hurt or grievous hurt or theft or house break, they booked him under section 151. This way no FIR is lodged, no investigation needs to be done, no charge sheet will have to be prepared and crime records/levels remain low. Their action satiates the largely ignorant public and helps them manipulate the crime statistics to the fancy of the ruling government.

3.1 (i) Cultural cooption:

Policing must be done according to the law and without fear or favour. However, part of the subculture of policing is that it carries within it cultural practice and bias which the constitution does permit for agents of the state. Traditional biases are reinforced by prejudices shared by a like minded peer group in an establishment which has not built any mechanism for self reflection or self

correction. Illustratively, in one case a woman came to the police station with her brother. Her complaint was that her husband was an alcoholic and that he was beating and verbally abusing her regularly. In fact, in this instance she had left her place with her child and had gone to her brother's place. The husband did not know where she was exactly. She did not want to file a complaint, but she did want the SHO to make some sort of intervention. She said that her husband was afraid of the police, so if the police could just give him a call and talk to him then she felt that things would be all right. The SHO said that first she should file a complaint. But the woman said that she did not want to file a complaint; she just wanted the SHO to talk to her husband. Since her husband was visiting the brother's place tomorrow, she said that it would be better if the SHO could talk to him immediately. The SHO called up the home and talked to his family members asking for him and then they suddenly cut the phone. The SHO then told the woman that she should not worry and that things will be okay. He then gave orders to his officers to bring in the husband the next day. The next day the woman, her husband, her brother and her sister-in-law reported to the police station. The husband, who looked like he was in the grip of a massive hangover, was detained. The SHO then gave instructions to sober him down with foodstuff and water/lime juice. In the evening the SHO had a talk with him and he agreed not to beat her and to take her back home.

The following day the woman thanked the SHO for his action. The police agreed that doing things that were culturally accepted was sometimes more important than being guided purely by the law. The SHO later remarked that had he taken legal action against him she would have lost her husband and she would have been abandoned by her paternal side. He thought that the purists were a bunch of theorists who talk about empowerment without understanding the cultural contexts.

3.1 (i) Corruption:

Corrupt practices are well known and well tolerated in this subculture. What the world sees as corrupt practice is seen by the best at the station as simply a necessary adjunct needed to do their jobs. It is seen by the worst as a perk which they themselves had paid for in order to enjoy. Unsurprisingly, we did not see money changing hands. However, there were a few instances that suggested gratuitous payments were made for "services rendered". In the instance where the police helped out their everyday tea stall woman, she immediately dipped into her small knot and proffered money. In our presence it was refused. But clearly it was common expectation on the part of the constabulary and community alike to give something in return for prompt assistance. The station was rife with examples of picking up *thanda* and *chai* for the *Sahebs* or themselves while patrolling and no payment was ever made. There was no attempt, that we witnessed, by any senior to disapprove these practices. Instead, senior officers

mentioned that these little things were taken for granted and considered an integral part of policing.

Low pay and poor infrastructure were put forward as good enough justifications for corrupt practices. We were frequently asked to do the math. Constables cited their low rental allowances of Rs 150 against markets rates of Rs 1000 as a reason for making money on the side. Similarly, the complex procedures for claiming petrol expenditures were so difficult, they explained, that it was simply easier to get someone to “donate” petrol in order to keep the station house jeep running. The neglect of the administration in providing basic amenities like paper, plus the numerous services demanded by the seniors as part of their own privileged position, were also strong contributing factors to justify their corruption. They argue that the money has to be made up somewhere.

It seemed entirely reasonable to them to make the difference from those they came in contact with during the course of their duties. Many made the distinction between being voluntarily paid gratuities for services rendered and actively extorting money. But not one police officer asserted at any time that they were free from the charge of corruption. No one mentioned any level of discomfort or guilt for indulging in corruption. It was felt that the ‘financial transactions’ of law enforcement were part of the ‘reality of policing’ which could not be understood by those from outside the force.

At the same time, their position of trust as a person in the service of the state with a high duty to uphold the law never came up in conversation at all and was certainly not a consideration. If pointed out, the response was that the environment all around abounds with people openly on the take. They pointed out again and again that the reality was that it is the corrupt individual who gains and is well rewarded for wrongdoing – especially in the police. The officers constantly mentioned that they joined the police with the willingness to be moulded into something good and noble but when. However, when exposed to a steady stream of wrongdoing – especially from within the system itself – they found it was easier to survive through co-optation.

In discussing this they did not point to their peers, but rather their seniors. It was very clear that the example provided by seniors at the police station (and across the establishment) - who they felt clearly knew the game and were instrumental in making them a part of it - played the greatest part in perpetuating every sort of malpractice. Everyone frequently pointed out this aspect of poor leadership as one of the strongest factors in the perpetuation of corruption, violence and more.

Despite all of this, the overall attitude of the police personnel towards each other was cordial. The common knowledge that everyone was sharing in a generally bad situation created camaraderie. In fact, many times the junior

and senior police personnel were seen relaxing and joking with each other. Despite the long working hours morale was reasonably high. Most felt that they were in the same boat; in a thankless profession and that there were many who were much worse off than themselves.

Much of the police response to public complaints and difficulties depended on connections with the police – the tea stall lady who was well known in the station house got immediate assistance. At other times there was much less sympathy, or much more attention, depending on what kind of influences were at work behind the scenes. For example, we came across incidents where a high ranking minister could intervene to get the release of several accused and a local corporator could use his weight to get an innocent juvenile released from police custody.

Many times we observed station house personnel going out of their way to help people. They were generally willing to do what they could to assist, where they could, if there was no cost to them or they were likely to upset relations with other staff, superiors or influential outsiders. A detainee was fed watermelon by the police because he was on *Navratri* fast. Police comforted and counselled an old couple whose teenage child had run away at their residence instead of calling them to the police station. They rescued, fed, and kept with them a minor girl, even though she tried misleading them several times about her origins and circumstances, until her father (who had filed a missing persons case) turned up looking for her from Manipur.

All these instances are evidence that people do not easily lose their humanity. However, anecdotal and discretionary ‘goodness’ does not equate to systemic good policing. The subculture in the Civil Lines police station is possibly typical of most around the country. It does not enable or assist efficient policing or even policing that is in accordance with the law. The situation can only be partially explained away by pointing to poor conditions and infrastructure. Rather, we felt that a great deal of the subculture prevails because it is allowed to remain by the supervisory cadres at the station and those directly above them.

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

Head Constable Mr Pandey has been with the police force for a long time. It would be fair to say that his identity is made up of being a policeman and that policing occupies a significant part of his life. Mr Pandey joined the Madhya Pradesh Police at the age of 22. He is married and has four children. After 28 years of service he is still only a Head Constable. Refused advancement in service, he has directed his energy to his family and has never let the stress of a demanding career impact his family life. One child

is a doctor, another is an Assistant Manager with L.I.C., one is in the Air Force and the last one is doing well in 10th standard. They would be happy to see their father retire in comfort but Mr. Pandey has ideas of his own. He lives about 2 km away from the police station, commutes on a bicycle and he leaves his home at 10:00 am. Here's an account of the one day that we spent observing him.

Mr Pandey reported to the P.S. around 10:30 am. Cycling his way to the P.S. he informed the duty officer that he dispatched some letters to the Court. The SHO gave him the task to overlook a probable 'gherav' by a group of people belonging to the Satnami community. They were dissatisfied over the police action on a case. He also received some cases for investigation falling under the jurisdiction area. No 'gherav' happened; he took the permission from the SHO and left for Noorani Chowk outpost at around 11:35 am. One person came to the outpost to deliver the medical report of a girl who was suspected of having attempted suicide. He went to the hospital and took the statement from the girl. On reporting back to the outpost he started investigating a case relating to a threatening call received by a young woman. The previous day he had informed the concerned cellular service provider and had requested call details from them. He asked for the feedback and made some notes. In the next three hours he dealt with complaints related to loss of vehicle papers, counselled the parents of a boy who had run away, followed up on the mobile threat case, addressed a consumer's complaint of a TV dealer, and dealt with another complaint related to a Supreme Court verdict on private universities. He took a half an hour lunch break at 3:45 pm.

After lunch he resumed his work and tracked down the names of five suspects in the mobile threat case. At around 5 pm a 13 year old came to the outpost crying and told him that a man who is his neighbour had beaten him with a wooden stick. He first calmed the boy down, gave him water, registered the complaint and then asked a fellow colleague to take him for a medical check up. At 5:25 pm he went to investigate the boy's complaint. He informed the boy's parents about the incident (here the victim's mother told Mr. Pandey that the kid is very notorious and should have been beaten).

As Mr. Pandey was already in the community where he had a person on the habitual offenders list he paused to inquire about

him. Not able to locate him he inquired about his presence and conduct from the neighbours. After, he left the spot for another case related to domestic violence. At 6:30 pm Mr Pandey went for his daily routine patrolling the Raipur Bus Stand where he secretly talked to some of his informers. After finishing the patrol, he returned to the outpost at 7:15 pm, meticulously recorded his observations and completed all of his paper work in an hour's time. At 8:30 pm a constable from the PS came to the outpost carrying a file and informed Mr Pandey that the SHO has asked him to go through the details of a case. At 10:15 pm, when the research team left, Mr Pandey was still working on the case that came from his SHO. He informed us that he will be in the outpost for another hour and then he would go to the Civil Line P.S. and only at 12:30 am would he head home.

It has been 15 hours. Nothing is very unusual as he is just a small fry cop returning home. But everything about Mr Pandey is remarkable. Throughout the day he has spent every moment usefully in service of the state and the people in his area. He has tackled issues with compassion, diplomacy and professionalism. He found solutions, prevented conflict, informed his presence in the area, used his contacts, counselled a worrying old couple and calmed a small child. He is dependable and consistent. No one has any complaint against him. He has his issues with policing in the state; he has been discriminated against, been denied leave on his brother's death, and his promotion was held despite direction from the CG High Court. But all of this did not make him antagonistic or unappreciative of his job. He said he wishes to see change before his retirement and wished us good luck in our effort.

3.2. Round the clock report

To get an overview of how police station staff utilised their time, the team observed their routine work round the clock for 20 hours over two days. For convenience, the observations are broken up into three time periods: from 6 AM to 1 PM (Morning Shift), 1 PM to 8 PM (Afternoon Shift) and 8 PM to 1 AM (Evening Shift). During this time the team went along on patrols and outside station investigative visits, interviewed personnel, talked with seniors and constabulary, as well as observed suspects, visitors and the reception they received from the police. Team members attached themselves to specific personnel (the station house officer, the duty officer, an assistant sub-inspector, the *Munshi*, a head constable and a constable) and documented their daily activities.

Typically any 24 hour cycle began slow and picked up into routine work and new concerns as the day wore on. At 6 AM, on the first day when we began our visit to the station house, it was quiet and there was no activity. The duty officer and several other men were sleeping in their vests and shorts on tables which were used for work during the day. On seeing the team they got off the tables, put them away in their proper places and ordered tea. Just outside the *Munshi's* room, in a passage, three young boys who were involved in an attempt to murder case u/s 307 were sleeping on the floor. One head constable and a constable always work at the writer's desk for upkeep and maintenance of records. This is on a rotational basis. A head constable who assists the *Munshi* was on duty at night. He performed work on the Daily Diary, Case Diary and Crime Diary and did this until 9:50 AM.

The Daily Diary (or Station House Diary as it is popularly known) is chronologically recorded from midnight to midnight on an hourly basis – the exact time is shown against each entry. It is supposed to be written by the Officer in Charge of the Police Station and when he leaves should be handed over the next officer in charge. Its objective is to safeguard the interests of the public by briefly chronicling, at the time they take place, all important occurrences affecting the police and the public. In addition, the Daily Diary also ensures that superior police officers are informed of such occurrences. The Case Diary on the other hand has to be maintained in each case by the Investigating Officer in his own handwriting. A fair copy has to be sent to the senior officer daily. Only the Investigating Officer can fill this and no one else can do so on his behalf.

However, in addition to the work listed above, the head constable was also busy preparing the surveillance report²⁵, filling up the deceased register and updating the hotel list of foreigners visiting the town. Between 6 AM - 6:30 AM the police station was in touch with the control room over the wireless to give the last 12 hours report. When the shift changed at 9:30 AM, the charge of the writer's desk was taken over by the *Munshi* who was a woman head constable. She had been in the force for the last 15 years. At 10:30 AM the constable from the Raja Talab outpost came around with the regular post. The *Munshi* and the constable were seen performing the following tasks:

1. Maintenance of registers and documents: Maintained records of activities of the police station that had occurred in the preceding 12 hours. Also maintained a record of tasks executed and those pending (so that these may be reported to the police control room). Also filled death register, preparation of cases, updated the village crime note book and maintained the crime record directory.

2. Perused the case diary and spoke to investigation officers - u/s 172 CrPC the procedure requires that this diary be written by the Investigating officer in the case and no one else. The *Munshi* is not permitted to do this work.
4. Surveillance, collection of information on criminals: Received a list of outsiders and of foreigners staying in the hotels and lodges of the city and entered them in the corresponding register. They also prepared letters to the department of telecommunication and requested them to trace phone calls.
5. Post clearance: Sending post to Chowkis, prepared answers about disposal of cases and complaints, and prepared answers for the courts.
6. Received, and subsequently lodged, complaints.

The duty officer's room is one of the most active parts of the police station. Police personnel posted at the writer's desk are essentially record keepers. However, they were also seen operating the wireless set, coordinating with the senior officers, the control room and the police station. In between keeping records current, the writer's team maintained and updated the old records and completed other paper work.

The SHO came to the office at 10:30 AM but had to leave for VIP duty almost immediately. When he returned at around 11:30 AM he immediately went into a counselling session for a young couple who had eloped. The father of the young girl was present at the time of the counselling.

As the afternoon progressed, the police personnel sitting at the writer's desk were busy with their routine work of filling seizure registers, sending letters issued by the District Magistrate to all beat officers, preparing the missing persons diary, and preparing duty charts. This time the SHO was engaged in counselling the drunken husband who had harassed his wife. The ASI and a constable were occupied with taking a sick person to the hospital who was arrested by the Delhi police in a bank fraud case. The reader, after disbursing the post, completed the formalities of passport verification.

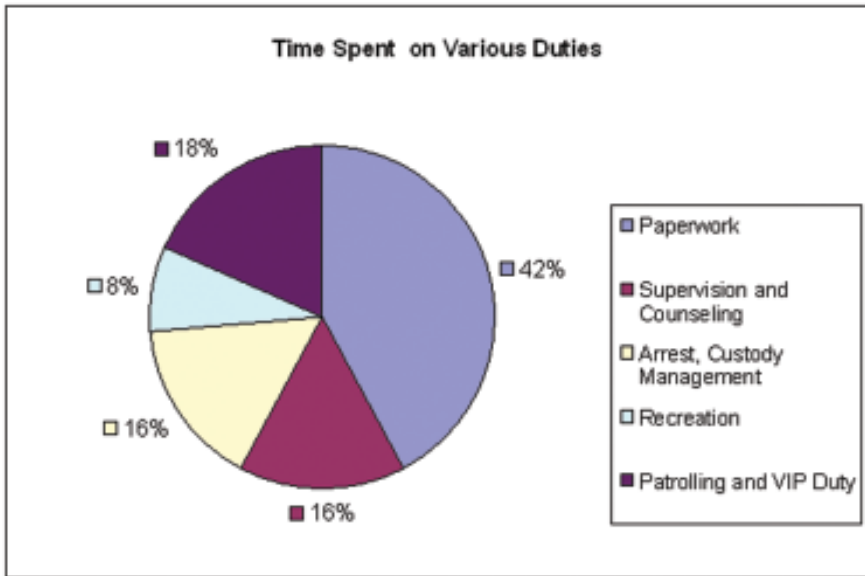
The tempo of activity rose considerably during the evening shift. On the first day a couple came in to lodge a complaint about a dispute over a shop. The duty officer fixed their appointment with the city SP for the next day. For another half an hour (between 9:50 to 10:25 PM) the *Munshi* was occupied with clearing up old and pending *dak*. At 10:45 PM the police control room began outlining the various locations the personnel would be stationed at for the next day on

law and order duties. Our team then joined the police on their patrol. After each round of patrol, the personnel reported back to the police station for a 15 to 20 minute break and to catch up with the news before going on to the next location. During one of the breaks it was communicated over the wireless that the Home Minister would be visiting a local temple. Attention immediately shifted to this new development and the patrol vehicle was diverted to VIP escort duty for the next hour so that it could accompany the Home Minister’s motorcade. It returned to the police station at 12:05 AM. Back at the station, discussions turned to different aspects of ongoing cases when at about 12:35 AM the duty officer received news that an absconding man had been spotted. Police immediately left for the location.

Police work is too varied to point to typical incidents. However, during the two days that we observed them, we were able to identify some routine activities, some typical situations and deduce police response (as well as time spent on them).

Table: Average hours spent by police station staff on various duties²⁶

Tasks	6AM-1PM	1PM-8PM	8PM-1AM	Total
Paperwork	3 hours	3 hours	2 hours.	8 hours.
Supervision and Counselling	1 hour	1.5 hours	30 minutes	3 hours
Arrest, Custody Management and Visiting Court	1.5 hours	1.5 hours	-----	3 hours
Recreation	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes	1.5 hours
Patrolling and VIP Duty	1 hour	30 minutes	2 hours	3.5 hours
Total	7 hours	7 hours	5 hours	19 hours



The findings bolster the general belief that police spend too little time for investigation and building community oriented field work. Sufficient time is required for the investigation of cases, and the failure to do so is an impediment to improve the conviction rate. Except in cases that attract media attention, and where senior officers take interest, most other cases are barely investigated. One should examine the general diary and personal diaries of the officers. These records will show that a large proportion of the work at police stations concerns service functions demanded by the rich and the powerful or VIP duties. These form the bulk of the day's work depending upon the area. While paperwork cannot be eliminated, as recording the day's events serves as an important check and balance, its utility is suspect given that it's not completed daily.

3.3. Management practices:

In five days the police dealt with a variety of small and large issues that included:

- Finding the right suspect in a case of attempted murder
- Searching premises for stolen goods
- Solving a private property dispute
- Dealing with an assault between neighbours
- Returning a mentally retarded person to his home
- Disciplining a teenage delinquent
- Counselling domestic violence cases and instances of elopement
- Handling VIP movements
- Patrolling a procession

- Confiscating a vehicle for negligent driving
- Getting an old man to hospital
- Interrogating suspects

They had little or no training to deal with these matters but had to cope through a combination of culture awareness and commonsense. While well aware of the law they only applied it when it was expedient. For example, it hardly registered that all the people in custody were illegally detained, or that the boys mentioned earlier were handcuffed and not able to get food from outside. The police seemed to have little awareness, or at the very least little respect, for the fact that the young boys were underage and should not have been there in the first place. At the same time, the police were genuinely concerned in trying to return the young lady who was eloping to her rightful guardians precisely because she was underage. This contradiction did not seem to trouble them at all as their primary goal was to sort out each problem in ways that were practical and possible in their situation.

The police were frequently called upon to attend to seniors and powerful people whom it would have been unthinkable for them to refuse. On one occasion a senior told a patrolman to leave his route and buy food and deliver it to a VIP who was about to go off on a train journey. The patrolman complained bitterly, not only at having the extra chore, but at having to demean his uniform by performing menial tasks. There was not even the remotest possibility of questioning the order and no one – not the senior or junior – ever asked who was going to foot the bill. Both probably knew that the burden would lie elsewhere. In this instance the food was bought from a big restaurant and of course the discreet owner did not ask for payment and none was offered.

There is an old saying that work expands to meet the time available. A couple of major complaints that the police have is their heavy workload and the thankless overtime they have to spend at their jobs. However, we found that they did not have much to do most of the day in terms of core policing work or dealing with the public. The team observed that the police had a tendency to laze about without much concern for promptness or time keeping because they knew that their own personal time would not be respected. Since they were well aware that they would not go home at a specific hour, they felt justified in long conversations on the phone, doing personal work during office hours, engaging in gossip and working at their own leisurely pace.

Time management is made very difficult by the severe shortage of staff and the ‘unofficial’ calls on police personnel’s time. However, even more troublesome is the management system itself. Roles are not clearly defined and responsibilities are shared ad hoc and diffuse. Interruptions are constant and the personnel are slaves to an order from anyone senior. These orders can range from asking

someone junior to go and purchase curd for lunch to sudden VIP movements that must be managed. It was a regular occurrence for the SHO to visit the chief minister's official residence each morning for a couple of hours. It was never clear whether this was a required obligation or a voluntary pilgrimage, but it appeared to take up a considerable amount of time for a person who considered himself short of time.

The common arguments made by police (i.e. too much work, a lack of time, and low motivation) are mostly passé. There is much more that needs to be examined. In fact the problem lies more in poor management, lack of professionalism and improper supervision within the department. The team observed a few such practices:

3.3 (a) Going on patrol:

Every day we were there our team accompanied personnel during their patrol. Most of the patrolling activities we observed were in defiance of the rules laid down in the MP police Regulation.²⁷ The record of our field workers showed that patrolling work was frequently subject to personal priorities. The observation below is indicative of a typical patrol.²⁸

The patrol was to start at 1 PM. The team was made up of a Sub Inspector and two constables. The patrol was expected to conduct a routine patrol, as mentioned in Section 449 of the MP Police Regulations. The section does not lay down guidelines on the kind of activities and amount of time allotted for day patrolling officers. Instead, it mentions that "the amount of patrolling required varies with the size of the town, and it is impossible to lay down hard and fast lines on which these schemes should be framed". In our observation, this clause gives a free hand to patrolling officers to treat it as an opportunity to fulfil their personal needs.

At noon there was much uncertainty about the composition of the patrolling team as the officer in question had been on leave for the past few days and had not turned up for duty in the morning. No one was certain whether she would rejoin duty or come in at all. A court hearing in the morning that demanded her presence was posted on the board. Perhaps someone else had gone in her stead. In any case, the officer came in at noon saying her shift did not start until 1 PM. After some general conversation with the observation team the officer went off somewhere and returned only at around 1:45 PM. It took another 10 minutes to gear up and we left for patrol at about 2 PM, presumably one hour late.

The first task was to go looking for some wanted persons in Rajendra Nagar. On the way there the police vehicle was driven well, but there was a clear understanding that it was to be given all rights of way. At one point the patrol

received information that someone was fighting in Bajaj colony. The patrol team headed in that direction, picked up the person, took him to the police station and entered him in the accused register. Just then a young middleclass woman came in complaining of receiving prank calls on her cell phone. The patrolling officer now moved on to taking her to the Station House Officer's room. Meanwhile, the vehicle (since there was only one) was commandeered for taking an accused murderer for a court appearance and since the officer on patrol was busy in the SHO's room, she left without her even though she was meant to accompany the accused to court.

Police patrolling resumed at around at 3:35 PM. It was said that the purpose of this patrol was to check on a two day old report of eve-teasing of a Nepali girl by the local boys in the vicinity of the patrolling officer's home. However, it was patrolling just in name as the time was spent entirely on personal work and we never went and checked out this case of eve-teasing. During the course of patrolling we went to the officer's house once to check on two daughters who were alone at home, and then to the local Dargah to look for *chadar* (a religious cloth sheet) which could not be found. The patrol was interrupted and we had to return to civil lines station immediately in order to give back the keys to the handcuffs of the accused that had been taken to court. They had been left behind in one of the patrolmen's pockets.

Patrolling resumed at 5:40 PM (after the vehicle came back from an errand to fetch yogurt for the SHO as he was on some kind of religious fast). The immediate purpose of this trip was to deliver a young boy to the Juvenile Home at Mana some 13 km away. However, still in search of the elusive cloth/sheet, we visited the Mosque again and could only return to civil lines at around 7:15 PM. The officer justified the diversions by arguing that the only way that staff got any personal work done was by taking short detours while going about their police work. The accompanying constables took these digressions from official patrolling as usual and we did not see supervisory officers check timings or question trips out of the station.

3.3 (b) Beat System:

The state of the beat system at civil lines also indicated how far practice has deviated from the actual requirements in the manual, and also how infrequently management uses valuable and established practices as a template against which to evaluate staff's work or performance. The MP Police Regulations set out clearly how to go about the beat system of policing. This differs from ordinary everyday patrolling. The beat system is intended to provide the community with policing that is specifically designed for that area. Designating special police to an area can, through regular visits, ensure that they know the area, its people/ concerns and bring back to the station local knowledge and good relations.

Ideally, each police area should be divided up into three to five beats. The beats are to be decided on considerations of geographic convenience, crime profile and must take into account social make-up and the possibility of caste and community conflict. Each beat-in-charge has to have two or three others under him and is expected to visit his locality at least once a week during the day. Every night pairs of beat officers are expected to patrol. Civil lines police station did have a chart made up by the *Munshi*. However, even very cursory inquiries revealed that there was very little knowledge of the system or its purpose. The MP regulations mention that “on an average two constables should be allowed to each beat for night duty (10 PM to 6 AM) and one constable to two beats for day work. No man should have more than four hours consecutive night duty, and every man should have at least one complete night in bed during the week”. Although the officers mentioned that each beat was composed of 7 personnel who regularly visited the area, no such practice was observed. Staff did not know what the beat subdivisions were, or which beats they had been assigned to. They did not even know when their visits and rounds were scheduled for. But some did mention that a few of them would patrol in a designated area such as the bus stand or a particular colony each day. We were informed that the beats had been created on geographical grounds and not after community consultation nor on any examination of crime patterns. There was also no practice of beat officer - public meetings.

3.3 (c) Relations with the public:

Public good will is vital to effective policing. The MP Police Regulation²⁹ requires that “members of the public should be treated with all possible civility and even when an unpleasant duty has to be performed, the use of tact will make matters much smoother”. It further goes on to mark that “politeness cost nothing but repays itself many times over”. On the frequent patrols we went on one could not help but notice that much good will was lost every time the driver was rude or aggressive towards those that got in the way of the police vehicle. Whether right or wrong the police driver inevitably faulted the other person and shouted at them to get out of the way. Disobedience to traffic signals and other rules of the road also pointed to a deliberate show of being above the law and is frequently remarked upon and resented by the public.

Nevertheless, police-public relationships did not appear to be hostile. Patrol time was dotted with many easy conversations with slum dwellers, liquor vendors, bus drivers and conductors, *dhaba* (roadside eatery) owners and other people whose daily business is on the street. During our study, an eloping boy and girl were picked up at the bus station on the basis of an informer’s suspicion that the girl was underage and may have been the victim of trafficking. A bus conductor and driver told the patrolling officer that an absconder who the police had been searching for had been spotted and the address would be

given to them the next day. We were not able to inquire whether such information was offered out of genuine concern, rivalry or for financial considerations but it did indicate that the police had access to a fair bit of street intelligence that was of value to their work.

More than exhortations to be courteous however, long term confidence in policing requires the public to perceive police as fair and even-handed. Several incidents affirmed the presence of differential treatment. Illustratively, a great deal of time was unnecessarily expended in visiting the offices of a computer dealer to look into a matter which was more of a consumer grievance rather than a criminal matter. Similarly, a great deal of time and energy (both of which are in short supply according to police personnel) were expended in counselling an errant husband and in matters pertaining to the Consumer Protections Act. These matters were not strictly criminal matters requiring police intervention. The police would have fulfilled their duty by courteously referring these people to social services or to the right forums such as the consumer cells.

At the same time, in spite of express prohibitions at law, poor and clearly underage boys were held in custody for well over the permissible limits even for adults. They appeared to be held more to coax the real culprits to give themselves up rather than being in custody because of any direct involvement in crime. There was nothing to suggest that they had been told their rights. The problems of middleclass people, like the woman who complained of prank calls on her cell phone, were attended to promptly as were the complaints of people like the man running a *dhaba* close to the police station who was well known by the police. Others however, like a complainant whose bicycle was stolen but who seemed to come from a much lower income group and was unknown, got short shift and a flat refusal to register the theft. Our observations at civil lines seemed to reaffirm CHRI's earlier *People's Perceptions of the Chhattisgarh Police* survey findings of 2005. More than 80% people surveyed had said that police were rude most times and fewer people said they had good experiences with police than had bad ones. Not surprisingly the majority of those who did were from higher income groups.

Promoting good public relations is not only a humanitarian practice indicative of decency but a productive management practice. We did not discern that there was a stated management approach to treatment of visitors, witnesses and detainees, or that the rules and regulations that could provide guidance were ever discussed or rehearsed with staff. The treatment meted out *inter se* between seniors and juniors, and the unfettered use of rough and common language, did not indicate that there was any standard of acceptable behaviour in place or that particular attention or courtesy was being given to the women in the station.

In a multicultural society like ours, where caste and communal tensions are easily roused, effective policing also requires the top brass to research and analyse the demography both within and outside the force. This view does not undermine the human potential to adapt naturally to different contexts but suggests there needs to be much more deliberative thought on this aspect of policing. During our five days of research the police had to ensure that separate Satnami and Muslim processions were held without incident. A staff in charge of a procession at the traditionally sensitive Noorani Chowk area shared his concern that police in charge of handling processions and community sensitive occasions really had no formal training about how to prepare for these occasions or how to handle the situation if things went wrong. He felt he was left solely to his instinct without any special knowledge of the sensitivities and cultural practices of any community other than his own. He also felt that baseline training and annual refreshers to sensitise personnel on how to negotiate the terrain between their own culture and that of the people they are dealing with would go a long way in preventing conflicts, handling volatile situations and improving long-term community relations. It would also help make police better mediators when there is tension between disparate groups.

There were frequent discussions about training. Staff were uniformly of the opinion that annual trainings were useless and that the “chalk and talk” sessions had little relevance or use to their real life experiences. Training establishments were not highly regarded and seemed to have no connection to the police station. Nor was there any process by which the constabulary could learn on how to be more useful in their work. For example, it was volunteered that it would be valuable for the rank and file to understand the subtleties of handling public processions and protest marches (so that their actions do not escalate or create the possibility of violence). None of these needs seemed to be on the radar of seniors. In addition, they did not feel it was necessary to use the time available at the police station - which was considerable, if some of their work methods were rationalised – to mentor staff about dealing with important issues to improve everyday policing. For instance, while street violence and social unrest are common occurrences, there was little desire to reflect on what went right and what went wrong when handling them. Staff themselves suggested that besides developing useful training programs, promoting a culture of exchange within the rank and file to share experiences on how situations were handled well could go a long way in ensuring that the police were more effective and better managed.

3.3 (d) Workplace Conditions:

Once the police personnel became comfortable with the observers, conversations with them frequently turned to working conditions, leave and career concerns. The lack of upward mobility was cited as seriously demoralising. Being stuck in the same job, and even in the same post for years, was intellectually deadening.

Reflecting on this issue a police officer who was stationed at the same place for ten years believed that although it's a good practice to allow staff to spend considerable time in one area to understand its fabric, it becomes counterproductive if personnel are allowed to stay for too long. He shared that with long stays staff build relationships impact on the integrity of policing. As a result, staff can often find themselves compromised into doing things which really should not be done.

We were repeatedly informed that working in the force also creates near unbearable tensions between work and home. Every person in the station had a strong role to play within the family. Many told us that being unable to strike a balance detracted from their self worth. Many admitted that they turned to alcohol at the end of the day. In our presence a constable posted at police headquarters was brought to the police station drunk. He continuously cursed the police force for messing up his personal life. He was sent off for medical examination. But as soon as he returned he began to rant loudly in filthy language again. He was told to sit quietly but carried on raving. Eventually a constable slapped him two or three times and he calmed down. His *challan* was prepared and it was sent to PHQ for departmental inquiry and disciplinary action. In the evening he was allowed to go home. We were told that the incident was reflective of the impact that policing can have on one's home life. Almost all police personnel were married and had children. They had well defined duties and deep connections to their families. Like everyone they need their share of time off. Marriages, deaths, children's school occasions and time to care for family members during illness are incredibly important events in the prevalent culture. On paper, leave allocations for police are generous. However, the police station was rife with instances of being denied leave on crucial occasions. Inability to get leave, and complete dependence on the whim of seniors to avail of what is a working persons right under their terms of service, causes deep resentment and bitterness for which there is no real outlet.

Everyone uniformly felt that there was no effective grievance redressal system. In fact, a strong sense pervaded that seniors strongly discourage complaints and everything depends on patronage. There is no transparent system of management. In this police station alone we came across two cases where police personnel, aggrieved by internal procedures, had approached the national human rights commission and the high court about the treatment meted out to them.

A number of issues that should be addressed by the leadership are suppressed and ignored in the name of maintaining "discipline". The internal grievance procedure is designed to restrict complaint. All grievances of lower ranks go through the Superintendent of Police. Staff felt that the monthly Inspector

General's *darbar* for the constabulary were an eye wash and in fact caused a greater sense of frustration and resentment. The immediate supervisor asks for a preview of what is going to be said and makes it clear that issues raised should not create waves. If the complaint indicates his superior's weaknesses, criticises his management style, casts a doubt on his integrity or highlights favouritism, the risk of victimisation is too great for any but the stoutest heart to withstand. Practically, it is very rare for such concerns to be voiced during those meetings.

Two long term police personnel provided notable contrasts on how each person deals with the negative culture within the police establishment.³⁰ Both complained of the hard work, long hours and difficult conditions. However, the Head Constable used his bicycle in order to constantly patrol, talked to many people, gathered information and returned to his base to assiduously fill out the information sheets and do all the other work of the day. In contrast, the other was an SI who often arrived late, ignored court escort duties, constantly abused the position to get something out of the public, and used the opportunity offered by patrolling to use the station's jeep for personal work. Since there was no greater likelihood of advancement for the "good" cop over the "bad" cop, their individual commitment or behaviour made little difference to policing as a whole. The confidence that the system will deliver rewards based on objective merit is absent. There is a clear feeling, backed by experience and illustrations of past behaviour, that one cannot trust a reliable chain of command as envisaged by the police regulations. We were given first hand stories of constables using their political connections to by-pass transfer orders that had come due to disobeying a senior.

We observed that discontent, a lack of motivation, telling lies, alcoholism, corruption, and using official time for personal errands all have roots in bad management practices. Present practice is based on whim and personal relationships. They provide glimpses of a near feudal hierarchy and iron control which cannot be called discipline. True discipline must be judged by the level of voluntary obedience to a reasonable code and an overall culture that takes ownership of the work place. When it comes to grievances there is a fear that getting on the bad side of seniors will hamper any chance of career advancement or lead to unpleasant transfers and undue punishment.

The SHO of the police cited the uncertainty and sporadic nature of their work as a reason not to attempt any planning. But it was evident throughout that a few changes (i.e. proper management, some forethought, conscious mentoring and clear job allocations) could achieve much better results in public satisfaction and greater benefits for the well being of police staff. We were told that there had been some efforts at change in the past by innovative police officers but these had died for lack of any encouragement from seniors or ended when the

individual left the post. There was a general sense that no one was really going to solve their difficulties or take a genuine interest. Nothing depended on merit; rather everything depended on patronage within or outside the force.

It did not appear to us that senior officers' were unaware of the issues at police stations or that there is a deviant subculture inimical to democratic policing within the rank and file. Rather, we came away with the feeling that seniors were equally derelict in their duties toward police. During the study it was clear that a subculture pervaded the police station and is perpetrated due to indifference or connivance of seniors and other power cabals. The British excuse is still in practice. It serves to deflect criticism of present behaviour and avoid critical analysis because it is unthinkable and unpatriotic to suggest that the British may have done something logical or sensible for the time and does not explain why, 60 years since independence, if we loathed it so much, have done so little to change the basis of regime policing to democratic policing. The matrix reference to 'the British' is frequently parroted today in order to deflect from the complete lack of critical analysis for all that is currently wrong. It is much more comforting to blame some long gone, and fashionably demonised, ruler rather than look straight into the eyes of present oppressors.

Civil Lines Police Station Raipur

Chapter 4: Reforming the reforms



Since the Supreme Court directed all governments to put in place, within a specific time limit, structures that would go some way to improve policing across India there has been a sluggish stirring toward bringing about changes in that most desperately needy of institutions. Ideally this process should be called police reform but it is far too imperfect to merit that description. Instead, with exceptions that only prove the rule, what we witness is a *mélange* of avoidance at all costs. There are good practical reasons why the unholy trinity of politician, bureaucrat and police should bring in people into this contentious dialogue.

Senior policemen will frequently state that outsiders must not generalise about the police; there are only a few policemen who are deviant. They will point to bravery in the face of violent challenge, the attitude of the public, and the pressures of political bosses as important contextual explanations on why the police structures exist as they do. The reality is that the calls for reform come from the public not from the police, the politician or the bureaucrat; and reform means different things to each group. The politician sees himself losing control over his most useful guard dog. The bureaucrat sees his near complete ascendancy over all areas of governance being challenged by the notion of an “autonomous” police force and this immediately conjures up the picture of an uncontrolled force that will become even more unlawful without the appropriate political and bureaucratic oversight. This position completely ignores the sort of dysfunctional control these actors have wielded for years. The police see reform as addressing their problems of status, lack of infrastructure, more powers to fight an undifferentiated “foe out there”, and as little accountability as possible.

But the people who experience the weight of policing are frequently its victims. Poorly served customers perhaps see reform in a completely different light. However, despite being the largest constituency, the public has never been asked what kind of policing they would like and have never, throughout the many iterations of the reform process, been brought into the process of defining new policing.

It seemed to us that there was little incentive or encouragement for innovation but that the system perpetuated apathy, lack of initiative and poor policing practice. It would be too easy to accept that this is the ground reality and nothing can change. However, the candid conversations we had with the constabulary led us to believe that the ingredients for a better police force were present at that very police station, but had been buried under years of managerial and administrative neglect.

First of all, very little is needed to improve the physical environment of the station house. There is no expenditure involved in keeping the place clean. Nor is there any earthly reason for stinking toilets, the reek of urine or a lock up that

far outstrips the Black Hole of Calcutta in its grim dungeon outlook. At the very least, no administration can have any excuse for not providing clean water, decent sanitation for both men and women personnel and basic stationary at police stations. If the station house officer's room can have a modicum of comfort put together with whatever was readily available there seems to be no reason why this treatment cannot be extended to the majority rank and file.

Ideally each officer has designated routine and cyclical duties. However, the observation of such duties was not obvious to us, nor did it seem that it was uppermost in the minds of the personnel. Nor was it clear that the seniors, who have carefully stipulated supervisory tasks and management roles, were adhering to those roles or had been trained and equipped to carry them out. Moreover, it did not appear that they were evaluated to assess performance or provided feedback on how to improve. Instead, the shortfall in personnel, the paucity of infrastructure and the lack of funds meant that from top to bottom, all focused on reacting to immediate tasks and emergent situations without differentiation or prioritisation. The routines of the day did not indicate that supervisory staff took regular time out to ensure that compulsory tasks were attended to or done to any standards. There is much that can be done to rationalise manpower usage at the station even at present strength. There is value in consulting with all staff on the issue of more effective manpower management; assessing available talent and education and putting it to the best use. Despite the shortfall in personnel, there is no reason to believe that rosters cannot be rationalised to permit people proper time off if they are given defined duties and held to them. In addition, if personnel are used *only* for official duties and relieved from having to do menial tasks and unofficial duties for seniors during office hours, then staff can perform their policing duties more effectively. We believe that this extremely disrespectful practice toward professionals did the greatest harm to senior-junior internal relationships and is responsible for much of the discontent, disloyalty and demoralisation of the force.

We were many times faced with the argument given by supervisory staff that any "soft" treatment would destroy the men's "discipline". The argument that consultation, inclusion and sharing ownership of policing within the system will destroy discipline communication patterns within the rank and file that smacked of colonial heritage were patently obvious. In democracies across the world police discipline today is maintained without oppression and autocracy or reference to inferior and superior categories of status. There is no reason - except internal unwillingness and protection of privilege - why this ethos of inclusion based on *mutual* respect cannot be quickly inculcated into present practice without the loss of discipline. We are of the view that if each rank, each task and each individual officer is valued, discipline would not be affected, efficiency would increase, and there would be enormous goodwill from staff toward seniors and from the public

toward the station house. A changed atmosphere would reduce the isolation of the station house personnel from the public.

When police performance is judged only by achieving the targets and promotions depending on the proximity to political or executive bosses, this subculture not only restricts officers from following the law of the land but makes them cynical of their profession. We found a number of officers who were disappointed with management. The law abiding police officers were not duly rewarded whereas those toeing to the whims and fancy of their bosses were decorated with medals and of the highest order and showered with regular promotions. Although a few kept to their ethics, most get co-opted into the vicious circle of corruption. To change this subculture management must get away with the archaic Confidential Report system and institute an objective and transparent appraisal system³¹

Conclusion: A state like Chhattisgarh is severely constrained by the limited resources available for the modernisation of the police force. For the government, spending on development or modernising the police is a tough balancing act. However, the government should realise that development itself becomes a victim to issues of law and order, with the Naxal problem being one example. We believe that the violence, corruption and misbehaviour of the police, along with the police's failure to accord the public with any respect, can be removed with very few inputs. Key to achieving this is better role modelling, more appropriate styles of supervision and a few additional amenities that require little or no expenditure. Therefore, there is a need to prioritise government policies for the modernisation of the police force, not only in terms of technological training but in changing the organisation and culture of policing altogether.

Appendix 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR POLICE PERSONNEL POSTED AT CIVIL LINES POLICE STATION

This questionnaire was used to interview the staff of the police station.

1. Name of officer:
2. Name of police station:
3. Designation:
4. Age:
5. Years of Service:
6. No. of years/months posted at present post:
7. Educational qualifications:
8. Marital status:
9. Number of children:
10. Are you able to visit your family daily?
11. Have you availed any holidays in a year? And are you able to avail one weekly holiday in a week?
12. What were your duty hours during the last one-week? Was there any shift duty, number of average working hours etc
13. Please describe your normal routine at work from the time of entering the police station to just before leaving for home?(also mention if any rituals – religious or others are performed before you start work).
14. In a scale of 1-16 what tasks do you find that you spend maximum amount of your time: No. 1 means highest amount of time spent and No. 16 means the least amount of time spent:
 - Patrolling_____
 - Enquiring about the performance of the staff of the police station_____

- Interacting with the community_____
- Investigating cases_____
- Deputed on VIP duty_____
- Traffic control_____
- Going to the court_____
- Going to the office of senior officers _____
- Visiting senior officers and politicians_____
- Executing orders of the District Magistrate_____
- Executing the orders of the SP/SSP_____
- Executing arrests_____
- Serving warrants/summons_____
- Completing paper work_____
- Helping other departments, please specify (Excise, Forest etc)

- Any other please specify_____

15. In what way can the police be more visible, what tasks can be done away with in a police station or what new features may be introduced to initiate a people friendly police?
16. What new technology may be introduced?
17. What are the tasks that may be undertaken by other agencies or persons or community?
18. Any other observation?

Appendix 2

OBSERVATION SHEET FOR POLICE STATION ON NUMBER OF PERSONNEL AND TIME INVOLVED

Date:Time: 6AM-1PM

CODE:

NAME OF INTERVIEWER:

SPECIAL OBSERVATIONS:

TASKS	6:00-6:30	6:30-7:00	
Supervision			
Maintaining different registers as general diary, case diary, cash book, prosecution work and other paper work			
Supervision of parade, drill, roll call			
Dak clearance			
Giving orders to junior staff			
Prevention & detection of offences			
Arrest			
Dealing with prisoners in police station			
Serving summons and warrants			
Search & seizure			
Pursuing of case diary and speaking to investigating officers			
Releases persons on bail/bond			
Maintenance of public order and safety			
Patrolling			
Surveillance – information collection on criminals and other			
Drill, parade, roll call,			
Guarding and escorting prisoners			

Appendix 2

OBSERVATION SHEET FOR POLICE STATION ON NUMBER OF PERSONNEL AND TIME INVOLVED

Date:Time: 6AM-1PM

CODE:

NAME OF INTERVIEWER:

SPECIAL OBSERVATIONS:

TASKS	6:00-6:30	6:30-7:00	
Guarding/escorting VIP's			
Execution of orders of DM & superiors			
Reporting to senior officers meeting of senior officers, politicians and others			
Assisting of other govt. depts			
Excise			
Forrest			
Other depts.			
Maintaining vital statistics			
Carrying dak			
Visiting court			
Meeting public/media others			
Receiving and lodging complaints			
Verification			
Other tasks			
Recreation			
Counselling work			
ANECDOTES			

[illegible]

Endnotes

¹ National Crime Records Bureau, 2005.

² Crime in India, 2004.

³ Crime in India 2004, Table 13.2.

⁴ Section 2 (s) CrPC. Police Station means any post or place declared generally or specially by the State Government to be a police station, and includes any local area specified by the state government in this behalf.

⁵ A state situated on the east coast of India.

⁶ Officer in charge of the police station.

⁷ Assistant to the SHO. An officer of the rank of a constable.

⁸ Also called the Writer, he/she is a literate head constable who acts as clerk, accountant and records keeper at a police station.

⁹ MP Police Regulations, chapter 2, section 1, reg.615. Paste boards that provide ready reference information relevant to maintenance of law and order, investigation and peace. They give essential information about the mode of functioning of the police station and must be compulsorily displayed. Taktis must list: government property of the police station and prescribed registers; villages in the police station area; magistrates with jurisdiction; magistrates empowered to hold inquests; assistant surgeons and assistant medical officers in the district authorized to make post mortems and their residence; persons exempted under the Arms Act; persons licensed to distil spirits; licensed retail shops for spirits and drugs; and towns in the district in which the Gambling Act (as amended) is in force.

¹⁰ AIR 1997 SC 610.

¹¹ MP Police Regulations, Part V, Chapter II, Regulation 615

¹² MP Police Regulations, Part V, Section IV, Regulation 633.

¹³ MP Police Regulations, Part V, Chapter II, Regulation 616.

¹⁴ MP Police Regulations, Part V, Chapter II, Regulation 617.

¹⁵ Rule 203 to Rule 210 of MP Police Regulations expressly provides travelling allowances to both Gazetted and Non-Gazetted Officers to travel within the District, as well as for travel outside their jurisdiction.

¹⁶ MP Police Regulations, Part V, Chapter II, Regulation 628

¹⁷ The deplorable representation of women in police has been raised by the National Women's Commission and National Police Commission's Fifth Report.

¹⁸ Attending to high profile bureaucrats and politicians during their movements in the police station jurisdiction area, or elsewhere, when required.

¹⁹ MP Police Regulations, Rule 183.

²⁰ MP Police Regulations, Rule 178, sub rule i.

²¹ MP Police Regulations, Rule 178, sub rule ii.

²² See MP Police Regulations Rule 181.

²³ Rule 465 A (1) (c) of MP Police Regulations do allow handcuffing of persons who have been accused under sections 307 and 308 of the IPC. In Provisions contained in Rules 635, 813 and 814 of MP Police Rules, the Supreme Court has clearly condemned the use of handcuffs on the prisoners saying that it was in violation of basic human dignity, which is guaranteed under article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

²⁴ Provisions contained in Rules 635, 813 and 814 of MP Police Rules.

²⁵ In the morning all the police stations submit their surveillance reports to the police control room on a 12-hour rotational basis. This principally involves listing the pending case reports and other pending work.

²⁶ Several of these duties were performed simultaneously so this cannot be taken as work performance in a 24 hour period.

²⁷ MP Police Regulations, part 3, Chapter 5, Section 1, Regulation.449

²⁸ The names of officers have been changed.

²⁹ MP Police Regulations, Part 3, Chapter 1, Section 1, Regulation.329

³⁰ Refer "Man of all seasons", p no: 33, 34 and "Going on Patrol", p no: _____

³¹ This has been stressed by the Seventh National Police Commission Report, Government of India 1981 and report of the Committee of Police Training, 1973.

The study based at *Civil Lines* Police Station, Raipur in Chhattisgarh is illustrative of typical police working conditions that can be found throughout the country. This diarization sheds light on the working conditions of police personnel employed at the station level. It analyses the activities of the personnel both within and outside the police station, the workload, the subcultures, emergency situations and entirely extraneous obligations imposed on the police by a variety of actors. The research study raises questions about police leadership and executive responsibility that for years has refused to pay adequate attention to training and appropriately provisioning the police so that they may carry out their duties.

This work is primarily meant to inform the police establishment and the political executive about priorities that need urgent attention. However, it is also intended to inform the public about some of the issues that make satisfactory performance unnecessarily difficult to achieve. We hope the diarisation will provide reformers with an evidentiary foundation for their advocacy. As well, we hope that by highlighting the constraints that police work under, some of the negative relations between the police and the public will diminish. If the complaining public is better informed of the issues that confront police, and the police itself become more willing to be transparent about their operations, then greater respect and cooperation between the two may be forged.
