

# A Study of Police Officers Perception on Factors Affecting Female Criminality in Mangalore City

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**Abstract**—Female criminality is influenced by social, economic, psychological, and cultural factors, with theories ranging from biological determinism to social learning. Education, marital status, family structure, and societal pressures shape crime patterns, with a distinction between intentional lawbreaking and crimes committed due to lack of awareness. The study aims to find out the factors contributing to the female participation in criminal activities. The objectives of the study is to know the treatment of female offenders in the procedures and interaction of law enforcement agencies, to find out the reasons for female criminals' involvement in criminal activities and assess the socio-economic factors that give rise to female criminality. For the study, questionnaire method was used to collect data from 100 police officers in Mangaluru City. Using primary data gathered from the study's universe, the qualitative approach of descriptive research design is the methodology employed. The study indicates that social factors play a significant role in influencing female criminal behaviour whereas theft emerges as the most prevalent crime among the female offenders. To tackle these problems effective communication skills of officers are the primary strategy in investigating female offenders. Key challenges in the investigation process include building trust, addressing gender-specific concerns, and overcoming interrogation difficulties. To reduce female criminality, it is essential to effectively address and mitigate these challenges.

**Key Words**—Female criminality, factors influencing, police officers

## I. INTRODUCTION

Female criminality is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various social, economic, psychological, and cultural factors. Historically, the criminal behavior of women has been viewed through the lens of male-dominated theories, often neglecting the specific circumstances and motivations that lead women to commit crimes. From illiteracy and socioeconomic pressures to religious influence and

family dynamics, numerous variables contribute to female criminality. Women with limited educational backgrounds may lack the rationality and awareness necessary to understand the legal consequences of their actions, leading to criminal behavior. Additionally, deeply rooted societal norms and expectations often place significant burdens on women, further exacerbating their likelihood of engaging in criminal activities. Religious influence has also played a notable role in shaping female criminality. In some instances, perpetrators have exploited religious beliefs to carry out their offenses, as seen in the case of Cyanide Mallika, a notorious Indian serial killer who posed as a spiritual leader to deceive her victims. Such cases highlight how religion can be manipulated to facilitate criminal acts, particularly in societies where religious devotion is deeply ingrained. Moreover, caste and social status can influence the type of crimes women commit. Research indicates that women from marginalized communities are often involved in crimes against individuals, while those from more privileged backgrounds are more likely to engage in property-related offenses. This disparity underscores the relationship between social standing and criminal behavior.

Marital status and occupational roles further contribute to the patterns of female criminality. Married women, facing immense societal expectations and family pressures, are more inclined to commit crimes against people, while single women are more frequently involved in property crimes. Homemakers, who often experience frustration and isolation, may also engage in criminal activities at a higher rate than women in professional careers. The psychological strain of unfulfilled aspirations and economic dependency can drive some women to illegal activities, illustrating the intersection of emotional distress and criminal behavior.

Various theories attempt to explain female criminality, ranging from biological and psychological perspectives to sociological and feminist viewpoints. Cesare Lombroso's theory emphasized the biological inferiority of female criminals, suggesting that they possess masculine traits that predispose them to criminal behavior. In contrast, Otto Pollak's theory proposed that female crimes are underrepresented due to societal leniency and the secretive nature of women's offenses. Meanwhile, modern theories such as Social Control Theory and Social Learning Theory argue that external factors, including social bonds and learned behavior, significantly influence criminal tendencies. Feminist criminologists further critique traditional theories for their gender bias, advocating for a more comprehensive understanding of the systemic inequalities that drive women to commit crimes. By addressing these factors, society can better comprehend and mitigate female criminality through informed and equitable interventions.

A study on patterns and trends in female crime was conducted by Darrell Steffensmeier and Emilie Allan in their 1996 paper titled *“Gender and Crime: Toward a Gendered Theory of Female Offending.”* The researchers examined long-term crime data and gender differences in criminal behavior to challenge traditional male-centered criminological theories. Their research found that although women consistently commit fewer crimes than men, their involvement in certain offenses—such as drug-related and property crimes—has increased over recent decades, largely due to socio-economic pressures and shifts in social roles. The study emphasized that female criminality is often relational and context-driven, linked to poverty, abuse, and caregiving responsibilities. A key limitation of the research is its reliance on official crime statistics, which may underreport female involvement in crime due to systemic biases in reporting, policing, and prosecution.

## II. METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the systematic process that scientists use to collect, analyze, and assess data in order to solve a problem or test a theory. It covers the overall design, structure, and methodology of the research as well as the methods and techniques used in the data gathering and analysis. The methodology includes a description of the tools and procedures used to ensure the reliability and validity of the study's conclusions. To seek, look through, arrange, and select data pertaining to a subject, a collection of techniques and processes known as research methodology are employed. It helps readers make critical judgments about the reliability and validity of a study.

The present study has been taken up with the following objectives:

- To know the treatment of female offenders in the procedures and interaction of law enforcement agencies
- To find out the reasons for female criminals involvement in criminal activities
- To assess the socio-economic factors that give rise to female criminality.

One hundred police officers in Mangalore city were chosen as the research universe for this study. Police officers' primary data was gathered using a questionnaire. The methodology used is the qualitative approach of descriptive research design, which makes use of primary data collected from the study's universe. For statistical analysis Microsoft excel and SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences) software was used.

## III. DATA INTERPRETATION

Data analysis involves systematically evaluating data using logical methods and presenting unbiased conclusions. The data from bivariate tables has been cross-referenced for interpretation, utilizing techniques such as statistical analysis and inference.

### 1. GENDER AND FACTORS INFLUENCING THE FEMALE TO EXHIBIT THE CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR.

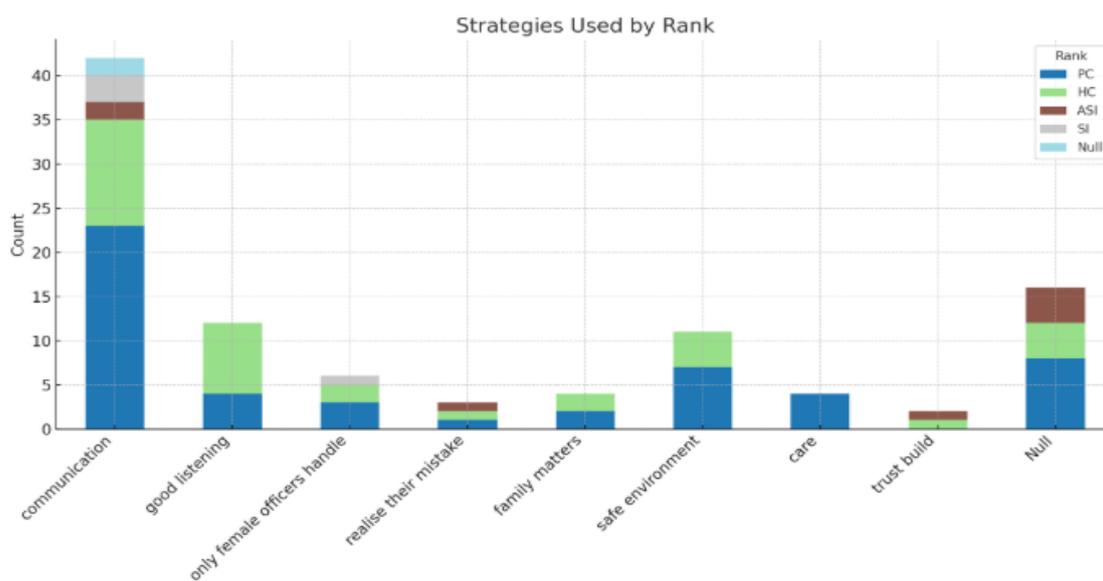
Gender * factors Crosstabulation							
		factors					Total
		social factor	physiological factor	economic factor	others	all of the above	
gender	Male	16%	9%	14%	1%	10%	50%
	Female	14%	11%	15%	1%	9%	50%
	Total	30%	20%	29%	2%	19%	100%

The data shown in the table no.01 displays that 50% of the respondents are male followed by 50% of the respondents are female.

The data shown with regard to factors that influence the female to exhibit the criminal behavior indicated that 30 % of the respondents came to know about it through the social factors, 29% of them said that economic factor is the factor that influence the female to commit crime ,20% of the respondents said that physiological factor is the factor that influence the female to commit crime , 19% of them said that all the four factors and 2% of the respondents said that other factors that influence the female to commit crime. The cross related data pertaining to gender and factors that influence the female to exhibit the criminal behavior reveals that among 50% of male respondents 16 percentage of them reveals that social factors that influence the female to commit crime,

14% of them reveals that economic factor that influence the female to commit crime, 10% of them reveals that all the four factors that influence the female to commit crime, 9% of them reveals that physiological factors that influence the female to commit crime and 1 percentage of them said other factors. Among 50% of female respondents 15% of them came to know economic factor that influence the female to commit crime, 14% of them came to know about social factors that influence the female to commit crime, 11 percentage of them came to know about physiological factor that influence the female to commit crime, 9% of them came to know about all the four factors that influence the female to commit crime where as 1% of them came to know about by other factors.The present study reveals that most of the police officers (30%) of the total respondents are said social factor that influence the female to exhibit the criminal behavior.

## 2. RANK OF A POLICE OFFICER AND THEIR STRATEGIES TO BUILD TRUST DURING INVESTIGATION.



The data shown in chart no: 02 pertaining to *Strategies Used by Rank* illustrates how different ranks of police personnel employ various strategies while interacting with the female criminals, particularly in sensitive or challenging situations. The most frequently used strategy across all ranks is communication, with Police Constables (PCs) contributing the highest count, followed by Head Constables (HCs). Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs) and Sub-Inspectors (SIs) show minimal but present involvement. This indicates that communication is universally considered a foundational strategy,

### Strategies

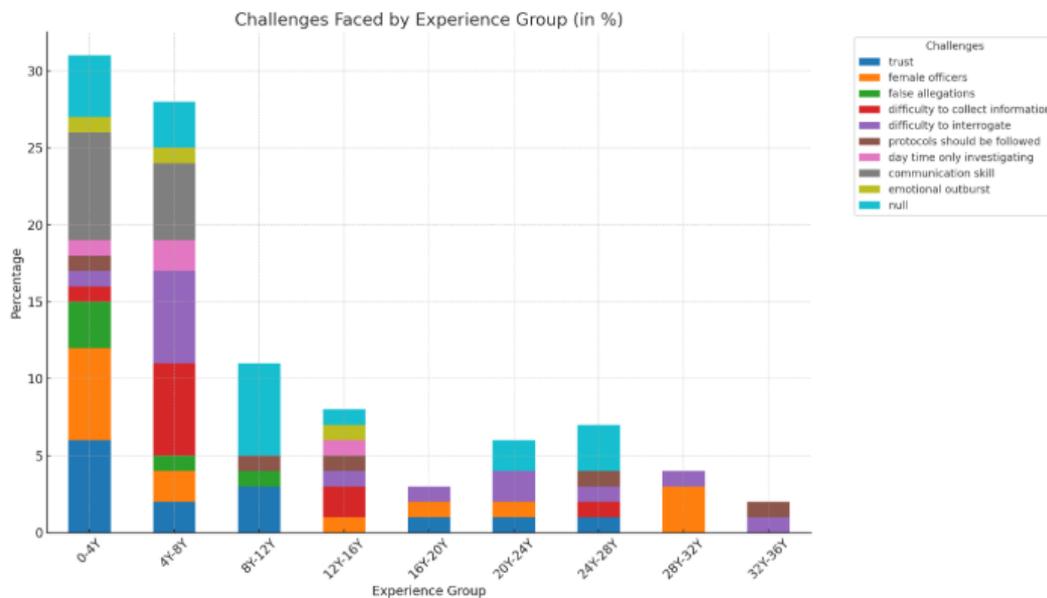
particularly among the lower ranks who are likely more involved in direct, on-the-ground interactions.

The second most frequently employed strategy is good listening, again led by PCs and HCs. This reflects an awareness of the importance of active listening in de-escalating situations and building rapport, particularly at the initial contact level. Strategies like "only female officers handle", though significantly less frequent, are still present and primarily used by PCs and HCs, suggesting that gender-sensitive approaches are recognized but not yet widely implemented.

Other strategies such as "realise their mistake", "family matters", and "care" show very low usage across all ranks, with minor contributions again from PCs and HCs. This limited presence may suggest either a lack of training in these areas or that such strategies are applied only in specific cases. The "safe environment" and "trust building" strategies are moderately represented, showing that in some cases, officers are attempting to create a supportive

atmosphere, though again, these are primarily used by the lower ranks. The "Null" category—which includes a variety of ranks—represents strategies either not clearly documented or categorized. Its relatively high frequency highlights a potential gap in reporting or standardization of the strategies being used. This suggests the need for better documentation practices and possibly clearer guidelines on identifying and reporting interaction strategies across ranks.

### 3.SERVICE DURATION OF THE POLICE OFFICER AND CHALLENGES FACED BY THEM DURING INVESTIGATION OF CRIMES.



The chart presents the various challenges faced by personnel grouped by years of experience, revealing a noticeable trend: the less experienced officers (0–4 years and 4–8 years) reported the highest percentages of challenges compared to their more experienced counterparts. The 0–4 year group notably struggles with issues such as false allegations, difficulty in collecting information, difficulty in interrogation, and trust issues, all of which appear prominently in this group. Additionally, challenges related to protocols, female officers, and communication skills are evident, indicating that officers early in their careers may lack confidence, field skills, or adequate procedural understanding.

overall percentage of challenges, though some issues persist such as trust and emotional outbursts.

The 4–8 year experience group mirrors many of the same challenges but shows a particularly high presence of difficulty in interrogation and false allegations, suggesting that challenges continue into early mid-career stages before significantly tapering off. The 8–12 year group sees a steep decline in the

As experience increases beyond 12 years, the frequency and intensity of reported challenges drop notably. From the 16–20 year group onward, challenges are minimal and more evenly distributed, with occasional mentions of communication skills, protocols, or investigative constraints like daytime-only investigations. This trend suggests that as officers gain more field exposure and procedural knowledge, their ability to manage or avoid such challenges improves, resulting in lower reported difficulties.

Overall, the data indicate a strong inverse relationship between experience level and challenges faced, with younger and less experienced officers facing significantly more obstacles across multiple areas of professional functioning.

4.GENDER AND TYPES OF CRIMES COMMITTED BY FEMALES.

gender * types Crosstabulation											
Gender	types										Total
	null	theft	cyber crime	prostitution	cheating	kidnapping	narcotics	marital crimes	trafficking	murder	
Male	6%	24%	4%	2%	0	4%	5%	3%	0	2%	50%
Female	6%	24%	0	0	1%	3%	4%	3%	1%	8%	50%
Total	12%	48%	4%	2%	1%	7%	9%	6%	1%	10%	100%

The data shown in table no. 04 pertaining to types of crimes only female are involved reveals that 48% of the respondents said that theft is the crime committed only by females followed by 12% of them with no response, 10% of them said that murder is the type of crime committed by the female followed by 9% of them opined that narcotics followed by 7% of them said that kidnapping is the type of crime committed by females, 6% of them opined that marital crimes followed by 4% of the respondents stated that cyber crimes are the type of crime committed by female offenders, followed by 2% of the respondents opined that prostitution and 1% of each said that cheating and trafficking are the type of crime committed by the females respectively.

Cross related data pertaining to gender and types of crimes only female are involved reveals that among 50% of the male respondents 24% of them opined that theft is the type of crime committed by females followed by 6% of them with no response, 5% of them stated that narcotics followed by 4% of each respondents opined that cyber crime and kidnapping are the types of crimes committed by the females respectively, 3% of them opined that marital crimes and 2% of each stated that prostitution and murder are the types of crimes only female are involved. Among 50% of female respondents 24% of them opined that theft is the type of crime committed only by females, followed by 8% of them stated that murder, 6% of them with no response, 4% of them stated that narcotics is the type of crime committed only by females followed by 3% of each opined that kidnapping and marital crimes respectively and only 1% of them opined that trafficking and cheating are the types of crimes committed only by females respectively. The present study reveals that 48% of the total respondents are opined that theft is the type of crime committed only by females and only 1% of each of the total respondents stated that trafficking and cheating are the types of crime committed by females.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

The present study was focused on the perception of police officers on factors affecting female criminality in Mangaluru city. The number of samples were 100 from police officers of mangaluru city. The following are the major findings of the study.

- The present study reveals that most of the police officers (30%) of the total respondents are said social factor that influence the female to exhibit the criminal behavior.
- The present study reveals that most of the respondents (42%) irrespective of their police ranks are came to know good communication skill is the strategy during investigation of female offenders and 1% of the respondents said that by trust build in investigation.
- The present study reveals that each 14 % of the total respondents are said building trust, only female officers to handle and difficulty to interrogate are the challenges faced by the police officers during investigation of female offenders.
- The present study reveals that 48% of the total respondents are opined that theft is the type of crime committed only by females and only 1% of each of the total respondents stated that trafficking and cheating are the types of crime committed by females.

V. SUGGESTIONS

A study on police officers' perceptions of factors influencing female criminality could yield valuable insights into law enforcement practices and gender biases within the justice system. By conducting interviews or surveys with police officers, researchers could explore officers' beliefs about the root causes of female criminal behavior, such as socioeconomic factors, trauma, mental health issues, and societal stereotypes.

The study could also investigate how police officers' perceptions of female offenders influence their interactions with them, including arrest decisions, use of force, and referral to social services. Understanding these perceptions can inform training programs to address any biases and improve officers' responses to female offenders.

Additionally, exploring differences in perceptions between male and female officers, as well as officers of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, could provide further insights into how gender, race, and personal experiences shape attitudes towards female criminality within law enforcement. Ultimately, this study could contribute to more gender-sensitive policing practices and enhance efforts to address the underlying factors driving female involvement in crime.

This study can be done on following points:

- \* Include large number of samples
- \* Samples can be taken from a particular designation of the police officers.
- \* Perception on awareness on this topic can be taken.
- \* Research will be more informative if samples is collected from correctional institutions.

To address female criminality effectively, targeted interventions should focus on key areas. First, socio-economic empowerment through poverty alleviation, education, and skill training can reduce vulnerability. Second, expanding access to support services such as counseling, rehabilitation, and family intervention programs is essential. Third, promoting gender sensitivity through police training and public awareness campaigns can help challenge stigma and traditional norms. Lastly, coordinated efforts between law enforcement, social services, and community organizations are crucial for implementing holistic and sustainable solutions.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The study on police officers' perceptions of factors affecting female criminality in Mangaluru City reveals that female criminality is a multifaceted issue shaped by social, economic, psychological, and cultural influences. Social factors emerged as the most significant contributors, with theft identified as the most common crime among women. Effective communication by police officers is seen as a key strategy in handling female offenders, while major challenges include building trust, ensuring gender-

sensitive investigations, and overcoming interrogation difficulties.

Furthermore, officers acknowledged that socio-economic disparities, familial dysfunction, rigid gender roles, and substance abuse are major drivers of female involvement in crime. Addressing these root causes through targeted interventions—such as education, economic empowerment, and culturally sensitive policing—can help mitigate female criminality. The study underscores the need for holistic, gender-responsive approaches in both policy and practice to foster safer, more inclusive communities.

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