

VISIT REPORT NO. 18 /VR/SZ-1 OF 2016

REPORT

ON VISITING

ALL WOMEN POLICE STATION MADURAI SOUTH

BY

**JACOB PUNNOOSE, SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR,
NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

In accordance with the tour programme approved as per NHRC Ref No 16(4)/2016-Coord Dated: 17.8.2016 I visited the All Women Police Station, Madurai South on 30th August 2016, along with the visits to the Govt School for the Severely Orthopaedically Handicapped Children and the visit to the Government Middle School for the Blind, K.K.Nagar, Madurai. The Regional DD Social Defence Sri S. Thanasekharapandian, and senior officers of the Social Defence Department, Child Protection Wing and the Department for the Welfare of the Differently abled accompanied me. All of them were extremely helpful in facilitating the visit. Sub Inspector Smt T Chandra was present and ably assisted and guided us during the visit.

2. The purpose of visit was to ascertain the arrangements existing at the police station to look into crimes affecting women and children.

3. This institution was established in 1995 and is functioning under the Police Department as part of the Madurai City Police Commissionerate. 37 posts of lady police officers are sanctioned for the police station which includes 1 Inspector, 4 Women Sub Inspectors, 9 Head Constables and 23 Police Constables. A few posts of Constables are vacant due to delay in effecting promotions and effecting new recruitment. The strength of staff now sanctioned seems quite adequate for the efficient functioning of the institution at present.

4. This institution functions in a relatively convenient and accessible building which is in good condition and spacious.

5. The purpose of this institution is to investigate specified offences committed against women and children. These include offences under S 498A IPC, 354A IPC, 506-part IPC, 313 IPC, 314 IPC, 304 B IPC, 294 B IPC, Domestic Violence Act, POCSO Act, Juvenile Justice Act etc. The Station has jurisdiction over 5 regular police stations in the City. They are Thedeer Nagar Police Station, Subramanyapuram Police Station, SS Colony Police Station, Thilagarthidal Police Station and Karimedu Police Station. Offences happening in these areas relating to specified types of offences are transferred to the All Women Police Station for investigation and subsequent prosecution.

6. The distinguishing feature of the All Women P.S. instituted all over the State is that women police officers carry out all the steps of investigation in the above specified types of cases. This gives much greater sense of freedom, confidence and ease to women and children who are victims. This also empowers women police and progressively infuses in them a higher sense of responsibility. They are also empowered to act against the criminals who commit offences against women.

7. It is seen that over the years, a fairly large number of cases are being investigated, detected and charge sheeted by the Police Station.

2008 - 16	2009 - 21	2010 - 25
2011 - 24	2012 - 23	2013 - 36
2014 - 34	2015 - 29	

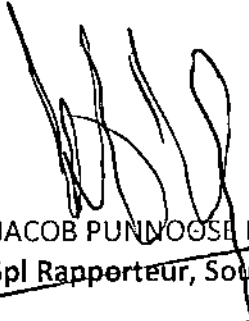
During the current year so far 13 cases have been registered.

8. The model of a mix of general police stations and all women police stations followed in the State also avoids the danger of totally limiting the role of women police to matters involving women only. The normal police stations also have considerable number of women who help in general policing. So women police officers get a chance to be performing all types of duties and can grow in efficiency, stature and public esteem.

9. I generally reviewed the progress of investigation in a few ongoing cases and found that the women police officers concerned have been successfully and correctly following up Cases reported in the police station. It is also seen that there is no long term delay in the investigation of rape cases and POCSO Act cases. The standard of investigation and the level of confidence of the staff also appear very good.

10. Security of women and children is a major problem in India. The sense of insecurity prevailing among women in this regard is very great. Of the crimes really occurring against women all over India, due to a variety of factors like fear of publicity, family conventions, fear of the offender, doubts regarding efficacy of system, privacy concerns, unwillingness to go to court, unwillingness to go to police, only a very small fraction actually gets registered as criminal cases. This reality sometimes gives a false comfort to many casual observers that low volume of registered crime means that there is low occurrence of crime. In reality, the need is greater access for women to the criminal justice system. If that is the goal, then the system being followed in Tamil Nadu of having all women police stations in addition to having policewoman in regular police stations seems a good initiative.

11. It is suggested that the Hon Commission may consider whether it is opportune to the general issue relating to response to crimes against women and ascertain the level of institutional empowerment of the police system in the different States of India to facilitate greater access to women, as may be indicated by percentage of women police, extent of presence of women in regular police stations and setting up of All Women Police stations.



JACOB PUNNOOSE IPS (RETD)
Spl Rapporteur, South Zone 1