

Policing in Patriarchy:

An experimental evaluation of reforms to improve police responsiveness to women in India

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Sandip Sukhtankar (University of Virginia)
Gabrielle Kruks-Wisner (University of Virginia)
Akshay Mangla (Oxford University)



Introduction

- Gender-based violence (GBV) is a worldwide problem
- India is no exception, some highly-publicized cases in the recent past
- Women face significant hurdles in reporting and registering cases
- Governments and police departments have introduced various gender-targeted initiatives to combat this scourge
 - Nirbhaya vehicles, women-only police stations, etc
- Yet these initiatives have rarely been rigorously evaluated, and hence their impact is unclear

Madhya Pradesh Police's (MPP) initiative

- Stemming the tide of GBV, and building women's trust in law enforcement, is a primary concern of MPP
- Since 2017, MPP has worked in collaboration with J-PAL SA to rigorously evaluate the impact of Women's Help Desks (Urgent Relief and Just Action, URJA)
- This intervention sought to increase accessibility and responsiveness of officers to women
- MPP collaborated on URJA design with J-PAL SA, a legal consultant, and civil society organizations
 - Includes iterative planning and piloting process

WHD Intervention



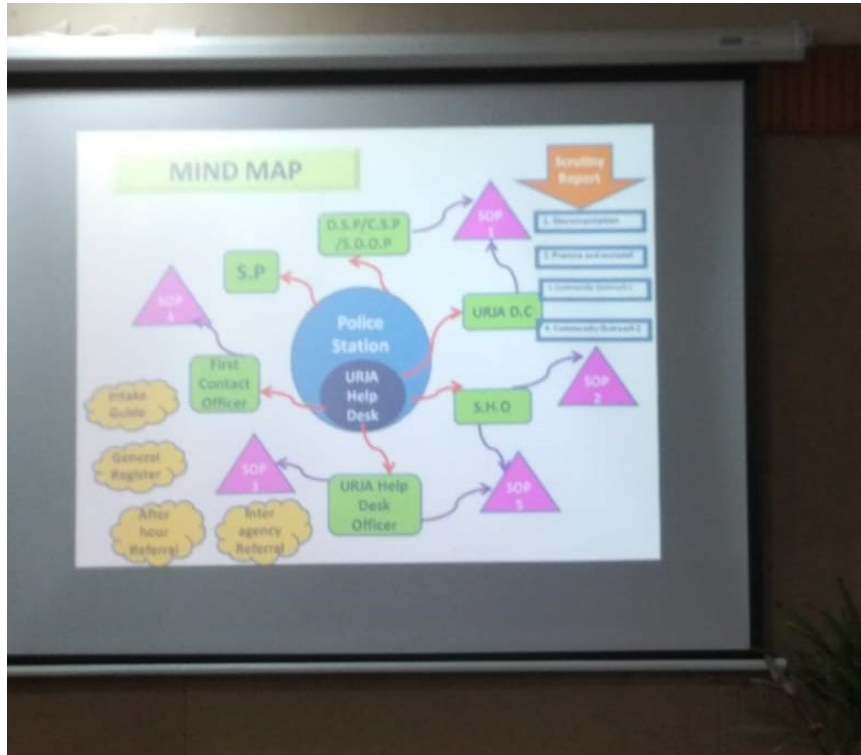
Women's Help Desk: Components



Physical space



SOPs and Training



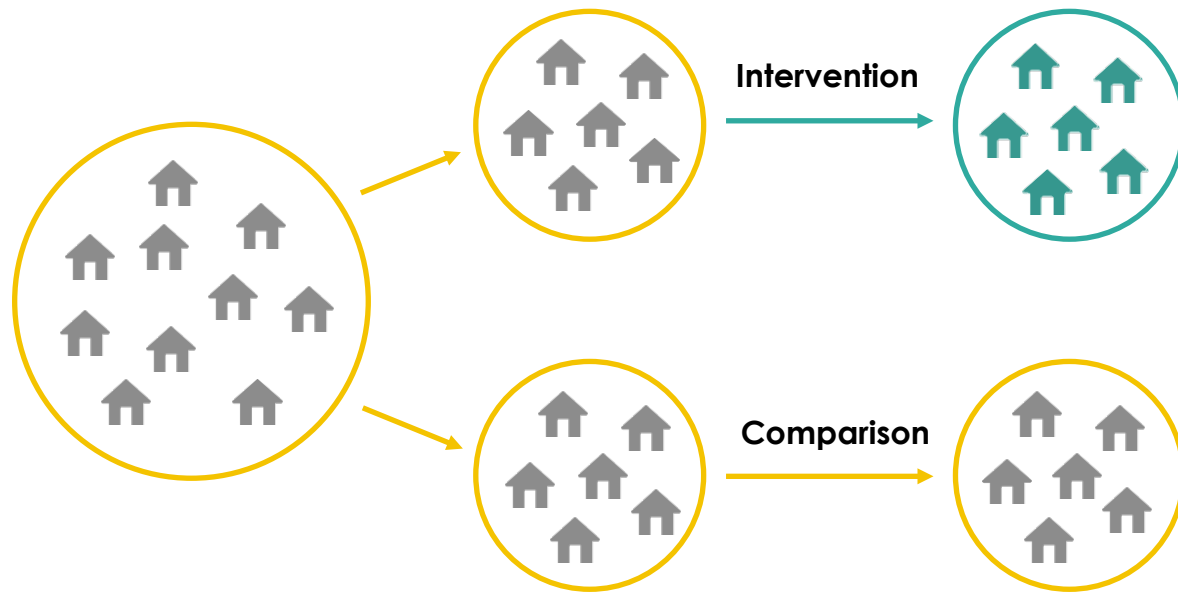
Community Outreach



J-PAL Evaluation



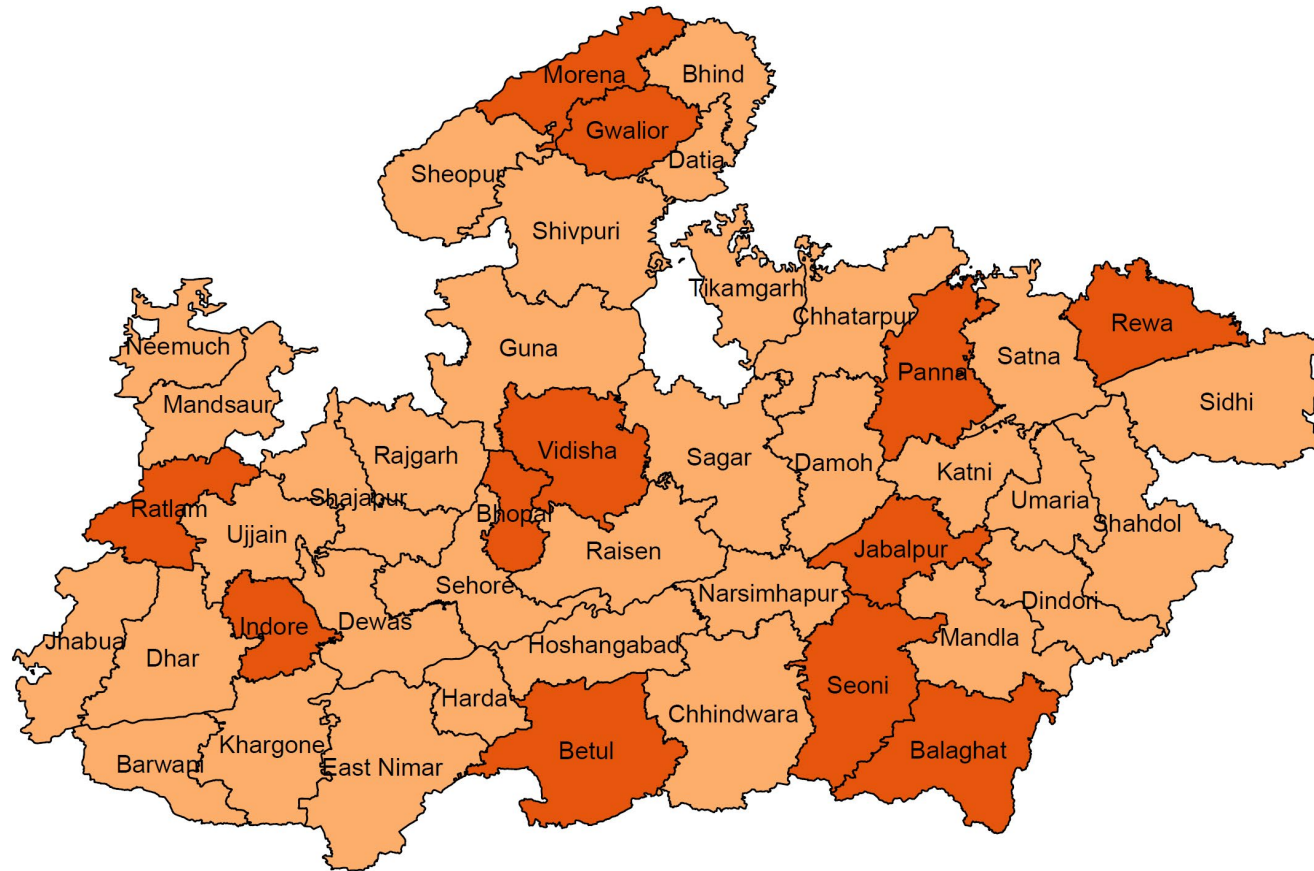
RCT: Our research methodology helps tease out the causal impact of programmes through randomised evaluations



- We measure outcomes of both groups.
- Any differences in outcomes can be attributed entirely to the programme.

The only difference between the two groups is the presence of the programme

Location



Madhya Pradesh representative of much of Northern India

- Within MP, 12 districts (out of 52) chosen for study
- Districts w/ 4 largest cities purposely chosen, since density of GBV higher in urban areas
- Remaining chosen so all socio-economic regions are represented
- Besides the 4 “big city” districts, all others look very similar to rest of MP

Research design

- Sampling frame: 180 police stations that are not specialized, headquarters, or “extremely remote”
- Stratify sample within district by geography (urban/rural), and by size characteristics (# officers; # cases; population served)
- Randomly allocate into two treatment groups and one control group

60 control

**61 regular
WHDs**

**59 woman-
run WHDs**

Overall implementation score

- Excellent on physical infrastructure, basically every station that should have a desk has one
- Excellent on zonal training, and creating awareness amongst police on intervention
- Improvement possible on local training at the police station level
- Community outreach was limited, difficult given large jurisdictions

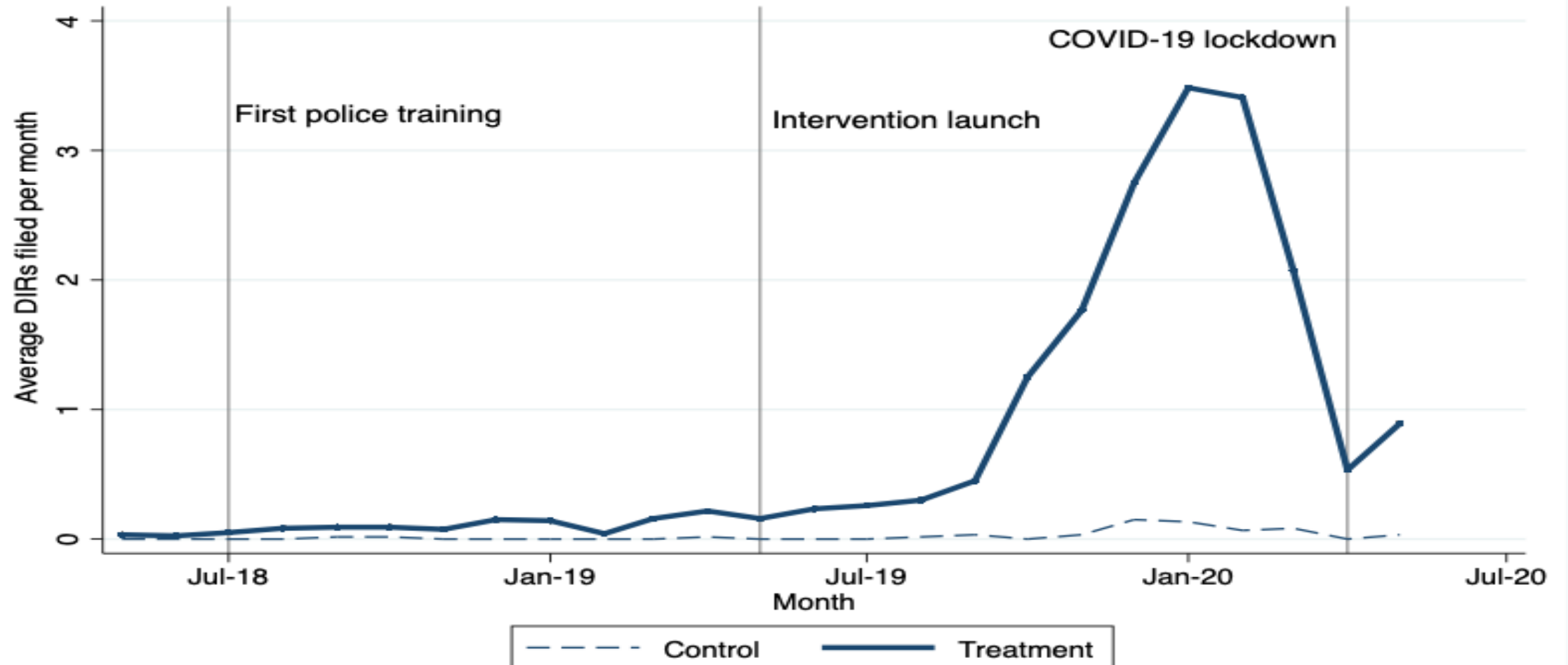
Results



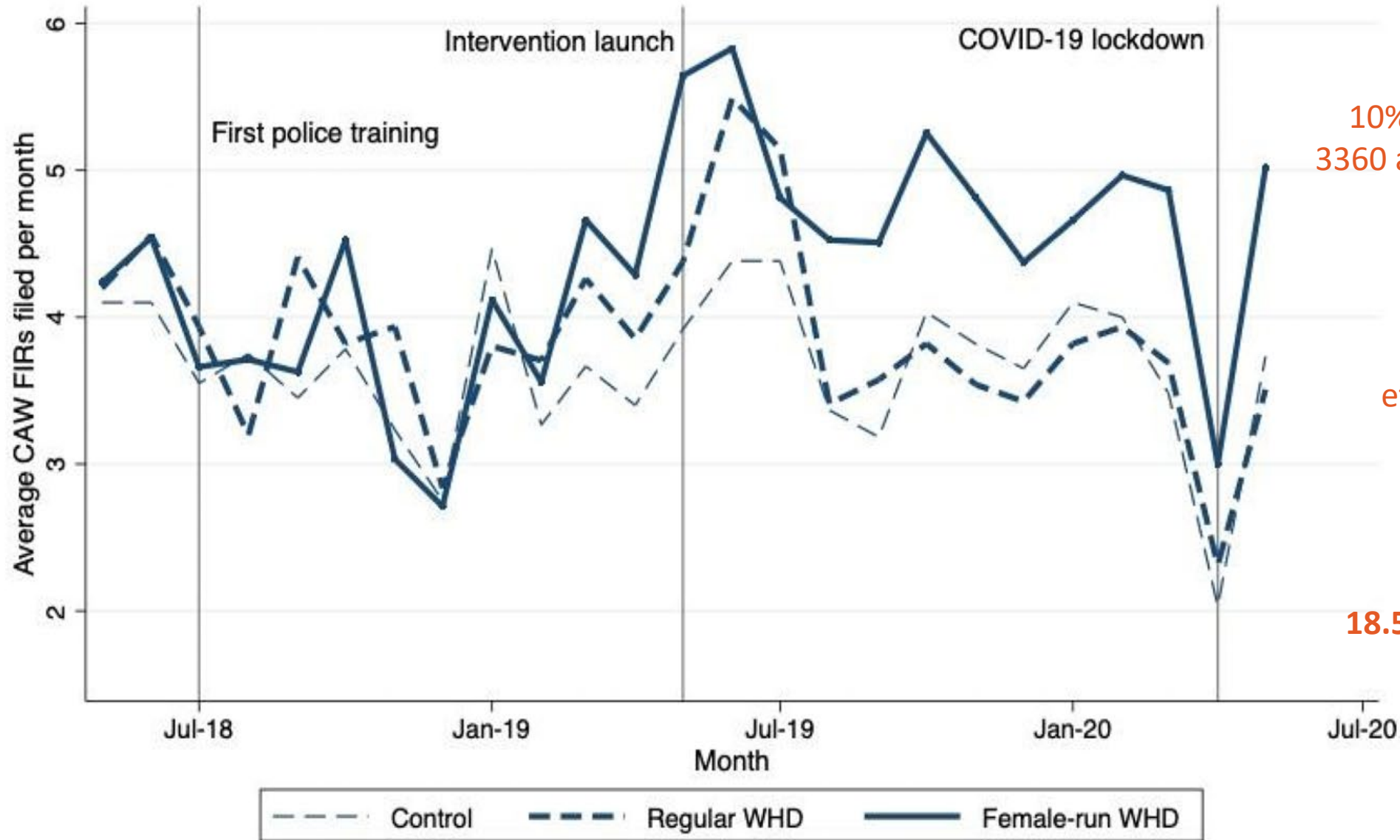
Endline survey

Police survey	User Satisfaction survey	CCTV data collection	Citizen survey	Admin data
January - March 2020			July - Sept 2020	October 2020
Police perception of crimes against women, community policing, and reported actions taken by the police for women's safety	Experience with the police and overall satisfaction with the visit	Count on the number and proportion of women that visit the police station	Engagement and satisfaction with and trust in police, as well as perceptions of safety and security	Data on FIRs (CAW) and DIRs, police assistance accessed by women through Dial100, etc.
Police station			Phone (remote)	MPP

Domestic Incident Reports (DIRs) increased sharply



First Information Reports (CAW)



14% ↑ in CAW FIRs
10% ↑ in FIRs filed by women
3360 additional FIRs over course
of 11 months

In “regular” stations,
effects are small & statistically
indistinguishable from zero.

In woman-run WHDs,
26% ↑ in CAW FIRs
18.5% ↑ in FIRs filed by women

User satisfaction at the police station

- **Modest, marginally significant improvements in user satisfaction**
 - Very high baseline scores
- **No differences between the 2 treatment groups for most part**
- **Clear increase in satisfaction with facilities**
- **Training and implementation matters a lot**
 - More training and better implementation were significantly linked to improved satisfaction

Women visiting treatment stations were slightly more satisfied

Police officer attitudes

- **No change in police attitudes about GBV and CAW**
- **But clear change in police perception of importance given to women's issues in the police station**
- **Interesting changes in awareness of lack of assistance to women**
- **Female officers now more likely to believe women**

Male officer attitudes did not change; some female officer attitudes did

Other important results

- **No changes in CAW rates based on citizen survey**
- No increase in public knowledge of WHDs: community outreach was limited
 - Changes are in **officer**, rather than citizen, behaviour
- No displacement of non-CAW FIR, NCR registration
- No significant increases in overall police personnel; increases in ASI rank and above, in *both* regular and woman-run WHDs
 - It is presence of **female officer** that matters for FIR registration

Takeaways and next steps



Takeaways

- Shift in **police behavior** regarding women's cases – but **attitudinal change** is slower to emerge
- **Hardware** vs. **software** of implementation => training & community outreach
- **Gender representation in policing:** Significant differences between “regular” and woman-run WHDs on FIR reporting, subtle differences in comfort level & responsiveness to training
 - Strong case for mainstreaming of frontline female officers

Next steps

- Women's help desks have been scaled up to nearly all thanas across MP
- We are studying the scale up process, including persistence, broadening, and sustainability
- Continue working together with MPP on various design and training aspects



Thank you



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