Problems surrounding police stations in India

Police stations in India are suffering from lack of personnel, funds and motivation, which pave the way for improper enforcement of rule of law in the country.

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What are the structural flaws in the system?

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- **Appointment** - The police stations in India are suffering from lower number of police staffs and higher vacancies, despite a huge administrative area under its jurisdiction.
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- Hence, it was simply not enabled to enforce the rule of law.
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- The police personnel were expected to investigate crime, maintain law and order, and were frequently deployed on VIP duty.
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- The personnel were subjected to frequent transfers and rapid rotations within these duties.
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- Also, postings were based on patronage, and it was not possible to deploy the best people for the most difficult tasks.
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- **Burden** - Though the police personnel were entitled to take certain days of leave in a year, this was never actually sanctioned.
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- Some of them were reported being overworked, on duty 24 hours a day, with high stress, neglecting their families.
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- **Infrastructure** - In some of the tribal belts, a majority of the constables lived in the nearby city because of lack of housing, schools and health facilities in that area.
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- They travelled to the police station every day, though they need to be present immediately in case of a crisis.
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- This has made them to spend out-of-pocket expenditures and hence they saw

themselves as underpaid and not respected.
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- Also, the police stations were always short of money, and personnel spent from their pocket on stationery and other needs.
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What are the concerns with the working styles?

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- Though a police station is expected to respond to the needs and events of the area, it was generally assigned targets, such as for seizing a certain amount of liquor and issuing a number of challans.
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- Every year, the targets were increased irrespective of the situation at the ground level.
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- For example, some stations were asked to achieve its targets for issuing challans in the case of people riding without helmets.
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- The targets were impractical to achieve because there were few motorcycles in the area and people simply did not have money to pay the fine.
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- Also, the police personnel hold poor understanding about enforcing the law, wherein the problem of gender-bias while registering complaints and the brutality on investigation is still getting witnessed.
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- Thus, the shortage of personnel, the sorry working conditions and their ignorance created a system not capable of upholding the rule of law.
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How does corruption take deep roots here?

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- The corruption is deep-rooted in the system making people to fear and avoid the police on the allegation that the police listen only to those who had money.
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- The police personnel indulge in both collusive (bribe giver and receiver both benefit) and coercive corruption (facing pressure from senior officials as well

as local leaders to accept bribes by forcing citizens).
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- Thus, the problem of corruption in the police system was more systemic than merely because of individual greed.
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- These deep rooted issues symbolises the pervasive lawlessness in the police system which warrants scrutiny and action by the government to go for systemic reforms.
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Source: The Hindu

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