

# Power in Numbers?: The Impact of Female Formed Police Units of Women's Empowerment

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## Research Questions

1. Do FFPUs have a tangible influence on women's empowerment efforts in the host country?
2. What is the sustainability of this influence? Will this influence continue to support women's empowerment after the unit has withdrawn?

## Methodology

- Feminist Discourse Analysis
- Qualitative Interview Analysis

## Case Study

### Why Liberia?

- The Indian FFPU stationed in Liberia is the first and longest deployed FFPU
- Role of women in Liberia's civil crisis and peace negotiations

### Interview Analysis

- 43 Interviews conducted in a 4 week span
- Participants were stakeholders in women's empowerment and security sector reform in Liberia

## Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of female formed police units (FFPUs), also known as all-female peacekeeping units, on women's empowerment efforts in the host country. Specifically, this research looks at the Indian FFPU currently stationed in Liberia to assess whether a shift in perceptions of gender roles occurred as a result of the unit's presence.

## Findings

According to interviews, the most common benefits of the Indian FFPU in Liberia were:

- The unit's ability to act as role models for Liberian women
- The de-stigmatization of the Security Sector
- Increased female recruitment for the Liberian National Police
- Increased and improved engagement with the local community

Overall, 2/3 of interview participants asked believed the FFPU had a positive impact on women's empowerment. However, participants voiced different opinions on how direct the impact was between the FFPU and women's empowerment.

## Conclusion

The Liberian case study of the impacts of the FFPU stationed in Monrovia emphasizes both the positive impacts and shortcomings of FFPUs.

FFPUs rely primarily on passive representation to encourage women's empowerment. However, this directly threatens the sustainability of the units' impact as the unit must be visible for the representation to occur.

FFPUs suffer from a tension between expectations to achieve gender based improvements and a desire to be equal with their male counterparts.

The all-female composition is advantageous for the stunning visual impact, but limits the impact to a small area and prevents the majority of Liberians from interacting with the unit.

## Recommendations

- All FFPUs should perform more active representation for women
- More women should be present in other areas of the mission