

More women are joining detective agencies in city

Metrolife spoke to female sleuths about breaking into the male bastion and the thrills and challenges of the job

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Set in the 1920s, Harini Nagendra's latest book 'The Bangalore Detectives Club' follows the life of a fictional female investigator solving a murder mystery. In real life too, women in Bengaluru are taking up the job, traditionally seen as a male bastion.

They take up assignments like background checks, infidelity investigations, and cases of property disputes and child monitoring.

While D K Giri, chairman of Bangalore Detectives Private Ltd, says not more than four women are part of the Association of Private Detectives India and the gender disparity exists, other agencies make different claims.

Naman Jain, managing director of Sleuths India Consultancy, says, "We have about 200 detectives and half of them are women, working full time." Such as Nidhi Jain, who is the director of this M G Road agency.

Nidhi grew up reading detective

novels by Agatha Christie and how Sherlock Holmes, the greatest literary detective, cracked every case. "Every case is different. Every day is a new day. My profession is both challenging and adventurous," says Nidhi, who became a detective in 2004 and won the Investigation Leadership Award in 2017.

She informs that the number of women applying for a job at her agency "has increased drastically in the last five years". "They are in the age group of 20 to 40 years. Most have postgraduate degrees."

But real-life detectives are nothing like what is shown in movies, she comments on their larger-than-life portrayal. The work hours are erratic — sometimes, eight hours a day, other times, 24 hours at a stretch, she shares. Working past midnight or at desolate locations or on periods are other challenges they face.

However, employing female detectives is more effective in some cases than their male peers. Nidhi says, "Women can go undercover easily because people don't suspect them as much

Nidhi Jain became a detective in 2004. Growing up, she was fascinated with detective novels.

as they would if a man asked them questions. Thus, women can get the necessary information out. They are also better at research."

Likewise, Lynx Security and Detective, HAL 2nd Stage, has 15 female detectives. "Half of them work on a full-time basis and the others do part-time. The latter comprise homemakers and college students," informs founder Nikhil Giri.

In HSR Layout, Bhavna Chheda runs Maratha Detectives Agency, which hires people for private investigation on a contractual basis, including women.

She says, "I was working as a receptionist in Mumbai. There, I helped a friend file a case of domestic violence against her husband. This incident motivated me to start a detective agency in Mumbai." In 2019, she started the Bengaluru chapter.

