

Reforms in Police: Need to improve efficiency of the police force

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Abstract

Safety of life and property of people is the basic responsibilities of governments of every country in the world. It is by creating and maintaining an efficient police force that the government provides a feeling of security enjoyed by the people. Security alone is not enough; in a democratic society, they also want to enjoy their individual freedom and rights without unwanted and illegitimate interference by a coercive and insensitive police force. Many evidences indicating India has been a primitive society with tradition of associating people in governance during the ancient times as well as in medieval period.

When the British took over the reins of administration from Mughals in 16th century, the law and order situation in the empire was at very low ebb. They made various changes in the police system to control the law and order in the colonial state. The British Rule ended in 1947 and India became independent on 15th August, 1947, but this independence did not bring any significant change to the police administration. The central government has taken many initiatives for the reforms in the police by constituting expert commissions and working groups (i.e. Santhanam Committee, The Central Vigilance Commission, Administration Reforms Commission, Gore Committee, Shah Commission, The National Police Commission, National Human Right Commission, and Padmanabhaiah Committee). The commission and committees made for reforms provided various recommendations for aforesaid matters but there have been no sustained implementation of the recommendations. The result is that the common man does not feel secure or protected in the society on the other hand he may be harassed by the police if he dares to take a stand against the establishment. So, the efforts should be made to enhance the peace and order in the society.

Keywords: police, reforms, committee, commission, recommendations, society

Introduction

In all societies, one of the basic responsibilities of government is ensuring the safety of life and property of its people. It is by creating and maintaining an efficient police force that the government provides a feeling of security enjoyed by the people. Security alone is not enough; in a democratic society, they also want to enjoy their individual freedom and rights without unwanted and illegitimate interference by a coercive and insensitive police force¹. India has been a primitive society with tradition of associating people in governance during the ancient times. Establishment of a police organization with preventive, investigative and prosecuting duties can be traced back to 'Vedas' like the 'Regveda' and the 'Atharveda' where there is mention of crime and punishments. In the Ramayana of 'Valmiki', it has been found that there were squads of police to captivate 'Hanumana' in Lanka. Then in the same work there is a mention of mob control duties and traffic control when the whole population of the 'Ayodhya' turned up en-mass to great return of Lord Rama from exile. The 'Arthashastra' written by 'Kautilya' also describes the police system in broader manners. In this epic, it has been found that there were various policies in this regard² (i.e. investigation policies, punishment policies, and crime prevention policies). The 'ManuSmriti' described that how the king took the help of police and spies to arrest the criminals. In the Mughal period, the mention of the officers like subedars, faujdars, thanedars did find place indicating in abundance that there was existence of strong police system at that time. When the British took over the reins of administration from Mughals in 16th century, the law and order situation in the empire was at

very low ebb. They made various changes in the police system to control the law and order in the colonial state³. First of all 'Lord Carnwallis' tried to improve it totally. He thought that ensuring happiness and rights of the people are important for the stability of the government. In 1843, Sir Charles Napier setup the Royal Irish Constabulary model of police force for his province. The model for the police given by the Napier soon spread to all the other parts of the country under the control of East India Company⁴. Due to the revolution of 1857, there emerged a disorder in India that made the organization of police very necessary. A commission was appointed for thorough study of police organization in 1860. It gave its recommendations after thorough discussion and on the basis of these; a Police Act was made in 1861. The main principles of the Napier Model were not even changed by this commission. The Act was about the organization of police system and the prevention of crime⁵. This Act still exists in Indian police. The police reforms of 1860 remained a matter of debates and controversy for the rest of the century. And a second commission, known as Frasar Commission was setup by Lord Curzon in 1902 to examine the present police setup of police organization, strength, recruitment, pay-scales, etc.⁶. The British Rule ended in 1947 and India became independent on 15th August, 1947, but this independence did not bring any significant change to the police administration. The central government has taken many initiatives for the reforms in the police by constituting expert commissions and working groups (i.e. Santhanam Committee, The Central Vigilance Commission, Administration Reforms Commission, Gore Committee, Shah Commission, The

National Police Commission, National Human Right Commission, and Padmanabhaiah Committee). The commission and committees made for reforms provided various recommendations for aforesaid matters but there have been no sustained implementation of the recommendations. The union government established the police Act Drafting Committee under the chairmanship of Shri Soli Sorabjee in 2005. The committee submitted a Model Police Act to the government in 2006. The committee's terms of reference were to draft a new police Act in the light of the changing role and responsibilities of the police in the society⁷. The structure of the police has practically remained unchanged though the country became independent nation and has undergone tremendous changes at all levels. This change increases the role of police in maintaining law and order in the society. The police also impact upon the social, economic and political situations and thereby contribute to the development and integrity of the nation. A healthy police-public relationship is vital to secure the desired measure of public involvement in the police operations to make it acceptable to society.

Objective of Study

The objectives of the present study are:

- To discuss the police system from historical point of view;
- To study the need of reforms in police;
- To suggest the suitable measures for ensuring good relationship between the police and public.

Hypotheses

Following hypotheses have been formulated for the present study:

- It appears that both the size and role of police have been transformed over the years.
- It is being felt that the police needs suitable training reforms in order to overcome harshness of behaviour, discourteousness, irresponsiveness to complaints and irresponsibility.

Result and Discussion

The present study has been conducted on the state of Haryana because no study has been conducted on this topic so far. For the effective maintenance of law and order in the state, there are four Police Ranges Ambala, Hisar, Gurgaon and Rohtak. From these ranges, Ambala range covering Ambala, Punchkula, Yamuna Nagar, Kurukshetra and Kaithal districts has been selected. From each of these districts, two police stations in urban and two in rural areas have also been selected randomly. Thus, in all these 20 Police stations have been selected. In the area of each police station, 10 male and 10 female have also been randomly selected hence the total sample of people was to consist of 400 persons but 20 persons were excluded from the sample as they did not come into contact with the police personnel and all the concerned police personnel have also been selected for interview. Following broad conclusions and suggestions emerged from the data analysed:

- Clearly show that the size and role have been transformed over the years. Haryana became a separate state on 1st Number 1966. At that time it comprised of one police range, six districts with strength of 12165 personnel only but now there are 21 districts, 4 ranges and 3 police

commissionerates with a total strength of 56979 police personnel.

- Another finding has been that the strength of police personnel in Haryana is very less as compared to population in the state. The population per policeman has to be 423 people but in actual practice it is 665 people per policeman. This creates big hurdle in effective policing since the increase in the population gives rise to crimes.
- From the survey, it was found that majority, i.e., 62.5% of police personnel were dissatisfied with their salary structure; however, only 37.5% were satisfied with salary structure. It may be a cause of corrupt practices in the police to fulfill their financial needs.
- As about the importance of training which is much necessary for effective and successful policing, a majority (79%) of police personnel agreed that training changes the attitude, behaviour, and habits of the trainee, whereas very few police personnel disagreed with it. A few number of police personnel were found dissatisfied with the training provided to them and said that field work training was not provided to them.
- When the police personnel were asked about the handicaps in their profession, 95% respondents opined that there were a lot of handicaps in their profession such as lack of modern tools for scientific investigation, heavy work and continuous duty, no timely promotion, political interference and no significant powers to the lower level officers. That is why an overwhelming majority (89.5 %) of police personnel were in favour of reforms in police.
- Now-a-days, almost all the departments are suffering from the problem of political interference. The police department is also not untouched by it. A majority (71%) has responded that there is political interference in police department from top to bottom, which creates big hindrance in performance of their duties and honest functioning.
- Increase in anti-social factor in the society gives rise to misdemeanor, crime against women, and disarrangement in society and the police has to deal with them. Even then, a big (75%) number of police personnel opined that ruthlessness is not only the technique to deal with erring citizens.
- The police force is deemed to be a disciplined force and the policeman is assumed to be on duty 24x7. In this regard an overwhelming majority (83%) of policeman say that they are not agreeing with it.
- An overwhelming majority (86.6%) of respondents were in favour of reforms in Haryana police. They said that Acts and Rules governing the police, organization and structure of police, training and training methodology are major areas where reforms are required in police. However, few (3.7%) respondents said that there is no need of reforms in Haryana Police.

Suggestions

During the study, a number of problems and challenges were observed and found about police functioning. An attempt has been made to suggest measures for improving the police and public relations.

- In view of the emerging trends in the crimes which are growing into complexity, the recommendations of various

commissions and committees should be implemented to improve the old Police Act.

- The strength of police should be increased so that police can perform its duties and responsibilities of maintaining law and order in society effectively and efficiently. It will also be helpful in reducing the work load of 24 hour duty of police personnel. Moreover, the strength of women police should also be increased to stop the crime against women.
- The Government and police department should replace the old tools, weapons and investigative machineries with latest technology. For this purpose we can send our police personnel abroad to enable them to get themselves fully aware of the methods and techniques being used by the police in other countries. This will have direct bearing on their functioning and will also instill confidence among them.
- The police training should be made more effective. It should be equipped with the latest methods, methodologies and the skills which are useful for field work of police personnel, so that their knowledge and skill could be improved. The instructors/trainers should be motivated for taking interest in imparting training. To motivate them, they should be informed about the latest techniques and methods of training by conducting seminars, refresher courses, meeting with officers etc. Thus, there is an urgent need of continuous training of trainers.
- The Government should increase the salary of police personnel so that they do not face economic problems. The salary on the basis of Punjab and Chandigarh police would increase their morale and they will work with more enthusiasm. The govt. should take initiative in the identifying the sincere, dedicated and fully devoted police personnel who did not indulge in corrupt practices. These police personnel must be publicly honored this will definitely boost their morale.
- The facility of internet connection, Wi-Fi connection and CCTV should be installed in the department to instill confidence among women who go there for reporting crime. It would be better if NGOs of a repute are involved to motivate women and should train them to fight against crimes.
- The police department should encourage the employees for computer knowledge and they should be provided training in this regard so that e-policing could be made successful.
- The police department should increase the number of Riders for surveillance and they should be made accountable for prevention of crime in their area.
- Police patrolling should be increased and the patrolling police employees should be responsible for the crime occurred during their duties.
- For effective law and order, the CCTV cameras should be installed on public places, crowded places and on cross-roads.
- To eradicate the fear of public and to increase the participation of public, the police should establish contact with the students at school level, college level and university level. Both of them, i.e., police and the people should share their opinions. They should be made aware

about the public's responsibilities towards police and vice-versa.

- Police administration should be included in education policy as a compulsory subject. It will make strong police-public relation at the school level itself. The students will learn about police and understand their duty towards police and it will improve the police-public relations.
- These days efforts are being made for the achievement of basic objectives of good-governance, therefore, the time has come when stern actions should take place against corrupt police personnel. Those who are in the habit of collecting money by bad means they should be brought to book.

If these suggestions are implemented in the various functions and at the various levels the government will be able to improve police and the extent of corruption and political interference would also decrease. It will give lower levels' policemen a new kind of respect. It will give them something to be proud of. They would be truly professional. Only thoroughly professional policeman can cope with the complicated problems and societal pressures that accompany unrest, violence, and crime.

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