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UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF POLICE-PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY



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ABSTRACT :

The police is primarily concerned with the maintenance of law and order and security of persons, and property of individuals. It, therefore, plays a vital role in criminal justice system. Of late, police duties have increased enormously and are becoming more and more diversified. The modern police must protect the public against, physical dangers, rescues lives, regulate traffic and preserve law and order in the streets and public places. It also has a duty with regard to the prevention of juvenile delinquency and atrocities against women and children.

KEYWORDS : Dynamics of police-public relations, contemporary society, modern police.

INTRODUCTION :

The police has always been an indispensable appendage of state organization in almost all the civil societies of the world. Only the persons of proven ability and those having thorough knowledge of local region and its people were recruited in the police force so that they could tackle the problems of law enforcement efficiently. However with programs of civilization and development of knowledge, the dimensions of police functions have extended beyond limits.

Robert Reiner' has rightly remarked that policing in an inherent conflict ridden enterprise, therefore, the police has a professional responsibility demanding from them the highest standards of conduct, particular those of honest, impartiality, and integrity.

But it is rather unfortunate that the police in modern Indian society is locked with fear, suspicion and distrust by the people. This public apathy towards the police demoralizes them to such an extent that police men lose self confidence and are of times, hesitant in taking firm step to prevent violation of law because of the apprehension of public criticism.

Yet another potential cause which shatters public confidence in police is the increasing interference of politicians in the working of the police.

Public apathy towards police is also due to the fact that quite a large number of cases prosecuted by the police result into acquittal of the accused due to some or the other procedural or technical flaws, defect or omission on this part of the police officials in dealing with the suspect or offender.

Police cases mostly fail because of the lack of the public co-operation, people in general are reluctant to come forward as witness and to assist the police in apprehending criminals.

This indirectly helps the offenders to escape detection or conviction. The members of the society do not realize that it is their social as well as moral obligation to help the police in suppression of crimes.

It should however be noted that the public apathy to law or police is also because of the image which lies police have created in the minds of people. Not only public but even the judiciary does not hold police in high

esteem. The judiciary has quite often made adverse comments about the working of the Indian police and blamed it for corruption, dishonesty, inefficiency and its apprehensive methods of investigation.

Mr. Justice O Chinnappa Reddy, former judge of supreme court attributed poor image and people's indifference towards police to a variety of factors, the more important among them being its high handed behaviour, acts of perjury and misuse of power and authority.

Even police commission, also commented adversely against the police and observed that the police is far from efficient, it is defective in training and organization, it is adequately supervised and generally regarded as corrupt and apprehensive hence utterly failed to win the confidence and co-operation of public. Instances of brutality, violence and even rape committed by police with persons under their custody are frequently reported by the media which annoy public and people began to think police as a foe rather than a friend. It is therefore necessary that the police should try to improve its image in public so that it commands respect and sympathy of the people.

The police –public relationship in India has always been far from pleasant. It has also been seen that the police force as represented by the villainous daroga, was known for its wanton atrocities and unabashed corruption in the medieval period. The British rule did not make much difference except that the Daroga was replaced by the sub inspector. Subsequently the police public relationship has continued to be rather uneasy.

While identifying the factors responsible for the confrontation between the police and public.

The national police commission observed "police performance in India today is under close review and critical assessment by a demanding public is in far greater measure than at any time in the past. Increasing crime, rising population, growing pressure of living accommodations and agitations arising from labour dispute, agrarian unrest problem and difficulties of students, negative political activities have all added new dimensions to police task in the country and tended to bring the police in confrontation with the public much more frequently than ever before.

The relation between police and public has been fluctuating with rapid urbanization. The important factors governing the police-public relationship are the complex nature of duties of the policemen and the extent and quality of police co-operation. Therefore, there is need to have a healthy atmosphere for developing mutual trust between the police and the public in our society.

In a study conducted in SHRINAGAR city to find out the nature of police-public relation, it was found that there are certain factors like corruption, political interference, poor police-public interaction which destroy these relations between the two.

The common notion is that public did not want to cooperate with police, because cooperation with police meant inconvenience. Even crimes are not reported to the police because of corruption, oppression and inefficiency. However public can not be blamed solely for this. This may be due to the undesirable attitude of police and delays in court. The police while dealing with the public, should be courteous and should not unnecessarily harm the people. On the other hand, people should feel that by helping the police they are helping their own society.

The police on the other hand complain that the public and politicians see only the dark spots of police enforcement. No one bothers to understand the severe limitations within which a policeman has to operate. The hard work which has to put in with bad service conditions and poor emoluments, and the emotional strains caused by being up against criminals and that too without adequate public sympathy.

Finally we can conclude by commenting that people get the government they deserve. Perhaps, the same is true of the police force also. The police force of the country can not differ from the rest of the society. Police in India may be corrupt to some extent. It may be brutal and inefficient also. But then what is the quality of sectors in our national life? Corruption is an accepted way of life in the country and the police has not monopolized it. Some of the policemen may be rude but then politeness is not a very common phenomenon in other means of life either.

Often one experiences the same rude behavior whether it is from the conductor of a public transport bus or an employee of a public office.

What is therefore needed is positive and sympathetic attitude towards the police and their problems...

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