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COMMUNITY POLICING: MY EXPERIMENTS IN BIHAR



Kumar Ashish, IPS

ABSTRACT:-

Policing has traditionally been known as a process limited to enforcement of law and order. However, with the advent of globalization and a new integrated world order, there has been an increase in complexity of administration and policing leading to newer and innovative ways of maintaining harmony, peace and efficiency. Community policing is one such way through which the values of community are integrated with that of administration resulting in communitarian and new innovative ways of ensuring maintenance of law and order.

KEYWORDS: Indian Economy, Tax revenue, GST.

INTRODUCTION:

Community policing has been a widely spoken concept in India since long. It is considered as a better alternative to old model of policing because the traditional model limits the contact between police and community. The goal of traditional policing is to protect law-abiding citizens from criminals. They do this by identifying and apprehending criminals while gathering enough evidence to convict them. In this model, police officers' focus on duty is to respond to incidents swiftly, and clear emergency calls- basically a

reactive form of policing. This type of policing does not stop or reduce crime significantly; it is simply a temporary fix to a chronic problem. The traditional model also fails to provide equitable and impartial policing to all sections of the citizens. In this scenario, community policing offers cost effective and participative crime preventive approaches. The main objective of community policing is to bring down the crime rates by *improving public police partnership*. It is aimed to solve local neighborhood problems by preventing and detecting crimes, restoring law and order and bringing down the crimes against women and weaker sections of the society. It aims to ensure proper coordination among various departments and agencies to ensure safety and security of the community¹.

In addition, community policing stands to assist the public in establishing and maintaining a safe, orderly social environment. While apprehending criminals is one important goal of community policing, it is not necessarily the most important goal. Community policing is concerned with solving the crimes that the community is concerned about and solving concerns by working with and gaining support from the community. The most effective solutions include coordinating police, government resources, citizens, and local business to address the problems affecting the community².

Moreover, community policing empowers people to have the opportunity to decide how police services are to be carried out in the community. It allows them to have greater voice in addressing their concerns and enhances the overall quality of life in

their neighborhoods. Also, it follows the principle of participatory process of development. It recognizes the people's participation as it is not possible for the police alone to reduce crime and disorder that threaten a society. Likewise, it offers a different connotation to the role of the police in a society and changes people's perception about maintenance of law and order. It widens the mandate of police beyond the traditional focus through a personalized approach to address community problems.

The Constitution of India made the 'law and order' component a 'state subject' and then onwards some States tried to implement the community policing from time to time. For example, in Karnataka enactment of the *Karnataka Village Defense Parties Act* of 1964, which became operational in 1975 aimed to establish community policing. Similarly, West Bengal had a program called the *Village Resistance Group* to deal with dacoits in rural areas. In Gujarat and Maharashtra, community policing program called *Gram Rakshak Dal* was initiated. Some other prominent community policing initiatives worth mentioning was started at various parts of the country³:

• **Mohalla Committee Movement trust:** It was established in Mumbai in the wake of Hindu-Muslim riots of 1992 and 1993. Mohallas or beat patrol met regularly to address variety of issues concerning the community such as concerns relating to health, education, environmental issues, issues related to communal harmony etc. It was highly successful in achieving its goals.

- Friends of Police Movement (FOP), Ramnad district, Tamil Nadu.
- Parivar Paramarsh Kendra, Raigarh district, Madhya Pradesh.
- Janamaithri Suraksha Padhathi, Kerala
- Community Liaison Groups, Uttarakhand.
- Trichy community policing, Trichy district, Tamil Nadu.
- Gram/Nagar Raksha Samiti, Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh.

If we talk about community policing endeavors in Bihar state, an initiative in Community Policing for safety of Women was started by The CID Branch of Bihar Police in association with Ladli Foundation. They came up with the concept of having Women Community Police to provide a safe and secure atmosphere to the inhabitants specially girls. Also to make women become familiar with Police and deeply understand the police system to invoke their taboo to interact with police station/ policemen. For this initiative, volunteer from girls studying in different colleges of Patna were identified and trained. Each of these girls was provided with ID Cards authorized by Bihar Police and are called Ladli Cop⁴.

As Superintendent of Police of two districts namely Madhepura & Nalanda in Bihar, my prime aim was to ensure speedy justice to the last standing man in row. For that purpose, I have initiated following steps of community policing for betterment of people & police as well.

1. First in Bihar to make Facebook pages of District Police in (Motihari- Darbhanga- Madhepura-Nalanda)- It was aimed at connecting people on social media where they could share their open concerns about functioning of police in daily life. I received plethora of complaints, corruption cases, information and suggestions as well. I also got unbiased feedback and communication from my people that helped me re-structuring police personnel functioning and rendering it into a better amicable ambience. I utilized this platform to create a positive image of Police by spreading good achievements through social media in order to reach to maximum number of people.
2. First to use Whatsapp group of District Police+ Administration for better coordination in Loksabha Election in 2014 in Motihari. Later, use of whatsapp was extended to common citizens too. It increased multifold the direct complaints, information & suggestions.
3. Started Cultural Policing Initiative in Madhepura district in Dec. 2015. It aims at enhancing the trust of public on police through the way of cultural exchange in which police and public share their grievances and happiness at the same platform. It was very well received by people in Madhepura as well as in Nalanda.
4. To secure the enhancement in Green cover of Earth, plantation of at least 05 trees is a must whenever I visit a Thana for Inspection or on each special day- like my birthday, 15th Aug, 26th Jan etc.
5. Made "Janta ke durbar mein SP" more effective & functional by means of getting its complaints solved within a week. It was mandatory for all my sub-ordinates to dispose of all the cases given to them within a week so that a

speedy justice could be given to the needy.

6. Training programs for junior officers & constabulary for soft skill development to have a better amicable daily communication with public, firstly it was experimented at Madhepura in Aug 2015.

7. Promoting social harmony through organization of **Mushayra**, Poetry reciting, Holi-Eid-Diwali Milan and other festivals at thanas.

8. Step-wise **Traffic awareness program in Nalanda**- One way introduction, No-entry's strict implementation, 02 times per day Vehicle checking mandatory by thanas at different locations, special Vehicle checking in Night (Named as "**Operation Moonlight**"), **Operation CASO** against illegal sand mining in various Thanas of Nalanda. And many more such drives.

9. Introduction of "**HAWK**" mobile police in Nalanda. It was aimed to take quick action like a hawk does. It has helped the citizens in providing them with a sense of security from cash loot, accidents, minor disputes, road-jam etc. This force is equipped with a wireless set, small weapons, cane stick and mobile phone. Anybody can reach them through dialing the helpline no. 100 from any corner of the district. It was a huge success.

10. In June 2016, introduction of "**PINK Brigade**" a special wing to curb the growing menace of eve-teasing in Biharsharif. City is divided into sectors and each sector is well guarded by some SI rank officers with help of other personnel. They work in shifts and especially in Coaching/ classes hours. It is lead by a woman officer of SI rank. A helpline no. (99559700002) is also issued for anyone who wants to register his/her complaint. Quick action is the prime motto of this brigade. It also imparts self-defense techniques special classes for girls. It is well- received by the citizens, replicated by other district forces and has seen a grand success in curbing this menace.

11. Launched "**Shikayat-Peti**" to address the local complaints. It aims to solve the issues of common people who are afraid of coming to a police station or who might not have access of modern communications like- Internet, whatsapp, Facebook or even Mobile phone. It has a lock system which is opened by concerned area SHO and letters are dealt with secrecy. If a person wants his/her letter to be seen only by SP, then that letter was forwarded to SP only.

12. All my personnel are constantly encouraged to **visit a school** at least in a week – to motivate children by asking simple questions of GK and to give them simple prizes like pen, pencil etc. This exercise aims at creating a positive feedback of Police among kids and whenever they will discuss this kind gesture of police in their families or with others, a positive image of police could be created which will be long-lasting.

13. Started celebrating the **Farewell and Retirement** of all police officers including junior personnel in Police line so that even a junior officer could feel a sense of togetherness. It enhanced the concept of "**Police- Family**" among my colleagues.

14. Started an innovative step on 15th August 2016 of "**Granting Leave to sub-ordinate police personnel on their birthdays**" so that they can spend an important day of their life with their families & friends. This has become a huge success within a short span of one month. Many personnel have availed this facility and constabulary feels happy and motivated now.

15. Launching an Interactive session namely "**COFFEE With SP**" in Nalanda on 24th Sept with an aim to establish a better rapport between Police & various sections of society with special focus on younger generations(College students in particular). This attempt envisages at addressing the problems of younger generation at the levels of career counseling, listening to their grievances, engaging them towards national-social causes and creating a positive image of Police among them.

16. Launched "**Mission Vastra-daan**"—a new initiative by Nalanda Police in which people are encouraged to donate their non-used warm clothes voluntarily for deprived people in winter season. These clothes are gathered at Thana level and after duly washed- iron pressed, clothes are packed to be distributed to the most marginalized & vulnerable people of remote areas of Nalanda district. It is a very successful mission so far to engender a trust among common people towards to developing an amicable face of Police. So far more than 20,000 people in district have been benefitted with this mission. Public has readily agreed to volunteer with us to spread the warmth in this chilling winter to the most needy—irrespective of their cast-creed or social status.

17. Launched "**Thana- Diwas**" at different police stations in district where SP & DSPs visit the thana to listen to the common problems of people in that area. It was a well-received effort by Nalanda Police where all issues

including corruption at thana level are being dealt adequately.

18. Started "**Chalo Paathshala**" a nouveau initiative by which Police distributes the reading materials- school bags and other things to kids of the deprived sections of localities having high crime rate. It is a foresighted proactive social policing effort through which police connects with deprived families, listens to their problems and tries to engage them towards productive works so that crime vulnerability could be reduced to a greater extent. It also creates a positive image of police among kids & their parents.

19. Organization and active participation in tournaments of different Games(Cricket, Football, Badminton, Volleyball etc) in city to motivate and inculcate a sense of Active Role of Police in daily life of all stakeholders.

Police-public relations in India lack mutual trust which is detrimental to the goal and purpose of policing. Both, police and the public can work simultaneously for a win-win situation which serves purpose of both the stakeholders. Community specific advantages include improved immediate environment, empowerment of communities and redressal of their grievances, creation of positive attitude towards police as well as prevention and reduction in the apprehension of crime. While Police Specific advantages stands for easy detection of crimes and effective patrolling, paves way for work satisfaction, improved police-community relationship, substantial decrease in police citizen conflict and ensures a better flow of information between police and community.

It is to be noted that police force serves the interests of citizens, not rulers. So far as community policing is concerned, media is the most important means of communication to know people and to get feedback. Policing must recognize the importance of media and use it as a tool to communicate with citizens and create awareness in society. Police must respect and remain sensitive towards the public opinion while maintaining law and order at the same time. Therefore, police must have to interact with media to learn and to inform the people. The positive role of the police should be highlighted among the people. It includes the public welfare activities and a direct and efficient line of communication between police and citizens. Therefore, officers and Constables should be sensitized about changing expectations of people. Police should interact with media & people especially in the local language.

With advents of newer communication platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, challenges for policing has increased manifold. To respond to such challenges in an effective manner- policing has to be expanded horizontally and vertically and for any expansion of such role- community policing can prove to be a useful tool for the maintenance of law and order. Community policing increases not only the reach of police but also ensures smooth flow of information between citizens and the police which can prove to be vital for the maintenance of law and order.

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