

Status and Consequences of Police-Public Relations in Present Scenario

Abstract

In everyday life people view the police as Intruders, Exploiters, cynical, prejudiced, suspicious and parasitical. It is well known that the crime detection is the first stage of criminal administration; although the crime detection and investigation are the important functions of police but their execution is not possible without the public co-operation. Taking into consideration the present functioning of police, the internal discipline and moral of police is considerably weakened because of political interference. The brutality and corruption of police has no doubt created havoc in the minds of common man. People think that if the police officer sleeps on duty or fabricates the evidences or avoiding the assigned responsibilities are form of corruption but it is not corruption, it is a 'misconduct' of the police. The police men are very ordinary people who happen to be extraordinarily possible. An attempt is made to understand the relation between police and public i.e. how the police should treat the public and what role public can play in checking increasing crimes by helping police.

Keywords : corruption, criminal justice, judicial leniency, public police

Introduction

Police is looked as the principle law enforcing agency in the country. Their duty is to promote peace, law and order in the society. But unfortunately public police relation are strained everywhere in India. The police is expected to be impartial and while performing their duties police men have to uphold the rule of law on one hand and respect sentiments of public on other hand. However if this balance is lost the causality is "Administration of criminal justice". Police functions are complex and the extent and co-operation of public is also responsible for this poor relation between the two. The absence of harmonious relations between the two could be attributed to the very thought that people have a feeling that police is not loyal to general public but is loyal to their political bosses. In securing the co-operation of the public there are certain codes of conduct which every police officer should observe with intensive care. The police authorities should be straight forward both in their professional and private life. If not so, it is very likely the public would hesitate to entrust their life. Lawrence Sherman in his book "police corruption" in 1974 has described the corruption as "It is accepting money's worth for doing something that a police man is under a duty to do or that he is under a duty not to do or to exercise a legitimate discretion for improper reasons". Corruption it is nothing but 'taking bribes'. Roebuck and Barker (A 'typology of police corruption', in social problems number 3,1974) have provided a typology of forms of police corruption they are misuse of authority, opportunist theft, protection of illegal activities, involvement in direct criminal activities, internal payoffs etc. There are three forms of police corruption according to Sherman. One form of corruption is that in which only a few isolated police men accept bribes. The second form of corruption is pervasive organized corruption. The third form of corruption is that in which a large number of officers take bribes but they are not join together to form networks of corruption. People who fall in the clutches of the police generally complain of brutal behavior of the police towards them either at the time of arrest, during interrogation or while in the police lockup. No doubt some of the condemnable practices of the police men are use of abusive language, compelling suspect to obey all the orders, asking embarrassing questions, holding out threats of violence if not obeyed etc. People consider these practices degrading to their status and violation of their rights. It is in this respect that police men need proper education on legal and ethical norms to gain the public co-operation.

The police are looked upon as law maintaining authority but sometimes its ignorance towards sensitive complaints creates its image of

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a law breaker. This tendency of carelessness and irresponsibility gives birth to loss of public faith in them and their respective role. No doubt most of the criminals fall into the hands of the police while a large number remain undetected. Many people refrain themselves from filing complaints because most victims are afraid of harassment by the police. In many cases it is observed that the police supports the influential people and as such draw evidences in their favor thereby deteriorating their self image. This behavior of police can be attributed to our defective legal system where law makers are themselves acting as law breakers. Today in most of the judicial cases now even the prosecutor wants him to manipulate his evidence. The defendant shows respect to the judge and the lawyer but he looks at the police men with scorn. The police men today feel that like public, the judge also supports the accused. The police now talk of 'judicial leniency' in the disposal of cases. They hold that they take lots of pain in collecting evidences but the judges dismiss the evidence as unreliable. It is the police system not the personality of candidates which made the police men to become authoritarian. That is the more powerful determinant of behavior and ideology. There may be number of factors, but the prime factor is that police does not function as per the mandate of law. On the contrary, they keep on changing their loyalties at the instance of the political parties. They are brutal to the general public and at times indulge in corrupt practice. Public protection should be the primary aim of police. The People in general have no good opinion regarding the public functioning in India. The main reason is the culture and attitude which police has developed of inhuman treatment to the suspect and offenders and some time even to those who are law abiding citizens.

Objective of Study

The main objective of this study is to bring to throw light on the relationship between police and public in present scenario and at the same time lay emphasis on the methods by means of which it can be modified.

Role of the Police

The police should protect the society, then only they will be able to create good image in public mind, win public trust and attract public support towards them. The police have two important functions to perform, crime investigation and crime prevention. The police men's job is thus to enforce laws that protect people and their rights and property. It is said that the police reaches the scene once crime is committed. No doubt, traditional criminologists did not pay much attention to the analysis of the role of law enforcement agencies. No doubt growing incidences of crime and unrest in public has drawn attention of authorities towards police strategies and their ways of executing power in society. Much is expected of police, their increasing workload as well as corruption in police system. Should the police be committed to law or political executive or to people? My opinion is that police should remain committed to none of these but only to the "role" it is expected to perform. Why is "commitment to role?" given top priority? The police act of 1861 requires the police to remain committed to the political executive. The

national police commission suggested the police should be more concerned with protecting the interest of the people that is they should remain committed to society. To secure the co-operation of the public the police should make effort to strengthen the relationship between the police and public, by performing his duties very sincerely. Some of the duties are given below to perform and to secure the public co-operation, they are the police should have co-ordination with the senior citizens of the area where it works. In relation with verification of the passports, pan cards, ID cards etc it must be done in their houses. It should maintain the secrecy of those people who cooperate in detecting criminals. They should visit to educational institutions so as to control ragging and other illegal activities. Priority should be given to women victims and their problems, to overcome the problems of women certain steps need to be taken by the police. Some of them are illustrated as follows:

Spreading awareness among women by organizing campaigns in education institutions as well as places of work for females. Providing information about various helpline numbers for seeking help at the time of emergency.

Other actions include conducting programmes for children so as to make them aware of society. In public places teasing of women must be concentrated much by the police. The police should conduct meeting of different religions for communal harmony. It must include the heads of all the religions, lecturers, doctors, engineers, lawyers and other reputed personalities of that area. The police should give more concentration on preventive measures in relation with terrorist activities and other anti-social elements. The police must be very careful in handling the custodial deaths. Public co-operation and participation is more essential to the police to perform its duties promptly in the detection of crimes and controlling the crimes. How the public should help the police? There are some possibilities that can help the police. In some or the other way public may help the police to control the crime rates. One question that arises in our is why our Indian police being corrupted? What factors encourage corruption? Many people do not agree that low salary of police men is main cause. A police constable in India begins his career by getting 8000 to 10000 rupees salary per month, while the sub inspector gets rupees 10000 to 18000 salaries per month. In no case it can be described a good salary but it is not so low as to force a man to accept illegal offers. The important factors which encourage the corruption in police department are Discretionary power of the police in deciding whether to arrest someone or not. Low visibility of police work and the 'secret society' character of police organization that is the violation of Official Secret Act. Solidarity among the police men which provides them immunity from high risk of being detected, apprehended and punished. The police men willfully do not involve in the corruption but the situation made him to act according to the situation. Certain situation made him to involve in corruption activities. The police even face criticism of the media, the wrath of citizens, unwarranted outbursts of politicians and irritation of

higher police officers. Police cannot punish a husband who beats his wife. He cannot show his emotions when he arrives at the scene of an accident and finds people crying, it faces lack of public acceptance.

Conclusion & Sugesstion

There is need to create a healthy atmosphere of trust, confidence and mutual understanding between police and public. This is also a fact that police could not function actively without the will and co-operation of the public. This co-operation is possible when the relation between the two is cordial. Once this relation is cordial, the crime and violence will be much controlled. Attempts should be made for improving the police public relation. Good work done by the police must be given prominence in the media. Occasional meeting of police men and citizens be organized in police station/colleges/universities and in public places in which the citizens and police give each other 'feedback' and mutual problems may be discussed openly. Rural police system should be strengthened. Laws should be changed. While dealing or attempting to handle the public/people prestigious cases as rape, police should be humble and should give positive support and a positive confidence to the victim and their family members. No doubt an attempt has to be made on both sides to create a healthy society and a healthy environment worth living for. It is only a few "rotten apples" who bring bad name to the whole department. An attempt to focus on corrupt officials and their indulgence in supporting criminals should be strictly looked into by the government.

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