

## Police Public Relation

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### *Abstract*

*Police is one of the best serving agencies, which is constantly under the critical public eye. These groups take the responsibility to regularize their force, to protect and to sustain their own state and dictatorship and also to maintain the rule, peace and discipline in the state. In creating Positive Communication, Police - Public Relations play an especially important role in the society. In Police Public Relations the main objective is to enhance the quality of police co-operation with the public, to emphasize a good Police - Public Relation imperatively, to create a new climate in the Police organization and to improve the radical change required. Police keeps the public informed about the matters from its sphere of activity. Police work is basically reactive. Police officers have only a set of narrowly defined objectives and a body of law that is continually subject to revision and interpretation to guide them. It hardly needs to give special importance which should be strengthened any how. The inductive views which make police department failure to their services are: very high work pressure, political interference, no co-operation from citizen, barely enough respect for laws among citizens and private partnership for police reforms. Hence, these given views come to certain conclusion that all these can be improved through attitudinal changes among citizens, youth counseling may also can help, winning public co-operation is hard but not impossible, new climate in police organization can also work, attentions to traffic and patrol duties and the major one is communication with press media, which is the main cause of the police image therefore keeping good relation from them may help. Looking to the above abstract of Police - Public Relations the above improvement is not enough according to police capabilities, there is certain suggestions to be made to see Police - Public Relations as a whole. Local policing, making transfers and promotions transparent, use of information technology, performance monitoring, minimizing political interference and introducing greater accountability may lead to a better and regularized Police - Public Relations.*

*Multi-Disciplinary E-Research Journal*

### **Introduction:-**

In the age of rapid development of communication technology, when geographical distances are practically no longer felt, direct communication with different sorts of public is still one of the basic conditions for long term successful and efficient operation of any social subject, especially one like the “POLICE”, which is constantly under the critical public eye.

**Police** is one of the best serving agencies which are inspired by a Marathi saying “*SADRAKSHANAYA KHALNIGRAHANAYA*”. The meaning of the above saying is to protect the virtue and destruct or abolish the cruel from its root. Generally, citizen’s social liberty and security is disturbed by the corrupt people in the society and in such cases every citizen do not have courage to fight against such corrupt people. So to face and fight against these evil, forces becomes hard for society. That is why the Society and the Government gave the responsibility to fight the group and control these evil people and to protect the citizens in the state. This

responsible group is called as POLICE force. The word POLICE is taken from Latin according to it "Police" means "Society" it gives the identity of quality of the group such as P for Politeness, O for Obedience, L for Loyalty, I for Integrity, C for Courage and E for Efficiency. British Government made a rule in the year 1861 for police administration. Their main aim was to regularize the police force, to protect and to sustain their own state and dictatorship. But when India achieved freedom the aim changed from protecting and sustaining the state to maintain the rule, peace and discipline in a state. To maintain the rule, peace and discipline in a state has become the chief responsibility of police force. Protecting, serving and maintaining the life of citizens is a very difficult job and it depends on the friendly relation between police and public. In fact the relation between police and public should be sincere, friendly, and faithful and on this relation the interest of the society is depended. There are more and more different groups of people and police officers have to establish a specific relation with everyone of them. They deal with different people, who are why they need to adopt different approaches; those violating the law will certainly have a different opinion of the police from those who do not violate the law. Furthermore, sorts of public are becoming increasingly diversified in the modern society, and the police is accountable for its actions and measures taken to all of them and has to establish relations and endeavour for long term co-operation with all of them. In creating such positive communication, **Police - Public Relations** play an especially important role.

### **Police – Public Co-Relation**

In **Police -Public Relations** our basic task and objective is to enhance the quality of police co-operation with the public. Public relations are an inseparable part of police work. They keep the public informed about matters from its sphere of activity, unless by doing so it would prejudice its own work or justified benefits of others. By the indirect relation that takes place through the mass media, the police endeavours to enhance the quality and extent of information it daily communicates to the journalists, stimulating preventive activity of the mass media and coverage of topics that are important for the citizens from the security point of view. Police officers are increasingly aware of the fact that in order to successfully perform the work, a culture of communication is a necessary component of their professionalism and expertise. In this context education and training have an increasingly important role. However, despite an established system of education and training of police officers, the real learning begins only when one is faced with the real pulse of the life in the streets, roads, cities etc.

Only in direct contact with people and problems, which this profession brings along, police officers are able to evaluate their knowledge and acquired skills. They may not always be successful in everyday relations with various situations, and perhaps they might be less tactful on a particular day. This is why initiatives, suggestions and complaints made by the public concerning the work, measures taken or conduct of police officers are a component part of the police profession. The police accept them and take them into account as a form of control by the public over its work and as a commitment for even greater professionalism in performing its tasks. Policemen and policewomen are the most visible and obtrusive agents of governmental authority and power to the average citizen. This being the case, what the public think about police and their work is highly important and may well serve as a significant social indicator of the political health of the society as a whole. Using telephone survey data gathered in the St. Louis SMSA during the summers of 1977 as part of a major study of police services, a number

of hypothesis regarding the influence of political alienation, perceived local crime, perceived police integrity, race, and social class upon public evaluation of local police performance were tested. Public ratings of police were generally quite high. However, those lacking trust in police integrity, who viewed crime as increasing, who expressed estrangement from the political process, as well as those who were nonwhite or lower class were more likely to rate police performance negatively than others. In addition, a number of noteworthy conditional effects were uncovered utilizing the nonmetric least squares estimation procedure developed by Grizzle, Starmer, and Koch (1969).

Police work is basically reactive. Police officers have only a set of narrowly defined objectives and a body of law that is continually subject to revision and interpretation to guide them. It is a wonder that the police are able to perform their duties with as little controversy as they do. There is no question that many times police are forced to act intuitively. Yet, this is not the characterization of police that is rendered to the public. Police work is rarely presented to the public in a positive light. The mainstream liberal media seem to think that police work is not entertaining unless it is a state of uncertainty. The public in recent times has developed a negative perception about the police mainly due to some events occurring in the Police service, mentioning drug issues and handling of certain matters. To make the police public relationship healthy, there are some duties of the police officers against the public according to the Police Act. As the police is a specific state body, it also has its own law, the Police Act, which, beside other police tasks, also governs the field of communication, in Act 6 (“General Police Directorate is responsible for making sure that competent state bodies and the public are informed about police work, relevant security matters and security conditions”) and Act 22 (“The police informs the public of matters from its sphere of activity unless doing so would prejudice its work or justified benefits of others”).

But in reality the picture that we see is different. In our country the numbers of officers are ritualistic, streaked to politician and selfish. On the other hand the judicial system is traditional so we see common man does not have faith in police force. In society we see that criminals keep the police force at their foot to protect themselves from the society. For criminals police is become a device to hide their crimes and to get honors and publicity. Because of this we see the gap between police and public. In addition to this, through cinema and television Indian police is shown careless, undisciplined, irresponsible, corrupt and involved in crimes that is why the image of police looks bad and it creates again the gap between police and public. If we study and observe the fact, it makes us; doubtful about the police, through this seminar and through discussion it is tried to present the actual relationship of police public and how it may be made healthy by the police and public also. Overall 15 percent of the households (3 crore households) interact with police department. More than half of the interactions happened for filing of complaint. More than 60 percent of the people interact with police face difficulties relating to the behavior of the police. The affect is magnified by the fact that most interactions with police happen in stress situations and most people are normally unaware about the rules and procedures to be followed. The reasons for police behavior could be either high pressure or lack of training. It is important to note that common beliefs about the extent of corruption and the untrustworthiness of governmental institutions influences police decisions to participate in corrupt activities. Inconsistencies between public perceptions and reality may cause police to make choices based on incorrect assumptions. Attempting corruption, therefore, must be

accompanied by attempts to change public expectations. Without a change in public expectations, police attempts may be unsuccessful.

It needs hardly to give special importance that a good police public relationship is imperative which must at all cost be strengthened in order to bring about public involvement and co-operation in the continuing day-to-day functioning of the policeman to make it more effective and meaningful, and to create a wholesome situation for participation of the public as are acceptable to society which will encourage the development of the cause of law enforcement. According to public's point of view it is looked upon that the police service in India is perhaps the most misunderstood and most harmful. The police are the commonest targets of criticism. The public consider it their unlimited duties to critical remarks on the police department at the slightest provocation. An angry motorist forced to halt because of traffic-jam curses the traffic constable on duty. The accused standing in the witness box pleads that he was subjected to third degree methods by the police. Whatever is the grievance, responsibility is fixed on the police. Hundreds of policemen have bravely laid down their lives in the service of the nation, but many in the public and the press continue to look upon the police only as an over-bearing and corrupt instrument, harassment and treat badly. The leading character of police says that "Every police force is rightly taught to cultivate and cherish the ideal of efficiency and unquestioning obedience to the law thereby developing upright personality". Had the police then been allowed to pursue other course, free India would not have received a well-organized and disciplined police force today? Therefore, there cannot be any reason for treating the police with outright suspicion and hostility. The job of the police in India today is second to none in its importance and the police, too, are keen to contribute its best to the progress and prosperity of the nation. Despite this, the impression goes around that police is a job for hard, suspicious, overbearing bullies, though this view is somehow unjustified. Policemen, and the work they do, are looked upon with distaste and distrust because they have to deal with that section of the society which is a visible reminder of the dark side of human nature. To this view, cinemas newspapers and fictions contribute abundantly, depicting the police as nothing better than the unsafe characters they have to deal with. But some police officers who turn molesters, rapists, criminal etc makes the above given matters useless and fictions. Because of which the other obedient officer have to suffer along with them for their department image. There are certain incidents taken place due to which police and public relation is affected very badly. Crime committed by police like molesting girls, sexually harassing young woman, not registering the complaint all this is because the police are also part of this society, and this society condones rape except when it happens to someone they know and care about. This is standard behavior for Indian men. There is the mob mentality. If you look back, you will remember how gangs of male college students whistled and hooted at girls walking by, how your own classmates, managed to touch up someone in a crowded bus or train. Girls, who are honest or mentally strong enough will describe instances that happened to them in lonely anyways we are all part of this, to some extent or the other.

Policing is not the first profession that comes to the mind of even a lower-middle class student. Like it or not, our police belong at the low end of the economic and cultural ladder. This is a class for whom things have not changed much for a long time. Not their fault. People, for whom life is a battle for day-to-day survival, operate by ancient laws of power. What are we going to do about this? Pretty much nothing. Because some of us do not accept the seriousness of

the problem. And because a large number of us would behave like those police molesters given a chance and the motivation. There are many certain incidents held such as “The accused jumps off the police jeep and gets killed, Police chases a man who falls into a well, Man commits suicide after being questioned by police, The accused found dead in cell, Suspect kills himself, Police make the accused drink urine, Man jumps into river seeing the police”. These are some of the strangest of news stories that appear in daily news. All this is because of gaps increasing day-by-day between police and public. There are a lot of social, political, cultural, literacy and academic principles and practices we have wholeheartedly adopted from the British. Sadly, we have miserably failed to copy a few basic human values and social orders that make any community get associated with other similarly civilized communities found anywhere in the world. When you are found guilty, when you are suspected or found doing something which is antisocial, the English police do not beat you, abuse you, or intimidate you in any manner. Rather what they do is they consider you as a human being who is likely to commit whatever you are found committing, and you have the reason for the same and finally you have the right to heard before a court of law. They respect you. And once a court of law finds you guilty beyond doubt, you are supposed to pay for the same by way of imprisonment or whatever the verdicts reads you to undergo. But here in our state and nation at large, police have a different work culture which is unfortunately not accepted by our society. Ours is basically a scared community: scared first by the British Police and next by our own police. It is in our blood that police are authorities to push us to comply and punish us if we fail to. We are afraid of uniforms. It is not police fault, but it is our fault because we get tremors down our spines when we see a force because our grandparents had the same feeling when they were under British occupation. The same feeling permeated to our fathers and they in turn passed on to the younger generation. Therefore it is right to say that we have inherited a ‘police policy’ which is based not on what the laws of the land stipulate but on the people’s attitude towards the police. And this attitude has been getting endorsed according to the changing social and political times.

The political orders time and again have made the police force dance to their tunes, and this attitude has created a kind of withdrawal syndrome in our police officers. They stay withdrawn from their own conscience and behave like machines according to the commands given by the politicians. They themselves are aware that they cannot do anything, and it will be dangerous if they try to make any change in the way they function. The system is so used to its rules, and it is very difficult for a handful of good police officers to change it. This is because they too have families and feelings.

#### **Main Aim for development in Police - Public Relations:**

- Should take initiatives to gain public confidence, and improve public relations.
- Imparting training to officials for effective public dealing.
- To enhance the quality of police co-operation with the public.
- To create a new climate in the police organization.
- To change the style of police & the police stations to be furnished.
- To provide a separate reception room for visitors.
- To provide facilities for drinking water, tea, coffee, etc.
- To help and do well to the people in distress, and to the weaker and oppressed sections of society.
- To emphasize a good police - public relationship imperatively.

- To co-operate in the day-to-day functioning of policeman to make it more effective and meaningful.
- To create wholesome situation for participation of the public as are acceptable to society.
- To make it clear that the police public friendly relations are beneficial to both of them.
- To suggest remedies and proposals through the collected data and through conclusion.
- To improve the radical change required for police - public relation.

**Inductive Views:**

- ***Very high work pressure and lack of basic infrastructure:***

The police force today works in acute shortage of personnel, resulting in high work pressures. Policemen spend long hours on work with barely any facilities being provided. Very often police station does not even have basic facilities like washrooms etc. these working conditions combined with long hours of work create excessive levels of stress. In addition to this police staffs of lower ranks are used by superior officer for personal works. In addition to increasing workload it also reduces the self esteem of the staff.

- **Political interference:**

There is excessive interference in the functioning of police by the politicians. Pressure on the police takes a variety of forms, ranging from a promise of career advancement and favoring treatment in service matters if the demand is yielded to, and a threat of strong penal action and disfavored treatment in service matters if the pressure is resisted. Even though it is not very easy to punish a police officer under permitted law without adequate grounds, it is easy to subject him to administrative action by way of transfer or suspension on the basis of an alleged complaint taken up for inquiry. While suspension acts as great humiliating factor, a transfer disrupts police officer's family, children's education, etc.

- **No co-operation from citizen:**

It is very hard to prevent crime without proper co-operation from citizen. However, people do not follow even the basic instructions to prevent crime like getting the domestic servants, drivers, employees verified and whenever an incident happens police is blamed for negligence.

- **Barely enough respect for law among citizens:**

People make use of every opportunity to break laws, when caught they bribe the concerned official to avoid Punishment/ embarrassment. This shows how Public forces Police to indulge into crime.

- **Private partnership for police reforms:**

For police reform to succeed, however, it needs external as well as internal support. Without leadership committed to improvement within a police organization, external calls for reform will rarely penetrate to the daily delivery of police services on the front lines. But without external support for reform, even the most committed police leadership will lose the political backing and resources necessary to sustain a successful reform

process. Perhaps the most promising but least studied source of external support for police reform is the private business community. Partnerships with private businesses, can gradually wear away the professionalism of police organizations. The most successful police leaders who welcome or promote partnerships with the business community are careful not to adopt the profit motive of business as their own, nor to assume that all business people necessarily understand customer service or quality control.

### **Conclusions:**

After going through the above description we come to a following conclusion which is as follows:

- **Attitudinal changes:**

One cannot teach people to be polite through court orders and threats of disciplinary action. The existing attitudes are results of complex factors, which include, other factors apart actual behavior of policemen on the one hand and conduct of public men in power on the other. Those people in the superior circles of society whose behavior and attitudes are averse to the taste of general public of middle and lower classes of society need to go through a change identifying themselves with the ordinary people. This concludes into Attitudinal Changes which has to be developed.

- **Youth counseling:**

The police must concentrate on the young, and youth counseling conducted on a Regular feature. Establishment of a positive relationship with this section of society could prove an effective preventive service. This will lead to positive effect on society as well as the Police.

- **Winning public co-operation:**

Policemen have been working mostly depending on law, but legal provisions cannot elicit public co-operation. In our democratic polity, the police must win public co-operation. It is no doubt an uphill task to secure such willing co-operation of the public. Yet, police must work hard for a sudden development.

- **New climate in police organization:**

Without pretending to speak with authority, remedies for the organizational constraints on police performances lie in proper living and working conditions of policemen. In general, police station buildings have a forbidding aspect and the conditions of lock-ups dreadful. Further, hardly any police station has facilities for public. So, even if a well meaning policeman was to try to be polite and courteous he has hardly anything to be courteous with. As this concludes to create a new climate in the police organization and thereby change the style of police work police station buildings should be properly furnished.

- **Attention to traffic and patrol duties:**

The sight of patrolling policemen is welcome to all and is regarded as a visible sign that the police are at work preventing crime and keeping a watch over their localities. Patrols are in our opinion, one of the best means of establishing good relations with the public.

- **Communication with press media:**

News of crime and disorder is of considerable interest to the people and therefore the press is interested in it. The police should establish a system of communication through which the authentic facts relating to crime and disorder can quickly be given to the press. If the police will not do it, then the journalists will tend to depend on whatever they can gather. In several states the superintendent of police cannot hold a press conference and the sub-divisional head office is not permitted to provide any information to the press. It has been observed that failure of police to be close towards press has been due to denial of prompt factual information to it either on the pretext of secrecy or because no regular facility exists for it. Hence, every district SP should permit to deal with the press, and the police stations should be allowed to give statistical details.

### **Suggestions to Reduce Corruption and To Improve Police - Public Relations:**

- **Local policing – more responsive and accountable enforcement:** ISSN 0976-9714  
There are several policing functions that concern the day-to-day life of common citizen and are very local by nature e.g. patrolling, traffic regulations, prosecution for offences like public nuisance or eve teasing. The enforcement to panchayat or citizen committees. This local force will have a small area under its jurisdiction, resulting in better interaction and involvement with citizen.
- **Making transfers and promotions transparent:**  
A payment of bribes for postings and promotions is a well-known phenomenon in Police department. As a result the policemen who have paid their way through try to recover the amount as soon as possible and corruption becomes a tool for getting better return on “investment”. Also transfers are commonly used as a revenge tool against officers as a pressure tactic.  
However, if a system could be designed where postings are automatically generated by software after a given time interval for each employee, a large amount of corruption can be eliminated. Similarly a standard of judgment for promotions could be articulated and made widely known so that individual judgments plays a limited part in promotions. This will reduce the need for bribe in order to get promotion.
- **Use of information technology:**  
Non-registration of complaints is the most common grievance of citizens interacting with police department. Since the registration of complaint or FIR is the first step in justice delivery, citizen is forced to pay bribe. Use of technology for reporting and handling of cases can be:
  - Filling of cases could be done through Internet and if required detailed information can be given later on.
  - Case status could be made available online to bring in more transparency and make the police force more accountable.
  - FIR could be registered/ receipt issued through check posts or mobile vans.



- **Performance monitoring:**

Establishing a system for monitoring the performance of police can substantially increase the accountability of the force. Objective performance and efficiency indicators can be chosen and tracked to monitor the performance of the police force. This will lead to having clear improvement goals for the force on objective and measurable parameters.

- **Minimizing political interference:**

As advocated by National Police Commission a Chief of Police of a State should be given a fixed tenure of office so as to encourage functional independence. It has been common place in India for transfers and postings of officers to be used as a kind of reward and punishment, as a result of which, many chiefs of police have had loyal support to the political parties. Also the selection of Police Chief could be entrusted to an expert committee. The committee may be given a pre-specified number of candidates, decided on the basis of seniority, to choose from.

- **Introducing greater accountability:**

Today, there is very little accountability of Police to the citizen with regard to satisfactory delivery of services e.g. if a police officer refuses to register a complaint. Unlike in other services like electricity or telecom, where if a citizen is not satisfied with the complaint redressal by the department, it has the option of going to the independent regulator, there exist no such mechanism in case of police.

It is very essential that accountability of officials at different levels be defined and a degree of immediate proximity to the people and third party intervention introduced. Public hearings could be an effective tool for this purpose. A system could be introduced where; a few complaints against police are picked up every month for public hearing. The public hearings could be conducted by a panel of retired judges and prominent citizens.

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