

# Police Public Interface: Challenges and Remedies in Changing Scenario

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## ABSTRACT

Police are one of the state's most visible agents. No other government department interacts with the public as often and as often as the police. When a citizen enters a police station or a police officer goes out on the street, there is an interaction between the police and the public. Therefore, the areas of the public police interface are too numerous for discussion here. In our opinion, it is really important to evaluate the quality of the interface between the police and the public, regardless of the area in which the interface occurs and to identify reasons for the poor quality. That's what have been done. Here, I have examined some areas chosen on the basis of the rationale explained in the next paragraph.

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## 1. Introduction

Police are one of the state's most visible agents. No other government department interacts with the public as often and as often as the police. When a citizen enters a police station or a police officer goes out on the street, there is an interaction between the police and the public. Therefore, the areas of the public police interface are too numerous for discussion here. In our opinion, it is really important to evaluate the quality of the interface between the police and the public, regardless of the area in which the interface occurs and to identify reasons for the poor quality. That's what we've been trying to do. Here, however, we examine some areas chosen on the basis of the rationale explained in the next paragraph. The areas of the public police interface can be divided into two different categories. One category has interactions between the police and the public in what may be called non-law enforcement areas in the absence of a better term. The other category is interactions which occur when the law is enforced by the police.

## 2. Importance for Police

Confidence in the police force of the community directly affects the quality of police operations. A hostile public does not hear or see anything, and therefore deprives the police of extremely important information. Crime does not occur; information about suspicious persons or incidents is abolished; and witnesses do not present evidence. Therefore, the ability of the department to control crime and maintain peace and security is negatively impacted. The support or lack of it by the Community also affects the health of the organization in other ways. First, a police force with a bad image cannot attract and maintain a high-quality workforce. Secondly, the lack of public confidence leads to job dissatisfaction. Third, even if their requests are urgent and genuine, it is difficult for the police to obtain additional resources from the government. Fourthly, failure to obtain public cooperation means that the police take short cuts and use third-degree methods to succeed. Generally, hostile public and brutal police go together. Consequently, the success of police work and the existence of a healthy and sensitive police organization in any democratic society depend largely on the degree of trust and confidence that the community has in its police force.

## 3. The Present Poor Image-Reasons

The fact that the police in this country in general and in the Uttar Pradesh in particular do not enjoy the public's confidence has been demonstrated from time to time in numerous public opinion surveys. This was also the unanimous conclusion of all the committees and expert bodies that examined police problems. As early as 1902, the Indian Police Commission observed: "The police force is far from efficient; it is deficient in training and organization; it is inadequately supervised; it is generally regarded as corrupt and oppressive; and the confidence and friendly cooperation of the people have not been guaranteed." These observations made about a century ago echo the reports of the State Police Committees and the National Police Commission that have been appointed in the country since independence. There are many reasons why the relationship between the police and the community is extremely unsatisfactory. The National Police Commission considered the most important "police partiality, corruption, brutality and failure to register cognizable crimes." People are definitely unhappy with the quality of their policing. Poor police services are not only the cause, however, but also the effect of increasing public distrust in the police force. This vicarious circle continues to widen the current gap between police and the community. Actually, the hiatus in the police-public relationship has historic roots. As an organized institution in this country, the police owe their existence to the 1861 Police Act. The system created by this Act was marked by some important characteristics.

First, the British realized that they must have a police force that is completely subordinate to the executive to perpetuate their rule in this country. The executive must exercise full and unquestioned policing control. This was achieved by setting up a system of dual control at the state level by the executive over the police one and at the local level. At the local level, they were placed under the general management and control of the District Magistrate, who was not a professional but a general administrator, mainly responsible for collecting revenue in those days. It was his responsibility to ensure that the police force served the state's and not necessarily the community's interests. The idea that

the police were part and accountable to the community never grew in the Indian soil.

Secondly, the police were not accountable to anyone other than their own hierarchy and the executive in this system. The need to hold the police accountable to other institutions was not part of this control model. Therefore, no institutional mechanisms for police accountability have been established.

Thirdly, the British structured the organization in such a way that the senior positions in the force would be occupied by them and the junior slots would be kept 'native.' Even if the senior positions were in due course Indianized, the elitist bias was not abandoned. The family background always weighed heavily in the selection of senior vacancy candidates. They realized that a system based on feudal values prevailing in Indian society would work effectively to ensure that the rank and file, which constituted the bulk of the force, remained loyal to their elderly within and outside the organization. This gave rise to a management philosophy based on lack of confidence in the lower ranks of the organization. The natives should not be trusted. The only way to make them work was to continue to show the rod and sometimes put a carrot in front of them. This distrust of the staff of the police station can be seen in the record system kept at the police station. A large number of records with the same entry in more than one were deliberately prescribed so that seniors could catch the lower staff on the wrong foot during formal inspections or even on casual visits to the police station. The same distrust is also reflected in the provisions of the law, such as the FIR, the maintenance of the Case Diary, the Station Diary, the recording of witness statements, confessions, etc.

Fourthly, the police were brought up in a military and authoritarian manner. There was a great deal of emphasis on maintaining a type of discipline that limited regimentation, requiring the lower ranks to blindly obey orders. The system did not require the constabulary to put its thinking caps on while carrying out its functions. They shouldn't have any, in fact. Recruitment to constabulary therefore stressed brawn requirements and not brain requirements. The higher the recruit, the better. He does not need to be educated, but he needs to be intimidating. During training, his physical fitness and endurance must be improved. This is why the training program of the constabulary has always been strongly targeted for outdoor activities such as drilling.

All of the above factors combined to create a system that distanced the majority of the police force from the community. Independence changed the political system, but the police system was unchanged. The 1861 Police Act continued to regulate it. Laws and courts continued to distrust it. Its structure of organization remained unchanged. Politicians and bureaucrats continued to control and control it. What they were remained was their management philosophy, value system and ethos. Its public disclaimer remained unchanged. It was a ruler appointed and it remained so. There was no attempt to bring about reforms and change the system inherited from colonial times. The need to change the system has not been felt very strongly for a few decades after independence. This was due in part to the euphoria of freedom, which led to high expectations, and in part to the fact that leadership standards,

both in politics and in the police, were quite good until at least a few decades after independence. However, the standards began to decline gradually, with politics becoming increasingly controversial and criminalized, leading to a noticeable decline in the quality of police control and the increasing misuse of the organization by people in power positions for partisan interests. This undermined the rule of law in the country and impeded the growth of a professional police system. In any case, people had little faith in the police's ability and impartiality and became more disappointed. This widened the gap between the police and the community, which resulted in both losses.

#### 4. Need to improve

By improving understanding and communication between the two it is important to bridge the gap. Education is the key to understanding the blocked communication line and opening it. The police must be educated to be sensitive to the needs and rights of the community. This must learn that the control of crime and the maintenance of law and order are important, but the preservation of citizens' rights is an equally important, if not important, concern in a democratic society. In the same way, the public must be educated to show a proper understanding of the role of the police, their problems and their constraints.

#### 5. Educating the public about police work and problems

They are damned if they do, and damned if not, according to police. True, considerable police criticism are based on public ignorance of what the police have to do and what they can do. As the Police Commission states: "The current public attitude towards the police also depends on the lack of knowledge of the police methods and conditions under which the police operate."

There are two aspects of this public ignorance problem. One-The public is highly ignorant of the organization of police and its problems. They therefore expect more of the organization than it can deliver reasonably and legitimately. For example, the general public does not know that the police are only part of the criminal justice system and that the criminal justice system is only part of the government itself. It is therefore unfair to blame the police for the ills caused by the operation of the other percentage system agencies or the government. This happens quite often.

The other aspect of the problem is that what the public knows can be more harmful than their complete ignorance. The media builds public understanding of the functioning of police. The image that the police media projects is often mistaken and unrealistic. The police officer is neither a superman nor a complete crook, as he is proved to be. This is partly because the commercial interests of the media demand a sensational and unrealistic projection of the functioning of the police and partly because the media is also unaware of the methods of police.

It is in the interest of the police itself to educate the public about the role of the police, the problems and the constraints they face. It is not as if the police have never attempted to educate the public. Attempts were made, but these were mainly aimed at reducing the vulnerability of citizens to

become victims of crime by developing their ability to protect themselves. Crime prevention education is necessary, but not sufficient. The police must launch a continuous, systematic and regular campaign to educate the public about the role of the police, with all their limitations, the problems they face in their day-to-day work, the environment in which they have to function, their lack of resources and other complexities that undermine their work. The police know that the public is unaware of the work of the police and recognize the importance of public education. What they must do is take initiative and develop ways of educating the public. There is room for learning from some of the best foreign practices, although not all the experiments can be replicated here.

## 6. Methods to educate community

### **Citizen's Police Academies**

These Academies are in the nature of the educational training programs carried out for citizens by foreign police forces. The idea is to educate the public and develop an understanding of the role of the police, the problems and the constraints they face. Is the idea replicable here? Currently, the police training institutions in this country are known to suffer from a host of shortcomings and shortcomings. The personnel employed in the police training institutions are not of the desired standards and lack budget. Since then, the situation has hardly improved significantly. The idea of starting Citizens Police Academies is very good and in these three states a small start should be made.

### **Mass Contact Meetings**

The district police superintendents and other senior officials should hold mass meetings with citizens in order to listen to what the public wants. Public participants in these meetings will be known as opportunities for communities to express their problems, needs and expectations. The police should also use these meetings to inform the public about what the police can do and why they cannot do other things the public wants. Police officers should explain to the public their limitations arising from insufficiencies in law, resources and the functioning of other criminal justice and government agencies.

If these meetings are successful as a mechanism to educate the public, the police will have to guard against two things. In the first place, they should not be organized routinely without confidence in their effectiveness. Secondly, the objective should be to educate the public and not sell complaints to other departments or services.

### **Citizens' Monitoring Committees**

The lack of openness of the police has also contributed to the perpetuation of ignorance or false myths about them. The police were secret and reluctant to share information with the public on their activities and working methods. The National Police Commission was concerned about the lack of openness in the work of police. They had recommended that all other police work should be open except in four areas (operations, intelligence, the privacy of individuals and judicial requirements). Percent Openness does not simply mean information sharing. It also means that you are open to public scrutiny. In fact, this would provide the police with the best protection against illegal interference, arid pressure and allow

the public to know the constraints under which the police must work. It is therefore agreed that "to institutionalize' open' work as well as to provide the public with a structure for checking police performance at the cutting edge, a monitoring committee should be set up at the level of the police station, which should have the statutory authority to seek information from the police, except secret information and station information. The researcher agrees entirely that these committees should have a legal base. The committees' success would depend on three factors. One is the interest of senior officers, the police and the administration, in setting up the committees and in ensuring that they are running effectively. The other is to manage committees with distinguished and honest Community citizens. The third step is to ensure that the committees are not politicized and do not function as the police station's "inner circle."

### **Use of Media**

Media plays an important role in shaping the public's understanding of the work of the police. As mentioned earlier, the media are guided by what sells in their selection of content and presentation. This leads to the negative aspects of police work being better covered. The emphasis is on highlighting the poor performance and misconduct of police staff rather than informing the public about their problems or working methods. Focusing on negative work leads to a situation in which the media itself remains unaware of the police, their problems and working methods. To some extent, the police must be blamed for this, because they have made no serious and serious effort to cultivate the media and to use it to educate the public. The police have mainly used the media to publicize their achievements, which are not always ready and widely accepted. TV is one of the most powerful media with an enormous coverage and reach. It was used by the police for only two purposes-one to investigate cases and the other to glorify their accomplishments. It was not used to provide the public with information on the police organization and its problems. The researcher feels that the experiment using radio and television as a means to develop a more satisfactory public-policing interface should be thoroughly structured to measure and influence. For example, a number of programs could be created for TV and radio after discussions in the focus group showed misconceptions, areas in which the public lacks knowledge and what the public would like to know. Viewer profiles and their attitudes towards the police should be developed before and after the programs and the content of the program itself has created opportunities for political interaction. For example, the public could be asked to take a quiz on the functioning of the police or to bring complaints and discuss how they were dealt with or how they were brought into discussion about the positive interactions with the police.

Cinema is another powerful creator of pictures. Their stereotypical police projections are all unrealistic. The police establishment should consider interacting with this electoral district to educate the public about today's police realities—the difficulties and the dilemmas. Senior officials must create opportunities to bring producers and scriptwriters into contact with the police's daily lives and invite them to develop more realistic portraits. This sort of unconventional initiative is believed to be effective. The film industry, on the one hand, is

always looking for interesting opportunities, and all types of police work have a dramatic real life for them. It is also believed that more life-like portraits are possible and that it would lead to sympathy for the police in the public. In addition, police officers must conduct radio and television talks and write articles in the press to explain the work and problems of the police to the public. The police could run a column in the press to provide information about crime and other problems in the districts on a regular basis. The column should invite and deal with responses.

### **Use of educational institutions**

Police are one of society's most significant institutions. In this country, however, educational institutions have shown no interest in either learning or teaching about the police. Four fronts have been the failure of education institutions and police departments to use them to educate students.

Firstly, academics in the country have not investigated problems with the police. In contrast to foreign countries such as the USA, where most research into police problems has been carried out by social scientists, no meaningful research into police problems has come out of the educational institutions' portals in this country. Whatever limited research has been done on the subject, police officers have done it.

Secondly, there is hardly any offer of courses in police science or administration at the graduate or postgraduate level in colleges to teach students the basics of police organization, role, work and issues. There may be one or two police sessions in some universities as part of the Criminology course, but the police as a full topic was not considered

important enough to be included in the curriculum. The police as a subject is completely and clearly absent from the syllabus of education at the training level.

Thirdly, neither the police departments nor the educational institutions have deemed it necessary to develop an internship system in which students can be deported to the police departments to learn about the police work during the summer holidays.

Fourthly, the police departments did not consider it necessary to deploy police officers to educational institutions on a systematic and regular basis to talk to the academic community, especially the students, about police issues. Some sporadic efforts are made by individual officers, but the practice was not systematically implemented as a regular departmental policy. The first and second failures must be addressed on a long-term basis. BPR&D should join the University Grants Commission in persuading universities to include police in the syllabus of teaching at both graduate and post-graduate level. At the secondary level of education, efforts should also be made to include this issue. In consultation with the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the subject matter content may be decided. Eminent political and social scientists should be encouraged to carry out police research. Several seminars, conferences and workshops on police issues are organized by the police. Academic community representatives should be invited to participate in these events. Appropriate initiatives can be developed to educate school and college students on the police organization and its problems regularly.

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