

Police in India: Responses of General Public of Jhalawad District in Rajasthan in India

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Abstract

Police in India is not seen as friend of common public but as an oppressor. It is blamed often for corruption, misuse of power, misbehavior, lack of work culture etc. This study tries to take a look at the responses of general public regarding police through an empirical study done in January and February 2012 in Jhalawad district of Rajasthan in India. The study included 200 common people which included 100 men and 100 women and tools used were schedule, interview and observation.

Keywords: India, Rajasthan, Jhalawad, Constabulary, Police.

INTRODUCTION

Existence of police can be traced back to Scriptures of the Vedic period in ancient India. The *Rigveda* and *Athervaveda* mention certain crimes and punishments in Vedic India. In *Ramayana* of Valmiki squads of police are mentioned who capture Hanuman in Lanka. Arrangements of police were made at the time of return of Rama to control the crowd. *Mrichhakatikam* of Sudrak presents an account of the proceedings of the conduct of a criminal case in a court of law and *Shakuntalam* of Kalidas present characters who investigate the

fisherman with a diamond ring. (Begam, 1996, 24) Kautilya gives detailed description of police in his book *Arthshastra*. (Sengupta, 1995, 5) The book gives details of patterns of investigation, punishment, detection, agencies of punishment and the devise of controlling the crime. It gives details of nine types of spies. *Thirukkural* written by Thiruvalluvar exhibits the techniques of organizing the spies for protection of royal kingdoms and persons as well as principles and practices of criminal administration of that time. (Begam, 1996, 24).

During Medieval period *kotwals* were the key police official. He was to report and regulate the law and order in the towns. He would patrol and guard the vantage points during nights and note all the arrivals and departures. However when British came to India they found police administration in bad shape. They reformed it gradually by appointing magistrates to supervise *darogas*. In rural areas they were to supervise village watchmen and in urban areas they retained *kotwals* to supervise

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darogas. (Begam, 1996, 26) But during British period the image of police was not that of friend of public but one of tormentor of public because the basic nature of British rule was colonial and police administration like other aspects of British rule were designed to exploit Indians in order to benefit the British.

Independence of India should have heralded a new era in public police relationship in India. Police should have changed their working to become friends with the public but they retained their colonial character and image. Various committees and commissions appointed from time to time by government of India suggested that defective training, corruption and oppression by police needs to be dealt with properly. (Begam, 1996, 35).

The police manual says that the most important duties of the police are the prevention of crime and maintenance of law and order. (Sengupta, 1995, 37) Police structure in India is a colonial legacy and police in India is not seen as friend of common public but as an oppressor. It is blamed often for corruption, misuse of power, misbehavior, lack of work culture etc. It is also blamed for failing to maintain law and order in a just way.

Case study: An empirical study was conducted from March to April 2012 which included 200 people on random basis were included in the Jhalawad district of Rajasthan and tools used were schedule, interview and observation.

Personal profile: There were 100 i.e. 50 percent men and 100 i.e. 50 percent women respondents. 126 i.e. 63 percent respondents were in between the age of 18 to 35 years, 51 i.e. 25.5 percent respondents were in between the age of 36 to 60 years, 20 i.e. ten percent respondents were in between 60 to 75 years of age and three i.e. 1.5 percent respondents were above 76 years of age. Seven i.e. 3.5 percent respondents were labourers, 16 i.e. eight percent were agriculturist, 47 i.e. 23.5 percent were in government job, rest were in various other works or home makers. 86 i.e. 43 percent respondents were from OBC category, 71 i.e. 35.5 percent were from general category, 29 i.e. 14.5 percent were from SC category and 14 i.e. seven percent were from ST category. 155 i.e. 77.5 percent respondents were higher secondary pass, 27 i.e. 13.5 percent were secondary pass, 14 i.e. seven percent were literate or primary pass and four i.e. two percent were illiterate. 64 i.e. 32 percent earned less than Rs 1000 per month, 40 i.e. 20 percent earned in between Rs 1000 to 5000 per month, 15 i.e. 7.5 percent earned between Rs 5000 to 10,000 per month, 56 i.e. 28 percent earned above Rs 10,000 per month and 25

i.e. 12.5 percent had no earnings. Family income of 21 i.e. 10.5 percent respondents was less than Rs 1000 per month, family income of 34 i.e. 17 percent was in between Rs 1000 to Rs 5000 per month, family income of 33 i.e. 16.5 percent was in between Rs 5000 to 10000 per month and family income of 112 i.e. 56 percent respondents was above Rs 10,000 per month. Spouses of 40 i.e. 20 percent respondents were in jobs, 36 i.e. 18 percent were home makers, five i.e. 2.5 percent were agriculturists, 92 i.e. 46 percent did not answer and 27 i.e. 13.5 percent were in other occupations. 176 i.e. 88 percent respondents were Hindus, 20 i.e. ten percent respondents were Muslims, three i.e. 1.5 percent respondents were Christians and one i.e. 0.5 percent were others. 108 i.e. 54 percent respondents were married, 90 i.e. 45 percent were unmarried, one i.e. 0.5 percent was widow and one i.e. 0.5 percent was separated.

Contact with Police: 117 i.e. 58.5 percent respondents knew the correct meaning of constabulary. 127 i.e. 63.5 percent respondents said they had some contact with police, while 73 i.e. 36.5 percent respondents had no contact with police. 78 i.e. 39 percent respondents said that they had contact with constable while others had contact with higher officials. 30 i.e. 15 percent respondents said they had contact with police while driving, 14 i.e. seven percent had contact due to fight with someone, four i.e. two percent had contact due to theft, 54 i.e. 27 percent had contact due to all the above reasons and 19 i.e. 9.5 percent had contact with police due to other reasons. 107 i.e. 53.5 percent respondents said their experience was good, 47 i.e. 23.5 percent said their experience was bad and 46 i.e. 23 percent did not answer. 57 i.e. 28.5 percent respondents admitted giving bribe to police while 149 i.e. 74.5 percent said they did not give bribe to police. 80 i.e. 40 percent respondents said they have taken help from police while 120 i.e. 60 percent said they have never taken help from police. 62 i.e. 31 percent said they experience of asking for help from police was good while for 18 i.e. nine percent the experience was bad. 84 i.e. 42 percent respondents said police gives respect to them while 116 i.e. 58 percent said that the police does not give respect to them. 62 i.e. 31 percent respondents said that police resolves the problem on time while 138 i.e. 69 percent said that the police does not resolve the problem on time. Respondents said that people are scared of police because police does not give satisfactory answer, asks for bribes and also inflicts punishments. 112 i.e. 56 percent respondents believed that the relations between police and public are satisfactory, 34 i.e. 17 percent said they are bad and 14 i.e. seven percent said there are good. 38 i.e. 19 percent respondents

had good experience of police while 162 i.e. 81 percent had no good experience of police. 42 i.e. 21 percent respondents had bad experience of police while 158 i.e. 79 percent had no bad experience of police. 10 i.e. five percent respondents said police has succeeded in its objectives, 43 i.e. 21.5 percent said police has not succeeded in its objectives and 147 i.e. 73.5 percent said police has succeeded in its objective to some extent. Respondents said that people expect security, solution of problems and restriction on crimes from police as the function of police is to provide security, stop crime, impart justice etc.

ANALYSIS

It is clear from the responses of the respondents that respondents did not have a good image of police. About one third had bad experience of police and had given bribe to police. For 18 i.e. nine percent respondents their experience of asking for help from police was bad. More than half respondents believed that the police does not give respect to them does not resolve the problems on time. 17 percent respondents said relations between public and police are bad. 81 percent respondents had no good experience of police while 21 percent respondents had bad experience of police. Only 10 i.e. five percent respondents said police has succeeded in its objectives.

SUGGESTIONS

Respondents gave following suggestions for improving performance of police: removal of corruption, removal of problems, removal of favoritism, removal of exploitation of public, use of civilized language by police, ensuring accountability of police, time bound performance of police, promotion of honest police officers, good police public ratio, positive work culture among police.

CONCLUSION

Major reforms are needed in police system in India in order to make the police a friend of the public and not a threat to public. The colonial legacy of using police to control and threaten the people should come to an end. For that suggestions given by the public and also by various committee. suggestions given by the public and also by various committee should be taken into consideration.

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