



The impact of community policing initiatives on crime prevention in India

Prerna¹, Akhilesh Ranaut²

¹Department of Law, University Institute of Legal Studies, Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Mohali, Punjab, India

² Professor, Department of Law, University Institute of Legal Studies, Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Mohali, Punjab, India

Abstract

In a democratic system, individuals are bound by the laws that are formulated by their chosen representatives. Consequently, they have a responsibility to actively engage in the efforts to prevent breaches of these legislative laws. Community Policing in this context is a method that aims to encourage citizens' active involvement in preventing crimes within their local communities. The actions of Community Policing are constructed upon a strong public-police partnership, established through the regular and through house visits carried out by BEAT officers in their designated areas. Community Policing in India is an evolving approach to law enforcement that aims to foster collaboration between police and local communities to address crime, build trust and enhance public safety. This article provides an overview of the key principles and challenges associated with the implementation of community policing in Indian context. Also addresses the role of community engagement, the importance of building trust and potential benefits in terms of crime prevention and social harmony. As Community Policing is an ongoing process that requires commitment and collaboration between law enforcement, community members and local leaders. It's essential to adapt strategies to the unique needs and challenges of each community to prevent crimes at street level.

Keywords: Community policing, modules, policing strategies, causes, effects, community engagement, accountability, crime prevention

Introduction

“Every Policeman is a citizen in uniform and Every citizen is a policeman without Uniform.”

The concept of community policing has evolved over several decades. It has its roots in the 1960s and 1970s when police departments started exploring new, community focused approaches. The goal was to move away from the traditional law enforcement model and engage communities in preventing crime and addressing problems. During 1980s and 1990s, the problem-oriented policing model became significant approach. In the 1990s, the U.S. federal government endorsed community policing by launching initiatives like the community policing service programs. In the 21st century, the evolution of community policing continued, with the police departments giving greater importance to fostering positive relationships with the community as a means of preventing crime.

Community Policing in India is a growing concept which came into force in recent years. The concept of Community policing in India is still in the process of development and its outcomes differ from one state or city to another. This approach aims to give local communities more influence and foster trust in the police ultimately contributing to enhanced public safety and social harmony. Community Policing is an alternative approach to law enforcement that focuses on preventing crime. It is a valuable concept and tool for restoring the image of police forces and bringing about changes in their internal procedures and interactions between the police and public. Officers often work closely with residents to address local concerns, and tailor their approach to the specific needs of the society. This approach highlights the importance of open communication, proactive crime prevention and a community centered mindset for police officers. It goes beyond conventional policing by

giving priority to proactive actions, decentralization and empowering the community. In this article, we will analyze the advantages of community policing and the programs of community policing in different Indian states. This research article aims to investigate the multifaceted influence of community policing, its impact on lowering crime rates, engaging the community and enhancing the overall welfare of the society.

Community policing helps the community in following manner:

Building trust between law enforcement and the Community, fosters a perception of the police as protectors rather than adversaries, thus strengthening positive community police relations. Due to diverse background, cultures and unique requirements of various communities tailored law enforcement approaches are necessary. Community Policing facilitates a deeper understanding by officials of the specific needs within each community, enabling more effective engagement. Community Policing enables law enforcement personnel to gain insight into the distinct requirements and concerns of the individual communities. The presence of police in nearly every local community acts as a deterrent for potential offenders. Police alone cannot completely reduce crime, therefore engaging community members and embracing a collaborative approach, we can enhance the overall well being of society through mutual contributions and benefits. As mentioned earlier, decision making in community policing tends to be more immediate and localized, as police stationed in specific area possess the necessary powers and authority.

Review of literature

The report of National police commissioner (NCP) set up by government of India to report on policing and recommend

various reforms, this report suggests that the police system needs to be reformed to be in tune with the present day scenario and upgraded to deal with crime and criminals.

An article on police community partnership by BPRD provides the essence of community policing model in which ordinary citizens, individually as Police Mitras and collectively as CLG's are empowered to enter into a problem solving partnership with police in every state.

An Article on Community policing in India provides various initiatives of different states of India to prevent or to reduce crime.

An article on community policing which describes the facts and misconceptions of community policing in prevention of crime.

National Crime Report Bureau compiles and publishes information on crimes in its publication 'Crimes in India.'

Research methodology

This article is mainly focused on the impact of community policing initiatives in India to prevent crimes. This present paper is based on doctrinal research method. The study was done based on secondary data which has collected through internet and related articles in newspapers and journals.

Modules of community policing

A hearts and mind strategy is the essence of community policing model in which the ordinary citizens, individually as Police Mitras and collectively as CLG's are empowered to enter into problem solving partnership with the police in every state. Implementation of some community policing strategies are:

Beat system: Beat system in community policing refers to the practice of dividing a community into specific geographical areas and beats with officers assigned to every beat. In these areas, officers focus on tasks like patrolling, preventing crime, collecting criminal intelligence and resolving minor disputes. Beat involved 3-4 head constables or constables in each police station. These shall be designated as beat officers with tenure of 2-3 years. They shall function from the police assistance centers situated in the beats or patrol areas. Officers build strong relationship with the community members to address local concerns. They use a problem solving approach to find long term situations rather than just responding to incidents. They held accountable for the outcomes, this can help drive proactive problem solving and problem oriented policing.

Police Mitras: The Commissioner of police and DSP can enlist local citizens who are willing to actively assist the police in various policing duties as "Police Mitras." Each Beat officer aims to recruit 100 to 200 police mitras in their respective areas. Police Mitras educate community members about crime prevention strategies and encourages them to report suspicious activities. Police Mitras designed to enhance community engagement, improve public safety and helps to prevent crime at street level.

CLG (Community Liason Group): These established at police state level and beat level consists of 10-15 members selected by SHO with approval of SDPO/CO. These groups serves as a platform for sharing information between law enforcement and the community. CLG engage in problem solving activities and actively engage with community by

organizing events, workshops and outreach programs. CLG may be involved in planning and implementing community policing projects. These ensure that law enforcement is responsive to the specific needs and concerns of the community it serves.

Existing framework of community policing

Various states in India have implemented community policing programs as a part of their crime prevention initiatives. These programs aim to enhance public safety, built trust, and foster cooperation between the law enforcement and the community. Some of the initiatives by several states are:

Kerala: Janamaithri Suraksha Program: One of the key objective of the janmaithri program is to prevent and reduce the incidence of crime and law order problems through coordinated efforts by the police and the people. This was implemented in 2008 in 100 Police Stations of Kerala. The goal of Kerala police community policing is to proactively reduce crime and cultivate public collaboration regarding security concerns while promoting active involvement of the community in security matters. The importance of this approach is underscored by its formal inclusion in the legal framework. The 2011 Kerala Police Act establishes and enforces community policing initiative as a compulsory requirement. In India this program is considered as the most well established initiative.

Maharashtra: Mohalla committee movement trust: 1994: Through this initiative committee members maintain foster harmonious relationship between Hindus and Muslims by organizing meetings and maintaining communication with the nearest police station. This program encourages citizens to actively participate in ensuring their safety and preventing crimes in their neighborhood.

Tamil Nadu: Friends of Police: in 1993: The Tamil Nadu friends of police (TNFOP) is a volunteer organization in Tamil Nadu with the objective of fostering positive connections between the police and the community. These volunteers actively engage with the law enforcement in a variety of tasks such as managing traffic, preventing crimes, and conducting outreach to the community. They offer support in upholding law and order, preventing crimes and conducting outreach to the community.

Himachal Pradesh: Viswas Yojna, Suvidha Yojna, Sanraksha Yojna: in 2000: These programs encompasses various activities to prevent crime and maintain public safety such as:

- Organizing visits of school children to police stations
- Producing educational documentary films
- Conducting village tours by the district superintendent of police
- Establishing police assistance centers
- Providing training in unarmed combat by police teams for female students.
- Enlisting police volunteers
- Visiting the residences of elderly citizens who live alone, to ensure their well being and security.

In state of Himachal Pradesh Community Policing as practices at four different levels as beat, Police station, Sub-division and district.

West Bengal (Kolkata): community policing initiatives in 1997: Through this initiative of West Bengal police citizens actively participated in a range of initiatives including:

- Drug awareness programs
- Sports activities
- “Nabadisha” a program aimed at helping street children
- “Prabaha” a program promoting blood donation
- Recognizing and awarding bravery and honesty by the detectives
- Establishing counseling centers
- Utilizing police assistance booths

These activities and programs reflect the active involvement of citizens in various community oriented efforts.

Punjab: SAANJH – The community policing initiative Launched in 2011 –

It aims at providing basic police services through a single window system. Also engaging with the community to deal with disputes. Engage with the members of public in spreading awareness about citizens rights and other issues impacting the society. An anticipated outcome of “Saanjh” is efficient service delivery, strengthening police community relationship and enhanced trust in the police.

Causes of community policing

Community Policing, a law enforcement strategy, emerged due to various factors:

Firstly, rising crime rates and community concerns about the effectiveness of traditional policing prompted a shift toward community-oriented approaches. Additionally, incidents of police misconduct and abuse of power destroy public trust, highlighting the need for a more transparent and accountable policing model. Community policing emphasizes crime prevention and a proactive approach, acknowledging that many community problems, such as drug addiction and homelessness, are linked to crime. Changes in laws and policies at different levels of government supported the adoption of community policing as a modern law enforcement approach. Research and evidence demonstrated the benefits of community policing, including reduced crime rates and improved community satisfaction. This model also encourages collaboration with other community agencies and utilizes technology and data for better community engagement and problem-solving. Police training programs increasingly incorporated community policing principles, and leadership within law enforcement agencies played a crucial role in its adoption. Grassroots efforts and community organizations advocating for community-oriented policing, along with media coverage of success stories, further contributed to its acceptance and implementation in various regions and law enforcement agencies.

Effects of community policing

Reduction in Violent Crimes: Communities with well implemented community policing have witnessed a decrease in violent crimes such as homicides, assaults and robberies. Community fosters strong and positive relationship between law enforcement officers and community with residents trust and collaborate with the police, they are more likely to report crimes, share information and cooperate with investigations. This trust building aspects is particularly vital in reducing violent crimes as it encourages community members to work with police to prevent and address such incidents.

Lower property crime rates: Property crimes like burglaries, theft, and vandalism have seen a decline in areas where community policing is strong. The proactive engagement of police officers and community members in crime prevention efforts contribute to decline in crime rates.

Increased reporting of crimes: Police officers in community policing models are often more visible and accessible within the community. Community members in areas with community policing are more likely to report crimes or suspicious activities. The increased reporting helps law enforcement respond quickly and effectively, preventing further criminal incidents.

Faster Response timing: In areas with community, the police force is typically more connected to the Communities needs and concerns. The community model often leads to community can quickly address issues, preventing escalation.

Preventive Measures: In many cases, community members actively participate in crime prevention efforts. They may organize neighborhood watch programs, support youth mentorship initiatives and engage in conflict resolution. This proactive approach helps identify and address underlying factors that may lead to criminal behavior.

Results

This article clearly presents the study’s findings, focusing primarily on information about crimes in India. This information is valuable for gaining a deeper understanding of the impact of community policing initiatives in prevention of crime in India. In order to understand the study’s result, it is important to review the data of the crimes reported and crime rates data provided by NCRB for the years 2016-2020 as:

In State of KERALA, after implementation of community policing, the crimes in year 2016 reported was 707870 and the crime rate was 1980.3, which reduced to 1818.4 in 2017 and then reduced to 1463.2 in 2018 and later in 2020 it was 1568.4 and cases reported in 2020 was 554724. As it is clear from the data mentioned above that the crime rate in state of Kerala reduced from 2016 to 2020. Thus, in Kerala it is considered as a well-established model of community policing.

In State of Maharashtra, In year 2016 the total no of cases registered was 430866 and the crime rate was 357.4 which increased to 383.4 in year 2017 and then in year 2018 it as 424.8 and later in 2020 it was 435.8 and the crimes reported was 539003.

In state of Tamil Nadu, the total no. of crimes reported in 2016 was 467369 and crime rate was 672.3 which reduced to 602.6 in 2017 and 661.5 in 2018, later in 2020 the crimes reported was 1377681 and crime rate was 1808.8.

In State of Punjab, in year 2016 the total no. of cases registered were 57739 and crime rate was 197.7, later in 2017 it increased to 239 and then in 2018 it became 236.8 and later in 2020 it was 274.6 and total no of cases registered was 82875.

Therefore, we can conclude that the implementation of community policing system has led to a favorable reduction in the crime rates in some states and increase in reporting of crimes in almost all states. The data analysis reveals that the implementation of community policing has minimized the unreported crimes. The data indicates that while the actual

occurrence of crimes is low, a higher percentage of them are being reported in states where community policing is in its early stages. This has led to an apparent increase in the crime rate in those states. Collectively, the Indian Police have made a promising beginning in the field of community policing within a short period. There are strong indications that the upcoming years will bring significant innovations in this regard.

Discussion

Community Policing initiatives have consistently shown positive outcomes in various studies. One of the primary findings is the significant improvement in police-community relations. When community policing is effectively implemented, there is a notable increase in trust and cooperation between the law enforcement and the community. Another key finding is the reduction in crime rates. As, in state of Kerala, after implementation of community policing programs, the crime rates in states reduced. In other states of India like Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, the crime rates increases but the reporting of crimes in these states also increases which shows that community policing initiatives shows positive outcomes as community policing creates an environment where residents are more comfortable reporting crimes and cooperating with the police. This is attributed to several factors, including increased reporting of crimes and a sense of shared responsibilities for public safety. Community policing brings several advantages to society, including the reduction of violent crimes and lower rates of property crimes. It also leads to increased reporting of crimes. It also leads to increased reporting of crimes, quicker response times by law enforcement, and the implementation of preventive measures. Community policing carries significant implications and applications in law enforcement. It fosters improved police community relations, crime prevention and an enhanced quality of life. This form of examination and research has contributed to our comprehension of how community policing has been introduced in various states within our country. However, its impact on crime rates and the relationship between the public and law enforcement remains a topic of ongoing discussion and uncertainty.

As Community Policing involves fostering strong relationship between law enforcement and the community to prevent crimes. This can be achieved through open communication, problem solving, and increased officer visibility via foot patrols, ensuring cultural sensitivity and implementing youth programs are essential in building trust and reducing child delinquency. Collaboration with local organizations and schools further strengthen the bond between police and the community, leading to a safer and harmonious society.

Conclusion

Community Policing has played a vital role in law enforcement. Community policing has significantly impacted law enforcement in the United State by expanding its role. It goes beyond just fighting crime, potentially altering people's perception of police. While the traditional approach can maintain public safety, community policing offers a more effective and efficient means of achieving this goal. This approach places a significant emphasis on the overall function of policing. People's perception of the

police solely as crime fighters might change when community policing is effectively implemented as intended. This analysis and investigation have aided our understanding of how community policing was implemented in different states of India. Nevertheless, its effect on crime levels and the interactions between the public and law enforcement is still a matter of ongoing debate and contention. The importance of cognitive policing needs to be given serious consideration. One of the primary reasons for failure to address the issue of terrorism in certain states and the ongoing tensions with Naxalites in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Assam, as well as the inability to effectively combat organized crime in some major cities, is primarily attributed to the lack of cooperation from the general public. Community policing has emerged as a powerful tool for crime control in today's society, many developing countries, such as India, and developed nations are now adopting the community policing system. Community policing is a highly efficient alternative approach for maintaining peace and harmony in society, enhancing safety, and creating a more desirable living environment.

References

1. <https://bprd.nic.in/writeReaddata/userfiles/201712301216387828300messagefromdirectorgenerall1.pdf>
2. <https://bprd.nic.in/Writereaddata/userfiles201907030914292113268Policecommunitypartnership-mm-03.pdf>
3. [https://keralapolice.gov.in/storage/pages/customs/table/able1.pdf /](https://keralapolice.gov.in/storage/pages/customs/table/able1.pdf/)
4. <https://SPC-Trainingpresentations?ppt>
5. [https://blog.ipleaders.in/community-policing-reality-myth-/](https://blog.ipleaders.in/community-policing-reality-myth/)
6. Ajay Kumar Yadav. Transformation in police functioning: Indian perspective of community policing",25 international journal of applied businesses and economic research, 2019, 6.