

PUBLIC PERCEPTION ABOUT POLICING IN PUNJAB AFTER THE INCORPORATION OF ICT

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Abstract

Policing is one of the basic governance services to keep society under law and order. Policing in Pakistan has underwent many reforms in order to provide the public with sense of security, safety and other related services. In modern times, where the crime is shaping itself technologically into complex nature, policing is also one of the biggest challenge for developing countries like ours. The challenge is not only in the dimension of fighting crime and criminals but also in satisfying the general public about its functions. Much has been done in knowing the governance issues in policing but it is also imperative to know as to how public grade the police in its behavior and performance. The current study has been focused on in depth knowledge of public perception about Punjab police with regards to its behavior and performance after it had gone through the technological innovations like ICT and special initiative police stations. The research found that the public perception about policing in Punjab is very bad amongst majority of the people due to a huge distrust in the institution. The department can improve the public perception by setting up a central and more proactive public relations cell to make two way communication with public. Likewise making departmental disciplinary actions against police officials public especially in cases of crimes related to THANA culture. At the same time ICT needs to be more user friendly particularly “language” as it is still a big barrier for general public to communicate technologically.

Keywords: ICT in Police, Public Perception, Punjab Police, THANA Culture

Introduction

Maintaining law and Order situation in the country is primarily a Police function. Modern policing has its roots as old as the civilizations are known. In the subcontinent policing system went through many changes. Hakeem, Haberfeld, and Verma (2012) explained the Aryan system was supplanted by Mughals legal system which was based on Islamic law. It shows that in the subcontinent there had been a policing system long before

the Mughals ruled these lands. On the occupation of subcontinent by the British empire, police system went through many reforms according to the situation of law and order. Das and Verma (1998) found the origin of colonial policing as a model adopted by British in Ireland which later was called as the Irish Police Model or the Colonial Police Model. The same was implemented in the subcontinent and remained enacted till the Indian Police Act of 1861. The Irish Policing Model was designed to control law and order situation in occupied territories and was based on coercion to further the economic interests of Queen of United Kingdom. Police was used in subcontinent to bring onto knees any voice raising against the taxes imposed on agriculture and other productions by the British Raj (Suddle, 2015).

After independence the Government of Pakistan continued policing functions under the same Indian Police Act of 1861, (Suddle, 2003). Although this Act was very comprehensive in itself but it was also intended to deal with the populace which was from an occupied territory. With no arrangements to cater for the populace independent to the British Raj, Indian Police Act of 1861 prevailed in Pakistan till Police Order of 2002, (Imam, 2011). Moreover, the said Act was linked with the overall bureaucratic structure of the country and any changes in one entity would hamper the other. Therefore, the Police Order of 2002 offered better police functioning in the overall scenario of the independent society, (Ullah, Hussain, Alam, & Akhunzada, 2016).

With the advent of technology, policing in contemporary world has started shifting towards technical means rather than merely on personnel. Information and communication systems have taken over humans in the form of properly established systems. Properly managed, information systems can serve as a powerful tool in the hands of progressive police executives (Sparrow, 1993). The influence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) cannot be restricted to individuals or private organization. It is also valuable for the enhancement of public organizations. Without doubt, policing is an information-intensive task, (Sparrow, 1993). There are no set definitions available that all theorist have agreed upon but the term e-governance is normally used when the public sector organizations use the technology in service delivery to the citizens, stakeholders and employees (Grant and Chau (2008); Jansen (2005)).

Objectives

The aim of this study is to analyse the policing functions based on the response of general public in District Lahore. Major objectives of this study are: -

- i) To know the standard of policing functions through an eye of a common citizen.
- ii) To bring into notice of competent authority the good and bad practices in policing functions.
- iii) To be a feedback for police itself on the voice of good governance.
- iv) Be a basis for the future study and research in this area.

Significance

There have been multiple studies in the past to know police performance. Media and social media also keep people informed about the day to day incidents regarding the policing however the researcher could not find the public view about policing in Punjab specifically to the behavior, THANA culture, crime control and a general perception. It is however perceived that the policing functions underwent the aid of technological advancements and to this end, digitization is an important hallmark. This study is focused on gauging the public perception of policing in Punjab as it has also incorporated ICT in carrying out routine

functioning. This study shall benefit the policy makers and command tiers in police to improve upon the grey areas identified through public perception.

Literature Review

Keeping in view the advent of ICT and its incorporation in public service delivery, a detailed review of literature has been conducted focusing on ICT and governance/ policing. Ensuing paras shall be covering the details related to ICT and policing duties.

In the present day of media advancement, the flow of information is very intense. Anything which happens in society is reported almost instantly. News throughout the day are full of criminal reporting. By seeing this the first question which comes to mind is that is there some mechanism working against this crime? Of course there exist a police force which is responsible for countering crime and criminals. Wessels (2016) concluded that police force is one of the institutions which play a pivotal role in the society. However, the way police functions against this crime is a mystery for a common man. At the end of second decade of 21st century and intensive information flow, the level of education and awareness in society, police have come under the spotlight of citizens, (Malsch & Smeenk, 2017). The expectations for a safe and crime free society have become more and it is mainly the police which has to ensure this. In ensuring good governance, better police services for the citizens is also mandatory, (Sousa, Miethe, & Sakiyama, 2018). Access to information through information based systems has been a step towards good governance. Major milestone in this shift was Punjab Information and Technology Board which has done a lot in developing digital governance tools, (Khurshid, Zakaria, Rashid, Kazmi, & Shafique, 2018).

Sebina and Mazebe II (2014) concluded that ICT is happening in all corners of the world and governance is becoming participatory and inclusive. Shrivastava and Bhattacharjee (2014) studied the relationship between ICT and the prevailing corruption keeping in mind the social, economic and political factors. The analysis of 98 countries shows that ICT and corruption has a negative relationship. ICT processes improves the government effectiveness. It also improves public service delivery and ICT can act as a catalyst for change and deal with corruption. Increase in ICT processes shall lead to low level of corruption. Giritli Nygren, Axelsson, and Melin (2014) concluded that instead of street level bureaucracy, the IT systems are communicating with citizens for governance and services. There are certain aspects of ICT applications; efficiency, transparency, satisfaction of employees and employee responsiveness which determine quality of the service delivery (Ranaweera, 2015). In Pakistan so far ICT is a challenge since (Madsen & Kræmmergaard, 2016) identified social influence as great factor in lowering or increasing adoption rate. Public feels more safe as innovations like affixing safe city mechanism incorporating ICT have created deterrence to criminals, (Cheema, Hameed, & Naseer, 2017).

The shift to ICT has increased the efficiency of police due to lowered stress of manual workload, (Humayon, Raza, Amir, Hussain, & Ansari, 2018). However, its impact on the user that is public are required to be researched. Citizens complaining for nepotism by the officials can be benefitted through the digital discretion by using computerized systems, (Peter Andre Busch & Henriksen, 2018). It is always perceived that ills of red tapism may be reduced by incorporating less human interventions through use of ICT, (Peter André Busch, 2018). There had been a widespread adoption in digitization like creation of websites and filing applications electronically on computers (Madsen & Hofmann, 2019). ICT in public sector helps improving the transparency in the governments, (Pina, Torres, & Royo, 2007). As bureaucracies are the solutions adopted by governments for public services, ICT is the

solution to transparency, (Cordella & Willcocks, 2010). ICT has made an endeavor in making governments open and transparent by keeping an eye on processes and procedures, (Carlo Bertot, Jaeger, & Grimes, 2012). With the ICT interoperability, integration and linkage of government organizations, more transparent governance can be made possible, (Giri & Shakya, 2018).

Problem Statement

Between 2009 to 2014, the number of heinous crimes reported in Punjab were 19,53,209 as per national data base, (Raza & Mehmood, 2014). In year 2014 total number of crimes against person was 48,717, (Punjab, 2015). At the same time (Jackson, Asif, Bradford, & Zakria Zakar, 2014) declares the Punjab police to be the most corrupt institution of Pakistan in the light of Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International. The reported crime graph remains almost consistent from 2016 to 2019 with minor variations. In this situation of crime the majority of police is deputed to protect political and influential personalities, (Mahmood, Rashid, & Abbas, 2019).

In this scenario it is imperative to know as to “What is the public perception about police in Punjab?” This therefore is the primary research question of this research. Public is the major stake holder of society which needs protection and safety. Knowing public perception is therefore an important area to be researched to know the effectiveness of policing. A similar study was conducted by the Transparency International in KPK in District Mardan. On the same inspiration this study is being conducted in District Lahore in Punjab Province.

Research Question

Due to the increased public awareness in the modern age of information technology & print/ electronic media, governance ills are in no veil any more. However, media cannot be considered to be the true voice of public. It is very much important to know as to what public perceives about the performance of governance entities. Keeping this in mind, the research question for this study is as under:-

What is the public perception about Punjab Police with regards to service delivery and organizational performance?

Methodology

Methodology used for this research is explained in ensuing paragraphs.

Research Strategy

This research has been carried out with “positivist” view since the observations and knowledge are based on sensory experience. In such a study researcher’s role is limited to the data that has been collected and its interpretation (Collins, 2010). Objectives are to be achieved based on realist perspective. According to (Gratton, 2010), there are many strengths of positivist approach out of which few are the precision, objectivity and structure in the research. Grounded on this paradigm the research findings will be quantifiable in nature. The ontology that follows is realist based on pure methods and tools, (Crowther & Lancaster, 2008).

Research Design

This study is being carried out at one point in time within a specific period. Henceforth, any effects in relation to the time period cannot be compared. The same spells the nature of this study as cross-sectional, (Mann, 2003). The reason to this is the aim of this study which is knowing the public perception about police in Punjab Province and it was done at a specific time period.

Population

The population for this research is all the citizens of Lahore District of Punjab Province being stakeholders in policing functions and the users of this public service. Data was collected from “The Lahore Session Courts” and “Lahore District Courts” since people visiting there are believed to have undergone police interaction in one way or the other in a very close manner. All the population is Lahore Based and no gender, age or social status differences were catered for. The unit of analysis for this study is an individual.

Sampling Strategy

Since the exact size of the population is unknown who could have the direct interaction with Police, the method of convenience sampling was used to develop the sample of the research. According to this method i.e “non-probability sampling”, population is selected on the basis of their knowledge, relationships and expertise regarding a research subject and the sample is based on collection of data from all respondents that are in easy access. Probability sampling was not possible due to lack of time and resources/ out-break of COVID-19 pandemic which is also considered as a limitation of the research.

Sample Size

For this research the sample size was a total of 367 respondents. All the respondents were the citizens visiting the Lahore Sessions Courts and Lahore District Courts in different cases for themselves as well as their relatives. Although quite a handsome number of females were included in the population, volunteers for the research were very less and out of 367 respondents only 9 formed part of the sample.

Research Instrument

The research instrument with a title CRC (Citizen Report Card) was developed by Transparency International for a similar study in KPK Province. The CRC is a questionnaire which was developed initially as 49 questions in Urdu language and was translated by language experts into English and Pashtu. The same questions were then discussed in a focus group discussion. The stakeholders being part of this focus group discussion arranged by Transparency International were general public representatives, police officials, media correspondents and lawyers, (Ahmed, 2019). After the detailed deliberation a set of 24 questions was adopted to be used a tool for the study.

Data Collection Method

Since this research is focused on to know the public perception about police, survey method was considered to be best suited based on a questionnaire. The questionnaire was taken from already existing research on the subject in another province by Transparency International Pakistan. Permission to use their tool was sought through telephone as well as

an e-mail. The questionnaire comprises of 24 questions each having multiple options less questions number 9, 14, 21 and 24 which are based on Likert Scale.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data with perfection and ease without errors, it was entered in SPSS program. Values were assigned to questions as per their answers in the questionnaire and was confirmed to be accurate by analyzing all the variables separately. After the data was considered to be error free, analysis of the data was commenced.

Data Analysis and Results

During the research the data was collected from 367 respondents out of which 97.5% were male and only 2.5% were female. The very low percentage of female population is obvious in our given cultural and traditional values since women are often kept away from police matters as far as it is possible. Nevertheless, even the low percentage means they are not totally away from this activity. Since this study aims at to know the public perception about Police, before we analyze the results as a whole, it is important to know the response statistics to given questions.

<i>Gender</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	358	97.5
	Female	9	2.5
	Total	367	100.0

Response Statistics and Analysis to Given Questions

Before formally analyzing the results, a short analysis basing on the responses of the sample population is carried out. The following question wise explanation of results shall further us to the analysis of cardinals of research i.e general perception, police behavior, police against crime and the THANA culture and ultimately would lead us to the answer of our research question.

Q1: Can you easily register a FIR/complaint?

<i>Easiness in Lodging FIR</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	141	38.4
	No	226	61.6
	Total	367	100.0

Registration of complaint or FIR is right of the citizens whenever crime occurs requiring police involvement. However, in Pakistan this has been continuously under discussion that police hesitate in accepting complaints. Data collected under the research also proves this view. Out of 367 respondents, only 38.4 % could easily register complain/ FIR and rest remained void of this easiness. However, a further research is needed to know why and what difficulties were faced by 61.6 % people in this regard. The literature also concludes that incorporation of technological innovations in filing complaints has made it

easy in Punjab Police, (Perito & Parvez, 2013). However, awareness amongst populace in this regard needs to be more broadly campaigned to accrue true benefits.

Q2: Do the police cooperate with you in filing FIR/complaint?

<i>Police Cooperation</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	117	31.9
	No	127	34.6
	Some Extent	123	33.5
	Total	367	100.0

The aim of this question was to know the behavior of police officials towards citizens. 31.9 % people responded they were cooperated with by police whereas 34.6 % responded with “No”. However, 33.5 % were cooperated with “To Some Extent”. If “Yes” and “To Some Extent” are considered as closely related, the overall behavior of police officials towards citizens is even nearing 65 % plus. Establishment of monitoring rooms at CPO office needs to be more effective in this regard as each police station is being surveilled in this room.

Q3: Do you agree that the police should provide you the relevant information to register an FIR/complaint?

<i>Provision of Information for FIR</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	165	45.0
	No	75	20.4
	Some Extent	127	34.6
	Total	367	100.0

In our society a common citizen avoids police intervention in any type of civic conflict, however, a routine offender is much used to it. A common citizen avoids visiting police stations as far as possible. This makes him ignorant of procedures and regulations. Therefore, a proper guidance is necessary. If facilitated by the police officials he can lodge his complaint in line with the court requirements spelled in law. During the survey, 24.2 % people experienced police to be cooperative in providing relevant information regarding their complaint. 28.3 % were not provided with any cooperation and 47.5 % were extended with cooperation to some extent.

Q4: Have you ever registered an online FIR/complaint?

<i>Online FIR/complaint</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	77	21.0
	No	290	79.0
	Total	367	100.0

Incorporation of ICT in policing provides citizens with an opportunity to register complain/ FIR online. However, a very few (only 21 %) people have used this facility and 79 % people have never registered any complain online. This calls for the awareness spread amongst populace to know such facility and also its use. Moreover, most of the online content is in English language which is understood by very less number of people. To facilitate people in using this facility, considering it in Urdu language may increase number of users. Nevertheless, factors for such low users need to researched in detail.

Q5: Mark the most obvious reason why you could not file a complaint to Police about a crime?

<i>Reasons for not reporting a crime</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Police will not do anything	127	34.6
	It is a minor crime	63	17.2
	Police will disturb me	75	20.4
	You don't want to be involved in Court matters	67	18.3
	You are afraid of Police	26	7.1
	You have reported to someone else	6	1.6
	It is not your job to report	3	.8
	Total	367	100.0

This question aimed to know the reason of not filing complaint. Although the respondents had given all the reasons, the most agreed reasons were that "Police will not do anything", "Police will disturb me" and "You don't want to be involved in court matters" with 34.6 %, 20.4 % and 18.3 % responses respectively.

Q6: In your opinion, how can the government improve the performance of police?

<i>How to improve performance of Police</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Need more training	151	41.1
	Need better equipment	39	10.6
	Recruitment be on merit	109	29.7
	More coordination with citizens	21	5.7
	Police should be more independent	24	6.5
	Promotion and transfer should be as per law	23	6.3
	Total	367	100.0

Although government keeps endeavoring in improving the police in one way or the other, Punjab government also claims doing the same with a slogan of de politicizing and meritocracy. To know what these efforts have brought in public opinion is also very important. 41.1 % respondents think that police need more training and 29.7 % think that recruitments be done on merit. According to the results, training is considered to be the most important step required to be taken by the government for better policing in Punjab.

Q7: Do you think crime rate is increasing in your area?

<i>Increase in crime rate</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	151	41.1
	No	146	39.8
	To some extent	70	19.1
	Total	367	100.0

There is an increase in crime reporting due to ease of reporting as per high officials of police. The citizen perception about crime rate also tells us that it is on the rise. 41.1 % respondents say that crime rate is increasing and 39.8 % say it is not. However, still 19.1 % respondents say that it is increasing to some extent.

Q8: Do you think that the police can eradicate these crimes?

<i>Police in Eradicating Crimes</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	157	42.8
	No	111	30.2
	Some Extent	99	27.0
	Total	367	100.0

As per the survey of this research, 42.8 % respondents feel that police can eradicate crime and 30.2 % think that it cannot. Yet 27 % respondents feel that police can eradicate crime to some extent.

Q9: How much do you trust the Police?

<i>Trust in Police</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Absolutely Not	69	18.8
	Not	111	30.2
	Neutral	56	15.3
	Much	32	8.7
	Very Much	99	27.0
	Total	367	100.0

Keeping the previous two questions in reference, 49 % of the respondents do not trust the police being having “Absolutely No Trust” and “No Trust” whereas 35.7 % having “Much” and “Very Much” trust in police.

Q10: Do you think that the police is fully utilizing its resources?

<i>Police Utilizing its Resources</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	136	37.1
	No	130	35.4
	Some Extent	101	27.5
	Total	367	100.0

As per the survey 37.1 % respondents feel that police is fully utilizing its resources and 27.8 % consider it to some extent. Whereas, 35.4 % respondents feel that police is not using its resources.

Q11: Do you think police deployed on VVIP protocol causes a negative impact to maintain law & order situation?

<i>Negative Impact of VVIPs Protocol</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	110	30.0
	No	257	70.0
	Total	367	100.0

Large cavalcades are no exception to news on media. A large number of police force is being committed on VVIP protocol duties as well as in the garb of security. This force is pulled out of the existing resources and hampers the over efficiency of force. Surprisingly 70 % of the respondents think that force deployed on VVIP protocol duties does not negatively impact law and order maintenance. However, 30 % respondents consider negative impact of such deployments on maintaining law and order situation. As per police officials, strength of available force for operations is effected with negatively whenever such duties are on the rise.

Q12: Do you think the police treat every citizen equally?

<i>Equal Treatment of the Police</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	128	34.9
	No	239	65.1
	Total	367	100.0

This question was aimed to know if there is any influence of social status, education or other factors on dealing of police officials with the public. 65 % respondents feel that police do not treat every citizen equally and 35 % consider it otherwise. Although monitoring room has addressed this issue to quite an extent however, public dealing outside the police station as per public perception is not equal. To know the exact factors influencing such discrimination need to be researched separately.

Q13: Do you think that crimes can be controlled if we encourage our police?

<i>Encouraging Police to control Crimes</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	280	76.3
	No	87	23.7
	Total	367	100.0

When we think positively about an organization, it impacts positively too. In his book “Social Intelligence” (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008) explains that positivity hugely impacts performance. Taking things positively can enhance individual performance as well. The research survey noticed that 76.3 % respondents consider police to be more effective if encouraged. Whereas only 23.7 % considered that it will not impact crime control by police if encouraged.

Q14: Do you feel secured in the presence of police?

<i>Citizens Feel Secured with Police</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	94	25.6
	Disagree	100	27.2
	Neutral	40	10.9
	Agree	32	8.7
	Strongly Agree	101	27.5
	Total	367	100.0

The foremost function of police is to provide security to its citizens. To protect life and property of citizens is prime policing function. Media is full of news where public is seen frightened from police. Social media is saturated with such videos. To seek the public perception about sense of security in police presence, this question was included in the survey. The response was based on Likert scale with value of “1” indicating strongly disagree to “5” indicating strongly agreed. 25.6 % respondents strongly disagreed of secure feeling while police presence, 27.2 % disagreed, 10.9 % stayed neutral, 8.7 % agreed and only 27.5 % agreed with the statement. From above results, it can be concluded that the public has a feel of being secure with the police presence to some extent.

Q15: Do you think that recruiting educated people in the police will improve the behavior of police with the citizen?

<i>Recruiting Educated Police Force</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	269	73.3
	No	21	5.7
	Some Extent	77	21.0
	Total	367	100.0

The positive impacts of education on performance and effectiveness of force has researched in many institutes. (Berger & Fisher, 2013) concluded in their research that an educated force is a key to prosperity for the state. In another study, (Van Rens, 2008) explains that better educated workforce will prove to be more productive in an organization. The survey results also show the same as 73.3 % respondents feel that more educated people will improve behavior of police force. While 5.7 % said “No”, yet 21 % think it will impact to some extent.

Q16: Do you think changing police’s uniform will change the perception of citizen about them?

<i>Changing Police Uniform</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	96	26.2
	No	271	73.8
	Total	367	100.0

Appearance matters a lot while influencing people. Different researches have shown that appearance impacts the people who perceive you. In a research, (Kwon, 1991) found the impact of clothing not only one ones’ mood but also on people one deals. In another study, (Slepian, Ferber, Gold, & Rutchick, 2015) observed the impact of clothing on not only the people who perceive about you but also on one’s decision making. However, the survey findings say that only 26.2 % of respondents think uniform will change their perception about police. It is evident that Punjab police already went through one such change in the past which did not impact on public perception. Still 73.8 % people think it will not have any impact on their perception about police.

Q17: Do you think that encouraging police will help improve their behavior with the citizen?

<i>Police Behavior with Citizens</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	306	83.4
	No	61	16.6
	Total	367	100.0

The findings of survey say that encouraging police will have positive impact in improving behavior. 83.4 % respondents were of the opinion that it will have impact on police performance. Phelps, Strype, Le Bellu, Lahlou, and Aandal (2018) also concluded that encouraging police will improve their behavior and performance.

Q.18 Do you think the top officials of Punjab police are accessible to a common citizen?

<i>Citizens access to Top Police Officials</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	137	37.3
	No	230	62.7
	Total	367	100.0

The common citizens deal with the preliminary tier police officials in day to day life however; there arise instances when a common citizen has to see senior official to get his problems addressed. The survey found 37.3 % respondents agreeing to access to top officials and 62.7 % found them un accessible.

Q. 19 Have you ever experienced friendly behavior of police?

<i>Friendly Behavior of the Police</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	63	17.2
	Never	38	10.4
	Often	104	28.3
	Not very often	162	44.1
	Total	367	100.0

The survey found that 17.2 % respondents experienced friendly behavior, 28.3 % experienced it often, 44 % experienced it not very often while 10.4 % never experienced friendly behavior of police at all.

Q. 20 Rate overall behavior of the police.

<i>Overall Behavior Rating</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	40	10.9
	2	72	19.6
	3	45	12.3
	4	28	7.6
	5	38	10.4
	6	19	5.2
	7	9	2.5
	8	14	3.8
	9	8	2.2
	10	94	25.6
	Total	367	100.0

Response to this question was on Likert scale, 1 being very bad and 10 being excellent. Most of the respondents i.e 60.8 % were from 1 to 5. While only 39.2 % was from

6 to 10. This displays that majority of the respondents were not satisfied with the behavior of police as a whole.

Q. 21 How much are you satisfied with existing *THANA* culture?

<i>Citizens Satisfaction with Thana Culture</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	41	11.2
	Disagree	111	30.2
	Neutral	77	21.0
	Agree	22	6.0
	Strongly Agree	116	31.6
	Total	367	100.0

Response to this question was also from 1 being strongly disagree, 2 being disagree, 3 being neutral, 4 as agree and 5 being strongly agree. Majority of respondents i.e 31.6 % strongly agree and 30.2 % disagree to the satisfaction with *THANA* culture.

Q. 22 Do people avoid reporting crimes to the police due to *THANA* culture?

<i>Citizens avoid to report crimes due to Thana culture</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	187	51.0
	No	180	49.0
	Total	367	100.0

The answer to this question is linked with the previous question. As 51 % respondents replied “Yes” and 49 % replied “No”, it is perceived that the that crime is not reported due to the *THANA* culture.

Q. 23 Will Model Police Stations change the *THANA* culture?

<i>Role of Model Police Station</i>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	177	48.2
	No	75	20.4
	Some Extent	115	31.3
	Total	367	100.0

Most of the respondents were of the opinion that it will change *THANA* culture as 48.2 % responded “Yes” and 31.3 % responded “To Some Extent” and only 20.4 % think it will not change the *THANA* culture. However, with the inauguration of special initiative police stations where front and back end are separate, it is perceived to be true that *THANA* culture can be changed with this arrangement. Moreover, monitoring room will also have impact of *THANA* culture.

Q. 24 Rate your district police.

Overall Police Services Rating			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	36	9.8
	2	49	13.4
	3	43	11.7
	4	48	13.1
	5	32	8.7
	6	21	5.7
	7	14	3.8
	8	20	5.4
	9	6	1.6
	10	98	26.7
	Total	367	100.0

At the end of the survey this rating was added to know the overall grade of the District police with public eye. Majority of the respondents graded between 1 being extremely bad to 5 being in the middle with 56.7 %. Only 43.3 % respondents graded District police from 6 to 10 (10 being excellent).

Findings and Analytical Discussion

The data was collected based on the questionnaire comprising twenty-four questions in four broad areas as, General perception, Police against crime, Behavior of police with public and THANA culture. As a whole this sums up in making a public perception about police in its behavior and performance. Findings to these four areas are explained in ensuing paragraphs.

Institutional Perspective

During the course of study, the institutional perspective was sought through the interviews of high ranking officials of Punjab police which included Inspector General of Police, An Additional Inspector General of Police and a District Police Officer. Major conclusion drawn out of these interviews are appended below which can be linked to understand the institutional perspective on the public perception sought through the survey.

- i) Overall strength of Punjab Police is very less as compared to the population.
- ii) Population explosion is a major challenge to our society and is one of the major causes of crime in the society.
- iii) Crime rate has increased due to free registration of crime.
- iv) Police officials are regularly being punished on the charges of corruption, bribery, torture and in custody death of detainees.
- v) Media plays a vital role in controlling as well as increasing the crime.
- vi) Punjab Police is facing critical budgetary constraints.
- vii) Political interference hampers merited policing.
- viii) Public pressurizes local police in their day to day social conflicts in one way or the other.
- ix) Poor administrative facilities have resulted in establishing police stations in private buildings.

- x) Policeman is a reflection of our society and should be seen as such.
- xi) Adequate training is being imparted to the recruits however field environment does not commensurate with training obtained due to lack of funds.
- xii) Training curriculum is continuously monitored and reviewed in the light of feedback and surveys.

General Perception

Majority of public cannot easily register FIR even after considering that Police does cooperate with them in doing so. Majority of public has never filed e-complaint or FIR and they think that police will not do anything on their complaint or they do not want to indulge in court matters. In public opinion, police performance can improve through more training and recruitment on merit. However, researcher is of the view that standardization of procedures at provincial level, facilitation desks and awareness campaigns will help improvement of general perception of police in public.

Police against Crime

Majority of the public opines that crime is increasing in their area but at the same time they think that police can overcome these crimes. They have comparatively less trust in police and also think that police is not utilizing its complete resources. In their opinion police does not treat every individual equally however encouraging police can increase its performance. As a matter of policy, police must share solved crime statistics through media and their website for public.

Police Behavior with Public

Majority of the public does not feel secure in presence of police. They think that induction of educated individuals will improve behavior of policemen and changing uniform will bring no effect to this. Public considers encouraging police shall bring in improvements in their behavior. High officials of police are not easily accessible to the public. They have not very often seen friendly behavior of police and rate it bad in overall spectrum. This aspect is not only related to police but with the public service sector as a whole. A national level policy drive is needed to overcome this notion and bring out colonial legacy out of the public service machinery.

THANA Culture

Majority of the public is not satisfied with the existing THANA culture and do not report crime due to the same. Due to THANA culture the overall rating of the District police is bad. To address this, a policy level decision is found missing. Most of THANA in urban areas are set up in private buildings which has reduced its worth against criminals. It also provides an opportunity to police officials to undertake mal practices since no boundaries of THANA building exist.

Future Research

Future research needs to be in knowing the exact factors in each domain discussed above hampering public perception of police in Punjab in order to bring about organizational changes and improvements as a whole. First step in this regard may be to know public perception in comparison of areas where special initiative police stations are commissioned with those where traditional THANAs are operating, however it is perceived to address two of the elements i.e police behavior with public and THANA culture. Nevertheless, to start with building public confidence in police, it may prove helpful in very less time.

Recommendations

A lot of hue and cry in the past few years and vibrant media has exposed odds in policing in Punjab. Model Town incident, Sahiwal killings and Salah Uddin's in custody death has remained under public discussion. Political interference has also been under discussion in one way or the other. But even then there are constant improvements being done in overall policing in Punjab. Special initiative police stations, SMS based complaint registration and web based services are some of the steps towards better and user friendly policing in Punjab. However keeping in view the public perception and the organizational view point, following are few recommendations for improvement in policing functions in Punjab:-

- i) Filing of complaint may be made more easy as still a number of people feel it difficult and relevant information/ guidance to this effect may also be made more friendly by incorporating technological innovations like uploading of hand written applications instead of automated options.
- ii) Language is a big barrier in using web based services and therefore incorporating multi languages will enhance its usage. Very less number of people are using e-complain facility for which more awareness needs to be imparted using media.
- iii) Status regarding disposal of reported crime may be intimated to individuals as number of people avoid it due to the reason that police will not anything or will disturb him.
- iv) Merit based recruitment with comprehensive practical oriented training may be ensured for getting better policemen amongst the public.
- v) Statistical data of solved crime may also be made public along with reported crime for analysis of crime rate by public.
- vi) Better liaison with public needs to be done to induce confidence and trust of police. Reporting crime may be encouraged with sense of protection and safety. In this way public trust will be regained.
- vii) Less dependence on the complainer with regards to investigations and raids and using indigenous resources will also improve public perception.
- viii) Police force deployed on extra policing functions may be reverted back to the basic operational duties.
- ix) Special emphasis may be given on training police for public dealing on equality without taking into account any social status.
- x) More quick and better/ proactive response of police may be ensured to instill sense of security amongst populace.
- xi) Stricter measures may be taken to get away the fear of traditional THANA culture and rigorous punishments be awarded to offenders in this regard.

Conclusion

The only constant is "Change", (Xie, Ding, Hu, and Kompella (2012)). It is not necessary to keep going with the old long system which does not suit the present day requirements. The country has got independence and so is needed for the system. Contemporary policing regimes are required to be visited and best practices should be incorporated to ease the public. Continuous public awareness campaigns educate people with their rights and also inform them with rules and procedures being necessary in day to day civic activity. Political interference in policing not only hampers meritocracy but also instills sense of deprivation. Such acts lower the overall national morale and effects the growth. The

research survey made an endeavor to know about public perception about policing in Punjab with regards to the service delivery and organizational performance. The future study is required to research the allied factors affecting police performance and hampering public perception.

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