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POLICE REFORMS

This article covers 'Daily Current Affairs' and the topic details of "Police Reforms''. This topic is relevant in the "Governance " section of the UPSC CSE exam.

UPSC Mains GS2 Syllabus : Role of Civil Services in a democracy

Why in the News?

The Prime Minister of India recently attended the 58th All-India Conference of Director Generals and Inspector Generals of Police in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The conference covered a wide range of policing and internal security topics, including cybercrime, technology in policing, counterterrorism challenges, left-wing extremism, and prison reform.

About 58th Conference of Directors General of Police / Inspectors General of Police

- The three-day conference, held in a hybrid style in Jaipur, Rajasthan, held from January 5 to 7, 2023. The Conference was attended physically by approximately 100 invitees, including DGPs of states/UTs and Heads of Central Armed Police Forces and Central Police Organisations. The remaining invitees joined electronically from across the country.
- The conference is the result of intensive discussions among police and intelligence professionals at the district, state, and national levels on specific issues.The Intelligence Bureau organised the event at the Rajasthan International Centre in Jhalana.

Key Highlights of PM Modi's Speech

- **New Crimimnal laws**:The Prime Minister emphasised the importance of a justice system that prioritises citizen dignity, rights, and justice, shifting away from punitive measures and towards data-driven initiatives. He emphasised the significance of informing women and girls about their rights under the new rules, and urged the police to safeguard their safety and freedom to work fearlessly at any time and from any location.

- **Keep abreast of the modern world**: He aimed to transform the Indian police force into a contemporary, world-class force that aligns with the country's expanding worldwide profile and contributes to the goal of a developed India by 2047.

- **Image of Police**: The speaker emphasised the importance of improving residents' perceptions of the police and suggested using social media to spread good messages. Additionally, he recommended using social media for catastrophe notifications and relief efforts.

- **Bond between citizens and the police force**: He pushed for organising sporting events to build the relationship between civilians and the police force. He additionally urged government officials to maintain their positions in border villages to build stronger ties with the local population.

Issues Regarding Police Forces

- **Custodial Deaths**: Custodial deaths occur when a person dies while being detained by law enforcement. As per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the number of such custody deaths decreased over three years, from 146 in 2017-18 to 100 in 2020-21, but then increased sharply to 175 in 2021-22.

- **Using Inappropriate Force**: Excessive force by police has been documented, resulting in injuries and fatalities. Lack of sufficient training and oversight contributes to the use of force in some circumstances. A policeman is a public servant and is therefore expected to treat its inhabitants lawfully.

- **Colonial Legacy**: Following the uprising in 1857, the British passed the Police Act of 1861 to modernise the nation's police system and put an end to any more uprisings. This implied that the police had to always submit to those in authority.

- **Operational Freedom vs. Accountability to the Political Executives**: The 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) has observed that the political executive has previously abused its power to improperly influence police personnel and force them to serve personal or political agendas.

- **Corruption**: The public's faith is weakened by police corruption, which includes bribery and other types of misbehaviour. There have been instances where senior police officers have been exposed for corrupt activities, and there have also been instances where lower-level police officers have been exposed for receiving bribes.

- **Overburdened Force:** There are 137 police officers, compared to the approved 181 officers per lakh population. When compared to the United Nations' recommended requirement of 222 police per lakh population, this is far too low. Furthermore, an already-existing issue of overworked police officers is made worse by a large percentage of open positions in the police departments.

Various recommendations for Police Reforms

- **Supreme court's directives in Prakash singh case:**

Directives of Supreme Court in Prakash Singh Case

1. Constitute a State Security Commission
2. Fixed two-year tenure for DGP
3. Two-year term for SPs & SHOs
4. Separate Investigation and L&O functions
5. Set up Police Establishment Board
6. Set up Police Complaints Authorities at State & Dist levels
7. Set up National Security Commission at Centre level

- **Recommendations of the National Police Commission**: The National Police Commission (1977–1981) in India provided reform proposals for the police, highlighting the importance of accountability and functional autonomy.
- **Ribeiro Committee**:The Ribeiro Committee was established in 1998 at the Supreme Court's request to examine police reform initiatives and offer suggestions on how to put the Commission's findings into practice. With some changes, the Rebeiro Committee adopted the National Police Commission (1978–82) main recommendations.
- **Malimath Committee**: The establishment of a central law enforcement agency was one of the 158 proposals given by the V.S. Malimath-led Malimath Committee on Reforms in the Criminal Justice System, which was established in 2000.
- **Model Police Act**: The Model Police Act, 2006 mandates that every state form an authority composed of civil society members, retired police officers, retired High Court judges, and public officials from another state. It emphasised the police agency's functional autonomy, promoted professionalism, and emphasised the need of accountability for both behaviour and performance.
- **SMART policing:** The Prime Minister introduced the idea of SMART Policing at the 2014 DGP/IGP Conference in Guwahati. In general, smart policing refers to interventions that apply data-driven and evidence-based policing techniques, methods, and tactics to prevent and control. **SMART policing means** –
  1. Strict and sensitive,
  2. Modern and mobile,

3. Alert and accountable,
4. Reliable and responsive,
5. Techno-savvy and trained

Conclusion:
The constraints of the political and social structure in India are manifested in the problems with the police. Therefore, it is necessary to implement police reforms and provide incentives for police agencies to implement best practices. In addition, it is imperative that an atmosphere be created as soon as possible that allows the police to serve the public as a tool.

Mains practice question
Q1) Analyze the role of political interference in the functioning of the police in India. Discuss the key recommendations made by the Prakash Singh Committee and their impact on the police structure and functioning.

Q2) Assess the significance of introducing technology, such as body-worn cameras, in police reforms. How can technological advancements enhance accountability and transparency in law enforcement, and what potential concerns should be addressed in implementing such measures?

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