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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY AND PUBLIC TRUST THROUGH TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

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#### Abstract

This study demonstrates the importance of police accountability, showing how it mediates the relationship between public trust, community cooperation, and police accountability. Police accountability is essential to modern policing, requiring law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to adhere to ethical norms and procedures. Public trust, necessary for effective policing, is built through transparency and accountability. The paper indicates that greater inclusion of the community in policing is crucial to improving the dialogue between the public and law enforcement. Building trust through accountability and transparency is vital in India, where diverse groups coexist, and a deep mistrust of authorities persists. The paper overviews current systems and draws insights from successful practices. The paper suggests measures to increase police transparency, ensure accountability of officers, and develop lasting trust in law enforcement in India.

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#### Introduction:-

Law enforcement in contemporary democracies depends on ensuring the police adhere to the law. This is crucial for upholding the law and carrying out tasks correctly. Additionally, it contributes to developing public trust, which is critical for efficient law enforcement. Public trust in police departments is increased when they are transparent and truthful, which fosters more respect and collaboration<sup>i</sup>. However, corruption, excessive force, and sluggish justice have eroded this faith in many countries, such as India. A wider divide between the police and the people they serve results from these problems, which give people the impression that things are unfair and erode their trust in the force.

In India, where several ethnic groups coexist with varying social, cultural, and historical backgrounds, fostering trust in the police is essential to preserving societal stability. It extends beyond the functioning of the government<sup>ii</sup>. Inherited Wariness of authority, which has its roots in colonial past and current challenges, frequently makes tensions worse. Collaboration among the community is important to solving these problems. By including the public in police operations through programs like community-oriented policing, being open and honest about police activities, and hosting regular public forums, law enforcement may promote collaboration, respect, and shared accountability.

By providing a means of communication between the public and law enforcement, allowing individual to express their opinions and collaborate to resolve problems, community cooperation promotes accountability<sup>iii</sup>. Police may demonstrate their commitment to transparency and accountability by addressing community complaints and

maintaining open channels of contact. Approaches for establishing trust that may be modified to suit India's unique context are based on this relationship.

### **Enhancing Police Accountability, Public Trust, and Community Collaboration**

Police accountability refers to the responsibility of law enforcement agencies to operate within the boundaries of the law, adhere to ethical guidelines, and meet community expectations<sup>iv</sup>. It takes a variety of techniques to monitor police behaviour, investigate misconduct, and hold officers accountable for any abuse of authority. Ensuring police accountability may significantly aid in the reduction of issues such as excessive force, corruption, and human rights abuses in India. Better and more equitable law enforcement can result from fostering an accountability culture and restoring public confidence in the police. Accountability ensures that the police serve the community equitably by encouraging them to operate responsibly and transparently. This procedure is crucial for addressing issues raised by misbehaviour or abuse situations, and it guarantees that law enforcement maintains the standards of justice and equity that the public has grown to expect.

The concept of 'public trust' is that police officers protect the rights of individuals, work for the betterment of the community, and treat everyone equally while enforcing the law. This is called public trust in policing<sup>v</sup>. Encouraging individuals to assist the police by reporting crimes, participating in investigations, and helping and actively engaging in community policing programmes is essential to build public trust in the police. In India, where some individuals/groups have long distrusted the police for a variety of reasons, it has become necessary to rebuild this trust through honest and fair policing. Being sincere, open and accountable enables the public to believe that the police are treating everyone fairly and encourages more significant support and cooperation from the community.

In order to maintain neighbourhood safety and address local issues, community collaboration entails local residents actively engaging in police operations. This collaboration can take many forms, such as neighbourhood watch programs, frequent police-citizen meetings, or cooperative efforts to address particular local problems. This type of cooperation is crucial in India because it lowers distrust, improves police understanding of regional issues and demands, and results in more efficient and culturally aware policing tactics. The police can identify the true causes of crime and collaborate with locals to develop remedies that all parties can agree upon by establishing a close relationship with the community. Working together in the community benefits everyone to sense responsibility for safety, which inspires individuals to support the police actively.

Transparency in policing indicates being open with the public about the rules, actions and preferences of the police so that the public is aware of every action. This can be done in different ways, such as sharing regular reports on police work, holding meetings with journalists to explain what the police do and reporting internal investigations when needed. In India, where individuals cannot always trust the police, constructing things transparently can aid in reducing suspicion and make the police appear responsible and accountable to the public<sup>vi</sup>. When individuals understand the various laws the police execute and the efforts they make to protect citizens, it improves the relationship between the police and the public. Talking openly about their actions makes the police more accountable and gives the public confidence that the police are fair, honest, and conscientious.

"Community-oriented policing" is an approach in which police officers work with local communities to identify and solve problems. In this approach, the duty of the police is not only to solve problems but also to prevent them before they occur. While 'Reactive Policing' focuses primarily on responding to incidents, community-oriented policing involves police officers attempting to solve problems on the principle of pre-emption through dialogue and collaboration with local citizens<sup>vii</sup>. This approach is particularly effective and practical in India, where tensions often arise between police and disadvantaged communities. When police work with local communities to tackle the root causes of crime, it strengthens police-public relationships and increases citizen cooperation. Through community meetings, collaborative problem-solving, and increased police presence in neighbourhoods, this approach aims to involve community residents in the peace-building process and make their areas safer.

Law enforcement ethics are the moral guidelines and standards that help police officers practice proper conduct. Fundamental ethical values include integrity, honesty, fairness, and respect for human rights. Adherence to these principles is crucial to earning public confidence in the police, especially in India, where there are many concerns about corruption and abuse of power. The purpose of promoting ethical conduct in law enforcement agencies is to ensure that officers act in the best interest of society and to enhance the reputation and credibility of the police<sup>viii</sup>. By

strictly clinging to ethical standards, police personnel can reduce the lacuna between law enforcement and society, establishing a more cooperative and trusting relationship.

Strategies adopted by police departments play an essential role in building trusting relationships between the police and the community. These include bringing more transparency in police operations, organising meetings and programs for regular interaction with the community, ensuring fair treatment of all citizens, and prompt redressal of public grievances. In India, where trust in the police may be low due to past events and cultural factors, using these strategies is essential to build a cooperative and vital link between the police and the public.<sup>ix</sup> By emphasising fairness, responsibility, and transparent communication, these methods can build a strong base of trust, which helps improve law enforcement and community safety.

### **Erosion of Public Accountability & Trust: Causes & Consequences**

The British police system is based on the principle of 'Consent Policing'. This concept originated from nine 'general instructions' given to the first police officers of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in 1829, called the 'Peelian Principles'. They are named after Sir Robert Peel, who was the Home Secretary of Britain when the MPS was established. The core of these principles is that the power and authority of the police arise from public consent, not just government orders. If society does not support the police, the police can lose their authority. The UK Home Office explains that consent-based policing means that the authority of the police comes from the general consent of the public. It is not necessary for every person to agree with the police individually, but general consent is the essential power of police operations. It is also stated that no individual can decide not to support the police or disobey the law. This principle may be particularly relevant in the Indian context. The aim of consensus-based policing is to establish trust and cooperation between the police and the public. In India, it is necessary that the police work with mutual trust and respect from the public. This will not only facilitate the police in discharging their duties but will also make it possible to build a strong democratic society<sup>x</sup>.

The principle of 'policing by consent' is extremely important in law enforcement in the United Kingdom. It implies that the police derive their authority from public acceptance, not by pressuring people. According to the UK Home Office, this principle means that the power of law enforcement is based on community consent, not the use of force by the state. However, citizens cannot be given the option to remain outside the control of the police, which indicates that this is an agreement that everyone must accept<sup>xi</sup>.

The implementation of this concept in India is inconsistent, and a number of systemic problems further widen the gap between police and public. Incidents of police corruption, excessive use of force, and general incompetence often reinforce the perception that law enforcement is more concerned with state interests than public welfare. This divide has weakened public trust, leading to a decline in cooperation between communities and law enforcement agencies. The lack of a clear and community-based policing approach further compounds this problem, leaving the police often seen as distant enforcers rather than in-touch protectors. The consequences of this erosion of trust are severe – it weakens the rule of law, hinders effective crime prevention, and creates an environment where fear and suspicion prevail over trust and cooperation. Faced with challenges, the Indian police force has made some positive efforts towards bridging this trust gap. The introduction of community policing initiatives in some states, such as Kerala's "Janamaithri Suraksha" project, has shown that a collaborative approach can improve relations between the police and the public. Other measures, such as modernising police infrastructure, following transparent recruitment processes, and increasing use of technology in crime reporting, are steps in the right direction. These efforts reflect a growing recognition that public trust is essential to maintaining law and order<sup>xii</sup>.

### **Factors Affecting Public Public Accountability & Trust in The Police**

1. Data acquired from Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2055 on August 1, 2023 shows that there has been an alarming increase in deaths of people in police custody in India. Although these cases have come down from 175 in 2021-2022 to 164 in 2022-2023, the number is still higher than in 2018-2019 (136), 2019-2020 (112) and 2020-2021 (100). This sensation is a matter of great concern, as it reflects issues affecting police accountability and public confidence. Although there has been a slight decrease compared to previous years, the high number still indicates that there are some serious problems in the police force, which can harm its reputation and make it difficult to gain public confidence in law enforcement<sup>xiii</sup>.
2. The reputation of the Delhi Police has rusted considerably due to rising cases of corruption. Officers are reported to take bribes in small amounts, often starting with a down payment<sup>xiv</sup>. Recent raids by the CBI have revealed that some police officers, including head constables and sub-inspectors, were taking money from

- individuals and demanding higher monthly instalments. In some cases, these officers carefully screened the individuals they questioned to ensure they did not record anything, making it clear that they did not trust them. In light of this corruption, the CBI has conducted several raids in the past two years and arrested more than two dozen officers. These actions have tainted the image of the police department even more<sup>xv</sup>.
3. A major operation being conducted along the UP-Bihar border has exposed illegal extortion schemes of police officers, raising concerns about public trust in law enforcement. Led by ADG Varanasi and DIG Azamgarh, the operation saw the arrest of 18 people, including two police officers, for demanding money from vehicles. The raids, conducted on the basis of several complaints, exposed widespread corruption, with Rs 5 lakh being extorted daily. Several police officers, including the Narhi police station in-charge, were suspended, and cash, bikes and records were seized. The incident underlines the lack of accountability and the severity of disintegration within the police force<sup>xvi</sup>.
  4. A sub-inspector of Bihar Police has been arrested in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh, for carrying 121.60 litres of illicit liquor. The incident underscores the problem of police corruption and poor accountability. It also indicates a growing lack of trust in law enforcement, especially in areas like Bihar, where prohibition has led to a surge in illicit activity<sup>xvii</sup>.
  5. Saheli vs Commissioner of Police, Delhi — In this case, the police brutally beat up a nine-year-old child, resulting in his death. This tragic incident shows that the police are misusing their powers even though their sole duty is to protect the individuals. Though the Delhi government was held accountable in this case and had to pay a compensation of Rs 75,000, the reason behind the compensation amount is unclear. This incident not only took the life of an innocent child but also severely damaged the public's trust in the police, as it exposed the lack of accountability and unchecked police violence<sup>xviii</sup>.
  6. The case of Joginder Kaur v State of Punjab showed that public confidence in the police has been steadily declining since the improper activities of some police officers were exposed. The court ruled that the state is liable for the mistakes of its employees, making it clear that the police can act as they please without facing any severe consequences. Although the state had to compensate for the damage caused, the absence of severe punishment for the officers tarnished the image of the police, raising doubts among the public about whether they can enforce the law with fairness and integrity<sup>xix</sup>.
  7. In the State of Rajasthan v. Vidyawati, the Court held the state liable for harmful actions committed by its employees, producing an important decision. The case drew attention to the ongoing issue of neglect of citizens' rights by law enforcement. It established the vital principle that the state must be accountable, but it also pointed to some significant problems within the police force, where abuses of power often go unpunished. The failure to hold police responsible for their crimes in such cases deepened public distrust of the police, which continues to influence people's attitudes toward law enforcement today<sup>xx</sup>.
  8. The 2021 IPF Smart Policing Index demonstrates concerning trends in individuals's attitudes towards the police in India. States such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh scored the lowest, in particular, indicating that residents of these regions do not trust their police much and do not believe that the police are accountable for their responsibilities. On the other hand, states such as Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Assam, and Sikkim scored high, indicating that people's trust in the police varies significantly in different parts of the country. The results show that northern states are facing more difficulties regarding trust and accountability, indicating that they need major changes to improve these aspects<sup>xxi</sup>.
  9. In October 2023, an extremely shocking video emerged in which a 15-year-old Dalit boy and his grandmother, Kusum Vanskar, were being brutally beaten up by the police at a railway station in Madhya Pradesh. The video shows Station House Officer. (SHO) Aruna Wagane beating Kusum with a stick while her grandson watches helplessly and is unable to assist. Kusum said she was treated brutally all night as the officers were pressuring her to get information about her son, who is a wanted criminal. When she demanded water, she was treated even worse. The incident flared widespread outrage, resulting in the suspension of six Government Railway Police officers (GRP). Political leaders, especially those from the Congress party, criticised the action, terming it systemic oppression against Dalits, and demanded the resignation of the Chief Minister. Although the Jabalpur Railway Superintendent of Police promised to hold those responsible accountable, scrutiny of past cases involving the grandmother and her grandson raises questions about police behaviour and public trust, indicating a need for change<sup>xxii</sup>.
  10. An incident in Odisha, where a police officer's fiancée has been accused of custodial abuse, highlights the widespread distrust in law enforcement and the system's failure to hold officers accountable. Between 2017 and 2021, more than 2,000 individuals died in police custody, and less than 1% of the officers were punished. The case not only reflects isolated incidents but also points to deeply rooted problems in the system. Although the Odisha government gave immediate suspensions to the officers involved, the action appears to be an

attempt to assuage public outrage rather than ensure real accountability. According to reports, most of these deceased belong to marginalised groups, and a culture of immunity prevents officers from facing consequences. More than 70% of women do not report crimes to the police because they fear re-traumatisation. The situation raises serious questions about the functioning of police in India and shows that significant changes are needed. There needs to be independent investigations, better training on gender issues, and much more. If these changes don't happen, the problems of abuse and lack of trust will remain, making it harder for victims to get justice, and everything will remain the same<sup>xxiii</sup>.

11. In 2021, Chief Justice of India N. Ramana noted that police stations have become a significant threat to people's rights. Recent incidents of police violence in Odisha have also reinforced this view. This persistent problem shows that many members of the public view the police as pernicious, meaning that they do not trust them and believe that they cannot be held accountable for their actions<sup>xxiv</sup>.
12. The Gujarat High Court has expressed disappointment with the Gujarat government for not complying with the Supreme Court's directions to reform the police force, particularly in the case of alleged police violence against an older man. The court clarified that these required changes to prevent misuse of power have been ignored, resulting in the public losing confidence in the police. The situation also highlights a worrying lack of accountability within the police force, as the State Police Complaints Authority (GSPCA) is having difficulty resolving complaints regarding police conduct<sup>xxv</sup>.
13. A judgment by the Jharkhand High Court mandated police to pay Rs 5 lakh as damages to a victim of police violence, with the amount to be recovered from the officers responsible. The judgment points to a worrying trend of police misconduct, which not only damages public confidence but also reflects the lack of accountability within the police force. Justice Anand Sen's judgment makes it clear that the complainant was wrongly arrested and physically harmed, raising serious questions about the integrity of law enforcement officials. The case shows that people are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the functioning of the police and highlights the need for urgent reforms and better accountability in the system<sup>xxvi</sup>.

### **Initiatives Toward Good Policing**

1. Collaboration between police and educators creates opportunities to actively engage and support youth, increasing the likelihood of reducing crime and harmful activities. By combining focused educational programs in schools with crime prevention strategies, students gain the knowledge and abilities to make smart and positive decisions. A prime example of this collective effort is the collaboration between UNODC, Raipur Police, the RiseUp4Peace education program, and the Nijaat Anti-Nasha (NAN) campaign in Chhattisgarh. This partnership highlights effective policing methods, aims to improve police accountability and strengthen community trust.<sup>xxvii</sup>
2. Punjab Police has launched the Indian Police Foundation Project for internal police reforms on the directions of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann. Punjab has become the first state to launch this project. The project, launched by Special DGP Gurpreet Kaur Dev, aims to improve police services to the community at the local level. It includes improving the methods of redressal of complaints and registration of cases, quick response of police and better behavior. Its primary goal is to reduce harassment and promote community participation. The project will be launched first in the SAS Nagar and Rupnagar districts and then expanded across the state. It will also be launched simultaneously in Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Chhattisgarh. The main objective is to make work more accessible and quick, improve methods of investigation, provide better services to citizens, create a favourable work environment for the police, strengthen community policing, improve police behaviour and develop training programs. Clear guidelines will be established focusing on the protection of citizens' rights and transparency. The Punjab Police is a pioneer in these reforms, which build trust with the public while enhancing accountability, thus presenting a role model for other states<sup>xxviii</sup>.

### **Concept & Importance of Community Collaboration in Policing**

Community engagement in policing is a coordinated effort between police and local residents to solve security problems, make the area safer, and build trust. This approach is based on proper cooperation between police and citizens, promoting good communication, shared responsibilities, and mutual respect. It involves various groups such as local organizations, businesses, schools, and residents working together to identify community problems and develop solutions.<sup>xxix</sup> The importance of collaboration with the community in policing is vital. First, it helps build trust between the police and the citizens they serve. When police officers regularly communicate with residents, they demonstrate that they care about everyone's safety and well-being. This trust is essential to good policing, as it encourages people to cooperate with the police, report crimes, and provide helpful information. Through working closely with the community, the police can more effectively understand local problems. When officers communicate

with community members, they learn about the specific challenges and concerns people face. This deeper understanding allows the police to create effective plans to address these problems, leading to safer and more prosperous neighbourhoods<sup>xxx</sup>.

Involving the community in policing helps residents feel a sense of responsibility for the safety of their neighbourhoods. When citizens feel they have a say in decisions, they are more likely to keep their area safe and cooperate with the police. This cooperation can also help reduce crime rates because when the community works together, it is more attentive and quick to solve problems. Also, communicating with different groups allows police to connect with individuals who are not always included, thus allowing everyone's concerns to be heard and addressed. This inclusion not only builds trust but also leads to fairer policing for all<sup>xxxi</sup>.

Community collaboration is vital to modern policing. It encourages trust, develops a deeper understanding of local problems, infuses a sense of responsibility among residents, and encourages inclusiveness. When law enforcement and community members work together, they can establish safer neighbourhoods and build a strong foundation for effective policing.

### **Challenges to Achieving Accountability & Trust in Policing**

Building accountability and trust in policing is a complex process, often made more challenging by a number of barriers and difficulties. These barriers can undermine transparency and collective efforts. It is vital for law enforcement agencies to recognize these difficulties so that they can build better relationships with their communities. Achieving accountability and trust in policing is a difficult goal, which can be hampered by a number of barriers that undermine efforts at transparency and collaboration. One major challenge is the internal resistance that exists within police departments. Many law enforcement agencies have deeply ingrained cultures that resist changes designed to promote transparency and community engagement. Officers and leaders may fear that new measures will diminish their power or expose them to public criticism. A lack of training or resources to effectively implement new transparency programs can exacerbate this resistance. To solve this problem, we need good leadership and a determination to establish a culture that understands the importance of honesty and accountability<sup>xxxii</sup>.

Still, there are many issues related to caste and economic status that persist in society. People from different social groups and low-income groups often face unfair treatment by the police. This unfair treatment breeds deep distrust, making it difficult to encourage cooperation. To rebuild community trust, the police must admit their past mistakes and try to rebuild relationships with those who feel excluded. It will take a lot of time and effort to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and included<sup>xxxiii</sup>.

Public scepticism of the police makes it difficult to hold them accountable. Known misconduct by police, such as excessive use of force or unfair targeting of people based on race, erodes public trust in the police. When people repeatedly observe misconduct that is not punished, they feel that the police are not accountable for their actions. To rebuild trust, police must maintain transparency in their internal reviews and provide clear information about any action taken against officers. Without this transparency, the public will remain suspicious of and distanced from the police<sup>xxxiv</sup>.

The media plays an essential role in how the public perceives the police, depending on how much trust and respect they give them. When the media highlights the wrongdoings of the police, it can damage public trust in the police. If the media exaggerates or shows only one side, it can create fear in the public and reduce their trust. At the same time, the media can also showcase the positive work the police do with the community, such as team effort and responsibility. Such positive stories can change the public's perception of the police and help build better relationships. The most challenging task is to adequately mention all types of actions taken by the police—good and evil<sup>xxxv</sup>. In today's social media age, news travels quickly, sometimes without complete information. When footage of police interactions goes viral, it can cause public outrage and erode trust, especially when officers appear to act inappropriately. This encourages police departments to communicate more transparently with the public and the media to provide detailed accounts of these incidents and explain what really happened<sup>xxxvi</sup>.

Establishing accountability and trust in police departments is difficult because of resistance at various levels within the department, racial and income discrimination, and public scepticism due to past mistakes. The media's portrayal of the police has a significant impact on public sentiment. To address these problems, police departments must

openly discuss these issues and focus on clear communication. This will help rebuild trust with the public and strengthen cooperation.

### **Importance Of Transparency In Policing**

Transparency in policing means that law enforcement agencies communicate openly and clearly to the public about their activities, decision-making processes, and behavior. This includes the public distribution of data on police actions, policies, and outcomes. Key elements of transparency include crime statistics, use-of-force incidents, internal investigations, and providing the public with access to raw data. It is also essential to involve community members in the dialogue on policing strategies and form independent committees to review police actions<sup>xxxvii</sup>.

Transparency in policing is extremely important. One of its main benefits is that it strengthens public trust. When police departments demonstrate transparency about their decisions and actions, people are more likely to have a positive view of the police. This trust is essential to effective policing, as people in the community are more willing to cooperate with and support the police when they understand what the decision-making process is. Also, openness promotes accountability, as it ensures that the police department is accountable for its actions. Information available to the public allows community members to push for change and demand accountability, leading to a more responsive and responsible police system<sup>xxxviii</sup>.

Transparency also helps to deter unethical behavior, as officers are less likely to behave inappropriately due to public oversight of their actions. This promotes a culture of integrity in police departments. Additionally, transparency provides both police and the community with important information that helps to more effectively allocate resources to solve community problems and meet needs. It also helps law enforcement understand local issues more deeply and identify bias or inequities in policing, improving the relationship between police and the community, while promoting a culture of open dialogue<sup>xxxix</sup>.

Over the past few years, there have been vigorous efforts to make Indian law enforcement more transparent. These efforts have largely resulted from public demand for accountability and appropriate conduct from the police. In this context, recent measures have been adopted such as the use of cameras for police officers, sharing crime data with the public, and working on data projects. These efforts aim to strengthen the relationship between the police and the community and promote good policing. For example, cameras on officers help record their interactions with the public, thereby increasing accountability and reducing unethical behavior. Videos obtained by these cameras are extremely valuable in investigations and court cases. However, there are also some problems in their use, such as privacy concerns, data management, and the need for clear rules to ensure that the technology is operated effectively<sup>xl</sup>.

Another important measure of sharing information is through reporting on crime data. Many police departments in India now make crime statistics available on their websites, allowing the public to view crime rates, types of crimes, and their changes over time. The Ministry of Home Affairs also compiles annual reports through the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which provide detailed information on crimes committed in different states. Public sharing of these reports makes the police more accountable and motivates people to work together in the field of security<sup>xli</sup>.

Many programs have been launched to make information more clear and open. A prominent example is the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), which uses computer technology to manage police records and simplify their work. It helps in sharing information between different police departments and monitoring crime incidents. Open data programs allow the public and experts to study crime-related information, leading to better communication about public safety and policing processes. Additionally, police departments are increasingly using social media to communicate with the public, share news on crime patterns, security measures, and community engagement<sup>xlii</sup>.

Transparency measures in policing, such as body cameras, public crime data reports, and data projects, are vital to increasing accountability and building trust between police and communities in India. While these measures provide great opportunities for greater transparency, addressing the problems they pose is essential to their successful implementation. As police departments continue to adopt these measures, they will help build a more transparent, accountable, and responsible law enforcement system that will improve public service<sup>xliii</sup>.

**Discussion:-**

Police accountability and public trust are considered to be key elements of effective and ethical policing, especially in the context of the evolution of law enforcement in India. This fact has been highlighted by the Hon'ble Home Minister Shri Amit Shah, who has stressed the importance of preserving these elements to promote good policing practices. Accountability and trust in the police force are vital to establish a safe and just society. The judiciary has also provided continuous support through several judgments and guidelines to strengthen police accountability and build public confidence. The Supreme Court of India, along with other High Courts, continuously issues directions to ensure that police forces function with greater transparency and accountability across the country. These legal frameworks are designed to hold the police accountable for their actions and ensure that they discharge their duties well. When police officers discharge their responsibilities and are accountable, a strong and safe environment is created in the society.

Over the past few years, the Indian government has made several efforts to make the police force more credible. Programs have been established at the national and state levels that aim to bridge the gap between the police and the public. These efforts are based on the goals of good policing, where the law enforcement process operates with integrity and transparency, and people feel secure in their role in maintaining peace and order. An important aspect of this change is the government's monitoring and support of states in improving their policing practices. By promoting reforms focused on accountability and public trust, the government aims to establish a police force that not only effectively enforces the law, but also becomes a helpful partner to the communities it serves.

Many states have initiated a variety of programs to bridge long-standing gaps between the police and the community. These initiatives aim to strengthen communication and cooperation between law enforcement and residents. The police are simply full-time members of a group of citizens who are remunerated to focus on tasks that are essential to the welfare of the community. Peel's principles are also very relevant in modern India, as they emphasise the fact that policing is a team effort, where both police and citizens work together to protect and support society.

Although there have been many positive changes in Indian policing, sometimes the actions of a few officers can harm the image of the entire police force. Issues such as misconduct, excessive use of force, or lack of accountability can harm the image of the police. These problems can erode public confidence in the police and cause them to question their actions. To address these problems, drastic changes are needed. The police must become more accountable, and develop clear and transparent methods for resolving complaints and investigating wrongdoing. When people see that the police meet high standards of integrity and accountability, their confidence will grow.

In addition, it is important to continue improving police training, encourage community participation, and adopt technological advances so that the police force can remain adequately updated while fulfilling its responsibilities to the public. Modernisation of policing in India depends on two key elements: police accountability and public trust. By focusing on these aspects, the Indian government and judiciary are striving towards an open and ethical law enforcement system. Although progress is being made through various reforms and programs, continued efforts are necessary to ensure that the police force becomes an organization that represents the principles of effective policing and establishes a strong relationship between the police and the communities they serve.

**Suggestions:-**

1. Create a website where the public can rate and share their police experiences. This way the police department can see what areas need improvement, and citizens can express their opinions about how the police are doing.
2. Establish community-run groups that include people from different backgrounds, nonprofits, and local leaders. These groups will work with the police to address community problems, review police performance, and offer suggestions for improving their performance.
3. Create a public website that displays information on area wise crime rates, police complaints, case resolution, and disciplinary actions. This transparency will help build a better and more trusting relationship between the police and the community.
4. It is important to organise dialogue forums at regular intervals where police leaders and citizens can discuss their concerns, latest developments and ideas for improvement. This kind of transparency creates a collaborative environment that encourages a culture of problem solving.



5. Publishing an annual report is vital to promote police transparency and accountability. This report should not only detail resolved cases but also include a summary of community engagement events and public feedback, thereby encouraging openness.
6. Social media platforms should be used to share first-hand updates on law enforcement activities in Norway and to address public concerns. This level of transparency and openness helps to strengthen public trust.
7. The 'PEACE Model' (Public Participation, Accountability, Collaboration, Ethics) aims to strengthen ethical policing and community trust through structured participation and transparency. It promotes quarterly public forums where police share case data, address community questions, and promote transparency. Independent ethics and accountability units evaluate police conduct and report findings to both police leadership and community representatives, ensuring impartiality. In collaboration with local NGOs, police co-create public safety initiatives that reflect a coordinated approach. Additionally, rigorous ethics-based training programs are implemented that value cultural sensitivity and respect. Community liaison officers are assigned to specific neighbourhoods to enhance coordination at the local level and improve police-public relations.

### Conclusion:-

The importance of police accountability and public trust are vital to improving law enforcement in India. With ongoing changes and sustained support from the government and courts, a significant step has been taken toward a police system that values transparency, integrity, and collaboration with the community. Although some challenges still exist, continued efforts are needed to improve training, prompt response to wrongdoing, and encourage active community participation. With these goals in mind, it is possible to build a police force that effectively assists in the welfare and safety of its population, thereby strengthening the foundations of justice and community prosperity for all citizens. The future of policing depends on this commitment to ethical conduct and genuine public trust.

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