



Mains Practice Question

Q. Police reform is the need of the hour to make Indian justice delivery system more efficient. Comment (250 Words).

28 Jul, 2021 GS Paper 3 Internal Security

Approach

- In the introduction, give some facts highlighting the poor state of police in Indian states.
- Discuss the general issues concerning the police forces and the need for reforms.
- Conclude by suggesting some steps that can be taken to bring police reforms.

Introduction

Recently, the government disclosed that between 1st April and 30th November, 2015, 25,357 cases were registered under police category which included 111 deaths in police custody, 330 cases of custodial torture and 24,916 in others. This data lays emphasis on the need to make police accountable and carry out police reforms.

Body

Issues Concerning Police Forces

- **Accountability to the Political Executives vs Operational Freedom:** The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC-2007) has noted that political control has been abused in the past by the political executive to unduly influence police personnel, and have them serve personal or political interests.
- **Psychological Pressure:** While improvements in pay scale and promotions are necessary aspects of police reforms, little has been spoken about reforms needed at the psychological level.
 - In the Indian police force, the lower ranks of police personnel are often verbally abused by their superiors or they work in inhuman conditions.
 - This non-harmonious work environment ultimately affects their relationship with the public.
- **Public Perception:** The Second ARC has noted that police-public relations is in an unsatisfactory State because people view the police as corrupt, inefficient, politically partisan and unresponsive.
 - Further, citizens in general fear going to a police station or dealing with the lower ranks of the police forces.
- **Overburdened Force:** While the sanctioned police strength was 181 police per lakh persons in 2016, the actual strength was 137 police.
 - This is way too low when compared with the United Nations' recommended standard of 222 police per lakh persons.
- **Infrastructural Issues:** Modern policing requires strong communication support, state-of-the-art or modern weapons, and a high degree of mobility.
 - However, CAG audit reports of year 2015-16, have found shortages in weaponry with state

- police forces.
- Also, the Bureau of Police Research and Development has also noted a 30.5% deficiency in stock of required vehicles with the state forces.

Steps Can Be Taken

- **Modernisation of Police Forces:** The Modernisation of Police Forces (MPF) scheme was initiated in 1969-70 and has undergone several revisions over the years.
 - However, there is a need to fully utilize the finances sanctioned by the government.
- **Need For Political Will:** The Supreme Court in the landmark **Prakash Singh case (2006)** gave seven directives where considerable work in police reforms is still needed.
 - However, due to the lack of political will these directives were not implemented in letter and spirit in many states.
- **Revamping Criminal Justice System:** Part of Police reforms, there is a need to reform the criminal justice system too. In this context, the recommendations of the Menon and Malimath Committees can be implemented. Some of the key recommendations are as follows:
 - Creation of a fund to compensate victims who turn hostile from the pressure of culprits.
 - Setting up separate authority at the national level to deal with crimes threatening the country's security.
 - A complete revamp of the entire criminal procedure system.
- **Curbing Criminalisation of Politics:** The criminal nexus with politics will have to be broken and reforms must start with the political system. Thus, there is a need for laws which debars persons with serious criminal cases from entering the assemblies and the Parliament.

Conclusion

The issues of Police are the manifestation of the limitations of the Indian political and social setup. Thus, there is a need to carry out Police reforms and incentivise police departments to adopt best practices.

Along with that, without further delay, there is a need to build an environment where police become an instrument of service to the people.

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