



# Police Reforms

## Why in News

In a recent reply in the Parliament, the government disclosed that between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> 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.

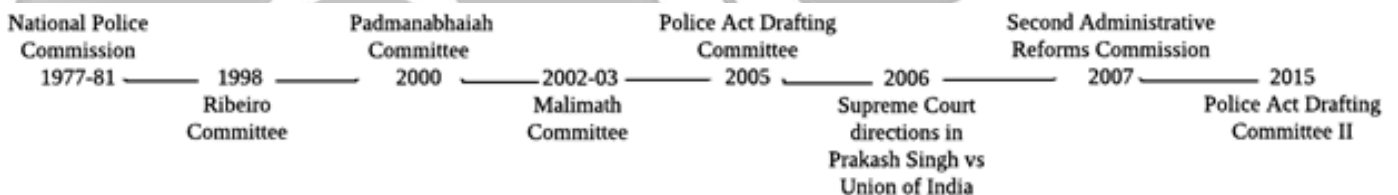
- This data again lays emphasis on the **need to make police accountable** and carry out **police reforms**.

## Key Points

### ▪ Police Reforms (Meaning):

- Police reforms **aim to transform the values, culture, policies and practices of police organizations**.
- It envisages police to perform their duties with **respect for democratic values, human rights and the rule of law**.
- It also aims **to improve how the police interact with other parts of the security sector**, such as the courts and departments of corrections, or executive, parliamentary or independent authorities with management or oversight responsibilities.
- Police **come under the state list of schedule 7 of the Indian constitution**.

### ▪ Committees/Commissions on Police Reforms:



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### ▪ Issues Concerning Police Forces:

- **Colonial Legacy:** The **Police Act of 1861** was legislated by the British right after the **revolt of 1857** to bring in efficient administration of police in the country and to prevent any future revolts.
  - This meant that the police were to always comply with those in power.
- **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**.
  - Further, a high percentage of vacancies within the police forces exacerbates an existing problem of overburdened police personnel.
- **Constabulary Related Issues:** The **constabulary constitutes 86% of the State police forces** and has wide-ranging responsibilities.
- **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.
  - For example, Rajasthan and West Bengal had shortages of 75% and 71% respectively in required weaponry with the state police.
  - Also, the Bureau of Police Research and Development has also noted a 30.5% deficiency in stock of required vehicles with the state forces.

## Suggestions

- **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.
  - MPF scheme envisages:
    - Procurement of modern weapons
    - Mobility of police forces
    - Logistics support, upgradation of police wireless, etc
    - A National satellite network
- **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.

## SEVEN DIRECTIVES OF SUPREME COURT

- 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**



- **Revamping Criminal Justice System:** Along with 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.

**Source:** [TH](#)

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