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Challenges and Priorities to Policing a Smart City: An Exploratory Case Study on the Cities of Kolkata and Bhubaneswar

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Abstract

The annunciation of Bhubaneswar and Kolkata among the first 20 smart cities in India aroused a lot of expectations from the police and the governance of the city. Policing is a very ardent part of administration involving the maintenance of peace, security and well-being of the populace. In this regard, it is quite a call of the day to explore what the challenges are that the police and people have to meet to prove worthy of the accolades. Further, it is also needed to set the priorities that have to be catered to by the police and the people in making Bhubaneswar and Kolkata, smart 21st century cities in India. Policing is one such activity and therefore the sense of belonging towards one's own city can be fostered if its day-to-day safety, protection and development involves its residents. If responsibilities are shared then challenges, priorities and the glowing future can also be fulfilled together. The present research seeks to explore and compare what the people and the police in Bhubaneswar and Kolkata opine about the challenges and the priorities that are to met to be continue fulfilling the expectations of being smart cities in India.

Keywords: *Community Police, Police Commissioner, Smart City, Smart Policing*

1.0 Introduction

In recent years, the Government of India has focused substantially on the issue of crime and urban law enforcement. From the crime statistics, it is revealed that crime is unevenly occurring in various smart cities in India. Therefore, the question of the perception of people regarding policing in smart cities requires a testing or thorough study. Owing to the unique characteristics of cities in India urban policing is a central governance challenge. That is why we have seen a variance in crime rate in smart cities and it's a pattern of law enforcement. This is also discernible among various low and middle-income countries including India. The reason for this variance may be due to a series of factors, like urban density, inequality and poverty among the citizens, urban design, planning and management. The present study is an attempt to unravel the contentions and precedence of policing a smart city in the opinion of the people and the police in the cities of Bhubaneswar and Kolkata. The success of today's policing depends on mass involvement. Policing is no longer the responsibility of the police organization as such. New policing or 21st-century policing aims at bringing the people to the fore and ensuring their active participation to meet the challenges of a growing population and added responsibilities. Therefore, a smart city will ensure that its citizens are active, involved and empathetic towards any cause of the city.

The Smart Cities Mission was initiated on 25 June 2015. The primary aim of the Mission is to encourage cities that furnish basic infrastructure, speckless and sustainable geographical areas and give a respectable quality of life to the citizens by providing 'smart solutions'. It intends to foster economic growth and ameliorate

quality of life through all-encompassing efforts on social, economic, physical and organizational principles of the city. The six core principles that Smart Cities are founded upon are (1) Community (2) More from less resources, (3) Innovation, Integration and Sustainability, (4) Convergence, (5) Technology and (6) Cooperative and Competitive Federalism (Kumar, 2017).

2.0 Policing a Smart City

Policing is a characteristic of social control processes that involves vigilance and sanctions to guarantee the safety of the social milieu (Morin 2013). The 'police' is a specialized, state-organized body with the primary responsibility for deploying legitimate force to safeguard security existing only in relatively complex societies (Storch 1976, Cooper 2011). A smart city aims to provide core infrastructure and a decent quality of life to its residents, a clean and sustainable environment. It intends to develop the entire urban ecosystem represented by four pillars of development – Institutional, physical, social and economic as follows: (a) Adequate water supply, (b) Assured electricity supply, (c) Sanitation including solid waste management, (d) Efficient urban mobility and public transport, (e) Affordable housing, especially for the poor, (f) Robust IT connectivity and digitalization, (g) Good governance - e-governance and citizen participation, (h) Sustainable environment, (i) Safety and security of citizens and (j) Health and education. Smart Policing involves the following technologies: Electronic Surveillance through CCTV cameras placed at strategic locations; Virtual monitoring of incidents, riots and decision-making without much legwork in the streets; Direct monitoring of law and order by top-level officials; Special monitoring of events like fairs, festivals and religious processions; Security alarm in public places and vehicles; E-filing of FIR such as theft of vehicle and phone; Real-time monitoring of security/patrolling teams, Smart Traffic System includes Automatic Traffic Lights, Online Traffic Monitoring, Emergency kiosks/ counters, Advanced Information System.

3.0 Theoretical Foundation of the Study

The idea of explaining urban transformation from the perspective of policing urban areas in general and smart cities, in particular, can be explained from the philosophy of community policing.

3.1 Community Policing as Operational Initiatives

Community policing is a process rather than a product. These principles underlie a host of specific programs and policing tactics as organizing meetings and crime-prevention seminars, publishing newsletters, forming neighbourhood watch groups, organizing youth activities, conducting surveys to measure community satisfaction or surveys of citizens to find out what problems concerned them, establishing adversary panels, conducting drug-education projects, media campaigns, working with municipal agencies to enforce health and safety regulations, increased use of foot patrols, increased attention to victims of crime, etc. (Skogan and Hartnett 1997, Germann 1969).

3.2 Organizational Transmutation and Decentralization

Community policing depends upon organizational decentralization and reorientation of police personnel in order to facilitate two-way communication between police and the public. Field officers are expected to work more unconventionally at investigating situations, resolving problems, and educating the public. (Myers 2013, Ferrandino 2013).

3.3 The Philosophy or Strategy or Style of Policing

The fundamental philosophy underlying these new 'community policing' programs is that the police not only need public support to accomplish their goal but that they have an obligation to involve the community in the process of deciding what they do and how they do it. The new professionalism implies that police serve, learn from and are accountable to the community (Skolnick and Bayley 1985).

4.0 Methodology Adopted

The present endeavour is an exploratory case study where primary data was collected through direct face to face interview of residents and police personnel of the city of Bhubaneswar. Non-probability sampling techniques are

used to collect the sample. More specifically, convenience, purposive (age group of residents, designation of police personnel) and snowballing (contacts/acquaintances of the residents) have been employed to collect primary data. 200 residents each from the cities of Bhubaneswar and Kolkata and 50 police personnel each of the rank of Inspectors posted in the police commissioners of Kolkata and Bhubaneswar comprise the sampling units of the study. A total of 400 residents (200 male and 200 female) and 100 police personnel are the sample of the study.

5.0 Exploring the Challenges and Priorities to Policing a Smart City

5.1 Opinion of the People about the Smart City Police

- 54 per cent of males and 56 per cent of females in Bhubaneswar feel that the police are good. However, the Kolkata residents have a mixed response towards their opinion about the police.
- 41 per cent of the residents of the city of Bhubaneswar are happy about sharing a cordial relationship with the police. However, the Kolkata residents mostly prefer not to comment about the relationship between the people and the police.
- More than 80 per cent of the male residents of both cities' males have visited the site of the commissioner of the city police. A good number of residents are aware of online FIR and Traffic Information like missing vehicles from the website.
- More than 85 per cent of the male residents of both the cities are satisfied with the interaction with the city police. The satisfaction level among women residents is less than 80 per cent.

5.2 Opinion of the People about Challenges to Smart Policing

- The issues that most of the residents have stressed in respect to smart policing are online services, upgradation, physical agility and better organization. 34 per cent of the male residents of Bhubaneswar and 56 per cent of the female residents of Bhubaneswar believed that steps are being taken by the commissioner to initiate smart policing. In Kolkata, 38 per cent of the residents have confirmed that smart policing initiatives have been undertaken but a significant 40 per cent of the respondents are oblivious to the fact. The measures undertaken by the city police include patrolling, 24x7 helplines providing several community and security services, and a well-equipped police force.
- 64 per cent of the residents of Bhubaneswar and 72 per cent of Kolkata claimed that the crime rate is showing an increasing trend in the city. Most believe that there is an increasing trend in newer dimensions of crime and cybercrime. The residents of both cities have pointed out that there is an increasing trend in cybercrime and property crime. However, crime against women is considered a rising problem by the Kolkata residents in greater per centage as compared to Bhubaneswar.
- In Bhubaneswar, both men and women (70%) have claimed that property crime is most rampant followed by cybercrime. However, crime against women is not a common crime. In Kolkata, however, we find that 25 per cent of the residents have claimed violence against women as quite frequent. However, property crime is the most common and a third is cybercrime.
- 60 per cent of the residents of Bhubaneswar are not satisfied with the measures undertaken to combat increasing crime trends. In Kolkata, 40 per cent of the respondents are unhappy with the progress made.
- The residents of Bhubaneswar especially women (65%) were of the opinion that traffic management is good. Most males (48%) were of the opposite opinion In Kolkata 49 per cent of the women complimented the police for being efficient traffic managers. However, nearly 65 per cent of the residents of both cities were aware that the police are using sophisticated technologies to control the traffic situation.
- More than 60 per cent of the residents of Bhubaneswar and about 50 per cent of the residents of Kolkata are not aware whether the city police offer to register online FIR. More than 75 per cent of the residents of Bhubaneswar and 60 per cent of the residents of Kolkata are unaware whether the city police offer to register online General Diary.
- The residents of Kolkata about 70 per cent are happy the collaborative efforts are successful. In Bhubaneswar, about 40 per cent of the residents are not aware whether these events are successful or not and about 34 per cent have replied in the affirmative. The people of Kolkata (about 36%) feel that political interference is a serious challenge faced by the Kolkata

Police. However, the residents of Bhubaneswar feel that the lack of updated technology is a serious impediment to smart policing.

5.3 People's Priorities for Urban Transformation through Smart Policing

- The respondents were asked to mark on a scale of 10 (10 being of utmost importance) about twenty issues as per the priorities that they wish to set for the city police. Most of the residents have marked out issues on a scale of 5 to 10. The priorities set forth by the residents of Kolkata Police tell us a lot about the trends in policing that the people are aware of. The rising cases of crime against women, children and the elderly are a cause of concern for both cities. Further upgradation of traffic to a more tech-based system is also an issue to be addressed. Traffic congestion, road accidents and casualties thereof is a serious issue. Further, the empowerment of the people in policing the neighbourhood can prevent crime and check anomalies. The people of both cities are rocked by natural calamities and have witnessed quite a few supercyclones in recent years. A more proactive involvement of the police in disaster management is thus the call of the day.

5.4 Opinion of the Police Personnel of Kolkata and Bhubaneswar

5.4.1 Opinion about City Police

- 92 per cent of the Bhubaneswar police force and 78 per cent of the Kolkata police force have a positive encouraging opinion about today's police. 86 per cent of police personnel from Bhubaneswar and 78 per cent of those from Kolkata believe that the relationship between the police and people is good.
- More than 90 per cent of the police personnel have attended in-service training programmes. They have received training on Cyber Crimes, Information Technology, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, of 2012, and traffic management. All the officers were satisfied with the training and believed that more such training was required. Most of them felt the need to have further training to handle cybercrime. They also felt the need for sensitization on recent legislations like POCSO, 2012 and Prevention of Sexual Harassment, 2013. More than 90 per cent of the respondent officers have not undertaken any personal courses. This may be because of their stringent work hours and stress.

5.4.2 Opinion about Smart City and Smart Policing

- The police personnel have identified several characteristics of smart cities. The most common ones are better infrastructure and technology, better communication and transportation, a clean sustainable environment and hygienic conditions. All the police personnel have agreed that their city has all the qualities of being called a smart city. The police personnel have raised diverse issues which they feel are the characteristics of smart policing. The most relevant ones are people friendly easily approachable police and online services.
- The officers believed that there had been no change in the crime scenario. More than 60 per cent were however of the opinion that there has been an increase in cybercrime. More than 90 per cent of the officers were also of the opinion that there has been a change in crime trends. As pointed out by the residents too property crime is the most common crime. However, Kolkata also has a rising trend in crime against women.
- Patrolling and CCTV vigilance have been pointed out to be the measures undertaken for combating increasing crime trends.
- The police personnel have suggested that patrolling, CCTV, an increase in the number of police personnel and more specialized investigation can help combat crime.
- 80 per cent of Kolkata Police and 60 per cent of Bhubaneswar police believed that the traffic situation was good and under control. This has been possible because of CCTV at important junctions, strict implementation of law and high-tech automated traffic signalling. However, they have also pointed out that Drones, CCTV and strict law enforcement can help in managing traffic congestion and unlawful activities.
- The police personnel of both cities believed that the commissioner offers online FIR, Online general diary and collaborative community service initiatives with NGOs.
- In response to detecting the challenges in the path towards smart policing a reality, the police personnel have mentioned the lack of an adequate number of police personnel, technological upgradation, and lack of adequate infrastructure and training. Political

interference has been observed as an obstacle to about 18 per cent of officers of the Kolkata Police Force.

- A significant percentage of police personnel considered these priorities as of utmost importance for ensuring smart policing in these two smart cities: high-tech patrolling, CCTV prevention of crime, identifying Crime Hotspots knowing your neighbourhood, empowering the people, community service programmes, awareness about traffic rules, awareness about recent legislation, combating environmental crimes, crime against animals, protection of monuments and artefacts, elder abuse, child abuse, violence against women, violence against marginals and disaster management.

6.0 Recommendations and Policy Implications

- In the background of socioeconomic development in the smart cities, policing should give special attention to the local communities, families, children and youth at risk, unemployed, migration and social marginalization by adopting a humane crime prevention policy.
- Every police station in the smart city should keep computer-based data on crime as well as criminals and be connected with all the police stations nationally.
- It is observed that there is a lack of coordination among various departments of the Government working in these smart cities. Therefore a partnership should be developed across the Ministries, state authorities, NGOs, community organizations, business houses and private citizens.
- Policing in smart cities requires a fusion of local knowledge with adopted traditional policies. Effective policing in smart cities demands resource mobilization, a good relationship between police and the public, and skills to maintain peace and security. Therefore, policing in smart cities should develop a system of coordination at the operational level among the various government departments, state officials, NGOs and the neighbourhood.
- In each city, there is domination of some areas by criminal gangs. In these areas, there is a need to develop proper vigilantism through ICTs.The police in smart cities should connect various communities including private protection services.
- With the rapid growth of smart cities there is a need for adequate resources in order to sustain a minimum growth among the poor and vulnerable.
- In our study it is also revealed that there exists a lack of trust between police and community. To improve the condition there is a need for cultural and managerial changes as well as to remove information or knowledge gaps. Hence there is a need to reform the way information is given to the public and at the same easy way of accessibility of people to police.
- In India, due to economic conditions and poverty a large section of the population is socially excluded even in smart cities. Therefore, police should be connected to different government departments and work effectively to minimize differences in the availability of civic facilities in the cities, and minimize cultural conflict, and firearms, because in these respects police have no control over the issues.
- A good information system using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) needs to be developed to make the community aware of crime problems, accessibility, multiple causes behind crime and the prevalent practices.
- India is following the 'due process model' of policing. Therefore, the constitution guarantees personal freedom and protection to be followed by the police. Hence the culture of observing human rights principles is to be inculcated among the police personnel.
- Similarly, our constitutional principles of equality and the rule of law are to be upheld in the policing system in the smart cities so that police would realize the different needs of men and women, rich and poor and the vulnerable.
- There should be a frequent in-service orientation programme for the police personnel at all levels to make them understand the changing objectives of policing and police goals thereby updating strategies in response to the crime trends.

7.0 Concluding Remarks

The concept of smart policing and smart city is in its formative stage in both cities. There is awareness among the people and the police about recent developments and they have a strong opinion in setting the goals for smart policing. The challenges that have been put forward by the residents of the two cities of Kolkata and

Bhubaneswar and have been supported by the police personnel explore the issues that are creating obstacles to police administration. These set forth the goals that are to be considered as countermeasures to overcome the challenges of policing a smart city. Further, the future of policing involves the inclusion of sophisticated Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and new models of urban policing like intelligence-led policing and predictive policing. The philosophy of restorative policing also adds hope as a new approach to policing a city. More so, police accountability, inclusive policies, and expertise in social skills can help us bring forth a police organization that is truly smart and a city which offers safety and sustainable living to its residents.

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