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## COMMUNITY POLICING- AN OVERVIEW

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### Abstract

Community policing is a philosophy and strategy in which police work as equal partners with communities to proactively identify, solve, and prevent crime by fostering trust and addressing root causes, rather than simply responding to calls. It emphasizes collaboration, problem-solving and empowering citizens to take the lead in local safety, thereby increasing public trust and safety. This includes activities like foot patrols, community meetings, and neighbourhood watch initiatives.

**Keywords:** Community, Partnership, Police.

### Introduction

Community policing is defined as a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that encourage the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to address the immediate conditions that contribute to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

Community policing is not a completely new notion. Sir Robert Peel established community constables, or 'bobbies', in the Metropolitan London Police District in the early 19th century, which paved the way for community police today. Sir Robert Peel rationalized that the police are the public and the public are the police. Community policing emphasizes cooperation between police and the community, rather than separating them.

The basic principle behind community policing is that 'a policeman is a citizen with a uniform, and a citizen is a policeman without a uniform'.

It is defined as a law enforcement strategy that allows officers to continue operating in the same region in order to form better bonds with the citizens who live and work there.

It contributes to minimizing the trust deficit between police and the public by requiring the police to collaborate with the community on crime prevention and detection, public order maintenance, and local dispute resolution, with the goal of delivering a higher quality of life and a greater sense of security.

Robert Trojanowicz has defined “community policing as a philosophy of full-service, personalized policing where the same officer patrols and works in the same area on a permanent basis, from a decentralized place, working in proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems”.



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The need for the police to develop relationship with the public that are based on mutual respect and trust in order to provide proper police services to that public. Such relationship is not created merely by soliciting support from the public but by establishing lines of communication that enable the police to become an integral part of community being served. The police are drawn in many directions by the complex and frequently competing groups that comprise each “community”. The fundamental principle of Community Policing is to reduce the gap between law enforcement officers and residents, so ensuring that officers become an integral component of the community they serve.

### **Key Components:-**

Community policing comprises three key components:

- (i) Community Partnership
- (ii) Problem Solving
- (iii) Organizational Transformation

Community policing is a line function in which there is regular contact between officers and citizens.

1. It is a department-wide philosophy and department-wide acceptance.
2. Well defined role-does both proactive and reactive policing.
3. Citizens identify problems and cooperate in setting up the police agenda.

### **The benefits of Community Policing:-**

#### **1. Improving police-community relationships and community perceptions of police:**

- Opportunity to increased public accountability through participation.
- Community and police work towards shared goals.

#### **2. Increasing community capacity to deal with issues:**

- Empowers community to respond to community concerns.
- Positive attitudes in the community to interact, deal with, and solve problems.



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### 3. Changing police officers attitudes and behaviours:

- Police officers increase interaction with and confidence of the community.
- Police and community develop positive relationships.

### 4. Increasing perceptions of safety and decreasing fear of crime:

- Evidence suggests that community policing can increase perceptions of Safety and decrease the fear of crime.

### 5. Reducing crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour:

- Evidence suggests that community policing can reduce disorder and anti- social behaviour.

## Community Policing Experiments /Outreach Programmes in India

Some of the community policing initiatives taken in the India have been describe briefly as under:-

### 1. Community Policing: Friends of Police, Tamil Nadu

Friends of Police empower citizens to help prevent and detect crime. FOP membership is open to all individuals, regardless of gender, who are not involved in civil or criminal cases. FOP members can contribute valuable information that helps solve crimes. The primary functions of the FOP include beat and night patrols, traffic assistance, crime prevention, information collection, law and order maintenance, and involvement in prohibition work

### 2. 'PRAHARI': The Community Policing Initiative in Assam

'PRAHARI' The community policing effort attempted to enhance the living and working conditions of police officers and change their attitudes towards the general public. PRAHARI aimed to address social issues and foster collaboration between law enforcement and the community.

### 3. 'AASHWAS': Assam Police

The Assam police launched the Aashwas project to tackle violence and insurgency while also showing compassion to children and victims of trauma. Aashwas has picked seven villages in each of seven districts having a history of ethnic or terrorist violence. These initiatives have successfully integrated the community with the police and elicited a significant response.



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#### 4. Community Policing Initiative in Himachal Pradesh

This plan divides police stations into sectors based on wards of Panchayat/NAC. Larger wards contain more sections. The People's Policing Committee for a sector was made up of all household members. Each sector includes an active group of 6 local residents, including one Home Guard, one Chowkidar, and a Police Constable/Head Constable as Secretary. The group is convened by one member of the Active Group. After receiving positive feedback, the technique was implemented in all state police stations.

#### 5. Community Policing Initiative in Pune

The police in Pune implemented a community policing effort following the 1992 riots, which killed thousands and eroded public trust in the police system. Mohalla committees were established across Pune to prevent future communal conflicts and rebuild public trust. In Pune, there are approximately 30 Mohalla groups that collaborate with the police to ensure public order. Mohalla committee meetings are held before each festival to promote peace and harmony in the community.

#### 6. Community Policing Initiative in Kolkata, West Bengal

The Community Policing initiative in Kolkata comprises both civil society and police personnel. The Detective Department organizes Drug Awareness Programs throughout the year at educational institutions and slums. Drug de-addiction camps for victims are created in collaboration with locals and major NGOs in the city. Kolkata Police hosts an annual Friendship Cup Football Tournament for local clubs. Bravery and Honesty Award. Every year, the Detective Department on behalf of the Kolkata Police hosts this award ceremony. Citizens who demonstrate bravery and honesty are honoured to inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

#### 7. The Parivar Paramarsh Kendra, Raigarh District, Madhya Pradesh

The Kendra is a unique community policing initiative that aims to resolve family problems by uncovering underlying causes. In this case, Kendra makes social decisions to prevent a family from breaking up. It serves primarily as a counselling centre for family issues. This enterprise aims to improve a city's social climate by resolving family disputes. Identifying and addressing personal issues early on can help prevent criminal behaviour. "Other Community Policing Initiatives in Madhya Pradesh are as following:-

Gram Raksha Samiti, Nagar Raksha Samiti, Balmitra Thanas, Child line, Medical Relief to Injured, Police Help the Visually Challenged, De-addiction Camps, Centre for Social Justice and Empowerment, Operation Vishwasand, Operation Hamdard".



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## 8. Community Policing in Punjab

The Community Policing experiment in Ludhiana began on October 12, 2002. Community groups with 30 individuals were formed in 400 beats to discuss serious issues. Meetings were held every two weeks or once a month. The resource centre assigned each group, which included a beat cop, to 'police the community'. In Amritsar, a single-window redressal cell was established to address community concerns.

To accommodate frequent visits for passport verification, arm licenses, and grievances, police station were outfitted with computers and phones lines. A senior SP was chosen to oversee the one-stop service. The proposed centre includes support lines and Health Department doctors to handle accident cases, among other features. The centre aims to provide helplines for women and children, as well as strengthen police public relations. Community Policing Centres were established in six police ranges across the states.

### Suggestions:

Some of the suggestions to enhance the community policing are following as:-

#### 1. Accountability:-

- To ensure accountability, set up independent civilian oversight committees to assess police actions and complaints.
- Establish clear disciplinary procedures and make results available to the public when appropriate.

#### 2. Transparency :-

- Provide regular, clear reports on crime data, use-of-force events, and departmental performance.
- Hold quarterly community meetings at which police executives explain policies, on-going initiatives and issues.

#### 3. Youth involvement:-

- Create youth mentorship programs in which officers engage with students on a regular basis at schools or youth centers.
- Create youth advisory councils to give young people a say in developing public-safety policies.



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