



PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF POLICE PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Police executives today generally agree that public support is important both for the legality of the police and the ability of the police to fight crime successfully. While research shows people generally support the police and are satisfied with the way police perform their duties, it also demonstrates that not all segments of society hold equally positive opinions. With this intention this study was conducted to assess the perception of police performance in the Karnataka and its two neighbor states. Eight hundred participants completed a demographics questionnaire and Perceptions of Police Performance Scale included eleven statements that measure an individual's attitudes toward police. Stratified random sampling was used and the descriptive and inferential statistics were applied for the results of the public opinion. The result of finding indicated that there was no significant difference between states in the public perception of police performance in the community.

KEYWORDS : Public perception of police, police performance**INTRODUCTION**

Police officers now days have to accept that public assistance for the police is essential for successful policing. Not only is public support fundamental to the legitimacy of the police, but it is also important to take help from the public in efforts to reduce crime. In addition to that there is rising evidence that public support depends on the public's perception that police treat people fairly and professionally. Against this background, police executives face a range of choices about how to use their constricted time and resources to encourage civilians that they operate professionally and with integrity. These might include public relations campaigns, retraining patrol officers in managing encounters with the public, improving supervisors' capacity to monitor and improve the behavior of officers in their encounters with the public, and winning over particular segments of the public through particular community affairs staff. As police executives choose among these options, they will benefit from more information about how public attitudes toward the police are shaped.

Police, more than any other public service agency, must have the support of the community if they trust public and efficiently perform their roles as service providers and crime fighters. Police work is most of the times reactive. Since there are not adequate police to patrol every street corner in every state, the police persons were depend on citizens to report crimes, emergency cases and other crime related information helpful to their investigations. Lacking the grip of citizens and their readiness to come ahead with information, the police would be facing complexity of doing their jobs on a day to day basis.

Cox and Fitzgerald et al (1996) said that value of research on attitudes toward the police and the need for policies based on such research, one need only examine the problems associated with negative perceptions of the police.

According to Percy (1986) perceptions of the police are important is that public mistrust of the police may diminish the ability of the police to control crime. Public who are not happy with the police are less likely to contact them or provide officers with information about unlawful activity. This is important, because studies indicate that fear of crime lowers evaluations of the police (e.g.; Reisig and Giacomazzi, 1998). Thus, it is understandable that negative perceptions of the police contribute to a cycle of reduced police efficacy, increased crime, and further distrust of the police. Finally, the police need to be concerned about how they are viewed by the public, because they are public servants (Fleek and Newman (1969) Percy, 1986)

Major problems of police department are they are unsociable, non cooperative, corrupted and politically influenced those are said by majority of the respondents. Almost all the respondents agreed that documented law is not sufficient to guide police in modern time. The study represents the public perception about police works is increasing that is optimistic sign of social change and it can help police to be successful at crime investigation and prevention.

Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR Surveys) conducted a survey of public opinion for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) on the subject of Police Performance and Public Safety perceptions overall the perceptions of the Afghan National Police (ANP) are broadly positive.

In India, not much data is available though anecdotal reports have indicated the Police Departments are plagued with problems such as inefficiency, corruption, and an insular police culture, which are hindering performance and creating negative public perceptions.

In the backdrop of the scanty literature on community perception and evaluation of Police Performance in Indian setting, and given the fact that citizen evaluation of police performance is paramount for police organizations to reintegrate themselves with the communities they police and of which they are members themselves the present survey is undertaken with an overall objective of studying the Public perception of Police Performance in Karnataka and its two neighbor states.

METHODS

Data for this study was derived from responses obtained from randomly selected adults living in Karnataka (KA), Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Telangana state (TS). Public Perception of Police Performance scale conducted and taken opinion of the citizens in 2016 and 2017. Comprehensive face-to-face survey with a random sampling technique was conducted. 11 questions covering following dimensions of police performance:

- Responding quickly to calls for help or assistance
- Not using excessive force
- Being helpful and friendly
- Treating people fairly
- Investigating and/or solving crimes, and
- Preventing crime

Objectives of the present study

- 1) To assess the citizen's perception of police performance

2) Find out the comparison between the three states in public perception of police performance

Tools

Socio-demographic data sheet

The socio-demographic data sheet was used to record the relevant information of the participants, it includes age, gender, education, occupation, income, marital status, religion, domicile, family type. This pro-forma developed for the current study by the researchers

Public perception of police performance measure

The measure of police performance used as the dependent variable in this study, it is based on responses to the survey question, "In terms of responding promptly to calls for assistance from residents, would you say the police in your neighborhood are?" To operationalize responses, the values 1, 2, 3, 4 and 1 were assigned to the variable to reflect a response of "very prompt," "somewhat prompt" "Less than prompt," and "Not at all prompt," respectively. Total no of questions asked in this measure were 11 and interpretation of the scores like minimum score 11 and maximum score 44.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical package for social science (SPSS-V16) was used to analyze the data. The descriptive Statistics (frequency distribution), ANOVA, Post Hoc Tests were the statistical analysis done.

Analysis and results

The "Sociodemographic data sheet" and another measure "public perception of police performance" designed by the researcher to elicit information pertain to various zones of public includes in the three southern states of India. The information Collected from the public was later analyzed and the outcomes indicated the following: Demography (n=800)

Findings on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents show that their mean age is 36.05 with a standard deviation of 11.75. This implies that majority of the respondents are middle- aged adults who must have dealings with police at least once. In education back ground of the respondents were having minimum education in years of 14.56 mean and having standard deviation of 2.9. The gender of Participants reveal a disproportionate representation, where male accounted for 64% of the respondents and female respondents constituted 36% of the respondents. This presents a ratio of 2:1 across the gender group skewed in favor of male. On marital status nearly seven (7) out of 10 respondents, that is (71%) were married while the remaining (29%) were either single, Separated from their spouses, divorced or widowed. A significant proportion 58.2% of the respondents are falling under skilled occupation comparatively semiskilled 26% and unskilled 15%. From the income level within three southern states upper low socio economical status group were the predominant with 40%. Data on respondent's religious affiliation depict that majority (65.2%) were Hindus, 17.5% were Muslims, 15% were Christians and while the rest (1. %) belong to other religion. A significant finding of Hindu religion was found among the respondents.

Test Variables- The following tables showed the mean differences of perception of crime prevention in Karnataka (KA), Andhra Pradesh (AP), Telangana state (TS) India.

Table-1a: Descriptives for variables on perception of police performance

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Karnataka	400	23.38	6.909	0.345
Andhra Pradesh	200	23.36	5.800	0.410
Telangana State	200	23.90	8.575	0.606
Total	800	23.51	7.112	0.251

Table-1b: ANOVA for variables of three southern states and perception of police performance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	42.203	2	21.101	0.417	0.659
Within groups	40373.752	798	50.657		
Total	40415.955	800			

From the table 1a and 1b, the findings indicating that 400 citizen's perception of police performance that are from Karnataka (KA) had a mean of 23.38 and SD of 6.90, for 200 citizens perception of police performance that are from Andhra Pradesh (AP) had a mean of 23.36 and SD of 5.80. As for the Telangana state (TS) the mean was 23.90 and SD of 8.57. From the ANOVA table, the F-ratio was $F(2,798) = 28.663$, $p > 0.05$, implied that there was no significant difference of the mean scores of perception of police performance among them.

Table-1c: Comparison of public perceptions of Police performance in Karnataka (KA), Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Telangana State (TS)

Dependent Variable		Mean difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Public Perception of Police performance	KA AP	0.023	0.616	0.999
	TS	-0.523	0.616	0.698
	AP KA	-0.023	0.616	0.999
	TS	-0.545	0.712	0.746
	TS KA	0.523	0.616	0.698
	AP	0.545	0.712	0.746

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The table 1c, indicating that there is no significant value for three states $p > 0.05$ indicating that public perception of police performance in three states is not statistically significant that means perception of police performance is almost similar in the three southern states.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings are discussed in relation to the public perception of the police performance in Karnataka and its two neighbor states in India. In the study, a significant majority described the perceived relationship between the public and police as very pessimistic and the perception of police performance in three states is very low that means public are perceiving that police in neighborhood are not doing good job, not at all responding promptly to the calls, not effective in dealing with the problems. Public perceived police are doing poor performance in dealing effectively with the community problems. This finding mirrored the view of that the public attitude towards police in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana state are same, there is no significant difference in the public opinion, all the three states holds a common opinion that is negative attitude and perception about the police performance in their community.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The public perception of the police and their performance can be changed if the police changed their relationship pattern with the citizens. In addition to it if the police are not using excessive force and offensive language, not breaking the law and order definitely public will maintain a healthy relationship. The results of this study strongly support previous research that has pointed towards police performance as being very important in the formulation of citizen satisfaction. In this study, perceptions of response time to a crime in progress, how often police are seen on the street, the relationship between the police and community and police efforts to reduce

crime were key performance indicators. The consistently significant performance variables reflect perceptions that police are trying to do their job in a professional and diligent way with respect for citizens.

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