

POLICE REFORMS

Facts and Figures

1. Police in Kerala

- Kerala Police has around 62,000 personnel for a population exceeding 34 million.
- As of 2023, Kerala has 163 IPS officers across various ranks, including Director General, Inspector General, and Deputy Inspector General.
- Kerala has 1,117 police stations, including urban, rural, and special stations.
- The police-to-population ratio in Kerala is approximately 182 officers per 100,000 people, below the UN-recommended ratio of 222.

2. Police in India

- As of 2023, India has an authorized strength of 5,047 IPS officers, including officers across various states and central agencies.
- India has approximately 17,000 police stations across various states and union territories.
- The police-to-population ratio shortfall leads to overburdened officers and compromised law enforcement, with insufficient police presence in many areas.

03. Rising Criminal Activity and Criminalization

- In Kerala, 828 police officers have been accused of criminal cases over the last six years, including theft, domestic violence, and harassment. Of these, 70 faced rape charges, 20 faced POCSO cases, and 60 faced harassment and intimidation charges, with action taken against just 40 officials.
- Kerala reported over 3 lakh criminal cases in 2022, reflecting a steady increase over the past decade.
- A 2018 study found that 26% of Kerala residents reported paying bribes to police, indicating deep-seated corruption.
- The 2020 Kerala gold smuggling case highlighted senior police officers' involvement in criminal activities, revealing systemic corruption issues.
- The Lokniti-CSDS report (2022) found that over 50% of police officers felt political pressure in their duties, leading to biased law enforcement and manipulation of investigations.
- According to NCRB data, there were around 250 cases involving criminal charges against police officials across India in 2022. The conviction rate for these cases across India was approximately 30% in 2021.

4. Police Reforms: Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and accountability are crucial for effective policing. The Supreme Court's Prakash Singh case (2006) emphasized the need for establishing independent Police Complaints Authorities (PCA) at both the state and district levels to oversee police misconduct. However, the implementation of these reforms has been inconsistent, with many states, including Kerala, being slow to establish PCAs. The existing PCAs are often underfunded, understaffed, and lack the necessary powers. According to

the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) report for 2022, Kerala has approximately 64,556 sanctioned police posts, with about 60,000 personnel. This results in a police-to-population ratio of around 170 officers per 100,000 people, which falls short of the UN-recommended standard of 222. This shortage of personnel hampers the police force's ability to respond effectively to crimes, manage investigations efficiently, and engage in community policing efforts.

5. Corruption and Political Interference

Corruption in the police force includes bribery, extortion, and collaboration with criminal elements. The police-criminal nexus involves protecting criminals or participating in criminal activities for personal gain.

The 2022 Lokniti-CSDS report found that over 50% of police officers felt pressured by political leaders, impacting their

impartiality and contributing to the erosion of public trust.

To address politicization, measures should include making the appointment and transfer of police officers more transparent and merit-based, with independent Police Establishment Boards (PEB) as recommended by the Supreme Court in the Prakash Singh case.

6. Existing Police Legislation

The Indian police system was established during British rule with the Police Act of 1861.

The Police Act, 1861, remains outdated, focusing on colonial-era priorities rather than modern challenges like cybercrime

and terrorism.

New legislation should prioritize community policing, human rights, and contemporary law enforcement needs.

Published By:

Institute for Sustainable Development and Governance

Golf Links Road, Near Wilcrest Point
Kowdiar, Thiruvananthapuram,
Kerala 695003, India
isdgoffice@ccds.in
www.isdg.in

Chief Editor: John Samuel
Research Anilkumar PY
Sanjo Sabu, Sunilji
Design Ji Media, Trivandrum