



Community Policing: Lessons from Peshawar Police

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Abstract

Community policing is a philosophy and strategy of policing that emphasizes building relationships and partnerships between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. The study aims to explore the perception of police officials about community policing working in model police station MPs. A qualitative research methodology was adopted to complete the study. The sample size consisted of 15 police officials, from three model police stations of the District Peshawar i.e. Gulbahar, Faqirabad, and University Town Police stations. The sample size was selected through purposive sampling, and the data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The study reveals that Peshawar's Gulbahar, University Town, and Faqirabad Police stations implemented community policing in 2014, establishing Community Police Forums (CPFs) with 45 members, including 12 women, in each. The initiative aims to foster partnerships with communities through monthly Community Police Forum (CPF) meetings, neighborhood watch schemes, and active youth engagement, with plans to expand to four new districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The researchers suggested that effective implementation of community policing, clear communication, public awareness, and adequate resources are crucial. This includes securing funding, increasing police presence, and utilizing advanced technology and detection methods to address crime proactively. Furthermore, fostering partnerships through community forums and accessible police positions will empower communities to participate in crime prevention and build trust with law enforcement.

Keywords: Models of Community Policing, Traditional policing, Community policing, Model Police Stations, Community Police Officer, Community Police Forum

Introduction

Police departments respond to crime daily. The goal for most, if not all, law enforcement agencies is to establish a safe and effective resolution to any situation presenting symptoms of injustice or disorder to the status quo. Furthermore, these agencies are also tasked with duties to improve public safety, and reducing not only crime itself but also the fear of crime within the community. This is hardly ever an easy feat. The field of criminal justice is rarely static. Rather, those in the field of public safety are often presented with situations that are complex and chaotic. Law enforcement agencies across the United States utilize various principles of community policing as a strategic means of combatting and controlling crime as well as restoring order.

Although a definitional debate continues what exactly community policing entails, there is no doubt that numerous benefits exist when utilizing the various principles associated with this strategy. In fact, "experience has shown that community policing as a dominant policing style is a better, more efficient, and

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more cost-effective means of using police resources” (Brown 1989, 10). As such, the field of criminal justice, and the impact community policing has on law enforcement agencies and communities demands the complete attention of citizens everywhere.

Community policing was developed by the United States Department of Justice in the 1970s. Community policing has been the most popular trend in policing during the past few decades (Sozer and Merlo 2013, 506). Established primarily as a practical response to the increasing limitations of traditional professional policing, such as the lack of innovative tactics or community engagement being utilized, the inception of community policing was in response to these new-age law enforcement problems (Ong and Jenks 2004, 54). It has even been suggested that the implementation of community policing has had an influence on policing strategies throughout the world (Sozer and Merlo 2013, 506).

Because community policing started over thirty years ago, there is a lack of consensus among scholars as to what exactly it entails. Stated another way, there are disagreements as to what characteristics are employed in a successful community policing campaign. Despite these disagreements, community policing continues to offer numerous benefits to departments that utilize this practice. The disagreement between scholars has, unsurprisingly, gained attention from critics who dispute the benefits and successes of community policing by concentrating on the generality and redundancy of its mission.

To be clear, however, community policing should be viewed as an ongoing practice or method with a strategic set of goals and not as a philosophy or ideology as many scholars suggest. This clarification, although ambiguous and irrelevant in many respects, serves a pivotal position in illustrating the continuous process of this evolving paradigm in the contemporary and reality-based society as opposed to the theoretical application in utopian societies discussed by several experts. This clarification is not intended to add fuel to the definition debate, as Seagrave has already complicated the intricate nature of this topic, but rather to emphasize the importance community policing has on the lives of public citizens and encourage further discussion (Seagrave, 1996).

Literature Review

Law enforcement agencies around the United States have tailored their focus to incorporate these three broad principles into community policing strategies. Moreover, these same duties have been incorporated into the famous law enforcement mission statement which cites “to protect and serve” as the top priority for police agencies.

Although a definitional debate continues what exactly community policing entails, there is no doubt that numerous benefits exist when utilizing the various principles associated with this strategy. In fact, “experience has shown that community policing as a dominant policing style is a better, more efficient, and more cost-effective means of using police resources” (Brown 1989, 10). As such, the field of criminal justice, and the impact community policing has on law enforcement agencies and communities demands the complete attention of citizens everywhere. Besides attacks on the fundamental assumptions and historical analysis inherent in community policing (Reichers and Roberg, 1990; Walker, 1984), there is basic disagreement as to whether such tactics work. For example, although evaluations of community policing programs suggest that foot patrols, one outgrowth of this approach, foster greater citizen cooperation, reduce

calls for service, and increase officer satisfaction; they do not necessarily reduce crime (Bowers and Hirsch, 1987; Esbensen, 1987; Trojanowicz, 1987).

Moreover, there has been little progress toward developing a standard measurement procedure for gauging the implementation of community policing (see Wilson, 2004). Still, evaluations over the years have found that some community policing tactics, such as foot patrol, mini-stations, and problem-solving, have been successful in reducing fear, improving relationships between the police and the public, and even reducing crime (Bayley, 1988; Skogan & Frydl, 2004; Skogan & Hartnett, 1997; Skogan et al., 1999). Unfortunately, modern societies have been unable to adequately adapt practices that effectively and efficiently combat crime. Though we have learned from our failures, in many regards, we have been unable to enact a foolproof system capable of eliminating crime. What society has been able to accomplish, however, is a system in which the traditional models of policing are supplemented by the engagement of community members. Although it cannot be assumed that a universal method of community policing exists, several tenets within the concept of community policing can be adapted and molded to fit the needs and tendencies of different organizations (Yero et al. 2012, 51).

Although there are still quite a few police officers who strongly tend to advocate traditional militaristic policing and regard community policing as fancy/soft policing, CPDI's (Center for Peace and Development Initiative) personal experience has been that there is a growing number of community policing advocates within the police, of whom, some have already experimented with, and there are others prepared to take forward community policing. Although community policing is not legally obligatory for the police in Pakistan, the prevailing legal apparatus of policing does not hinder and is supportive of, this modern policing approach. Noticeable trends amongst the police, especially the top leadership, regarding policing as a service and recognizing the importance of strengthening relationships with citizens are being frequently observed. These are positive signals that a cultural shift in police is very much possible wherein community policing is likely to prosper (CPDI, 2016).

Models of policing

There are different models of policing in the world which are as follows:

Traditional (Reactive) Policing - police respond when a call comes in stating that a crime has occurred. Upon arrival, the patrol service takes a report and then passes the investigation over to the detectives' branch. At this point, the patrol service officer(s) would return to their patrol vehicle or station, awaiting their next callout.

Predictive Policing refers to the usage of predictive and analytical techniques in law enforcement to identify potential offenders.

Problem-Orientated Policing (POP) - has an emphasis on trying and prevent crime from happening. This policing model has detectives watching for patterns in crimes to help understand when and how crimes are being committed. Once they have a pattern they will search for ways in which to help prevent crimes from continuing to happen in those areas.

Community-Orientated Policing - focuses on police building ties and working closely with members of the communities within their AOR. The officers will make their presence known and also rely on community members to report any

suspicious behavior or tips on criminals in the area. This method creates a relationship and engenders an element of trust.

Reassurance Policing aims to identify "signals", and involve the community in solving community-related problems (similar to community policing). Signal crimes are those that shape a community's perception of risk [from particular types of crime during a given period.

Intelligence-led Policing (ILP) – built around risk assessment and management, ILP is defined as “a strategic, future-oriented, targeted approach to crime control, focusing upon the identification, analysis & management of persisting and developing problems or risks.”

Community policing

Community policing is based on the assumption that police officers should partner with the community to solve problems that generate repeat calls for service. For this to happen, officers must be given the discretion to make independent decisions and act as advocates on behalf of the neighborhoods they serve. Community policing is often about more than crime. It sees crime as the result of other underlying problems. Officers' responsibilities involve addressing and rectifying those problems before they result in crimes, typically with the cooperation and assistance of the public. This might involve social issues such as homelessness. In a traditional policing environment, officers might be responsible for moving the homeless off the streets and perhaps into shelters, but they would not be expected to take action to resolve the homelessness issue itself. (J.Stewart, 2007)

Community policing, no matter how well implemented it may be in terms of crime prevention and negotiation efforts, is not sufficient to constitute policing practice. What is necessary is a deeper comprehension of the relationship between the various modalities of policing practice and the actual working conditions. For the goal of ensuring excellent policing, a more strategic approach to the difficulties posed by diversity is required than a dogmatic acceptance of community policing. (Wright, 2012).

As a result, only the community's citizens' steadfast and determined effort and active participation may result in significant development and favorable improvements (Haque, 2014). In this ideology of policing in action, the goal is to improve public trust in the police by democratic means. 'Police' is regarded as an integrated community component under this policing system, performing a critical role in establishing community security and stability. In truth, this ideology is founded on the notion that law-abiding community members are entitled to input in exchange for their involvement and support. It is envisioned that solutions to current community complications will necessitate empowering both citizens and the police to discover inventive novel approaches to addressing neighborhood issues that go further than a restricted focus on specific crimes. Community policing's organizational model, on the other hand, necessitates that all department workers, whether civilian or sworn, find methods to put the idea into effect (Skogan et al., 2019).

Methodology

This study was conducted in the district of Peshawar. The study aims to explore the perception of police officials about community policing working in model police station MPs. The study's nature was qualitative. The qualitative research method is used because it enables a deeper understanding of experiences, phenomena, and context. A sample size of 15 police officials was selected through

the purposive sampling technique, 05 from each of the 03 model police stations of Gulbahar, Faqirabad, and University Town. Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used as a tool for data collection. Semi-structured interviews were used as a tool of data collection because it allows the researcher to collect open-ended data, explore participant thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about a particular topic, and delve deeply into personal and sometimes sensitive issues.

Analysis and Discussion

Despite 624,390 police officers, law and order in Pakistan are tumultuous. According to the National Crime Data, crimes against persons and property are rising, which raises the necessity of modifying the primary purpose. Due to their highly stigmatized status and lack of public respect, the Pakistani police must concentrate on establishing their legitimacy by fostering close relationships (Imam, 2022). Cooperation, as opposed to pressure, is the sole means of restoring the imbalanced power alliance and enhancing public-police confidence. The Pakistani police have been cut off from the person, which has led to a decline in citizen involvement, depriving it of credibility and partnership. Without a two-way strategy and a friendly flow of interactions, the dissemination of information between two poles will worsen if no action is taken. In light of this, the police must prioritize community policing in addition to a clearly defined organizational approach. To maintain their legitimacy, the police must abandon their old methods of policing and engage with the public to build a strong and trustworthy association (Saeed, 2014).

Police Officials perception

“The concept of a Model Police Station (MPS) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa KPK Province was introduced by the Inspector General of Police in 2014. The process commenced in Peshawar in April 2014 with the declaration that three existing police stations in Gulbahar, Faqirabad, and University Town would be operated as MPS.”

“The MPSs are designed and refurbished to efficiently respond to the needs of the community with an enhanced provision of;

- *User-friendly and accessible public reception/reporting areas.*
- *Space to facilitate meetings for various community-based forums.*
- *Crime investigation facilitates with modern interview rooms and holding facilities.*
- *Dedicated Women's Desks where women complainants can have their concerns attended to by trained women officers compassionately and efficiently.*
- *Enable the Women Desk Staff to be able to perform mainstream policing functions alongside male police staff.*
- *Enhance accommodation and facilities for staff.”*

“The initiative of community policing is being piloted through a dedicated Community Police Officer (CPO) and the formation of Community Police Forum (CPF) in the three Model Police Stations of Peshawar. The three CPFs have a voluntary membership of 45 persons including 12 women from the MPS catchment area.”

“CPFs hold monthly meetings steered by the community police officers and the CPF coordinator. The terms of reference of CPOs and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) guide the functioning of the CPFs. Community policing awareness raising events in educational institutions and corner meetings are held by CPFs in

their neighborhoods to disseminate advice on crime prevention and citizen's protection."

They all considered community policing a better strategy as compared to traditional policing.

When I asked why they think so they responded that it helps them to build better relationships and trust and cooperation with community members.

When I asked about the problems in the implementation of community policing so they responded that lack of availability of enough funds and the deficiency of police staff are the main problems.

I asked them about the future of community policing.

They responded as;

"There is a developing focus on the formation of Neighborhood watch schemes in the catchment area with a focus on the active engagement of youth in the process.

The community policing CP initiative will be extended to four new districts of KPK where the concept of MPS will be introduced by the Police."

Results

There are three model police stations MPSs in Peshawar. These MPSs are Gulbahar, University Town, and Faqirabad Police stations. Community policing setups were just established in these three MPSs. Community policing and MPSs were established and initiated in 2014. There is a Community Police Officer CPO in every MPS and a Community Police Forum CPF in every 3 MPS. The CPF consists of 45 members including 12 women from the MPS catchment area. CPFs hold monthly meetings steered by the community police officers and the CPF coordinator. There is a plan for the formation of Neighborhood watch schemes in the catchment area with a focus on the active engagement of youth in the process through community policing. The CP initiative will be extended to four new districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where the concept of MPS will be introduced by the Police.

Recommendations

- The stakeholders need clear communication about community policing techniques, and those responsible for implementing each strategy must understand how to successfully apply them to fight against crime.
- The public should be informed about community policing practices so that they can share information while also feeling safe.
- To effectively address crime in the community over the long term, it is essential to secure extra funding, hold police-community forums, increase the number of police officers, and ensure that police positions are easily accessible in community policing partnerships.
- The use of community policing as a strategy to address crime requires enhanced detection methods, increased deployment of police officers, upgraded tools, the use of technology and surveillance equipment, and proactive law enforcement actions.

Conclusion

It seems that there has been a significant surge in crime in Pakistan in recent times. Meanwhile, Pakistani police forces are unable to successfully fight crime, enforce the law, give people a basic level of safety, and stop the emergence of militancy. Because of the worsening law and order situation, the government must allocate more money to strengthen crime-fighting organizations. Therefore, there is an immediate requirement to introduce a new approach to controlling crime, called community policing, which not only lowers rising crime rates and increases

employment opportunities but also enhances the bond between the community and the police.

The study's overall conclusions indicate that community policing is the most effective strategy to employ in Pakistan to reduce crime and foster good ties between the public and the police.

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