



DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

**REBUILDING TRUST IN POLICE AMID
SCRUTINY AND SKEPTICISM**

www.nextias.com

REBUILDING TRUST IN POLICE AMID SCRUTINY AND SKEPTICISM

Context

- In recent years, high-profile cases of custodial deaths, excessive force, and flawed investigations have eroded public trust in the Indian police, highlighting the urgent need for systemic reform focusing on accountability and integrity.

Need for Rebuilding Trust in Police in India

- **Crisis of Confidence & Erosion of Credibility:** Incidents of custodial deaths, alleged misuse of power, and botched investigations have eroded public confidence in law enforcement.
 - ♦ **NCRB's Annual Report** and the **Common Cause–Lokniti 'Status of Policing in India' Survey of 2023** cited '*citizen confidence in police has declined by nearly 11% since 2020*'.
 - ♦ The **case of Sanjiv Bhatt**, once a high-profile IPS officer, underscores the complexities of police accountability.
 - ♦ The **Supreme Court's remark** of the Uttar Pradesh Police for a '**lackadaisical**' investigation that led to a wrongful death sentence underscores the **dangers of procedural lapses** and further amplifies concerns.
 - ♦ Political misuse of police powers has further fueled perceptions of bias and impunity.
- **Trust Deficit:** According to the **Status of Policing in India Report (2022)**, 36% of citizens surveyed expressed **limited or no trust in police institutions**. The skepticism arises from:
 - ♦ **Political interference** in investigations;
 - ♦ **Lack of sensitivity** towards marginalized groups;
 - ♦ **Excessive use of force** and custodial violence;
 - ♦ **Poor accountability frameworks**;
- **Numbers Behind Distrust:** According to the **NCRB 2023 Report**:
 - ♦ **117 custodial deaths** were recorded in India in 2023 (up from 86 in 2022).
 - ♦ **1,418 cases of police excesses** were registered nationwide.
 - ♦ Only **2.7%** of those accused in such cases were convicted.
 - ♦ States with the highest custodial death reports: **Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Gujarat**.
- **Allegations of Discrimination:** Marginalized communities feel further disenfranchised, exacerbating social tensions.
 - ♦ Allegations of discrimination cut to the core of what a uniformed service stands for: **integrity, equality, and duty**.
- **Concerns Over Digital Policing:** Digital policing has improved service delivery but raised surveillance concerns.
 - ♦ Over **40% of citizens** expressed unease about police facial-recognition databases.
 - ♦ However, **crime detection efficiency** rose by **18%** in states implementing predictive policing tools under **NCRB's Data Analytics Wing**.

Related Reforms and Renewed Initiatives

- **Community Policing:** MHA's Sensitive, Modern, Accountable, Reliable, and Tech-savvy (**SMART**) **Policing 2.0 Framework (2024)**: It introduced standardized citizen feedback forms, real-time FIR tracking, and an AI-based misconduct alert system.
 - ♦ **Project Bandhan (Assam):** It initiated regular police-school interactions to counter misinformation and hate crimes.
 - ♦ **Awaam Aur Police Program (Jammu & Kashmir):** It saw over 6,000 community meetings in 2024, helping defuse tensions.

- **Transparency and Technology:** The integration of **body-worn cameras**, **automated case tracking**, and **citizen feedback dashboards** (as per *Digital Police Portal*) has helped increase accountability.
 - ♦ NCRB data (2023) reveal that police departments adopting e-FIR systems and digital monitoring reported a 25% improvement in public satisfaction indices.
 - ♦ **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS)** expanded nationwide to 97% police stations by 2024. Citizens can now **track FIR status online**.
 - ♦ **New NCRB Dashboard (2025 Beta)** includes a 'Public Trust Index', integrating citizen survey data to measure transparency.
- **Accountability and Oversight:** The Supreme Court's *Prakash Singh vs Union of India (2006)* judgment mandated the establishment of **State Security Commissions** and **Police Complaints Authorities**, yet implementation remains patchy.
 - ♦ However, only about 12 out of 28 states have fully functional independent oversight bodies.
- **Training and Sensitization:** The *Indian Institute of Public Administration* underscores the need for **continuous human rights and gender sensitivity training** for officers.
 - ♦ Courses at the National Police Academy are being redesigned to emphasize emotional intelligence, community interaction, and de-escalation strategies.
- **State-Level Reforms:**
 - ♦ **Kerala's Janamaithri Suraksha Project** expanded in 2024, integrating mental health first responders with police teams.
 - ♦ **Delhi Police 'Sewa First' Initiative (2025):** Officers undergo empathy and gender-sensitivity training modules co-developed by TISS and MHA.
 - ♦ **Telangana's HawkEye 2.0 App** now allows anonymous feedback and misconduct reporting.

Way Forward: Pathways To Reform

- **Independent Oversight:** Establishing robust, autonomous bodies to investigate police misconduct.
 - ♦ Reducing political interference in postings and investigations.
 - ♦ Strengthen **Police Complaints Authorities (PCAs)** at state levels.
- **Community Engagement:** Encouraging participatory policing models that involve citizens in safety initiatives.
 - ♦ Building awareness about citizen rights and police responsibilities.
- **Training and Sensitization:** Focusing on human rights, de-escalation techniques, and empathy in police training.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Leveraging technology like body cameras and public complaint portals to ensure openness.
 - ♦ Annual police accountability and performance reports in the public domain.
 - ♦ Make outcomes of custodial death trials public via NCRB dashboards.
- **Depoliticization:** Ensuring operational independence from political influence to uphold impartiality.
- Former Intelligence Bureau Chief **PC Halder** has emphasized the need for introspection within the police force, pointing out that **public safety and trust are foundational to effective policing**.
 - ♦ The legitimacy of law enforcement is compromised without these.

Daily Mains Practice Question

[Q] In the context of increasing public scrutiny and skepticism, discuss the challenges faced by the Indian police in maintaining public trust. Suggest measures that can help rebuild this trust

Source: IE

