

# Preface

The police in India evoke both fear and curiosity. Citizens are still unfortunately terrorized by khaki and they nurture considerable revulsion for misuse of power, corruption and brutality associated with the police department. However, there is also admiration when officers combat mafia killers, hunt rapists and pursue predators plaguing the society.

Unfortunately, there is little understanding of the roles being played by the police and the challenges they face in the democratic functioning of the country. It may be an exaggeration but the Indian police do play an important part in strengthening the democratic ethos of nation. Though maligned, derided and poorly treated, constables and subordinate personnel serving the police bravely battle stone throwing mobs, comb the ravines in summer heat to hunt for murderous gangs and walk the lofty mountains in knee deep snow to guard the frontiers. Despite being made a tool for serving vested interests of the ruling class and working under horrendous conditions, the Indian police nevertheless chalk notable achievements in safeguarding the people.

We have developed this book to provide a balanced picture of policing in the country. Our objectives are to provide a broad understanding of the role of police, its myriad functions, challenges and responses. Even though there are a large variety of police forces within the country, both state and central, there is little appreciation of their different roles and command structures. We describe these in some detail and also the variety of roles such as investigation of crime, maintenance of order, collecting intelligence and combating terrorism played by the police. We have provided insight into the tight noose that the Ministry of Home Affairs has struck around the police and ways in which it throttles reform efforts. We present evidence about the politicization of police but argue how it is also related to the limitations of professionalism within the police leadership. Though, the country is rapidly transforming from the economic boom there is little appreciation that the police is also keeping pace with technological advances and is updating its capabilities. We provide a separate chapter to discuss the technological applications in the police and ways in which recruitment and training can help assist in enhancing its proficiency. We also present an elaborate discussion about the interface between the police and human rights and discuss some of the major incidents like the Gujarat carnage where political considerations prevented the police from discharging its basic responsibilities. Finally, we examine the role of the police in terms of the democratic polity and speculate upon the future that awaits the police in the country.

We believe this presentation will help readers and concerned citizens improve their understanding of the police and appreciate its strengths and weaknesses. Police remains an important subject and plays a significant role in the society. In a democracy it is necessary that citizens understand the nature of the basic institutions that govern their lives. Unless a general knowledge and understanding comes there is little hope that citizens can participate meaningfully in the democratic processes that affect them. This book is for those who wish to understand an important institution of their country and we hope that this knowledge will compel many to begin participating in processes that can improve the policing system. For too

long, policing has been an isolated and neglected issue even though it affects the citizens in almost every possible manner. This book will hopefully draw attention to this neglected subject.

We wish to thank our publishers, LexisNexis, and particularly George Theimi, Editor; Legal Editors Prasenjit Das and Deepti Sarin; Sheeba Bhatnagar, Managing Editor and Debarati Banerjee for giving us this opportunity to develop and implement this project. The limitations are of course our own.

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