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PRESS RELEASE

Status of Policing in India Report (SPIR) 2018: A Study of Performance and Perceptions

New Delhi May 9: Common Cause and Lokniti Programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), launched India's first Status of Policing in India Report (SPIR 2018) at the India Habitat Centre today. The release was followed by a panel discussion on "People-Centric Policing and the Rule of Law."

The participants of the panel discussion were former Law Commission Chairman Justice A. P. Shah, former Union Minister and author Mr. Arun Shourie, former DGP and Indian Police Foundation Chairman Mr. Prakash Singh and Human Rights lawyer, Ms. Warisha Farasat. The discussion was chaired by Professor Suhas Palshikar Co-Director of Lokniti Programme.

The report sets out to ask hard questions on law enforcement in 22 states across India, and tries to study and evaluate policing in India. The report is a combination of performance and perception about policing through an analysis of official data and an elaborate perception survey. It also highlights the gaps and systemic inefficiencies which have become endemic in almost all states even though these have been flagged by CAG reports year after year.

SPIR 2018 also aims to spark national conversations around police-community relations as they exist in various Indian states. In fact, the analysis in this report is arranged primarily in terms of best or worst-performing states. The information is also given on parameters like age, gender, caste, community, urban/ rural or economic/educational status. The survey provides snapshots of levels of fairness and responsiveness of the criminal justice system to distress and crime, and the levels of accessibility and impartiality with respect to the society's vulnerable sections.

The performance indicators have been developed on the basis of official data for five years until 2016. Forty-three variables have been categorised into six main themes (i.e. crime rate, disposal of cases by police and courts, diversity in the police force, police infrastructure, prison data and disposal of cases of crimes against SCs/STs/ women and children.) The report also analyses critical deficiencies flagged by the CAG in its audit reports of 11 states spread over a decade.

The report brings out the fact that the states have a pro-active role to play in improving policing and making citizen's voice count. Therefore, this report is also aimed at those who would like to locate the performance of a particular state or study the specific details of sub-themes through detailed annexures at the end of the report. These are tabular representations of select objective data, state-wise compliances to Supreme Court guidelines and technical details of survey indices.

Key findings of the report are as follows:

- 82% respondents did not report any contact with the police in the last 4-5 years.

- Of all those who reported police contact, 67% contacted the police, whereas only 17% were contacted by the police. Of this, Adivasis (23%) are most likely to be contacted by the police, followed by Muslims (21%), OBCs (17%), Dalits (16%) and upper castes (13%).
- The rich contacted the police the most (74%) while the police contacted the poor most (21%). Likelihood of police contacting the person is nearly twice as high amongst the poor (21%) as compared to the rich (12%).
- 44% respondents reported significant fear of the police/ torture in some form.
- Sikhs, mainly in Punjab, reported the highest levels of fear among religious communities, with 37% saying they were highly fearful of the police (over double the national average).
- People are most likely to report class-based discrimination by the police (51%), followed by gender-based discrimination (30%), caste-based discrimination (26%) and religious discrimination by the police (19%).
- Thirty-eight percent respondents agreed that Dalits were falsely implicated in petty crimes, 28% agreed on false implication of Adivasis on charges of being Maoists, and 27% agreed on false implication of Muslims on terrorism related charges.
- When looking at the five-year average, only three out of the 22 selected states have been able to meet the reserved quota for SCs (Punjab, Uttarakhand, Delhi). Only six states have been able to fulfil the reserved quota for STs (Bihar, HP, Karnataka, Nagaland, Telangana, Uttarakhand) and only nine states have been able to meet the reservation quota for OBCs (AP, Assam, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Telangana, Uttarakhand). None of the states have been able to achieve the 33 percent benchmark for recruitment of women in police force.

An analysis of key findings of CAG audit reports:

- Shortage of staff quarters is a grave issue. In selected districts of Assam, the shortage proportion is 99%, in Bihar 80%, and 88% in Himachal Pradesh.
- 48 out of 50 women police personnel in MP cited problem of inconvenience (non-availability of proper toilets, seating, retiring and work spaces etc.).
- Under-utilisation of funds is as high as 71% in Bihar, 41% in UP and 32% in Assam signifying mismanagement of funds and lack of training infrastructure.
- UP surrendered over 80% of funds for training equipment due to inefficiency.

Full report can be downloaded from www.commoncause.in