

Meanwhile, Manoj Panara has filed a police complaint against unknown BJP workers of where he is shown donning a BJP scarf to indicate he has joined the saffron party.

# 'Free police force of political hindrance to hone performance'

## A study by Gujarat National Law University suggests separating investigative aspect from maintenance of law and order and setting up specialised complaint authority to ensure efficiency and accountability

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Study saw participation of police officers, judicial officials and lawyers as well

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**A**t a time when cops from Gujarat are under the scanner, an empirical study by Gujarat National Law University has suggested important reforms to improve police accountability and the criminal justice system. The study asserts on the immediate need to separate the investigative aspect from the maintenance of law and order.

It also stressed that a positive change can be brought about if the police decision-making process is freed from political interference.

The study titled 'Importance of Police Accountability and its Impact on the Governance of Criminal Justice System in the State of Gujarat' saw the participation of 469 respondents including 173 police officers, 296 judicial officers as well as lawyers including public prosecutors.

The study concentrated on four districts of Gujarat: Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat and Rajkot.

Conducted by faculty members Akil Ali Saiyad and Mardul Mishra, the study's objective was to identify flaws in the existing laws governing police functionaries, external influence affecting police accountability, and examine effect of police accountability on criminal justice as well as the administration system.

"In the present time, there's an urgent need to separate Law police (ones that conduct investigations) from the Order police (ones that maintain peace). Public acceptance is necessary for a police force to be efficient. The efficiency of the police will

### Reason for abuse of power

- 137 respondents pointed at political pressure for abuse of power
- 94 respondents indicated personal interest for abuse of power
- 133 respondents pointed at financial allurements for abuse of power
- 87 respondents voiced external patronage as reason for abuse of power
- 132 respondents said lack of political will hinders police accountability
- 101 respondents opined procedural safeguard as hindrance to police accountability

### Reason for acquittal of accused

- 98 respondents opined that the reason is improper and flawed investigation
- 107 respondents opined that reason is improper presentation by prosecution

### Observations made

- People should be made aware of law and job description of police
- Function of police system should be made more transparent so as to curb corruption
- Frequency and number of training programmes for cops need to be increased
- State Police Complaint Authority could be restructured
- Nature of complaint and bar on cognizance should be modified and recruitment procedure to police force may be made more rigorous with psychological and spiritual test

have a positive response if there is support from the public, hence reorganization and reorientation of the police force is essential to sensitize them to the needs of society," said Prof Saiyad.

He added, "One approach could be to reorganize the existing setup by removing deficiencies and anomalies and redesigning the training programme. Another approach, though radical, would be to break completely from the past, i.e., reconstitute the entire police force on a scientific basis

and in accordance with the needs of Indian society."

Other suggestions included making the investigative officer accountable if a person was acquitted due to flawed investigation.

It also suggested setting up a separate and specialised police complaint authority at State- and district-level to inquire into complaints filed against police officials. The police must be equipped with necessary training and resources to increase the level of performance, the study averred.