



When Brahmaputra meets rivers Meghna and Padma in Bangladesh, they together form the largest delta in the world.



Aditya Mishra, Additional Director General, CID, and Vira Sharma, Managing Editor, The Global Times with GT reporters

...of courage and valour

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How many of these estranged calls do you actually manage to resolve?

The statistics of resolving problems stand at 86% and 6% of these cases are directed towards the local police if prompt action is required. For instance, if someone has been shot or a car has crashed and we need reinforcement, the case is given to the nearest police station.

Dial 100 has been under the scanner for delayed responses. What is your take on that?

Firstly, we need to understand that it is a reactive helpline. A police unit is only dispatched after we receive the call. That takes time. Things have improved tremendously over the past few years. Our average state-wide response is now 15 minutes, which is not a huge gap. Earlier there were no dedicated vehicles for such emergency responses, but now we have around 5000 vehicles. On an average, we get 4 calls per vehicle and handling an emergency situation takes about an hour, which amounts to a 4 hour engagement. For the rest of the 20 hours, these vehicles patrol the streets to ensure the decorum. So, yes, the response rate has definitely become better.

On police department

The police department has always been on the receiving end of criticism. Why do you think that happens?

Well, truth be told, the system is weak. So, attracting criticism is inevitable. Secondly, people come to the police when there is a conflict between two parties. One of them would be wrong; or both may be partially wrong. So, as police tries to hear the grievance on both sides and resolve the issue, it is rather impossible to satisfy both the offended parties with a solution. There will always be one party that will be dissatisfied, which will eventually go on to generate negative feedback. Thirdly, India is not a very disciplined country. People make intentional mistakes like not wearing helmets or three people travelling on one bike, which does not just hurt them but puts everyone else in jeopardy, too. In such a scenario, it is difficult for us to be soft. The police has to take a tough stance, which is disliked by the offenders.

But it is hard to overlook the negative image associated with the police!

That negative image has been created over the years, and we will have to go a long way before we can even begin to alter it to a significant degree. Children,

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from a very young age, are fed with a negative image of the police instead of the opposite. A child is told that he will be handed over to the police if he is involved in mischief. Corrupt police officials playing villains in movies have also fostered this negative image. Besides, the media is not highlighting the positive things done by the department. The general feedback is also of a bad experience.

The popular opinion also suggests police as a bribe-taking, money-extorting entity. What is your take on that?

Allow me to share a story with you. When I was a student, the main means of transport we had was trains and because of such a huge crowd, getting a reservation was almost impossible. If you wanted one, you would have to bribe the Travelling Ticket Examiner. You get

your ticket and the TTE gets some extra money. Everyone is happy and nobody complains or minds that this was an illegal transaction and should not have happened. There is a lot of corruption happening in many departments which is not talked about because everybody is happy with it. Whereas, typically in a police department, if you face corruption, you shout about it because it leaves you with some dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Police is viewed as a very corrupt organisation, but if you actually look at the data, there are a lot of other organisations that are way more corrupt.

How do you plan to change this negative image into a positive one?

The police deals with negative situations, so I doubt the response we get will be anything but negative. A crime takes place, police comes and arrests you; we are rarely allowed to handle positive situations. But we try our best to make sure we do everything to help people in need. If an accident happens, we don't wait for an ambulance to come but rather provide the first-aid ourselves. We also have special call centers where someone is always providing the answers to people's queries. Every time our department engages in something good, we share it on our social media to promote a positive image. We want to showcase our positive work to balance out the negativity.

What are the biggest challenges faced by the police on a day-to-day basis?

We have a few problems of our own, one

of them is that we are a male-dominated force. 95% of constables in UP Police are men. In rural areas, women are hugely involved in conflicts and having no women constable sometimes creates difficulty. Another issue we face is that constables recruited in earlier days were not well-educated. Constables with poor educational background and no communication skills find it difficult to solve a problem. People appointed 20-30 years ago lack aptitude as well as attitude, making it our most difficult challenge.

Are there any measures being taken to overcome these challenges?

Of course, there are a lot of things in the pipeline. Now that we have 20% reservation for women, the number of women officers is finally rising. The qualification required to get into the police force has also been increased from an education till Class X to Class XII. This will help bring in educated personnel who will have a better aptitude for handling difficult situations. We, now, also focus more on training police officers properly.

What kind of pressures does the police department have to deal with?

Police department is a sector that lacks sufficient investment, making it a semi-deprived sector. Though what you see now is the new model that we have worked hard to build, but if you ask an average policeman, he still feels he is struggling with resources. For a state which has a population of almost 23 crores, the police force is of 2.3 lakh

which means the ratio is 1 police officer per thousand people, whereas, the international average is of 1:300. So, our constable is thrice as burdened as a constable in any other part of the world.

How do you deal with this stress?

The only way out, in any field, is to strike a perfect balance between one's personal and professional life. As a student too, you need to study hard but you also must find time to do things that you enjoy doing so that you have created a perfect balance for yourself.

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On signing off

What message would you like to give to the public?

The police is always with you. We have around the clock services just for your ease and for your help. Whenever you need us, trust me, we will be there without a doubt. There is no 'No'. 🇮🇳

Interview conducted by Anushree Doharay, Suhani Walia, Srishti Singh, Yashi Singh & Akshat Gurnami, AIS VYC Lucknow, IXA (This interview was conducted when Aditya Mishra was serving as ADG UP 100. He is currently ADG CID)



Aditya Mishra enlightens the GT reporters about the police and its many roles