

Only 7% women in India's police forces

Nationally, there are just 7% women in the police, and no state is able to fully meet its SC, ST and OBC quotas for police officers.

These are some of the findings, on the status of the police in India, of the first-ever India Justice Report (IJR), an initiative of Tata Trusts. The India Justice Report is a quantitative analysis of the capacity of the four pillars of justice - judiciary, police, prisons, and legal aid. This is the first time that these four pillars are being quantitatively studied together using six filters – budgets, human resources, work load, diversity, infrastructure and trends (change of the last five years). The report presents a state-wise picture of each pillar, in separate clusters, of 18 Large and Mid-sized states and seven Small states, basis population, and seven Union Territories (UTs) and 4 other 'unranked' states.

Sanctioned strength 193 / one lakh people

India, the world's second most populous country, has 151 police personnel per one lakh people. As a comparison, the police to people ratio in BRICS countries, like Russia and South Africa, is two to three times more though their population is far less.

Each state and UT sanctions police personnel based on budgets, area coverage, population distribution, and crime figures. Nationally, the sanctioned strength is 193 per one lakh people. In several states, the sanctioned strength itself is lower than the national average actual strength (151), going down to as low as 108. The actual strength per one lakh people in several states is even lower, the lowest being 75.

As of January 2017, the constabulary in 31 states and UTs fell short of the required numbers. Of the 18 Large and Mid-sized states, six had a shortfall of at least 25%. At the level of officers – starting from assistant sub-inspectors – who form the backbone of supervision, decision-making and planning, the shortfalls are even more critical. Except one, all others have shortfalls of various degrees, as of January 2017, ranging over 60% in some cases.

Between 2011 and 2017, constabulary vacancies increased in 10 of the 25 Large and Mid-sized and Small states. Officer level vacancy increased in 14.

As a result of all this, India's police cover is one for every 663 individuals, going as high as over 1,600 in some cases.

Unmet quotas

Several states and UTs have adopted various quotas for SCs, STs, OBCs and women in their Police forces. These are applied in direct recruitment at the entry level.

Nationally, a majority are struggling to meet these quotas. Only about six states and UTs against each diversity category each have managed to meet or exceed SC, ST, OBC quotas in the officer cadre.

None of the 19 states and UTs, which have 15% or more reservation for SCs in the officer cadre, have met the target and, on an average, the gap is 35%. None of the 14 states and UTs, with 15% or more reservation for STs in the officer cadre, too have failed to meet the target, the average gap being 44%.

The 22 states and UTs, with 15% or more reservation for OBCs in the officer cadre, too are below target, with an average gap of 55%.

Rs.820 per capita Police spend

As of January 2017, the average all-India per capita spend on policing is Rs. 820.

Most Large and Mid-sized states spend between three and five percent of their total budget on policing. Between 2011-12 and 2015-16, only 10 states' police expenditure exceeded the growth in total state expenditure.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs assists in modernisation through new buildings, technology and better equipment. Data for 2016-17 shows that only one state fully utilised the scheme. In 19 states and UTs, data for which is available, utilisation is below 60%.

Police Stations serve smaller urban areas

There are 15,488 Police stations in India, 9,932 to serve rural communities and 5,036 for the urban segment. The Report considers the area a police station covers, and the number of people served. In Large and Mid-sized states, one urban police station covers between 33,000 and 240,000 people. A rural police station serves between 30,000 and 233,000 people.

In 28 of the 30 states and UTs, data for which is available, the average area covered per rural Police station exceeds 150 sq. km; the National Police Commission (1981) suggests it should be 150 sq. km. Urban areas are better served; in 25 states and UTs, basis available data, the average area covered is below 20 sq. km.

The India Justice Report evidences such gaps and deficits at the level of each State and UT, allowing perusers to realise the urgency needed in repairing the system. This will allow duty holders and policymakers to identify where weaknesses are and undertake appropriate interventions with ease, working towards improving the overall capacity of the justice system to deliver to all citizens.