

Prakash Singh Committee

The Prakash Singh Committee is a key body in the Indian Polity. The police system in India is primarily governed by the Police Act of 1861, a colonial legacy. Over time, the police have become politically influenced, unaccountable, and plagued by inefficiency and corruption. Issues include misuse of police for political ends, lack of professionalism, insecure tenure, and eroded public trust. Prakash Singh, a former Director General of Police (DGP) of Assam and Uttar Pradesh, initiated this case. It was filed as a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court of India in 1996.

The nature of the committee pertains to the type of reform mandated by the Supreme Court in a 2006 judgment, which includes specific directives aimed at transforming both central and state police systems.

The Core Objectives of the Committee

- Protecting police independence from political interference is vital to restoring public trust and inspiring confidence in law enforcement.
- Ensure professional independence.
- Enhance clarity and openness in responses.
- Improve public confidence
- Modernize public operations.

The Seven Landmark Supreme Court Directives (2006) are central to the Prakash Singh Committee -

- a) The State Security Commission (SSC) is designed to prevent unnecessary political interference in police operations. Its members include the Chief Minister or Home Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Director General of Police (DGP), and independent members from the judiciary and civil society. The SSC's responsibilities encompass setting broad policy guidelines, assessing police performance, and ensuring police independence. It functions as a buffer body, mediating between the government and the police to maintain operational autonomy.
- b) The selection and minimum tenure of the DGP involve choosing the DGP from the most senior officers listed by the UPSC. The tenure is set at a minimum of two years, with no arbitrary removal. This aims to promote stability and independence at the top leadership level.

- c) The minimum tenure for key police officers, including DGP, IG, SP, and SHO, is 2 years. This policy aims to prevent frequent transfers that could be used as punishments or to exert political influence.
- d) The Separation of Investigation from Law and Order holds that responsibilities tied to law and order can obstruct effective investigation, leading to lower conviction rates. The reform suggests creating separate units for law and order duties and for crime investigation. This separation enhances the quality of investigations, speeds up justice, and boosts professionalism.
- e) The Police Establishment Board (PEB) includes the DGP and senior officers. Its functions cover transfers, postings, promotions (below DGP rank), and disciplinary matters.
- f) The Police Complaints Authority (PCA) is an independent body established to address public complaints. The state-level PCA handles complaints against senior officers, while district-level PCs deal with allegations against lower-ranked officers. The PCA covers issues such as custodial deaths, rape, corruption, and abuse of power. It aims to improve police accountability and protect human rights.
- g) The National Security Commission (NSC) oversees the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). Its responsibilities include selecting chiefs, setting minimum tenures, and managing policies.

Constitutional and Administrative Significance

Its federal aspect concerns policing being a state subject (List II, Seventh Schedule), but the Supreme Court intervened under **Articles 32 and 142** to deliver complete justice. This case is a landmark example of judicial activism.

Implementation

- Implementation remains limited to a few states, underscoring the need for stronger political will to realize reform goals and improve police accountability nationwide.
- In most states, partial compliance is observed.
- The watering down of reforms involves common
- The political resistance involves a high level of status.

Common Tactics

- Weak SSCs dominated by political influence
- Advisory (non-binding) nature of SSC recommendations

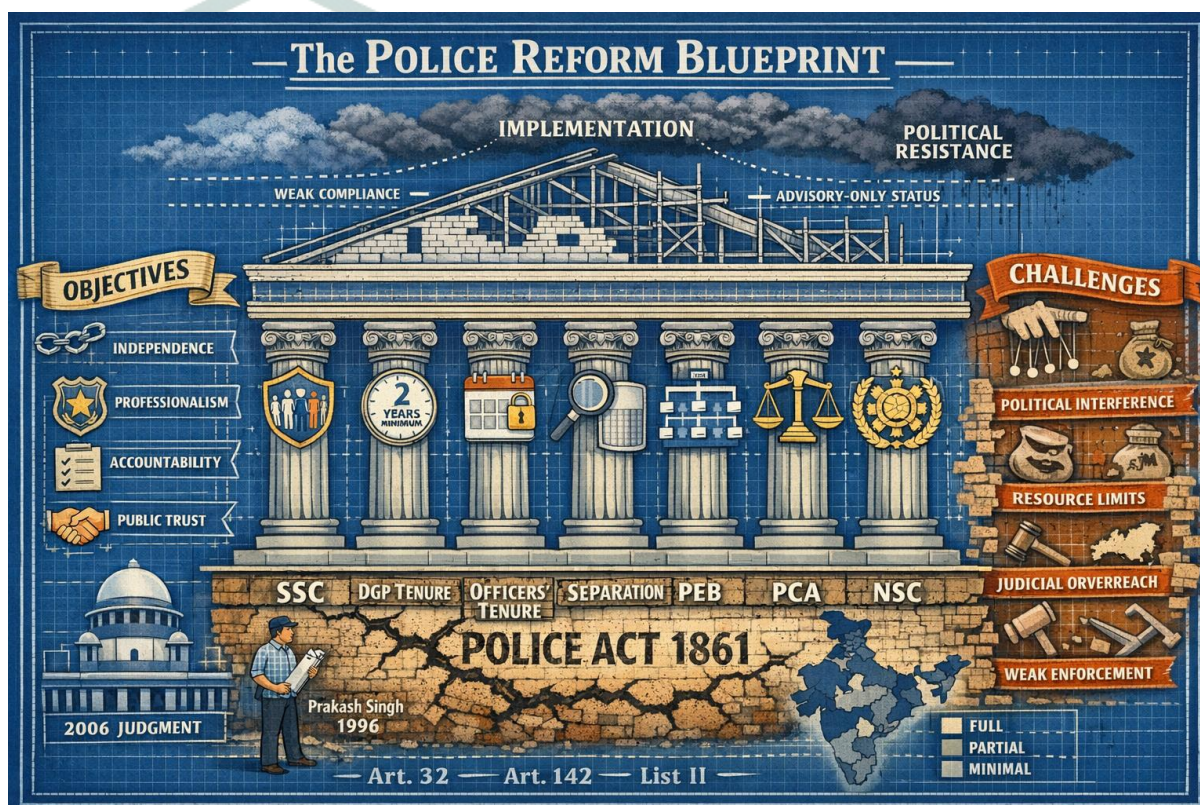
- PCA without true independence
- No clear division in the investigation.

Criticism of the Prakash Singh Reforms

- States undermine the spirit of reforms.
- The discussion of judicial overreach highlights federalism concerns.
- The lack of an effective enforcement mechanism hampers the full realization of the reforms, raising questions about how compliance can be improved.
- Reluctance exists among political figures.
- Limitations in resources and workforce

In Brief

The Prakash Singh Committee is a key judicial effort in India's police reforms, aimed at shielding the police from political interference and improving professionalism, accountability, and public trust. Nevertheless, its effectiveness has been hindered by a lack of strong political commitment.



Police Reforms in India



CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS

- Police and Public Order: State subjects (7th Schedule)



NEED FOR REFORM

- Colonial Law
- Custodial Death
- Lack of Accountability
- Political Interference
- Poor Gender Sensitivity
- Communal/Caste Bias
- No Anti-Torture Law



RELATED DATA

- Police-People Ratio:** 153 police/100,000 people (Global benchmark: 222 police /100,000 people)
- Custodial Deaths:** 175 in 2021-2022 (as per MHA)
- Women's Share:** 10.5% of entire force (India Justice Report 2021)
- Infrastructure:** 1 in 3 police stations is equipped with CCTV (India Justice Report 2021)



IMPORTANT COMMITTEES/COMMISSION



RELATED INITIATIVES

- SMART Policing** (pan-India)
- Automated Multimodal Biometric Identification System (**AMBIS**) (Maharashtra)
- Real Time Visitor Monitoring System** (uses **AI and blockchain**) (Andhra Pradesh)
- CyberDome** (Tech R&D Centre) (Kerala)



CHALLENGES WITH POLICING

- Low Police-Population Ratio
- Political Superimposition
- Unsatisfactory Police-Public Relations
- Infra Deficit
- Corruption
- Understaffed/Overburdened

WAY FORWARD

- ↑ Police Budget, Resources
- ↑ Recruitment Process
- Implement Measures to Reduce Corruption
- ↑ Skills of Policemen
- Better Representation (Women, Minorities)



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