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Community Policing Versus Human Rights, Law and Order and Public Safety in Tehsil Charsadda: A Critical Assessment

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Abstract

Community policing is an innovative concept in Pakistan. However, it has its roots in British colonial period. The changing dynamics of society, patterns of crimes, disputes and their solutions have forced the policy makers and law enforcing agencies to introduce reforms in the exiting policing system so as to dispense justice, to protect basic rights and to restore law and order in the society. This paper is consisted of three parts. Part-I deals with Introduction, literature review and methodology. Part-II deals with brief evolution of police reforms in Pakistan. Part-III deals with the challenges, recommendations and conclusion.

Keywords: *Community policing, human rights, Dispute Resolution Council, Charsadda.*

Introduction

The significance of community policing in safeguarding human rights cannot be overlooked. It helps to promote a model policing system that is police-public partnership, accountability of police, and swift response to meet public needs. Frequent consecutive police-public interactions through various mechanisms like organising open public gatherings and filing of complaints against the police officials engaged in exercising abuse of powers. Such mechanism helps to build up trust between the common citizens and police officials. On the other side, it also helps to safeguard human rights, and discourages unlawful actions like illegal detention, physical and mental torture, extra-judicial killings etc (Davis, 2010).

In addition, community policing enables the citizens to identify their local problems and to sort out their solutions at door-steps so as to dispense justice to aggrieved people. Moreover, this system also helps to protect the rights of weaker segments in a society like women, children, senior citizens, minorities, and special people. It also helps to resolve family disputes in an amicable manner (Wassan, 2023).

For this study, Tehsil Charsadda, District Charsadda has been selected. It has three tehsils Tangi, Shabqadar, and Charsadda. District Charsadda is consisted of 996 square km with

1.84 m) population (according to 2023 census); out of it 84 % of population lives in rural 16% lives in urban areas (Population Census, 2023).

In 2008 the militancy was intensified that forced the local tribal people of former tribal areas to Charsadda wherein they became settled. This resulted in exacerbation of crimes in the locality and created law and order situation therein. In such adverse environment, the local traditional police could not identify the criminals. Corollary, the security engineers pondered over introducing community policing to establish a parallel swift policing and justice system at door-steps of general masses (Gondal, 2023).

This study aims to examine community policing as a progressive approach of policing, assessing its effectiveness in affirming law and order situation, protection of human rights and how it could contribute to the effective governance of public safety in district Charsadda. The main area of my research will be tehsil Charsadda. Further-more this study explores that how community policing initiatives—such as police-community liaison committees, dispute resolution council, and public awareness campaigns by police official, joint setting of police and community members and information technology initiatives—effect public trust on police, crime rates, and overall perceptions of security and its role in public safety and protection of human rights.

Literature Review

For this study both local and international literature has been chosen to find out research gap. Some of these are following. Brogden & Nijhar highlighted the importance of community policing as a concept and pointed out its origination of this concept in western countries (like USA, UK, and France) and Japan. The authors declared this system as more accountable, sensitive and community-oriented mechanism for crime prevention and ensuring public security (Brogden & Nijhar, 2005). Najero in his study tried to explain the nature of urban crime from social, political, diplomatic, economic and historical perspectives; and also pointed the various issues like lack of resources, lack of modern training, inadequate investigation system, notorious Thana culture and lack of coordination within police and with public in Karachi (Najero, 2023). Dempsey and others pointed out the paradigm shift from traditional policing system to community policing in America (Dempsey et al., 2019). Aziz and Mustafa comprehensively highlighted the history of policing system, its organisational structure, major challenges to it, and some doable suggestions to improve the overall policing system (Aziz and Mustafa, 2023). Nawaz and others analyzed the community policing initiatives in KP province from the perspective of citizen-police relations; and also discussed legal reform in KP police like The KP Police Act 2017 and Community-Oriented Policing, Dispute Resolution Council (DRCs), and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) (Nawaz et al., 2019). Imam tried to mention the significance community-police relations and its role in minimizing the crime ratio and the implementation of law and order (Imam, 2022). Hussain and Sanauddin held their research study in District Kohat and pintoed out various issues like police's ignorance of community policing, its reluctance to loss authoritative power, its less attention to community policing (CP) and lack of facilities in police stations (Hussain and Sanauddin, 2023). Aslam and others held their study in Karachi's urban

areas and found high crime ratio therein due migration of people from rural areas and high population congestion in addition to other factors. She considered CP as an appropriate mechanism to overcome such problems and also to resolve disputes among local people through speedy and cheap justice system (Aslam et al., 2024).

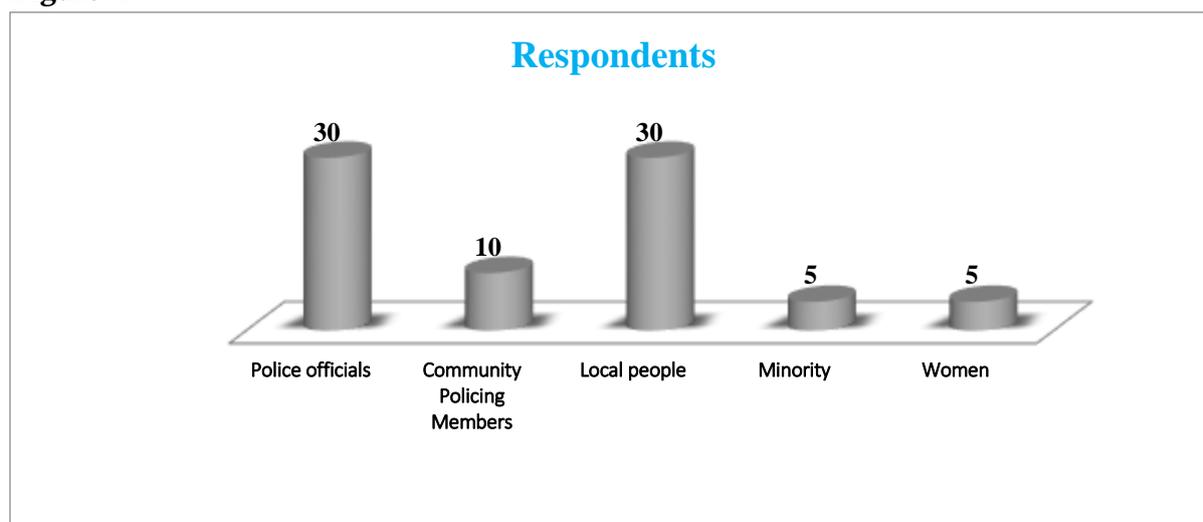
Kahlon has pointed out the importance of check and balance and accountability of police; and discussed various reforms introduced in policing system (Kahlon, 2020). Hussain made a comparative study of traditional and community policing in Pakistan and US.; and declared the failure of former system in Pakistan due to its weak socio-economic and political system; while the success of latter system in USA due to its strong economic and socio-political base (Hussain et al., 2024). Saeed comprehensively discussed the concept of community policing and highlighted its role in bridging the gap between police and general masses by eroding the trust deficit. On the other side, he pointed out the major issues (unpleasant behavior of police official, malpractices, Thana culture, lack of public trust and lack of external accountability mechanism on police) involved in hindering this system in Pakistan (Saeed, 2014). Khan conducted his research based study and relied on both primary and secondary sources for data collection; and discussed the police reforms introduced during 2013 and 2015 and also briefly highlight community policing (Khan, 2016).

The literature review generates a question that if the community policing is an effective approach of policing then why is it ineffective in tehsil Charsadda?

Methodology

This study is based on primary (structured-interview composed of opened closed-ended questions, structured questionnaire and participatory observation) and secondary (research articles, official reports, books and national and international newspapers) sources. Purposive-Stratified sample police official, non-police member of community policing, women, minority, and local government members will be interviewed

Figure-1



A mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative) approach has been followed for this study. MS Excel is used for quantitative data collected through questionnaire. In addition, thematic analysis method is used for qualitative data.

Evolution of Police Reforms

The concept of policing has its roots in Greek and Medieval eras. During those eras, slaves were assigned the task to maintain law and order. However, there was no established mechanism or institution to observe law and order in the society (Khan, 2026). The Roman established the Vigile system (Rernorld, 1926).

Charles Reith, a famous English historian, pointed out that community-based policing system was a transition from “Kin police” of 10th century wherein people used to perform policing function. Later on, Frankpledge system and Parish constable system were introduced (Khan, 2026). Later on, Sir Robert Peel (the former Home secretary of Great Britain) established London Metropolitan Police Force. This police initiative earned him the title of the father of modern police system (Lewis, 2011).

In the Mughal period, the Zamindar system was established for maintaining peace in the assigned territory. Likewise, the institution of Kotwal in urban areas enjoyed the power to collect revenue, enforce law, and also municipal administration functions. At village level, the village headman was responsible of crime control and public safety (Khan, 2026). In the pre-colonial period in subcontinent, there was decentralized informal policing function system (Khan, 2026). In the post-colonial era, British Empire introduced Police Act, 1861 in the sub-continent. Later on, it also introduced Police Rules, 1934. In the post-independence period, Metropolitan Police system in Karachi was introduced in 1948 (Khan, 2026).

In addition, Police school of investigation (May 2014), Police School of Intelligence, Police School of Tactics (July 2014), Police School of Explosive Handling (Feb 2015), School of Public Disorder and riot Management, Counter Terrorism Department (Nov 2013), Rapid Response Force (RRF) were established in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Moreover, the government introduced legal reforms like KP Rented Building (Security), Act 2014, KP Restriction of Hotel Business Act 2014, etc (Khan, 2026).

Brief Account to Community Policing

The first document which is considered a move toward community policing in Pakistan is Police Order 2002. Under this order public safety commission were formed at provincial level and public safety and complaints commission at district level. Another major developments of community policing were the establishment of Dispute Resolution Council (DRC), Police Complaint Redressal Authority (PCRA), Police Access Service (PAS), SOS (police security alert service), and Police Assistance Line (PAL). ‘Ulati police’ program launched in 2016 to 2017 by the assistance of USAID small grant and ambassador’s fund on CRSS platform was instrumental in public awareness about police system. These developments were initiated by the efforts of the then KP IGP Nasir Khan Duranni. In 2017 the KP Government passed “KP Police Act 2017”. This law is considered a major legal document of introducing community policing in KP (Zahid Ullah, & Tayyub, 2023).

Major issues of Community Policing

During study the following major issues have been found like unawareness on part of most of the police officials and general public about CP, lack of accountability in police

department, police reluctance to loss its monopoly over power, Lack of facilities to police, overload of work on police due to militancy and terrorism, prevalence of traditional Thana culture, bribery etc (Khan, 2026).

In addition, lack of binding force for implementing the DRC panel decision, lack of representation of women and minority in the panel, and no such budgetary allocation for DRC members are some issues in DRC. Moreover, Liaison committees at tehsil level and Public Liaison Council at village council level do not exist on in most of the police stations. Public member avoids work in PLCs due to non-cooperative attitude of police. The the illegal and unlawful demands of members of PLCs is also a serious issue Khan, 2026). Likewise, public unawareness about their rights and duties, unawareness about digital platforms- such as PAS, SOS, online complaint against police officials system, non-cooperative public behaviour etc are some issues on part of general masses (Khan, 2026)

Recommendations

On the basis of findings on research topic the following recommendation are proposed. These recommendation would help policy makers in making effective and community friendly policies for KP police. Due to semi urban nature of tehsil and district Charsadda as case study, the findings are potentially applicable to both rural areas and urban areas.

These study will offer a comprehensive program for police leader ship to effectively implement the reform made in KP police system and the police community oriented.

The study has also the importance of community stake holders and human right activists. The study has linked the new approach of policing- community policing- with human rights. It is analyzed that how community policing initiatives in tehsil Charsadda- such as DRC, Public liaison committee, digital apps through which public can table their issue and give suggestions to police for better performance of the police.

During survey, several multi-dimensional recommendations have been proposed (Khan, 2026). For public, their awareness about rights and duties, awareness about proper use of social media platform for CP, and awareness about moderate policing initiatives are essential. In addition, their cooperation with police is also important to prevent crimes in the society. Moreover, some institutional initiatives needs to be taken like institutionalization of CP, opening of DRC offices in each police station in District Charsadda, involving expert citizens in DRC, granting representation to women, transgender and minorities in DRC, and activation of Public liaison committee (PLCs) in all others police stations.

Besides these, some human resource reforms are also needed like imparting proper training to police officials about conflict resolutions, community engagements, and basic human rights, assigning community policing role especially to police officials having specialization in mediation and communication training and deputing educated, polite, legal experts as Muharar and his staff in police station. Likewise, complaint mechanism like PAS, SOS, Pakistan citizen portals should be made more accessible and efficient; and an efficient and strong feedback mechanism for digital complaint services needs to be promoted. Similarly, periodic meetings of public representatives with DPO and DSP need to be held so as to get feedback on the performance of police and with the collaboration of

public devise adequate strategy for overcoming the shortcoming in policing. In addition, budget should be allocated to DRC and liaison committee members so the public would be able and encouraged to help and offer regular services to police.

Conclusion

In the light of aforementioned discussion one can arrive at a conclusion that human-made laws and institutions always subject to overhaul from time to time. Likewise, community policing system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a positive step to establish public-police liaison to sit on a table and to discuss the local issues pertaining to crimes and also to sort out their doable solutions. In addition, it is also helpful to resolve the disputes local people at door-steps rather to go court and spend huge amount on litigation. However, there are some grey areas in it which needs to be addressed by bringing reforms in it so as to make it a more vibrant justice system.

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