Impact of Effective Policing on Nation's Economic Development: Making Delhi Police a Model Police Force in the World

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Introduction

Distinguished Police Commissioner Mr Rakesh Asthana, former police commissioners and senior officials of Delhi Police and ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to address you today at the inaugural event of Delhi Police's Learning Lectures series, as you celebrate your Platinum Jubilee Raising Day.

Seventy-five years of a police force managing the law and order of the capital of India is a huge achievement. In so many ways, the evolution, growth and progress of Delhi is closely linked with Delhi Police.

First, let me commend you on your great service, not just to Delhi but also to the rest of the country. Managing the safety and security of a city with nearly 3 crore people is no mean task. In fact did you know, Delhi's population is more than that of the entire population of the countries of New Zealand and the Netherlands?

Delhi is the seat of the Indian government and home to the Parliament, Supreme Court, Rashtrapati Bhavan, and all Union government ministries. This makes security an especially sensitive task.

I would also like to thank you for your tireless and relentless work during the Covid-19 crisis. Even at the cost of losing personnel, you remained steadfast in your duty. I salute Delhi Police.

According to a survey conducted a few years ago, the consensus among the general public was that crime greatly affected the 'ease of living'. And ease of living is positively linked to the economic development and prosperity of a nation. It is in this context that the role of police becomes critical.

Criminal activity discourages domestic and foreign direct investments, reduces competitiveness of businesses, and creates uncertainty and inefficiency in the business environment. An efficient law and order system and crime-investigation processes are must for orderly growth and economic progress.

I am glad to speak on a topic I feel strongly about: the role of police as an agent of social change, and specifically how Delhi Police can become so by orienting itself as a model police force.

India's Economic Development, Reform Agenda and Techological Disruptions

Today, India is witnessing unprecedented levels of economic development and technological disruptions. The economy grew at 9% and is expected to grow at similar rates in the coming years, making us one of the fastest-growing large economies in the world.

Mammoth reforms have been undertaken by the Government of India: GST, IBC, RERA, lowering of corporate tax, de-monopolization of coal, new definitions of MSMEs, to name a few These are not just bold structural reforms, but also mark the introduction of innovative and path-breaking schemes for making India a global manufacturing champion and an export hub of the world. If you look at the chronology of reforms, you will see that they all add up to the vision of an aspirational India.

Take the Performance-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, for instance. The PLI schemes are aimed at creating long-term solutions, specifically designed to boost domestic manufacturing in sunrise and strategic sectors like battery storage, mobile manufacturing, clean mobility and solar PV manufacturing. The minimum production in India as a result of the PLI schemes is expected to be over USD 520 billion in the next five years, which will make us an integral part of the global value chains.

The government has rolled out some truly robust infrastructure schemes such as the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), National Monetization Pipeline (NMP) and PM GatiShakti. Their combined effect will ensure integrated development of world-class infrastructure, with the participation of both the government and private sector. Innovative financial models such as infrastructure investment trusts, REITS, etc., are also being introduced across the infrastructure space.

With the necessary macro- and micro-growth drivers in place, the stage is set for the investment cycle to start and catalyze sustainable growth for cementing India's position as the world's fastest-growing major economy for the long term.

India's successful vaccination drive has played a crucial role in protecting lives and livelihoods and accelerating economic recovery. So far, India has administered over 170 crore vaccine doses—over 95 crore first doses, more than 73 crore second doses, and around 1.45 crore precautionary doses. This is a herculean achievement. We have the world's largest health insurance scheme, Ayushman Bharat, which has a beneficiary base of 50 crore Indians. Just as there cannot be accelerated and inclusive development without strengthening of socio-economic outcomes through such schemes, we cannot think of economic development without a modern, forward-looking and efficient police force.

Digitization has played a crucial role in empowering Indian citizens and unleashing transformative changes in their lives. We have over 750 million mobile internet users today—with a new internet user added to the list every 3 seconds. The powerful backbone that we have created in the form of the JAM trinity has given a completely new dimension to financial inclusion in the country. The most path-breaking initiative has been the UPI, which has totally revolutionized the payment ecosystem. As a result

of this approach, we now have some of the best fintech startups who are providing basic as well as niche services.

With increasing access to tech-based infrastructure, electricity, affordable internet connectivity and concerted policy support, we are well-poised to leap forward and become a global digital hub. Since the launch of the Startup India movement in 2016, we have already become the third-largest startup ecosystem of the world.

How Delhi Police is Positioned to Aid India's Development Story

Delhi Police is already seen as an efficient organization. Given the vulnerability of a city like Delhi due to it being the national capital and the challenges on the security front posed by forces inimical to this country, Delhi Police has succeeded in preventing any major terrorist-related incidences in the last many years.

Delhi Police has deftly prevented and detected heinous offences and maintained law and order efficiently. The police's humane touch in the management of the pandemic is exemplary and other police forces in the world can learn from you.

The incumbent government is very supportive of the police and committed to the maintenance of excellent law and order. The government has also undertaken several police reforms—from changing the format of the annual conference of DGPs by holding it in different parts of the country to the Prime Minister himself spending 2–3 days with the DGPs in all the deliberations and providing his insights and inputs, to radically increasing budget allocations, etc. It is imperative that the Prime Minister's initiatives for increasing the pace of economic, industrial and infrastructure growth are reciprocated by police leadership.

A pre-requisite of economic development is abiding the rule of law. This fosters safety, security and a trust in society, which enables millions of transactions. In modern economies, some projects are large and require protection through the Contract Act. Also, economic activities are stimulated when there are fewer uncertainties and verification processes are efficient. Police has a major role in this. In fact, police, as the most visible face of the government, should inspire a great sense of confidence.

You at Delhi Police have a huge opportunity to transform the police force. You are at a historical juncture to emerge as a model police organization. Your ambition should be to emerge as the best police organization in the world, and not just in India.

Evolving as a Model Police Force: Adaptability and Agility are Keys

Within the four corners of law, there is ample scope of interpretation to facilitate the development agenda. But often colonial, age-old and flat-footed mindsets and attitudes become serious obstacles in the execution of developmental ideas, projects and/or schemes.

Serious and sometimes deliberate misuse of criminal laws in business and/or development contracts/activities through police or courts have become a common modus operandi of unscrupulous

elements and the police often becomes a party to this wittingly or unwittingly. One wrong step can undo years of hard work, destroy the potential of success of big projects, or lead to the folding up of budding startups as they suffer setbacks. This impacts the credibility of the police force and by extension, the government. This needs to change.

Police have to become an important actor in India's development story and I think you at Delhi Police must lead the way. The first step is to become an enabler of social and economic change and not a status quo-ist.

Discard the notion, maintained in some quarters of the force, to maintain the status quo. Until recently, a good police officer was one who could keep their area quiet. Their objective was to ensure that an event took place 'peacefully'.
But in a country experiencing very rapid social transformation, the police is increasingly being seen as an important 'facilitator' of this change. The police must be perceived as facilitators in bringing about India's economic progress in every which way.

Simultaneously, there is a need to conscientiously obliterate the perception of being obstructionist and to encourage fair, just and legal developmental activities.

You have to uphold the rule of law and create an environment of peace, safety and security. You also have to provide the necessary services to businesses such as verification and licensing in a time-bound manner because these have financial implications.

We must understand that most institutions we see today were created decades ago, at a time when success was measured not by adaptability, pro-activeness, and agility, but instead by the ability to maintain stability—that is, maintain the status quo. My firm belief is that no modern institution can succeed if it exists only to maintain the status quo.

The success of a modern institution, therefore, is measured by its agility and adaptability. In the context of a police force, adaptability and agility are crucial for the prevention of crime. This means constantly evolving oneself, taking risks, and innovating and embracing technology.

Take a country like Estonia, for instance. It is known to be a global pioneer in e-governance. As much as 99% of all its citizen services can be accessed online. Tax filings can be done in less than five minutes, and people can access all their healthcare information from a decentralized database, which is blockchain-protected. This requires, most important of all, a vision.

The Government of India, today, has that vision—which is why we have been able to open bank accounts using Aadhar, link them with our mobiles and totally revolutionize digital payments. The National Digital Health Mission will lead to a unique health ID for all Indians, allowing patients to share their health records with consent with different health providers, thus making way for healthcare that is personalized. It will bring down the administrative costs of hospitals and streamline processes. In fact, this is happening across all sectors in India.

This vision is to use technology to leapfrog. However, it is not just the government that should have this vision, but also every single institution associated with the government. Without the vision, we won't be able to achieve our goals. You should have this vision—a vision to make Delhi Police the most agile, tech-friendly and modern police force of India.

This is where technology comes into play. There is a need to go digital, lean and agile; and startups are the best placed to provide the tech, solutions and impetus for this. Global examples of such solutions that turn complex information into one that can be used to reach meaningful conclusions are OpenGov, Transitmix, Appalacious and Social Glass.

Role of Technology: Suggestions and Way Forward

I would especially like to highlight the opportunity offered by technological changes, which are fundamentally changing every organization and work culture. Given the complex nature of your work— from working for the citizenry on the ground as the first responder, predictive analyses of crime to calibrate your response, to the use of technology in intelligence activities to modern weaponry and gadgets—I think no other organization can take advantage of these changes and re-invent itself as Delhi Police can.

Today, technological convergence is critical. I recently read *The Future is Faster than You Think* by Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler. Although this book is not written by a police officer, I recommend that all of you read it. It will compel you to think, to realize that change is inevitable, that it will be based on convergence, and that it will be driven by technology. It will compel you to take a solutions-oriented approach.

I read about Moore's law in this book. In 1965, the founder of Intel, Gordon Moore, noticed that transistors on an IC had been doubling every 18 months. So every one and a half years, a computer became twice as powerful and yet its cost remained the same. Moore's law is the reason why the smartphone in your pocket is a thousand times smaller, a thousand times cheaper and a million times more powerful than a supercomputer from the 1970s. And this trend is only growing. But this is not just limited to ICs and chips. Ray Kurzweil, Director of Engineering at Google in the nineties, had stated that this law extends to technology in general. Once a technology becomes digital, it will follow Moore's law: we will use new technologies to design even newer and better technologies and this trend will continue exponentially. This is what is known as the law of accelerating returns.

The point here is that the most powerful tool of transformation today is technology, and organizations and institutions that do not recognize this fact will either wither away or lose their relevance.

Use Data to Foster Healthy Competition

Data is an immensely powerful tool to revolutionize governance and bolster citizen-centric delivery of services. We have used this for improving the ease-of-doing business as well as in the Aspirational

Districts Programme. Let me give you an example. In the Aspirational Districts Programme, we selected 112 of the most backward districts of India and used convergence, collaboration and competition to drive reforms across socio-economic parameters. We rank these districts on how well they perform across a number of indicators—this has led to immensely healthy competition. It has pushed districts to compete and work towards improving their rankings by taking concrete developmental action. Today, some of these districts, as per an independent UNDP assessment, are doing better than others in the country. In fact, in the Union Budget, the Finance Minister stated that 95% of these districts have, in fact, surpassed state averages.

I strongly encourage you to leverage data-driven competition to improve police services. Pick up a few key indicators of law and order, crime prevention and conviction rates. Ask a third party to rank various police stations across these parameters and put this out in the public domain. I am certain that you will see a renewed vigor in the SHOs of these stations to initiate action to improve their rankings, thereby bringing down criminal activities and ensuring a higher conviction rate in their jurisdictions.

Use Tech to Bring Certainty in Systems

Justice delayed is justice denied. Police plays a major role in taking the evidence to the courts. However, police stations are also involved in numerous day-to-day activities, which include providing verifications and no-objection certificates of different kinds to citizens.

Citizens' lives will be transformed if government departments, including those of the police, provide maximum information and services through their portals by respecting the defined processes and timelines. For instance, providing the status of a complaint or timely intimation of the next steps involved. Today, while almost every police force in the country has an online reporting system of some kind, they encompass processes that are cumbersome. Secondly, where online processes are used, please do not replicate and duplicate paperwork.

In the government, we often refer to a reduction in compliance burden as the key to ensuring the success of businesses and startups. If we can bring down hundreds of complex forms to one simple form, we can make things easier for businesses and enable more of them to want to enter the space. Similarly, crime-reporting should be a simple process. Click a picture, let the app pick up your coordinates, enter a description, and you should get a call-back from the police. Strive towards this.

Tech for Digitization and Real-Time Data and Situation Management

Digitization of all available data on a single platform is a must. GIS and a robust data backbone can make even policing highly effective. A police official on patrol will greatly benefit if her jeep has on board computers with access to GIS software and additional datasets, such as information on known criminals, history-sheeters, etc. Police departments across the world use such tools to check in real-time how many parolees or probationers are recently released on their beat, the conditions of their release, and if they have violated any of these conditions.

Delhi Police and its police stations have a lot of data—they are data-rich. They should use this data on a real-time basis and utilize the power of data analytics to become data-intelligent.

Police forces must not stop at the digitization of records. Their focus must be on automated record management systems. These should be linked to computer-aided dispatches. Essentially, our available records should be on a real-time basis and linked to real-time response to emergency situations. These would vastly aid GIS and hot-spot policing, location-based information.

The police forces of India, at large, must think of a centralized information storehouse. The police in the US, for instance, hold large volumes of data on immigration, criminal records, tax infringements, etc., in a single database. On the other hand, India does not have a single database for the same. Most of the information is scattered. Our ability to link real-time information systems and databases across various police jurisdictions in the country would provide a huge impetus to modernization and efficiency enhancement of policing.

Here, as you all must be aware of, the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) aims at setting up a comprehensive and integrated system through the adoption of e-governance and creation of a nationwide networking infrastructure for IT-enabled investigation of crime and detection of criminals.

Delhi Police has proven its technological prowess by achieving the first rank in the implementation of CCTNS. Riding on this momentum, Delhi Police should lead the nation towards the trinity of nodes of the criminal justice system: the police, courts and prisons.

Tech for Criminal Investigation and Patrolling

Delhi Police must bring home to India global path-breaking technologies. If these are successful in Delhi, then they can be considered for replication in the rest of the country. For instance, there is technology to detect gunshots based on microphones and acoustics installed in crime-prone areas. These have proven to be so highly effective that during a shooting incident in California, the police were able to apprehend the perpetrator, who was on a killing spree, in less than 5 minutes! These are the kind of technologies that we must be more open towards.

In fact, when it comes to focusing on criminals, AI, ML and neural networks based on predictive modelling can become a core pillar of pro-active policing. A key issue that the police encounter is to grapple with the challenge posed by repeat offenders. Police departments in many parts of the world are now using predictive modelling to predict the likelihood of a perpetrator committing a crime again, and subsequently designing supportive programmes to reduce such possibilities.

We deploy drones during high-profile events or during tense situations. However, I feel drones should become a part of active policing. These should be used for routine patrolling, especially in vulnerable spots such as crime-prone areas, poorly lit stretches of roads, etc. This would not just instill a sense of confidence among citizens but also prevent crime, including those against women.

3D crime-scene imaging is quickly becoming an indispensable aspect of policing in the developed countries. From quickly gathering data at the scene to preserving it for later analysis and creating effective presentations for criminal trials, the laser scanner is proving to be a critical tool for crime scene investigators. This allows all evidence to be permanently mapped on the crime scene, and reduces the

likelihood of criminals walking away scot-free on account of lack of evidence. This would be the future of forensic technology.

Tech for Effective Traffic Management

Another challenge that Delhiites face is traffic congestions. In a fast-growing country, loss of time is equivalent to a reduction in productivity, and we simply cannot risk that. Congestion and traffic snarls lead to increased pollution by idling vehicles. This is simply not acceptable in a world where climate action is becoming increasingly important. Our approach, however, has been reactive and not pro-active. This needs to change. We should not think of clearing traffic jams, our management should be such that they do not occur in the first place.

Today, traffic signals in Delhi are interlinked. They are standalone. They do not react actively to the traffic situation. So if a signal is programmed to turn green after 120 seconds, it will still do that irrespective of whether the entire stretch becomes choked or is completely deserted, or how the traffic situation is at nearby intersections. This has a ripple effect across the city. I know that you are working towards smart traffic signals, but this must be a city-wide initiative, without which we will not see any desired effect on scale.

Here, we must take a cue from what is happening across the world. Traffic signals are interlinked with each other, they are fed by pressure sensors on roads, they are fed by real-time GPS data and they react in real-time to evolving traffic situations without the need for manual intervention. If we are able to do this in Delhi, we would be able to set an example for the other cities in the country.

You should think about deploying geospatial technologies, drones, AI and ML to predict not just choke-points from a congestion point of view, but also areas where accidents and traffic violations are most likely to occur, and use data to react accordingly.

Providing a Healing Touch to Victims

Our system is such that when viewed from the perspective of the victim who has already borne the brunt of the crime, it seems the police has an onerous task to provide a healing touch.

For instance, victims of heinous crimes may require trauma counseling, psychiatric and rehabilitative services besides legal aid. Organizing victim-support services at the police-station level must be a priority. My personal view is that at the hour of need, women police officials are much better placed in providing support to the victims of crimes. Therefore, we need more women in the police forces.

Community-Oriented Policing/Learning from Best Practices

When police and communities come together to share the responsibility of community policing, everybody wins. Many of the issues that the police respond to are rooted in social biases, as opposed to criminal behaviours. This requires a shared vision with the community and a change in perspective where citizens must be given the power to create an actionable difference in the community. As the power shifts from 'us' to 'them' to 'me', the burden of the police becomes lighter as individuals take ownership.

There are several such best practices—global, from different states of India as well as from Delhi Police itself. The Bharosa Cell of Pune Police, the Police Didi initiative of Mumbai, the Janamaithri Suraksha Project in Kerala, Police ke Pathshala project in Nagaland are some such examples.

Institutionalizing these practices is of essence. Sometimes, certain innovative practices are initiated by some officers, but often, when they leave, these practices fade away. This should not happen. We need continuity. We must analyse all these models, pick up what can work, tailor them to the needs of citizens and the overall context, institutionalize them and replicate them on a larger scale.

Youth Engagement

India has a young demographic. While there are many positives to this, there are also challenges, such radicalization of the youth and engaging in violent extremism. Hence, police must strengthen its connect with the youth.

I must congratulate you for having youth-friendly programmes such as Yuva, where you engage and steer street children and youth towards the mainstream of society, provide them with skills and sports development training. This has set a strong example for other police forces in the country.

Delhi Police must also actively engage the youth in community-oriented policing (COP), which would not only serve to widen your reach and intelligence, but also make the police force one that is perceived to be youth-friendly.

India's dynamic youth are innovating not just for India, but also for the world. Our phenomenal startup revolution is the biggest testimony to that. Today, we have 84 unicorns in the country, worth over USD 278 billion. In 2021, during the pandemic, we witnessed 3–4 startups turning unicorn every single month—and today we have the world's third-largest startup ecosystem of the world.

NITI Aayog is synonymous with startups and the youth. I regularly interact with young innovators and entrepreneurs who are driving tech-adoption across a wide spectrum—from drones and geospatial technologies to AI and robotics. They have been able to offer solutions to some of the most pressing challenges faced by the country today.

I strongly encourage Delhi Police to tap into this vast talent pool of young innovators and entrepreneurs and use their expertise, solutions and innovative solutions to improve policing. There will be plenty to learn and benefit from our startups.

I am extremely delighted to know that over the past few years, Delhi Police has been hosting hackathons and innovation challenges. We will be very happy if you work together and partner with the Atal Innovation Mission of NITI Aayog, which is at the forefront of fostering innovation in India. The key is to have these hackathons much more frequently and mainstream the resultant innovations so as to ensure that the technical prowess of the force evolves dynamically, rather than in a staggered manner.

A police force that is modern, tech-savvy and youth-friendly will also strike a chord with the youth of the city. Delhi Police should not just see this as an opportunity to deepen its connect and reach within the vibrant youth community of the city, but also as a prospect to attract a younger and more skilled talent pool during routine recruitments, bolstering the overall composition and technological capabilities of the police force.

Conclusion

Effective policing is the key driver of economic growth. In fact, if you look at some of the industries that have been most affected by the pandemic—transport, tourism and hospitality—you will find that these are the ones that are most dependent on the police.

Delhi Police is the best-positioned police force in India to lead from the front when it comes to reforms. If you can transform yourself as an agent of change in an area as complex as the national capital, then you can become a model police force for the rest of the world to emulate.

Engage with economic actors at all levels: Every month, Delhi Police may consider organizing an interaction with several categories of businesses—large businesses; real-estate firms (these generate a high level of employment per rupee of investment), trade and hospitality industries and MSMEs—and seek inputs on what the police can do to help them. If you get the tag of the most business-friendly police apart from being a pioneer of citizen-centric policing, you would greatly serve the nation.

Introduce competition: Indian police forces have a number of good leaders and it is important that they deliberate on making police an agent of social change as well as an enabler. I would strongly recommend that Delhi Police follow a similar model to encourage competition among different police units. NITI Aayog will be happy to work with you.

Focus on behavioral change: An emerging field of improving governance is to study our interactions with citizens from a behavioral angle. Compliance for many things can be dramatically improved by fostering behavioral change in citizens as well as the constabulary. Delhi Police may constitute a team of officers to study the experience of police forces across countries and identify issues and challenges where behavioral insights can offer large dividends. Today, the 'nudge theory' has become crucial in driving behavioral change. For mutual trust and respect, a police force must look and conduct themselves like the citizens they serve. This is where the nudge theory becomes important. At NITI Aayog, we have a Behavioural Insights Unit that examines the role of behaviour change in socio-economic development. We would be happy to work with you.

Ladies and gentlemen, Delhi Police is the pride of not just Delhi but the entire nation. You are leaders of a highly efficient police force. In a complex and rapidly changing world, we need to constantly transform ourselves to confront the world of tomorrow.

Technology (AI, ML, drones, geospatial tech), use of real-time data, community interaction and the creation of transparent competition will enable Delhi Police to become an agent of change and the best police force of the world.

I wish Delhi Police all the very best and a great future.

Thank you.