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Police and Service Delivery for Citizens

What is the issue?

- An efficient criminal justice system helps a country politically, socially and economically.
- But political masters show reluctance to implement the Supreme Court-mandated police reforms of 2006. Here is a look at the importance of police reforms.

How important is police reforms?

- **Social** - The social implications of lack of police reforms can be gauged from the report, "Crime in India 2019."
- It was published by the National Crime Records Bureau.
- As per the report, more than 25,000 cases of assault on women, close to 12,000 rape cases and 4000 "dowry deaths" have been pending trial for 5 to 10 years.
- **Economic** - The economic cost of the failed criminal justice system is also notable.
- It is reflected in the reluctance of foreign companies to set up manufacturing and commercial ventures in India.
- They see quick settlement of criminal, labour and civil disputes as a precondition.

What are the other roles performed by police stations?

- Besides prevention and detection of crime and maintenance of law and order, police stations in India undertake numerous daily tasks.
- They provide verifications and no objection certificates of different kinds to citizens.
- They supply crucial documents too.
- Police stations also verify domestic help/employees of central and state governments/public sector undertakings/students going abroad for studies.
- In a few cases, the special branches are involved; for example, passport verification and issues related to foreigners.

- But these NOCs and verifications are not easy to come by.
- The procedures are non-transparent and timelines are often blurred, thus encouraging corrupt practices.

What are the reforms needed?

- A definite attempt can be made to ensure time-bound delivery of the above-mentioned services to citizens.
- Despite the push for digitisation, the online facilities available for getting the above mentioned services are far from ideal.
- Users face numerous problems of accessibility to these services.
- States thus need to invest more resources to upgrade their e-portals for providing the 45 identified basic services to the citizens.
- Adhering to a defined process with a timeline and clear delineation of the levels of police officers involved can ensure transparent and non-corrupt service delivery.
- Along with English or Hindi, the state languages should also be incorporated for ease of access to all citizens.
- Investigation and prosecution need improvement and all criminal trials must be completed within a year.
- Technology-driven service delivery mechanisms can help achieve this.

Source: The Indian Express

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