

## **Towards a More Humane Police Force**

### **What is the issue?**

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana expressed concern at the degree of human rights violations in police stations in the country

### **What does NCRB data reveals?**

- Human rights violations in police stations include
  1. torture
  2. custodial deaths
  3. atrocities against women
  4. fake encounters, etc.
- An average of about 100 custodial deaths have taken place every year between 2010 and 2019
- A judicial inquiry which is mandatory for every suspicious custodial death was conducted in 26.4 cases
- Ratio of the number of arrests to the number of IPC offences has decreased from 1.33 in 2010 to 0.96 in 2019
- On an average about 47.2 criminal cases were registered annually against policemen in last 10 years

As per the NCRB data, Tamil Nadu ranks on the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot in number of custodial deaths behind Uttar Pradesh

### **What are the reasons for human rights violations?**

- to extract quick confession from the suspect
- to teach the person concerned a lesson
- taking law in their own hand through extrajudicial actions
- to assert power or authority

### **What are the safeguards available in this regard?**

#### **Constitutional safeguards**

- **Article 21** - Right to life, Right of persons to life with human dignity. For example, handcuffing is prima facie inhuman

- **Article 22** - Rights to the arrested and detained persons
  - right to be informed of the ground of arrest
  - right to consult a lawyer and to be defended by a lawyer of his choice
  - right to be produced before a magistrate within twenty four hours

## International efforts

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** - No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** - Every human being has the inherent right to life and no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life

## What kind of reforms are needed?

Click [here](#) to learn about the history of police reforms

- **Reducing the number of arrests** - arrests should be made only when it is necessary to prevent the person from tampering with evidence, committing any further offence, etc.
- **Separation of investigating police**- the investigating police should be separated from the law-and-order police to ensure better expertise in investigation
- **Increase in number of investigating officers** - Malimath Committee recommended that an investigating officer should preferably investigate not more than 10 cases every year
- **Subject experts** - With increase in newer types of crime like white collar crime and cybercrime, subject experts are needed
- **CCTV cameras** - Supreme Court has directed States to install CCTV cameras in police stations with a storage facility of audio-video recording for 18 months
- **Scientific tools of interrogation** - like the lie detection test, narco test and brain fingerprinting test must be encouraged
- **Display boards on human rights** - CJI suggested to install display boards on human rights to disseminate information about the free legal aid services to deter police excesses

**Source: The Hindu**



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