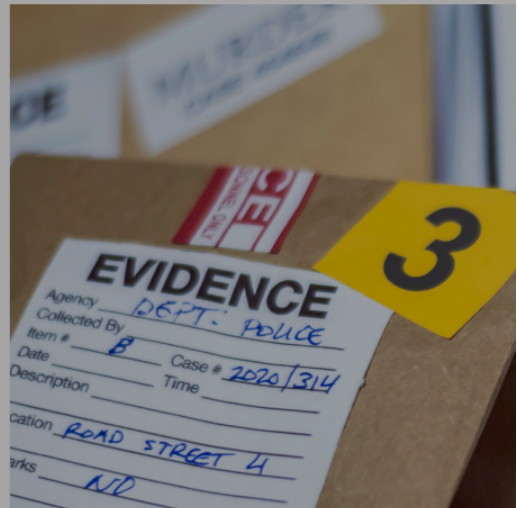# POLICY BRIEF

Digital Media Policy for Inclusive, Evidence-Based, and Robust Community Policing in Pakistan

Executive Summary

This policy brief outlines a strategic framework for the digital transformation of policing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. Despite significant advancements in recent years—such as the deployment of the Police Access Service (PAS), Criminal Record Management System (CRMS), and other technology-driven initiatives—the absence of a comprehensive digital policy has constrained the sustainability, scalability, and institutional coherence of these efforts. The brief argues that a robust, unified digital policy is essential for enhancing operational efficiency, promoting transparency, strengthening public trust, and aligning police services with contemporary governance standards.

The document proposes a structured approach built around four foundational pillars: data governance, digital infrastructure, capacity building, and public engagement. These pillars are complemented by enabling factors, including strong institutional leadership, legal and regulatory reforms, sustainable financial mechanisms, and inclusive partnerships with civil society and private sector stakeholders. Together, these elements aim to create an ecosystem that supports responsible innovation and ensures the ethical use of technology in policing.

Furthermore, the brief emphasizes the importance of safeguarding human rights, particularly in the collection and use of personal data, and calls for citizen-centered approaches that promote accountability and responsiveness. By institutionalizing mechanisms for digital feedback, grievance redressal, and citizen participation, the proposed policy seeks to foster a culture of collaboration and trust between the police and the public.

In conclusion, the policy brief advocates for a phased and inclusive implementation strategy that embeds digital transformation within the broader vision of democratic governance and public service delivery. Through this approach, KP Police can become a model of digital policing in Pakistan, equipped to meet current and future challenges with professionalism, transparency, and resilience.

Introduction

Community Policing / Community Oriented Policing

Community policing, also known as Community-Oriented Policing (COP), is defined as a proactive approach to addressing community-related issues, whereby police officers take on expanded roles in identifying and resolving problems. Police officers leverage on community resources and develop extensive links with the community. Police departments also rely on information from the community and establish multiple channels for the flow of crime-related and community-specific information. Most importantly the performance of police officers is based on public service activities, crime prevention, satisfaction and sense of safety of community.

Background on Community Policing in Pakistan

Community Policing in Pakistan has been in practice both formally and informally since the establishment of Police in the sub-continent. The Peelian principles of "Police is for the public and the public is for police "also called as "policing by consent" have been an ideal for police with varying degree of implementation. Peelian tradition treated policing as performed by "citizen in uniform" and focused on the "local community contact" Informal practices were first institutionalized in watch and ward through the formal role given to village headman or Nambardar and the other similar institutions. Similarly on the lines of these principles, a whole line of community police instruments ranging from collective patrolling to dispute resolution are in practice in different parts of Pakistan.

It must be noted that from very onset the Police in Pakistan is essentially a rural phenomenon therefore community policing also essentially remained anchored in rural ethos. Policing challenges have meanwhile moved from rural to urban with major crimes concentrated in the urban centers as well as other policing challenges like security, public order, terrorism and riots. Urban community policing created new stakeholders like traders, religious leaders, labor/student unions, lawyers and journalists. It would not be unfair to hold that the community policing institutions in practice in rural areas could not be transplanted in the urban settings. Senior police officers have noted that the police's unpopular public image presents a significant, often insurmountable, barrier to effectively carrying out the sensitive and socially responsible functions required in community-oriented policing. By and large urban community policing could not make use of the community policing barring few exceptions like CPLC (citizen police liaison committee) in Karachi. Though the same concept could not take off in the commercial hub Faisalabad in Punjab which shows the importance of context and limitations of urban community policing.

Arrival of Digital and the Changing Policing Landscape

While police forces were still navigating the transition from rural to urban settings, the broader world had already shifted rapidly into the digital age. Pakistan is one of the fastest growing digital societies with social media penetrating in the society at an exponential rate. The platforms like Tik Tok and YouTube now reach more than half of the adult population. A Gallup survey found that those who have education level below FA (12th grade) spend more than five hours on internet. Those with lesser and lesser income levels engage more and more on social.

The changing digital media landscape affected the police in more ways than one and not all detrimental. To start with, policing challenges and risks are now defined by digital sphere predominantly. A common perception now is that an incident is not considered a crisis unless it trends on social media—highlighting how social platforms have become central to crisis management for police. This has multiplied the levels and frequency of crises for police. Digital sphere has evolved as community which requires a separate engagement and handling (the expression used by police). Policing and politics are also intertwined. Political crises have turned into policing crises and vice versa with its tricky and substantial consequences.

The digital space also presents significant opportunities for law enforcement. The speed and frequency of engagement of digital sphere coupled with glamour and aversion created by police image has led to explosion of police related content. Police has its own array of influencers evoking contrasting emotions ranging from appreciation to wonder. Digital media opportunities have also sparked issues of discipline and order within the police force.

Objectives of the Policy Brief

The policy brief will lay out contours of the Digital Media Policy for inclusive, evidence-Based, and robust Community Policing in Pakistan, in this regard few terminologies and definitions need to be defined and laid out from the very onset. Some of these definitions are drawn from law, some from literature and some introduced for the first time.

- Police; Police has been defined as the Police Establishment in the law and includes
  - all persons appointed as special police officers or additional police officers under this Order; and
  - all other employees of the police;
- Policing; has not been defined in law but is taken as the functions and duties performed by Police. The functions have been further categorized in Article 8 of the Police Order 2002 into Investigation, Intelligence, Watch and Ward, Reserve Police, Police Accountability, Personnel Management, Education and Training, Finance and Internal Audit, Crime Prevention, Crime against Women, Traffic Planning and Management, Criminal Identification, Information Technology, Transport, Research and Development, Legal Affairs, Welfare, Estate Management.
- Community; "the people living in one particular area or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, social group, or nationality"
- Community Policing: Policing determined by strategies, tactics and outcomes based on community's consent and reflect community's needs
- Digital Sphere or Digital Public Sphere; "a communicative sphere provided or supported by online or social media – from websites to social network sites, weblogs and micro-blogs – where participation is open and freely available to everybody who is interested, where matters of common concern can be discussed, and where proceedings are visible to all"
- Digital Society refers to the expanded understanding and acknowledgement of intersection between technology and society
- Digital natives; are "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet

- Digital Community; Communities of interest or place that rely on digital technologies such as mobile phones, the Internet and e-mail to communicate, network and disseminate information also called as internet or online communities
- Cyber Crimes; As per original and popular typology; Cyber trespass, cyber theft, cyber porn/obscenity, cyber violence

The Need for a Robust Digital Community Policing Policy

Why do we need a digital community policing policy, would be the first question. The answer lies in four factors; rising digital trends, digital sphere being hub of crimes, digital communities surpassing physical communities and utilizing digital tools for effective policing both on and off line.

a. Digital Trends and Usage

Some of the trends in every growing digital sphere are worth highlighting

- Total social media users in Pakistan are 71 million
- 25.9 percent of the digital user's female, while 74.1 percent are male
- Median age of the social media user /digital native is 21

According to Gallup Pakistan Poll

- 4 in 10 people spent at least 1 hour using TikTok
- Females spend 5 hours using TikTok while males spend 2 hours.
- People between ages 18-23 spends 7 hours on average using TikTok
- People with education less than FA spend 4 hours on average using TikTok
- People with degrees higher than FA spend 2 hours average

The expanding social media coverage and participation is key to digital sphere;

- Facebook has 44.5 million users with 19 % growth and reaching 26 % population
- You Tube has 71.7 million users with unchanged growth from last year but still reaching 29 % Population
- Instagram has 17.3 million users but showing impressive 33 % growth though reaching 10 % Population
- TikTok has 54.3 million users with whopping 229 % Growth and reaching 38 % of total population
- Snapchat has 30 million users with 17 % Growth and reaching 18 % of total population

- Pakistan is the 46th largest market for E-Commerce with a revenue of $5.2 billion in 2023


b. Threats: Rising Digital Crimes

The mushroom growth in digital sphere has given rise to digital landscape rife with threats ranging from disinformation to cyber terrorism. So far, the threats fall in five categories;

i. Harassment, exploitation and blackmailing (mostly females)
ii. Extremism, hate speech and disinformation leading to violence
iii. Cheating, frauds & scams in E-commerce
iv. Illicit financial flows using crypto currencies
v. Copy rights and intellectual property issues

The date from Federal Investigation Agency - the agency tasked to investigate cyber-crimes shows the exponentially rising figures in cyber-crimes while the capacity to investigate these crimes remains insufficient. The graph below shows complaints rising with limited disposal due to limited capacity. With half a million cyber-crime complaints, it can be safely concluded that cyber-crime is highest in number as compared to any other crime in Pakistan.

Year	Complaints	Verifications	Enquiries	Case/FIRs
2020	102000	85340	9116	604
2021	115868	80803	15766	1224
2022	136024	83552	14380	1469

2023	134710	82396	18012	1375
2024 (Till April)	29281	28031	4824	324
Total	**517,883**	**360,122**	**62,098**	**4,996**
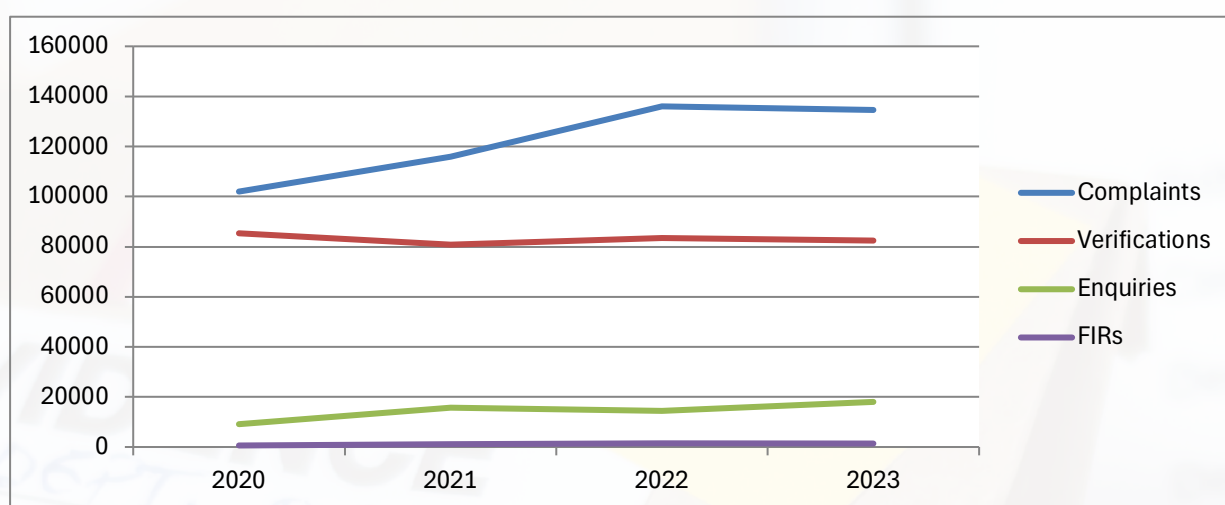
c. Opportunity: Enhancing cooperation between the Police and Community

The expanding digital sphere is not without the opportunities. Some of these opportunities are already being realized albeit personally, irregularly and disparately. Police has been mainly focused on the public relations and general information, and has not yet harnessed the enormous potential of digital sphere. The engagement by police also remains one-way, either crises or information driven and does not acknowledge the emergence of digital communities and prospect of digital community policing. Some of the gaps will be covered in next section.

d. Utilizing Digital Tools for Effective Policing

Digital sphere and digital communities have given rise to new digital tools. Police is mainly focused on the digital content while the digital toolkit for community policing is quite broad and holistic. This digital toolkit takes the conventional principles of community engagement fused with digital technology and then molds them with the needs of new generation of digital natives.

Current gaps in Digital Media Engagement by Police

Like many public sector institutions, the police made rapid and uncoordinated advances into the digital sphere. Police presents the unique case though; conservative, mostly rural and male dominated department suddenly thrust into digital sphere. The response came in two ways; formal and informal. In the formal response Police leadership took the task upon them to lead in the digital sphere while

informally, the Police personnel at the junior (lower) level have started imitating the content being created at those strata of society. Punjab police has taken the lead in digital policing at both formal and informal levels.

Police in Pakistan consists of seven provincial departments (4 x provinces, Gb, AJK & ICT) and three federal police organizations; Railway Police, Motorway Police & Federal Investigation Agee of agency. All these police forces are at varying degree of digital media engagement ranging from negligible to active. National Highway & Motorway Police (NHMP) will be regarded as second to Punjab police in digital engagement with active social media presence and awareness campaigns.

Is the current effort enough for an inclusive and robust digital engagement? Is there a standardized digital media approach? Is there a consensus on who will do what with respect to digital media? Has there been significant effort at moving beyond personal to institutional approach?

The answer to all these questions would be in negative. This section explores the reasons for police forces lagging behind in digital engagement.

i.   Training and Resources for Police Personnel

The sustainable change in any organisation comes right from the start i.e. recruitment and training. What kind of people an organisation hires and then trains shapes the orientation of that organisation. Recruitment and training effects are more pronounced in case of Police for being a disciplined force. Informal interviews with the police training institutes indicate limited focus on digital sphere and limited use digital sphere for community policing.

Then there is distinction between core functions and line functions. Digital media is considered as a line function or a support function not a core function like investigation, operations or security. Digital media responsibilities are often assigned to junior officers based on informal aptitude, without adequate training or strategic guidance. Their understanding and capacity of producing content, employing tools like SEO and cater to diversity remains limited though.

ii.   Lack of clarity; Public Relations or Community Policing

Conventionally public relations have been the sole objective of media engagement. As the media transitioned from print to electronic, police moved from press releases to press conferences. The underlying purpose remained the same i.e. to highlight police's successes called *good work* in Police parlance. Digital media is different form conventional media in so many ways but most pronounced difference other than speed and visualization is democratization. Every digital media user is also a journalist. Though the *intermediation* part has retained some of its character with emergence of influencers but an influencer embodies more lack of inhibition then the editorial control of legacy media.

The police continue to treat all media platforms primarily as tools for promotion and public relations. Resultantly the press releases of drugs and alcohol seizures which would find some respectable place in the inner pages of Urdu newspapers now attract derision from digital media users. Police needs to have the clarity and vision to move from public relations to community policing, and building on the earlier point, has to embed digital engagement as the core function. This clarity and vision will come from a holistic digital media policy.

iii.   Technological Infrastructure and Access

Digital media engagement is hugely dependent on technology. For an organisation, technological needs will fall in two categories; analysis & intervention. First and basic step in digital media engagement is to observe, monitor and analyze the digital sphere relevant to the organization i.e. Police. Intervention is the next step. It includes but is not limited to reaction, response and replies. It involves production of content relevant to each media and audience.

All the above requires range of technical resources ranging from something as basic as un-interrupted supply of internet and as advance as NLE (non-linear editor) machines. There are now sophisticated analytical tools available as well which perform content, discourse and sentiment analysis on daily, weekly and monthly basis. Content creation requires equipment and tools so does the production of podcasts, reels and other micro content.

iv.   Personal vs Official Distinction in Digital Engagement

The lines have been blurred between personal and official in digital sphere, more tilting towards the personal. More often official public relations become personal promotion much to the chagrin of conventional and old school. The preference of personal centric approach is rooted in the nature of digital media which encourages personal stories and finds official engagement as boring and redundant. The officers who share personal stories are immediately rewarded while those highlighting official activities do not get similar reception.

Another notable question to be seen, and which will come in later detailed study, is the correlation between public service and personal digital engagement. Anecdotal evidence points towards two contrasting conclusions. One school of thought is of the view that more digital presence leads to fall in quality in public service. At the same time, other argument comes that more personal presence leads to more goodwill and immediate response leading to improved public service delivery. The absence of conclusive results itself shows the random and sporadic nature of digital engagement.

v.   Existing laws, Policies and Regulations on Digital Policing

The police have made significant progress in digital engagement, but this progress lacks a coherent, well-defined, and comprehensive policy framework. A policy that emerges after deliberations, approved by the relevant forum and implemented at all levels. The directions on digital engagement are either non-existing or not followed. Often some clip goes viral in negative way and the concerned official is penalized. The penalty is however not driven on the basis of laws and regulations but more on the basis of reaction. If the reaction is positive, the official gets away with anything; if the reaction is negative, he/she is penalized for bona-fide content as well. Government Servant Conduct Rules 1964, the principal regulation for media engagement have not been able to keep up with the proliferation arising out of digital media

Besides the regulation of personal content on digital media, the official policy has to cater to digital media within the framework of community policing. One of legacy practices has been the *khuli kuchheri* or town hall meeting. E-katcheri or digital town halls have been introduced in different departments including Police but show same lack of imagination when it comes to using digital media for community engagement. A cohesive digital media policy will chalk out options ranging from Twitter spaces to

Podcasts for effective community engagement. Further the policy will be embedded in the Police Rules, Standing Orders and Circulars. Even changes in existing laws can be considered too.

Challenges without a Policy

i. Lack of Standardized Digital Policing Practices

As already discussed, the digital practices presently vary from organisation to organisation and person to person. It has already been highlighted that the digital engagement approach is reactive and focused juts at the public relations. The standardization will from a clear vision with well thought out targets and objectives institutionalized through proper training and human resource management and supported by technological architecture.

ii. Gaps in Handling of Digital Crimes

Community policing is always aimed at providing a safe environment for the citizens. Public safety remains the cornerstone of all policing efforts; however, the digital sphere has now emerged as a major hub of criminal activity. These digital crimes need to be handled through digital means. Digital communities are pushing back and demanding a safe digital sphere as well as brining the issues of personal safety in to digital sphere. Digital Community Policing Policy will have major emphasis on dealing with digital crimes ranging from harassment to frauds al and be responsive to on ground issues brought out on the social media. Presently the digital crimes are dealt under the Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act 2016 and have been handled exclusively by Federal Investigation Agency. Recently the government has decided to establish a dedicated authority to deal with cyber-crimes under Ministry of Interior. The role of police is pivotal though for two reasons. The ordinary crimes like homicides and robberies now invariably have a digital link and more importantly police are the first recourse to any victim for being readily available. Police also got the investigation powers under the PECA 2016 but the dedicated units within police have not been established yet. The key however is to keep the community engagement and digital crimes prevention together. Rather the prevention has be ensured through digital community policing.

iii. Weak Community-police Relations with Growing Digital Communities

This age has been called as digital age. People now spend equal or more time in digital sphere then do in physical domain. These people will be termed as digital natives. In contrast, the police remain digital immigrants—still adapting to the norms and dynamics of the digital world. Most of the issues and challenges emerge due to disconnect between digital natives and digital aliens. Digital Community policing is not a sub-set of overall community policing but is a complete territory in itself own right. Digital policy will address the weak relations vis-à-vis digital communities and will lay out strategy to bridge the gap.

Roadmap of Digital Community-Police Relations

i. Raising a Digital Policing Architecture

Digital media policy for community relations will be the first step towards an inclusive and robust community engagement. The architecture of digital community will be the next step. The architecture will

not be limited to establishing few social media channels or dedicating staff to make content, which are the tools of public relations. Digital community police relations are not limited to public relations exercise on behalf of the Police but should be a wholesome exercise for improving the public service.

This digital architecture would consist of three pillars; people, tools & engagement. These three pillars will constitute and shape the police-community relations in the digital sphere.

- First will be the people or human resource from the police side. These will be of two types; primary and secondary. Who will engage with public or community, is a question to be settled in the digital media policy. Will it be a dedicated desk or anyone can respond on digital media? How will the engagement by core responders on ground (SHOs, Moharar, beat officers) be reconciled with the engagement by core responders on digital media? The people responsible for the digital sphere will be trained as the primary and secondary responders respectively. Those with primary responsibility will be trained in content creation, information collation, data analysis, campaign management and strategy while those with the secondary responsibility will be trained in communication, gender, diversity and awareness.

- Digital media architecture will also require necessary tools. Normally the tools fall in two categories; back end and front end. Front end would require the content creation and engagement tools like computers and other IT related tools, audio-visual equipment, media related equipment like NLE (Non-linear editors) and even the equipment necessary to set up a full-fledged studio. The back-end architecture will be equally or more crucial, and will include the analytical tools for sentiments and content analysis, archiving, curation and retrieval and data base management for better engagement. Artificial intelligence has now increasingly crucial role at both front and back ends.

- Engagement is the third pillar of the digital architecture, and will be the most evolving. As already discussed, public relations and crisis management are the two main forms of engagement through digital media. Police is either sharing content which aims to put them in good light or responding to various crises surfacing or amplified through digital media. Effective community engagement extends far beyond public relations and reactive responses. Police has to decide on the type, frequency and quality of engagement on digital media. Two important measures of holistic digital engagement are websites and mobile applications. Both the forums exist in very rudimentary form, and provide very little or no engagement as compared to an active presence on social media. This signifies the shallowness of the digital engagement. This is also true for helplines and other specialized applications related to traffic, gender-based services, and other support systems. Punjab police is the only police force to have a mobile app though that is rated very low on the app store.

ii. Building Trust and Collaboration

Trust stems from empowerment and partnerships. Citizens' trust in Police would range from dissatisfaction to aversion and hostility. Police has responded to the lower level of approval by doubling down on public relations. The long-term trust depends on deep and continuous engagement. It would appear clichéd but transparency, truth and courage to accept mistakes are foundation of trust. Police cannot choose to be transparent in one instance and go into hiding into other.

Digital media policy has to make transparency as the corner stone for building trust with community. Communication strategy will thus complement the digital media policy. In fact, communication strategy

and digital media policy will run side by side based. Now the communication domain and digital domain exist in the same space with increasing overlap between electronic and digital media. Collaborations and partnership with the intermediaries already present in the digital sphere will help build trust quickly.

iii. Improved Community Feedback and Reporting of Crimes

Police station is the hub of core policing functions like reporting and investigation of crimes and police station has posited the core dilemmas in reforming police functions. The solution so far has been to bypass the police station and set up more presentable forums like front desks and police *khidmat markaz*. The problem of public service remains persistent though because these additional measures only provide ancillary services like driving licenses and police verifications or at best the complaint receipt. Citizen after the initial reception is again dependent on the same police stations and same investigation officers for their grievances.

Same trend has been visible vis-à-vis the digital media. As already discussed, police are using the digital media for public relations, crisis management or complaint management the last being at the rudimentary level. The services part is still limited to traffic license and police character verification certificates which have been mirrored from designated physical spaces to the digital spaces like application and social media handles.

Community engagement goes beyond the provision of ancillary services or compliant receipts. It should be a two-way process based on continuous and consistent back and forth exchanges between police and community. Presently police are not harnessing benefits of community engagement on digital sphere but utilizing digital to deal with complainants one by one thus not taking benefit of scale. The community engagement envisaged by the proposed digital media policy will ensure feedback loop through which community feels empowered and heard.

iv. Case Studies/Examples from within Pakistan

Police in Pakistan have already been late in catching with digital community policing with the chronic issue of sustainability. Recently Punjab Police has launched virtual police station which has been housed at the Punjab Safe City Authority at Lahore. A visit to the virtual police station tab leads to a page with three fields – name, phone number and description. On the face of it, this is just another online complaint system. It is also not clear who will be responsible for follow up because the legal authority to provide relief and redress grievance fall within the Police Station.

v. International Best Practices and Successful Initiatives

Community policing is a rapidly growing concept globally with number of successful case studies and best practices emerged in the recent past. Police in number of jurisdictions have moved from policing the digital content to creation of virtual communities.

UNITY is on the leading best practices in digital community policing in EU. UNITY went on to establish a framework for European best practice related to community policing. The UNITY project used ICTs to aid in bringing together the police, communities and other statutory and non-statutory organizations that may otherwise be disparate or operate in information silos. As one component of the UNITY approach, a mobile app was developed as a means to bridge the gap between police, other statutory and non-

statutory organizations, and the wider public. This technological intervention, sought to enhance participation and engagement between groups across six pillars of activity.

These six pillars constituted are;

- o Address local needs
- o Build trust and confidence with communities
- o Enhance collaboration
- o Prevent crime
- o Improve accountability
- o Facilitate effective communication.

The mobile application, deployed and tested against scenarios in Belgium and Finland, utilizes basic functionalities such as a message-board, the ability to organize events and meetings, and a person-to-person direct messaging feature as mechanisms through which the ability of dedicated channels for citizens, community groups and police to act as a means to influence improved participation and engagement could be tested. In the Netherlands, there are around 50 community police officers, 50 % of whom are digital community police officers. There is a national network as well as centralized training programs for different dimensions like online investigation, the Dark Web and staying safe. DCP is distinct from the cybercrime units. The community police officers, who work for 50% digital and 50% on the streets, are not restricted to examining crimes, but have a broader overview, which is helpful in understanding current events and trends in communities.

In another interesting case study, the monitoring and enforcement of video games communities was devolved to community members through introduction of Virtual Police Community Support Officers. In the case study, the trusted members of specific virtual communities worked with the police in digital sphere.

Benefits of Digital Community Policing

- ▪ **Enhanced Communication with Citizens and Responsiveness**

Digital community policing is one of the most promising areas in policing. Citizens who are now digital natives and spend majority of their time in digital sphere want to be engaged digitally. They now find visiting police stations cumbersome and time consuming besides the inhospitable environment. They are also now more vocal then ever when their voice can be transmitted quickly and forcefully. Digital community policing will provide avenues for better, productive and purposeful engagement.

- ▪ **Real-time Communication Channels**

In the digital age, immediacy is everything—delayed responses are no longer acceptable. The key feature of digital age is networking and portability which has made the individuals to be in "perpetual contact" Digital native does not understand office hours. Police already works on 24/7 basis but the tendency is still persisting to have forums that encourage more formal during office hours engagement. Digital community policing warrants real time communication channels. Police has to follow digital natives instead of them following police. Their day starts in the afternoon and they demand real time

communication. Digital policing is the answer. The proposed digital media policy will lay out the framework for the digital community police officers working in shifts to be available purposefully in real time.

- **Quick Response to Community Concerns**

The real time availability will ensure quick response to community concerns and complaints. Moe often, the complaints are of nature that requires counseling or assurances. The quick response is also urgently required in crisis situations both personal and social. Time is of essence in the cases of harassment, blackmail and domestic abuses. Even at the community level, there are many instances in which police's intervention is needed often. Digital community policing ensures the timely response.

- **Use of Analytics for Crime Prevention and Detection**

Analytics and data-bases are essential to any digital apparatus. The foremost advantage of digital intervention is the allied development of analytics which is otherwise weak area for police. Tactical crime analysis will provide the necessary trends, patterns and series of crimes both online and offline. No crime whether in digital sphere or offline, is without the digital footprint. Police can have the analytics from social media to develop an early warning system to detect crimes ranging from violence to extremism.

- **Evidence-based Decision-making**

The analytics apparatus and data-bases will also pave the way for more evidence base decision making in policing. Historically, police operations have been guided by legacy systems, anecdotal experiences, and informal practices. Policing systems do not get benefits from the evidence, which is neither collected, nor collated therefore not analyzed. Which area to focus in policing, which tools to used, where to deploy police, what is the image of police, which initiatives are well received and which are not, how the citizens respond to the checks and pickets? These are some of the questions that shape the policing policy at both tactical and strategic level. Digital policing provides an opportunity of the evidence-based policing.

- **Increased Transparency and Accountability**

Transparency is the core of good governance and public service. Police like any other government department only shares what it considers necessary to its benefit and only operates through press releases and press briefings. Citizens have to rely on either journalists or word of the mouth to get feedback on police working. Digital community policing will ensure more transparency and accountability. With more and elaborate feedback on both online and offline activities of police officials, a culture of accountability will emerge. The accountability will also be buttressed by the ready availability of video and audio evidence. Novel ideas like "Rate your SHO" or "Most responsive Police Station" will tie the performance of the police with the citizen feedback.

Areas needing Reform and Updates

The areas needing reform will be determined by the gaps within the digital community policing infrastructure. Digital community policing model already envisages three core areas which shape the digital policing system; policy, culture and architecture. The last one i.e. digital architecture has already

been discussed as covering people, tools and engagement. Policy sphere will ensure the institutionalization of digital community policing. Culture is the trickiest and hardest to change but at the same time is something without which no reform will be possible.

Policy sphere will start with having digital community policy but will not be limited to policy document. Changes in the police rules and laws, re-designation of policing duties and roles, new performance indicators will be required to make the policy sustainable. Culture is affected by incentives, diversity, training and capacity building. Mostly culture is associated with physical sphere and therefore police culture is equated with Thana Culture. Digital sphere has its own digital culture shaped by digital natives. Police has to adapt to the new digital culture instead of expecting public to adapt to police culture.

Guiding Framework for Policy Development

The proposed policy should be developed in the line of challenges emerging out of the digital sphere, how the community are formed in the digital sphere and how police can better engage with the newly emerging digital communities. The framework is proposed as follows:

- Scoping study; to outline the scope and coverage of Policy outlining the areas which policing will cover, and equally importantly the areas it will not touch.
- Situation analysis; this will include analysis of data on crimes linking online & offline, interviews of key informants, focus group discussion and review of existing laws & policies
- Priority areas; which will be prioritized in the policy. These areas will lie on the convergence of conventional policing and digital sphere. The task will be to shift (some) areas of conventional policing to digital
- Digital tools and architecture; Policy will identify the institutional base for the transformation. New recruitment, capacity building, equipment, offices and SOPs (standard operating procedures) will be designed to serve as the base
- Law and rules; Digital policy has to identify and propose new sets of laws and rules with the aim to place the core police functionaries at the center of new initiative so that the change does not remain peripheral
- Pilot project; the proposed policy can benefit from pilot roll out in selected areas and domains
- Political ownership and backing; the political environment is conducive for digital initiatives. However, the institutional support has to be ensured for sustainability
- Collaboration and partnerships are essential, as the digital sphere thrives on networks that transcend the traditional boundaries of the public and private sectors. Key partners from private sector, media and civil society have to be identified and brought on board for better reception of the policy.

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