

## GNLU PRESS NOTE No. 34/2020

**No perceptible increase in domestic violence in Gujarat during the lockdown – IGP Shri Komar**

**The pandemic has helped the Gujarat police enhance its public image by their people-friendly approach – IGP Shri Komar**

**Role of a police force has acquired a new dimension in the wake of the pandemic – GNLU Director Dr Shanthakumar**

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**Gandhinagar, July 11, 2020:** Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) organized a webinar on “COVID 19 Pandemic: Law Enforcement Challenges.” The webinar was delivered by Shri Narasimha Komar, IPS, Inspector General of Police (Law & Order), Gujarat State.

Shri Komar said that the pandemic and the resultant lockdown was a new experience for the police as also for the public. However, despite several constraints, police played a critical role in the COVID-19 pandemic management in close coordination with other departments of the state government such as Health, labour, civil supplies as well as the central government. It enforced the lockdown while ensuring that the essential services are not disrupted. He said that police adopted a strategy of information, communication, persuasion, domination and intervention for effective lockdown with people participation.

He said that police protected doctors and para-medical staff. It helped migrant labour to reach shelter homes, to get food and health services and reach their home states once the inter-state and inter-district transport was resumed. For this purpose, police coordinated with the respective state governments as well as NGOs. It coordinated with foreign embassies and High Commissions for the safe evacuation of foreign nationals stranded in the state. It made special efforts to protect vulnerable sections of the society like senior citizens, women and children.

Shri Komar said that the pandemic has disrupted the functioning of all wings of the criminal justice system, namely, police, forensic science, prosecution, judiciary and prison & correctional services. All these wings will have to rework their systems & processes and coordinate with each other to navigate through these difficult times. We have learnt a lot of lessons and improved our internal systems and processes. I am sure, we would be able to provide better quality service to the people of Gujarat in the coming days.

The pandemic has led to the new paradigm of policing: from the police station to beat station, from conventional policing to community policing, from the arrest-based investigation to evidence-based investigation & need-based arrest. Police have also resorted to the use of technology like drones &

hydrogen balloons for aerial surveillance, RFID-based e-beat system for reducing human intervention in the supervision of police patrols, eGujCop & Poket Cop to facilitate paperless & remote investigation and supervision to reduce public interface and vehicle tracking and management system.

Shri Komar appreciated the role of SRPF, CAPF, Auxiliary Forces, Forest Guards, RTO, CDO, Ex-Servicemen, NCC/NSS volunteers etc. who stood alongside the police during the lockdown.

Shri Komar concluded by saying, “I am proud to say that every policeman in the state, right from a constable to DGP, showed a great deal of commitment during the last three months of the pandemic. The pandemic has helped the Gujarat police enhance its public image by their people-friendly approach. I am thankful to the people of Gujarat for their support and cooperation during these testing times.”

Replying to a question, Shri Komar said that, “the instances of increase in the domestic violence cases during lockdown have been reported in many other countries and also in other states in India. However, Gujarat has been quite fortunate in this regard. Based on the statistics of FIRs, complaints, emails, help Centre data and NGO inputs, we have found that there was no perceptible increase in domestic violence in Gujarat during the lockdown .

Earlier, in his inaugural address, GNLU Director Dr Shanthakumar said: “COVID-19 has turned the world upside down. There is hardly any aspect of our life that has been left untouched by the pandemic. And, law enforcement is no exception. Law enforcement is very critical to any civilized society. It has always been a very demanding task with multifarious duties. But, the Covid-19 pandemic has thrown innumerable new challenges before the police force. We can say that the role of a police force has acquired a new dimension in the wake of the pandemic. The police had to enforce the biggest lockdown in the history of mankind. It had to deal with the movement of the huge migrant population to their home states. It had to protect doctors, paramedical staff and government officers on duty. Police are also called upon to perform duties in the area of maintenance of public health like enforcing social distancing norms and wearing masks in public places, etc. While the lockdown has led to an overall drop in the crime rate, there is an uptick in certain crimes such as domestic violence and cybercrime. We have seen that the police force has displayed social sensitivity and professional competence and handled these unprecedented challenges with remarkable tact, forbearance and maturity. In this context, it is useful to study as to how COVID-19 will affect future law enforcement. I am grateful to Shri Narsimha Komar, Inspector General of Police (Law & Order), Gujarat State for having agreed to enlighten us on the challenges of law enforcement post-COVID-19.

The webinar was organized under the aegis of GNLU Center for Research in Criminal Justice Sciences and Police Academia Interaction Forum.



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