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E-POLICING AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: PUBLIC INCLUSION THROUGH POLICE KHIDMAT MARKAZ BAHAWALPUR

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Abstract
Policing by ICT has revolutionized public service delivery, increasing access to the services, making them more transparent, efficient and trusted by the public. This paper discusses the linkage between e-policing and public participation, relevant to Police Khidmat Markaz Bahawalpur (PKM). The paper reflects on the thesis, titled Enhancing Public Value through E-Policing: The Role of Public Police Khidmat Markaz Bahawalpur, which examines the citizenship aspects of digital policing services and posits their crucial contribution to citizen engagement, public inclusion, and public value. The approach taken in the study is mixed method which incorporates survey, questionnaire, observation and interview with police officers and officers. The respondents involved in the study were 175 members of the general public, 10 civil society members and 15 staff members who are members of the PKM. The findings reveal these positive impacts on public inclusion activities of PKM Bahawalpur by making police expedient easy, scarification of the caste sentiment from police's traditional police station, transformational interaction between staff and citizens, and opportunities in providing feedback-based governmental services. Results also show that challenges with digital illiteracy, social restriction, high service charges, lack of awareness, weak feedback mechanisms, and delayed service caused by inadequate staffing can still hinder the implementation of these services. The paper ends with a conclusion that points towards strengthening public participation in e-policing only through strengthening digital access, feedback mechanisms, facilities for the population to be involved, and citizen centered service delivery.

Keywords: E-policing, Public Participation, Public Inclusion, Police Khidmat Markaz, Public Value, Digital Governance, Bahawalpur

1. Introduction
Police duties have evolved away from that traditional focus on crime-control and law-enforcement. In contemporary public administration, police organizations must render service to the citizens, generate citizen trust and make themselves available to all social sectors. The primary problem which has been constantly highlighted with the traditional policing methods

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is poor citizen police relations, corruption, limited accessibility to the police, bureaucracy and red-tape in developing countries like Pakistan (Bayley, 1994; Reisig & Tankebe, 2012). In this sense, e-policing has become a reformist approach which introduces digital technologies in a way that modernises policing and enhances public confidence in the law enforcement institutions.

Police Khidmat Markaz (PKM) is one of the significant e-policing programs of Punjab Pakistan. It offers multiple police services via one-window platform and technology. These services involve the issue of such documents as character certificate, general police verification, learner driving licence, duplicate driving licence, electronic driving licence, international driving licence, vehicle verification and registration, loss report, crime report, FIR copies and report of violence against women. Services provided by PKM are an effort to alleviate the anxiety of citizens from "Thana culture" and strive to provide more transparency, efficient and accessible police services that are provided outside the confines of the police station.

This paper is about e-policing and public participation/public inclusion. Public participation is when people have a say in providing, assessing and developing public services. Public inclusion means people from different social sectors, such as women, people living in the country, people who are old, people who have disabilities, and people who are not very tech-savvy can access public services without being discriminated or excluded against. In PKM Bahawalpur, the public participation manifests in four ways: citizens using the PKM services; trust in online police services; readiness to utilize the feedback mechanisms and preference for mobile apps or direct service centres. Accessibility to women, disabled children/adults, elderly visitors, rural users, and digital or social barriers faced by citizens are all indications of public inclusion.

This paper thus looks at the relationship of e-policing through PKM Bahawalpur with public participation and public inclusion, and what hinders the actual realization of this potential.

2. Literature Review

E-policing is one application of e-governance in the context of police administration and public safety using information communication technologies to augment the public safety sector. It comprises online complaint register, digital case management, biometric verification, online tracking, mobile applications, helplines and digital databases. As Bertot et al., (2010) state, digital tools have a positive effect on transparency and the elimination of bureaucratic inefficiencies. A major effect of digital policing is its direct interaction between citizens and police and the resulting gains of increased trust and citizen participation in crime prevention and provision of services, as explained by Meijer and Thaens (2013).

In Pakistan, PKMs present an extensive move towards the modernization of police services. These centers offer meaningful services like vehicle verification, character certificates, tenant registration and reporting lost documents. PKM is an e-policing technique in which the amount of paperwork can be reduced and the delivery of public service can be enhanced, as described by Khan et al. (2021). The provision of Ahmed (2020) is also cited as being able to lessen human involvement and enhance transparency. E-policing fosters greater regularity in service delivery and can help to decrease the possibilities for corruption by limiting discretionary, face-to-face interaction between officers and citizens.

There has also been great attention paid to the need for public inclusion in the literature. The use of digital policing technology is limited if not useless unless citizens can access and understand it. Ali and Qadir (2022) say that among the hindrances of e-governance in policing are: lack of resources, lack of awareness, and digital illiteracy. On a critical note, Garcia (2020) suggests that rural and marginalised communities can still be excluded from

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digital policing because of the lack of internet connection, technological skills or trust of the communities in the public sector. Hence, the efficacy of public participation in e-policing is not only dependent upon digitalization of the platforms but also the citizens' capacity, awareness, and confidence in using them.

The concept of public participation is also linked with community-oriented policing. The main components of community policing are the relationships between citizens and police, proactively addressing challenges, and building trust (Gill et al., 2014). These include studying the needs of the citizens and finding out how they can be served, which can be accomplished through feedback systems, public surveys, community meetings, and digital platforms. Feedback mechanisms are especially relevant for the context of PKM as they enable the citizens to share their experiences and impact the improvement of the future..

3. Theoretical Framework

The paper is based upon the Public Value Theory. Public Value Theory was proposed by Moore (1995) to explain the value creation of public institutions other than efficiency and cost savings. The creation of public value will occur when government services enhance citizens' lives, boost citizens' trust in government institutions, and meet public needs. Public value, Benington (2011) adds, has two components, outcomes and processes. Outcomes = Security; better access; Citizen satisfaction; Processes = Transparency; accountability; Citizen participation.

In the context of PKM Bahawalpur the public value is associated with three basic components.

First: Trust and legitimacy is established when the police service is fair, transparent, and citizen friendly. Second, service effectiveness is when citizens are able to access services that are useful, accessible and timely. Third, there is public participation when citizens can give feedback to, report complaints to, contact through online platforms and participate in improving services.

E-policing adds public value by improving and enhancing police response and access. Online tracking, biometric verification, mobile apps, SMS information, and centralized databases minimize delays and provide more transparency. But, public value is not complete with some groups being left out because they are digitally illiterate, socially isolated, gender constraint, handicap, disadvantageous geographic location or unaware. For this, public inclusion is of paramount importance for meaningful e-policing.

4. Research Methodology

This study was a mixed-method research. The data collected involve quantitative data, with structured questionnaires used as one of the tools for data collection and qualitative data, which were obtained by conducting interviews, observations, and document analyses. This was appropriate given that the study necessitated not only data in numerical terms but also for their understanding of the citizens' experiences with PKM Bahawalpur.

The target population was made up of 350 persons which included police personnel (20) engaged in the PKM, civil society (30) and general population (300). The sample of 200 subjects were obtained using purposive sampling technique from the population. 175 general public, 10 civil society and 15 police were selected as the sample. Further, interviews were held with 15 police officers/officials who provide qualitative data on e-policing and service delivery.

The questionnaire was related to the public's experiences with PKM, challenges to using it, how digital services are being used, how feedback is being provided, and satisfaction with the experience. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the instruments reliability. Overall, the internal consistency was found to be high with a reliability coefficient of .892. Reliability for

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key variables was high, too: accessibility 0.872, efficiency 0.889, digital literacy 0.861 and public trust 0.895.

SPSS 25 software was used to analyze the data. Data were summarised using descriptive statistics and relationships among certain variables were explored using Chi-square tests.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Demographic and Digital Access Profile

There were 200 respondents in the survey. Majority of the respondents were male, with 150 male respondents accounting for 75.0% of the sample while 49 were female and one respondent fell into the "Other" category. The younger the respondents, the more they were. 61.0 percent were in the age range of 20-30 years, while 33.5 percent were in the category of 31-40 years.

Education profile revealed that the respondents are relatively educated. Approximately 37.0% achieved graduation level qualification, 19.0% M and 28.0% a post-graduation.Phil education. Information on residence revealed that 69.5 percent of respondents came from urban residences and 29.5 percent respondents came from rural residences.

Most respondents were digitally connected. Approximately 95.0 percent of smartphones were owned and 94.0 percent had internet in their home and 89.5 percent used the internet. The figures indicate that there was a large proportion of the respondents with the necessary basic instruments on hand for digital policing services. Later on, however, the results indicate that digital access does not necessarily lead to digital inclusion as digital illiteracy also proved to be a serious obstacle.

5.2 Public Participation through PKM Service Use

Citizen involvement in e-policing can be assessed with direct use of the citizens in Pdm services. The results obtained revealed that 82.5 percent of the respondents had visited at least one Police Khidmat Markaz for some of its services whereas 8.0 percent had not gone and 9.5 percent had postponed a visit. This means that PKM can be seen not so much as a symbolic reform as a popular service offer which is used in the public service.

There was also good feedback on service timeliness. Approximately 85.1 percent of the respondents indicated they received the service in the specified time frame, 7.9 percent indicated that they did not receive the service in that time frame, and 7 percent took a neutral stand. Factors influencing public participation included staff behaviour. 50.0 percent of respondents rated the polite level of the PKM staff as very polite, while 30.0 percent rated the PKM staff as polite. At most, 3.5 percent said they showed rude behavior.

These results indicate citizens are more likely to be engaged when they feel prompt and well-treated service from the police. Citizens are less likely to approach the police in traditional policing as long as the police are frightened, delaying, or rude.In traditional policing, citizens might not approach the police if they are frightened, delayed or rude. The effect of PKM seems to be that it lowers these hindrances by making it a more serviced based environment.

5.3 Transparency, Trust, and Public Value

Results reveal high acceptance of the contribution of PKM in enhancing transparency and efficiency. Approximately 83.0 percent of the respondents felt that the services of the police officers had become more transparent and efficient since implementation of the PKM; and 82.5 percent agreed that the image of the police had improved since implementing the PKM. Likewise, 81.5 per cent reported that PKM was improving public value and 81.5 per cent said that PKM has helped to reduce the distance between citizens and police.

Another important outcome was the decrease of "Thana culture". 78.5% of the respondents agreed that there was a deterioration of traditional thana culture in Punjab due to the introduction of PKM.The study revealed that about 78.5% of its respondents were convinced

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that introduction of PKM had affected traditional thana culture of Punjab. This is significant as Thana culture is linked to delay, fear, informal pay, and poor relationship between police and the public. Through its digital, standardized and service-based nature, PKM helps in institutional legitimacy.

The chi square output also corroborates the public value/police image relationship. The chi square value for the cross tabellation of the presence of the belief that the presence of PKM in teaching enhances public values and belief that the presence of PKM has improved the police image was 176.595 with 4 degrees of freedom and p value of .000. This suggests that there is statistically significant correlation between the perception of PV and the better image of police.

5.4 Public Inclusion and Barriers to Access

Despite its improvement in access, the study reveals that even today, social and digital barriers limit the extent to which public opinion can enter into inclusion. Seven out of ten respondents reported social barriers, including issues in the family, financial situation, and social conditions, as inhibiting people's ability to access the PKM. Lack of mobile and internet skills was even greater challenge; 86.5% of the respondents rated that as the big challenge for using PKM services.

When the question above was asked, the largest mention among respondents was of digital illiteracy (43.0 percent), followed by lack of awareness (35.0 percent), social barriers (14.0 percent), and other reasons (8.0 percent). The findings indicate that more than availability is needed to have public inclusion. Awareness, confidence, skills and social acceptance of the service from the citizens' side are also needed.

It was found that the social barriers–digital literacy relationship was significant statistically. The chi value is 28.062, degree of freedom of 2, and the p value of .000. It indicates the linkages between social barriers and digital literacy barriers in relation to access to e-policing service.

5.5 Awareness and Digital Participation

One of the requirements for public participation is awareness. The study's results indicated that the main sources of information about PKM mentioned by the respondents were social networks, as well as from neighbors and family. The social media was the major source at 40.0 per cent, followed by friends and family at 36.5 per cent, TV at 17.5 per cent and newspapers at 6.0 per cent.

But when asked if enough awareness was created about the availability of the PKM services in their area, 60.5% replied in affirmative, 24.0% replied in negative and 15.5% answered in a “don't know” category. That is, while there is awareness, it is not universal. Public participation may be enhanced by targeted campaigns, particularly those in rural and non-uprisights areas.

Digital policing tools also had great potential. Some 83.0 percent of respondents were aware of the existence of police mobile applications, and 69.5 percent had used a police mobile app to obtain a service. Nearly 78.5 per cent believed that online police services were reliable and efficient. People had their preferences: 43.5 percent liked to visit PKM physically, 40.5 percent preferred their visit through a mobile application, and 16.0 percent preferred to do it by helpline call.

One of the highly relevant findings is that 93.5 percent of respondents stated that they would rely more on the police services were they to be made more convenient using mobile applications. This demonstrates that citizens will engage with digital engagement, but it must be easy, quick and intuitive. Of those surveyed, when asked about improvements they desired in police digital services, 43.0 percent replied faster response, 35.0 percent replied better

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awareness, 14.5 percent replied a simpler process and 7.5 percent responded more language options.

5.6 Feedback Mechanism and Participatory Governance

Structured feedback is a key mechanism for public participation, particularly through allowing the public to evaluate services and express complaints. This is a significant gap in the result. Approximately 80% of the respondents indicated they were not enquired to provide feedback after receiving a service from PKM. 20.0% reported being asked.

When asked the respondent how they currently shared complaints/comments relating to PKM services, 37.5% noted that their comments or complaints were not even being recorded. Other methods consisted of video recording (29.5 %), SMS (19.0 %), QR code (7.0 %) and the complaint register (7.0 %). This indicates that feedback collection isn't coherent, and structured enough.

In spite of this the citizens were found to be very willing in adopting a citizen participation in feedback-based governance. Approximately 75.5 percent would use a proper feedback system if it was available; 17.5 percent "might use" a proper feedback system; and 7.0 percent would not use a proper feedback system. Furthermore, 63.5 percent reported a problem in the PKM, but due to no appropriate feedback mechanism didn't report it.

The preferred methods of feedback also show the importance of digital participation. Around 30.5 per cent chose social media and online forums, 26.0 per cent SMS, 24.5 per cent citizen satisfaction surveys, 11.0 per cent community meetings and 8.0 per cent complaint boxes. This means that citizens are interested in feedback channels that are easily accessible, open and afflicted with technology.

The fifth topic is about the inclusive participation of women, elderly persons, and citizens with disabilities.

5.7 Inclusion of Women, Elderly Persons, and Disabled Citizens

The inclusion of vulnerable groups necessitates the provisioning of services, which would allow them to do this in a dignified way. The study revealed that 75.5 per cent of the respondents stated that there are distinct counters for women in PKM. Approximately 77.0 percent were confident PKM is easily available for persons who were disabled and 73.5 percent stated that seating or waiting areas are available for elderly and disabled people.

With all, but, however, but nevertheless. Of those, 45.5 percent reported that they had not observed any signage encouraging women, elderly or disabled persons to use the facility.However only 54.5 percent had observed signage directing women, elderly people, or persons with disabilities to use the facility. 75.5 per cent reported there was an officer who helps elderly, disabled and female visitors, with 24.5 per cent saying there was no officer. The outcomes indicate that PKM has moved towards an inclusive agenda, however accessibility contributions of convenience should be standardised and highlighted.

Long waiting time was another challenge. Nearly 64.5 percent of those who responded had to wait long hours waiting for staff. This impacts the inclusion of publics, as waiting times can lead to hardship for women, the elderly, disabled citizens and citizens in need of financial assistance.

5.8 Overall Satisfaction and Needed Improvements

The overall satisfaction with PKM services was favourable. Nearly 74.0 percent of the respondents reported that they were satisfied, 18.5 percent were neutral regarding the statement, and 7.5 percent found the statement unsatisfactory. The research did reveal some areas of need, however. When asked what improvements are most needed in PKM, 34.5 percent said it required more "faster service", 27.0 percent said it required them to be more

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"low-cost", 22.5 percent indicated an improvement was needed in "improvements to facilities" and 16.0 percent indicated an improvement in "increased awareness".

Services charges were also an issue. Nearly, 50.5 percent of the respondents felt the charges of a PKM is high and 14.5 percent of them felt the very high. Just 35.0 per cent rated them as low. Affordability is included in public inclusion suggests. Low income people may be discouraged from seeking use of PKM services if they believe the charges to be too high.

6. Key Findings

The findings of this paper can be summarized as follows:

1. By making the platform less intimidating and more organized and advised the citizens to use the police services, PKM Bahawalpur has shown attention to public participation.
2. There was an improvement in transparency, efficiency and public trust with e-policing – 83.0 per cent of respondents said that PKM resulted in more efficient and transparent services from the police.
3. The police image and public value has improved in the eyes of 82.5 percent, 81.5 percent agree that the public value is enhanced by police implementation of PKM.
4. Social barriers, lack of awareness, digital illiteracy, service charges and time delays are factors that still prevent people from participating in the public space: 4).
5. 86.5 per cent of them saw digital illiteracy as a major obstacle to inclusion, making it the most prominent obstacle to inclusion.
6. Systems for feedback and control are not strong. After receiving PKM services, 79.8% of the respondents were not asked to provide feedback.
7. Citizens are willing to take part in feedback-based governance: 75.5 per cent said they would avail a proper feedback system, if available.
8. There are elements of partial inclusion for women, elderly people and disabled people via specific counters, seating arrangements and designated officers – however, there is room for improvement in signage and uniformed assistance.
9. Mobile Apps are very promising in the future as 93.5 percent indicated they would use the police services more if it was made easier to use via mobile apps.

7. Conclusion

The study reveals that e-Policing 2020 through Police Khidmat Markaz Bahawalpur has helped contribute to the public participation and public inclusion. Through PKM citizens have access to a more accessible, transparent and respectful service-oriented police environment. It decreases apprehension, response or concern by traditional police stations, enhances the image of police. The report describes members of the public's attitudes when interacting with the police, both physically and in digital formats, confirming they'll support both services when they're timely and respectful, affordable, easy to understand.

However, the notion of e-policing is not yet realized as certain groups are still at risk of exclusion. Melonoplaty problem effects a less inclusive PKM because of digital illiteracy, awareness, social problem, high service cost, staff limitation, and bad feedback. Citizens shouldn't be able to participate in the use of the service alone, but should also be able to give feedback, report concerns and help to improve services. In the absence of a formal feedback system this is a significant shortcoming.

In general, it can be stated that PKM Bahawalpur is a progressive e-system of policing approaches which provide more value to the public through the management of service delivery, transparency and trust. To actually achieve public inclusion, however, it is necessary to reinforce public support for digital literacy, awareness-raising initiatives and mechanisms, citizen feedback loops, accessibility features, staff in numbers and costs, and

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affordability. E-policing is able to live up to the expectation of participatory governance only by being accessible and controllable by all citizens – both urban and rural, male and female, digitally knowledgeable and digitally less knowledgeable, physically able and physically unable.

8. Recommendations

Based on the thesis findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. A simple and accessible public feedback system should be initiated at PKM in order to make it easy for citizens to voice their complaints/lobby legislators.
2. The feedback should be gathered in several ways like SMS, QR code, social media, online forms, citizen satisfaction survey and complaint boxes.
3. If the citizens do not know about the use of mobile, internet or applications, digital literacy campaign should be launched.
4. Expand public awareness activities, particularly in rural and unserved areas.
5. Mobile apps can be simplified, streamlined and offered in greater variety of language choices.
6. More staff should be provided to reduce long waiting times.
7. Separate counters and special support services for women, elderly and persons with disabilities should be uniform throughout the PKMs.
8. The woman's disabled visitor signage needs to be enhanced and more visible.
9. Service charges should be taken into account to ensure that low-income citizens are not deterred from using the services of PKM.
10. Staff of PKM should be trained continuously in customer service, soft skills, Digital systems and service delivery for inclusion.
11. Mobile PKM units need to be established for rural/remote areas.
12. Install technology and software regularly to avoid slowdown and disruption in services.
13. Monitoring and evaluation systems should be put in place to follow up and hold responsible PKM performance.
14. Community policing should be associated with PKM to improve citizens' confidence in police.
15. Better coordination between NADRA, traffic police, Excise and Taxation and administration to offer integrated public services.

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