

Mahamaheem's Speech for 41st All India Police Science Congress on 23rd June, 2011 at Dehradun

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be here amidst you all on the 41st All India Police Science Congress. I heartily welcome to all the participant who have come from various parts of this vast country.

This is the special occasion for Uttrakhand, to host such a mega and special event for the first time under the guidance of Bureau of Police Research and Development.

Addressing the Congress in Uttrakhand for me is like a home coming since I have worked here earlier.

I am told that first All India Police Science Congress was held at Patna in 1960 and since then it is being organized annually by rotation in different States with a view to provide unique platform of to encourage creative thinking among the police officers and social scientists. The Conference also strives to evolve a fresh approach and find newer solutions to the multi-dimensional problems confronted by the Indian Police in today's social environment. Police Science Congress is also a time for

introspection as much as it is time to hone professional skills to meet the newer crime trends and organized crimes.

I am happy to learn that I have been asked to chair the session on "Integrity in Higher Echelons of Police Leadership-Moral and Financial." Each culture, each civilization, each religion and society develops norms and laws to protect the people against those who are strong, and exploit others. Human nature, being what it is, allows one or group of people to oppress others singularly or collectively. The existence of the state as an institution basically owes its origin to offer twin protection to people

namely freedom from the reach of external and internal security in a well defined geographical area.

The present police system came with the British in the late 18th century. While the colonial police had its own flaws and which were many, but financial irregularities and instances of bribe at the higher levels were certainly not as rampant as they are today. Credit goes to Indian Police for taking over the growing burden of population growth, industrialization and, of late, liberalization.

However, there can be no doubt that those who police the society must first police themselves. Integrity in Higher Echelons of Police Leadership-Moral and Financial has to

come from within. I think integrity should become a way of life and it should be woven into the fabric of our soul. Police integrity is essentially an attitude of mind which reflects in behavior. Social factors like fear of public humiliation and fear of departmental punishments etc., also plays an important role in shaping such attitude.

By contrast honest behavior can be encouraged by appreciation by seniors, social recognition and earning departmental rewards and promotion.

Integrity cannot be viewed mainly in terms of financial integrity. Financial integrity is one of the offshoots of moral integrity. Police is a disciplined

department, therefore seniors have to become the role model and icons to the rest of the organization. To this extent, a senior cannot disown the responsibility for the present poor image of the forces.

Sheer love for use of authority even without the corresponding financial gain can also be cause of unethical behavior which as well be caused by desire for revenge, in an outburst of anger or establishing one's sheer brute authority on others.

In today's environment, nexus of police and criminals has developed. The only way to contain the rot is to take some principled position. We often come across news

articles regarding distorted medical reports and manipulated forensic reports. This is also one of the factor were seniors have to step in.

We need to keep these aspects in mind while infusing the sense of honest behavior in the officers. One more important factor in promoting and perpetuating police lack of integrity is a practice of condoning unacceptable actions of the juniors. These may not be for very great financial gain but would still be important factors in affecting the integrity of the officers.

Lack of financial integrity may start with very routine and traditionally accepted departmental behavior such as

accepting small gifts, free hospitality, discounts on purchases or what is commonly known as "Dastoor" on festivals, birthdays etc. New entrants to the service are influenced by the prevailing environment. These are like breaching the "Lakshman Rekha" and slowly open the door for higher levels of corruption.

Policing as a profession involves use of authority in a very protected environment - mostly within the walls of the Police Station. Traditions like keeping silent about the misbehavior of juniors and condoning them and protecting them by higher ups act as encouragement to such acts of

junior staff. For the same reason the statistics of corruption cases hardly, if ever, reflect real extent of corruption.

Here we may recall Alabama Code of Police Ethics (2006). Which runs as follows,

"As a law enforcement officer, my duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression and intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality, and pursuit of happiness.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner which does not bring

discredit to me or my agency. Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life."

I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession..... Law Enforcement." Perhaps such a code needs to be adopted in India too.

We are witness to a churning in the society about the need for transparency and integrity in governance. The news channels and mass media cover each action and critically analyze every police action or inaction. Right to Information indicates that society itself is no longer willing to be governed under a cloak of secrecy - a hangover of the

colonial rule. The intense debates on the Lokpal issue are ample proof that there is visible turmoil in society. No right thinking man wants taxpayers' money to be misappropriated. This is a strong demand that every government functionary, police personnel included, has to maintain professional competence and also highest level of honesty and integrity. Direct or indirect links with criminals would not be tolerated by the society. Democracy means will of the people. Therefore, it is about time police device well defined ways and means to check and if necessary eliminate those who vitiate the very

culture of integrity and honesty. The role of senior police officer in this context becomes critical.

I think that the guiding force of career in police should be integrity, honesty and professionalism. The need of the hour is that we should develop the police service which is accountable, transparent and impartial. I am also aware that our police personnel, right from lower level to higher officers have a difficult job to do. A police mans' job is not an easy job. It becomes all the more unenviable since he has not only maintain the rule of law in his jurisdiction but has also to stand unaffected by such corrosive factors such as public distrust, political pressure and physical and

financial temptations. काजल की कोठरी में रहकर भी बेदाग रहना होता है।

A policeman is the most visible representative of the state. It is a general perception of people that image of government is reflected by the image and working of police. Any wrong decision on the part of police directly buys peoples wrath against the government in power. To build to image of police department is not an individual responsibility but the responsibility of whole police fraternity.

In the end, I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me. I am sure that the deliberation and

recommendation for the congress will go a long way in promoting the culture of excellence in police organization and enhancing accountability to people and meet new challenges ahead.

Thank You - Namaskar