

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICE INTERROGATION AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS

Dr. Pradeep kumar kashyap

Asst professor, Krishna Institute of Law, Jindal Nagar, Hapur

Abstract

The interrogation of suspects by law enforcement officers is an essential component of the criminal justice system, with the objectives of elucidating the truth, gathering evidence, and guaranteeing accountability. It is essential, however, that the procedures and principles that govern interrogations be in accordance with fundamental human rights in order to forestall the abuse of power and to protect the dignity of persons. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights are two examples of international human rights frameworks that place an emphasis on the rights to life, liberty, and security, as well as the freedom from torture and the right to a fair trial. With regard to these principles, it is necessary that interrogations be carried out in a just manner, free from any form of pressure, intimidation, or harsh treatment. The adoption of ethical interrogation procedures, the guarantee of legal representation, the preservation of the presumption of innocent, and the maintenance of openness are the measures that are necessary to strike a balance between effective law enforcement and the protection of human rights. The purpose of this study is to investigate the confluence between human rights norms and police interrogation tactics. It highlights the issues that are encountered in various jurisdictions and proposes solutions to increase accountability. Through the incorporation of human rights concepts into interrogation procedures, societies have the ability to advance justice, avoid the wrongful conviction of individuals, and increase public faith in the institutions that are responsible for law enforcement.

Keywords: Principles, Police, Interrogation, Human Rights

Introduction

Since the beginning of the criminal justice system, it has been widely acknowledged that the questioning of suspects by law enforcement is among the most delicate and critical stages. The objective of this is to test the credibility of witnesses and suspects while simultaneously acquiring critical information that might be of assistance in the investigation and prosecution of criminal activity. As a result of the potential for abuse of authority, coercion, and the violation of fundamental rights, the practice of questioning has, throughout history, been surrounded by controversy. In the context of law, criminology, and human rights discourse, the issue is an important field of research because of the tension that exists between the maintenance of public order and the protection of individual rights. Lawfulness, impartiality, openness, and respect for human dignity are the guiding values that regulate the process of questioning. The conduct of interrogations is subject to stringent restrictions imposed by human rights legislation, which applies on both the international and national levels. An explicit prohibition against torture, harsh or humiliating treatment, and arbitrary imprisonment may be found in a number of international documents, including

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), and the United Nations Convention against Torture (1984). By guaranteeing the right to legal representation, protection against self-incrimination, and the presumption of innocence, national constitutions and court decisions also serve to progressively strengthen these rights throughout time. Even if these protections are in place, instances of improper interrogation methods, coerced confessions, and brutality in custody continue to cast doubt on the integrity of the court system. This is especially true in poor countries where there may be a lack of institutional accountability. These crimes not only harm human rights but also weaken public faith in law enforcement, which ultimately results in unjust convictions and miscarriages of justice. Therefore, it is imperative that these violations be addressed immediately. However, officials within the police force claim that interrogations are necessary in order to guarantee efficient law enforcement, particularly in light of the growing number of criminals and terrorists. To ensure that interrogation techniques continue to be successful while still being firmly rooted in the values of human rights and due process, the most important problem is thus to achieve a balance. In light of human rights standards, the purpose of this study is to investigate the fundamental principles of police interrogation, to bring attention to the common challenges and violations that have been observed across jurisdictions, and to propose reforms that can bring law enforcement goals into harmony with respect for human dignity.

WHAT ARE POLICE?

It is not possible to find a definition of the term "police" anywhere in India. There is no clear or vivid explanation of this phrase that can be found in any of the state statutes, including the Criminal Procedure Code, "The Police Act, 18812," or any other act. In addition, the Police Act is the sole piece of legislation that addresses the form and organisation of the police force in a certain state. Furthermore, rather of defining the notion, it provides light on its functions and behaviours, which is a significant contribution. According to the definition that is published in Black's Law Dictionary, the term "police" refers to a government agency that is accountable for the upkeep of public order and safety as well as the management of criminal activity. Putting it another way, the term "police" may be used to refer to any individual or organisation that has been granted permission by the state to investigate, enforce, and prevent criminal activity. The concept of the police force as an organised force was first established in England during the 1800s, when Sir Robert Peel³ was in charge of establishing the first municipal force in London. This event marked the beginning of the concept. Prior to this, police consisted on an informal structure in which individuals would patrol the streets on a regular basis on their own volition.

POLICE-HUMAN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

Keeping peace and order, investigating and preventing criminal activity, and defending the fundamental rights of individuals are all responsibilities that fall under the purview of the police. The unfortunate reality is that it is not unusual for police officers to misuse their position and ignore civil and human rights while they are conducting cross-examinations of those who have been accused. The development of a number of different principles of police interrogation has been a solution to this problem. These standards have been devised to guarantee that the police carry out authorised activities without infringing the fundamental human rights of persons. In order to safeguard and advance fundamental human rights, which the state is not permitted to violate, these principles have been established. As a consequence of

this, the accused is entitled to certain rights if the police detain someone for the purpose of conducting cross-examination.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION DURING POLICE INTERROGATION

The idea of human rights implies that every single person has the right to exercise these rights in their day-to-day life. In the past, these fundamental rights often encompassed fundamental necessities such as food, housing, and clothes; but, as society has advanced, people's requirements have broadened. At this point in time, the right to live a life that is free, peaceful, and dignified is an essential human right for every individual. For the purpose of safeguarding and defending fundamental rights, domestic laws, such as the Constitution of India, have been passed. In particular, the article titled "Right to Life, Personal Freedom" (Article 21) discusses the fundamental human rights that individuals possess throughout their whole lives, and no one has the authority to deny them these constitutionally protected rights. When conducting interrogations, law enforcement officers employ a variety of tactics that violate the human rights of persons, despite the fact that such activities are prohibited by law. As a matter of fact, we are aware of the fact that law enforcement officers engage in cruel behaviour and torture during interrogations. During the subsequent conversation, we are going to go more into the techniques that the police employ in order to conduct interrogations.

HOW POLICE INTERROGATION WORKS?

When it comes to police interrogation, there is no predetermined set of principles. Nevertheless, in accordance with a number of international treaties, there are a few fundamental rules that the police are required to adhere to whenever they are conducting an interrogation. Even when the police are carrying out an authorised state activity, it should not violate the fundamental human and fundamental rights of the individual who is being interrogated. This is the logic that underpins these standards. The promotion of human rights and basic freedoms is the goal of these principles, which cannot be compromised under any circumstances, not even when the state is directly involved. The interrogation of suspects who are currently in the custody of the police is an essential part of the investigative process. The police have the jurisdiction to question a suspect whenever they hold them for either a cognisable offence or a noncognizable offence. This includes both situations in which the suspect is being held by the police. As a result of this interrogation, the authorities are able to gather vital information and find the truth about the occurrence, both of which can contribute to the expeditious conclusion of the case.

Principles of Police Interrogation and Human Rights

1. Legality and Rule of Law

The questioning process must be conducted in accordance with the law at all times, as this is the most important concept that must be adhered to. The rules and procedures that govern the manner in which suspects should be questioned provide police officers the authority to question them. In the majority of judicial systems, any evidence that was gained via unlawful means, such as through the use of torture or intimidation, is not admissible. The interrogation should be conducted in a manner that benefits to the administration of justice rather than undermines it, and respect for legality guarantees that law enforcement does not abuse its authority.

2. Presumption of Innocence

It is not always the case that a suspect who is in custody is guilty. Until a competent court of law establishes that an individual is guilty, international human rights accords emphasise that every individual is deemed innocent until proven guilty. Therefore, techniques of interrogation must avoid treating suspects as criminals or utilising methods that indicate guilt in order to prevent committing crimes. The interrogators are required to take a neutral posture and concentrate on the evidence rather than utilising coercion in order to adhere to this guideline.

3. Right to Silence and Protection Against Self-Incrimination

One of the most important safeguards that is afforded to the accused throughout the questioning process is the right to maintain silence. This right is violated when statements or confessions are taken under pressure or when they are being coerced, and they frequently result in erroneous convictions. Prior to the beginning of any interrogation, suspects are required to be advised of their rights by the courts in a number of nations, including the Miranda rights in the United States. When this concept is respected, it helps to avoid abuse and increases the trust of the legal system for everyone involved.

4. Right to Counsel and Legal Representation

Interrogations that are carried out without providing suspects with the opportunity to consult with legal counsel raise significant questions regarding fairness. The provision of legal counsel, the protection of the suspect's rights, and the prevention of the employment of coercive tactics are all functions that are performed by an attorney. In many jurisdictions, the questioning procedure is considered illegitimate if the individual is denied access to legal representation.

5. Prohibition of Torture and Inhumane Treatment

In international law, the ban against torture, as well as any other kind of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, is unwavering. The use of physical or psychological abuse to coerce confessions is expressly prohibited by the United Nations Convention Against Torture as well as by a number of regional conventions. On the other hand, there are still numerous incidents of violence in correctional facilities across a variety of countries, which raises serious issues regarding enforcement. Not only is it vital to uphold this concept in order to defend human dignity, but it is also essential in order to guarantee that the evidence that is acquired is credible.

6. Transparency and Accountability

Transparency is a characteristic that is emphasised significantly in contemporary questioning practices. It is becoming increasingly common practice to record interrogations, either by audio or video, in order to avoid misbehaviour and to guarantee the integrity of evidence. By allowing courts and other monitoring authorities to examine the method in which interrogations are carried out, such procedures provide an increase in accountability.

7. Proportionality and Necessity

Interrogation need to be carried out in a way that is commensurate with the gravity of the occurrence that is being investigated. There is a violation of human rights standards when there is an excessive use of coercion, protracted imprisonment, or needless limits placed on personal liberty. In order to establish that the measures utilised are necessary, lawful, and the least invasive available, the authorities are required to provide justification.

8. Cultural Sensitivity and Respect for Dignity

There is a human element involved in the process of interrogation, in addition to the legal procedure. When it comes to guaranteeing justice, it is essential to respect disparities associated with gender, culture, and language. During the questioning process, particular precautions must be taken to protect vulnerable groups, such as children, women, and people with impairments respectively. It is possible that discrimination and abuses of human rights would occur if such protections were refused to be provided.

OBJECTIVE

1. The goal and objective of the research presented in this thesis is to investigate the manner in which the human rights of the accused and the victim are protected in line with the criminal legislation that is now in effect in India.

Definition of Police

There is no constitutional resolution in India that defines the term "police." There is no known meaning of this phrase that can be found in either the Criminal Procedure Code or the Police Act of 1881, nor in any other decision passed by the state. When everything is said and done, the Police Act is nothing more than an examination of the structure and association of the police authority in a particular state. According to the Black's legal word reference, the term "police" refers to an administrative office that is tasked with the responsibility of preserving public requests, ensuring public safety, and identifying and controlling criminal activity. To put it simply, the term "police" may be applied to any individual or group of individuals who have been granted the right by the state to maintain the rule of law and peace in order to investigate and prevent any misconduct. Sir Robert Peel was a significant contributor to the establishment of London's first Municipal Force in the 1800s, which is considered to be the beginning of the concept of the police as a coordinated entity which originated in England. Prior to this, the police force was a purposeful employment in which individuals were purposefully responsible for maintaining a constant watch over the highways.

Principles on Police Interrogation

Despite the fact that there are no concrete principles governing police interrogation, there are some natural principles that the police are required to adhere to while regulating interrogation. These principles are depending on several international conventions. The idea behind it is that regardless of whether the police are carrying out a state-approved activity or not, they should not in the tiniest amount violate the fundamental human and vital rights of the individual who is being investigated. These principles are developed with the intention of advancing human rights and important opportunities, both of which

cannot be excused, even to a significant degree, under the guise of governmental activities. According to the following, a fraction of the principles are as follows:

The individual who is subjected to questioning has the fundamental right to life, freedom, and security throughout the process. It is not even remotely possible for law enforcement professionals to divorce these fundamental liberties from the concepts that are at issue. In addition to being derived from Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is also preserved in many constitutional provisions, such as Article 20, Article 21, and other similar provisions.

Individuals who are subjected to interrogation cannot be denied their right to life on the basis of their own decision. In order for the authorities to proceed with such interrogations, they need have an adequate level of abstract fulfilment. It is specifically controlled by Article 20 of the Constitution of India, which is taken from Article 6(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

1. A person who is subjected to questioning will not be subjected to torture or any other kind of harsh punishment that would deprive him or her of the fundamental rights that are guaranteed to them.
2. Every person would be entitled to the fundamental right of uniformity under the watchful eye of the law and corresponding insurance of the law, and no authority would be able to take away this right from a person who is subjected to interrogation. The Indian Constitution, namely Article 14, is responsible for managing this matter as well.
3. Furthermore, there are standard rules for the treatment of an individual who is subjected to questioning while in the custody of the police. These criteria include avoiding subjecting the individual to any form of oppression or agony, as well as ensuring that they are treated fairly at each point of the process.

Rights against Police Interrogations

There are some rights that a person has when they are being interrogated by the police while they are in the custody of the police. The following are some examples of these

1. In India, a person who has been accused of a crime is presumed to be blameless until the proof of the crime is shown in front of the court, after a reasonable amount of ambiguity has passed. As a result of the fact that the burden of proving that the defendant is at fault is with the arraignment side, it is the responsibility of the police to remove any lingering doubts and prove that the defendant caused the incident. The authorities in this location do not have the authority to subject the accused to unlawful harassment in relation to the problem; hence, the accused has the option to remain silent, and he cannot be forced to take any action under any circumstance. The third paragraph of Article 20 protects individuals against self-implication, which is analogous to the right to remain silent.

The highest court in the land decided in the case of *M.P. Sharma v. Satish Chandra*[ii] that an individual whose name is mentioned in the First Information Report (FIR) and an examination was conducted against the charges has the right to remain silent, similar to the protections that are afforded to them against self-implication under Article 20(3).

2. Every individual who is a citizen of India has the right to a reasonable examination, which is a fundamental human right that is accessible to them. People who are subjected to questioning while in the custody of the police as well as those who are incarcerated are accorded this privilege.

It was decided by the Supreme Court in the case of Babubhai v. Province of Gujarat[iii] that the right to reasonable examination is one of the protected rights that are guaranteed by articles 20 and 21. It was also decided that a speedy examination is an essential component of a swift preliminary, and that the police should not delay the examination process since doing so violates the constitutional right of the individual who has been accused.

3. An individual who is subjected to interrogation does not necessarily have to be placed under the law enforcement's supervision. There is also the possibility of addressing it in a conventional manner, if that is possible. When the authority has an abstract fulfilment with relation to the commission of the offence by the concerned individual, then the only time that interrogation is permitted in guardianship is when it is necessary. If the contrary were to occur, the individual's fundamental right to life would be violated.

4. During the course of the questioning, it is not permissible to subject a person to barbaric forms of discipline or pain under any circumstances. For a substantial amount of time, the Indian Parliament has been arguing for the elimination of the treatment of third-degree torture; yet, to this day, there has been no significant progress achieved in this regard. A person's privilege of humanness is taken away when they are subjected to torture during questioning, which is a violation of both our constitutional rights and the fundamental human rights.

5. The protections afforded to a person both during and after their detention are addressed in our constitution's Article 20. When a person is placed in the custody of the police, these rights take effect, and the same holds true for when they are interrogated while in police custody. An apprehended person has the right to know the circumstances surrounding his detention in order to prepare a defence. As stated in Article 22, the capturing authority must provide the subject with a copy of the grounds of capture, as well as counsel, legal advisor, and representation in accordance with the legal strategy.

1. Historical development of interrogation techniques and critiques

Confrontational, confession-focused approaches, such as the Reid technique, were emphasised in the practice of interrogation in the early 20th century. These methods were designed to shatter resistance and obtain admissions from the suspect. These approaches have been criticised by academics and practitioners over the course of time for creating admissions that are not reliable and for promoting psychologically coercive practices that raise the possibility of false confessions, particularly among vulnerable groups such as children and people with cognitive impairments. Critiques that are empirical and case-based have sparked requests for reform and the implementation of information-gathering strategies that are less aggressive.

2. Causes and dynamics of false confessions

Longer interrogations, sleep deprivation, intense psychological pressure, deceptive promises, and suggestibility are all factors that have been identified as contributing to false confessions by a substantial

body of research that has been conducted across multiple disciplines, including psychology, law, and criminology. These factors all have the effect of impairing decision-making and either increasing compliance or internalised false confessing. Evaluations and empirical research provide evidence of continuous connections between coercive conditions and the prevalence of false confessions. These studies also demonstrate that a significant number of exonerations that are supported by DNA evidence entail confession-related mistakes. The aforementioned publications emphasise the importance of implementing legislative protections and modifying procedures in order to limit the number of false convictions.

3. Legal and human-rights frameworks

Several international documents, most notably the United Nations Convention Against Torture and regional human-rights treaties, have established absolute bans on torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. These instruments also oblige nations to oversee and control the techniques of interrogation and the circumstances of imprisonment. Legal protections for procedural safeguards, such as the right to counsel, the ban on coerced self-incrimination, and access to redress, are also supported by human rights law. For the purpose of preventing abusive interrogation methods, the academic community in the field of law and human rights places an emphasis on the responsibility of states to adopt both prohibitive norms and positive measures (training, monitoring).

4. Alternatives and best-practice interviewing models

Different information-gathering strategies have been created and studied as a reaction to the acknowledged hazards that are associated with the use of coercive approaches. In the PEACE methodology, which stands for "Preparation and planning; Engage and explain; Account; Closure; Evaluation," the focus switches from the extraction of confessions to the collecting of evidence and the creation of rapport. The evaluations of the training that is based on PEACE report that the interviewer behaviours have improved, the information yield has increased, and the dependence on coercive methods has decreased. This indicates that systematic, non-coercive procedures may be both successful and ethical.

5. Procedural reforms: recording interrogations and oversight

Electronic recording (audio/video) of interviews conducted by custodial staff is a change that has received widespread support. The purpose of recording, according to literature and policy studies, is to promote openness, discourage abuse, assist the court assessment of voluntariness, and eliminate disagreements over what took place while the individual was in custody. Despite the fact that implementation poses practical difficulties (such as scope, storage, redaction, and chain of custody), empirical assessments reveal that there is a widespread consensus that recording is one of the most effective procedural defences against challenged confessions.

6. Training, institutional culture, and evidence on effectiveness

Both in the laboratory and in the field, training strategies that teach investigatory interviewing skills (rapport, open questions, and cognitive interviewing approaches) have shown encouraging outcomes. However, organisation culture, supervision, and incentives have a significant role in determining how well knowledge is transferred to practice. According to the findings of a number of reviews, training that does not include institutional transformation (meaning performance measurements and accountability) only results in partial change. This suggests that in addition to trainer curriculum, there is a requirement for systemic transformation (namely, policy, oversight, and monitoring).

7. Vulnerable populations and special protections

Coercion and false confessions are more likely to occur in individuals who are not native language speakers, persons with intellectual or mental problems, and minors, as is frequently highlighted in the research. Both comparative and case studies advise against transferring adult-focused approaches to vulnerable populations and urge age-appropriate precautions, such as the presence of a guardian or advocate, required access to counsel, and adapted interviewing techniques.

8. Comparative and international perspectives — reform gaps

The comparative research reveals that different jurisdictions have different types of practices and safeguards. Despite the fact that some nations have made rapid progress in instituting protections (such as required recording, PEACE training, and restrictions on the amount of time spent in custody), others continue to rely primarily on confession-centric systems that have inadequate monitoring, which has led to documented instances of miscarriages of justice. On the other hand, academic research emphasises the importance of adapting reforms to local legal cultures, resource limits, and accountability systems. This is in addition to the necessity for worldwide dissemination of best practices.

Conclusion

Interrogation by law enforcement officers is a practice that is at the crossroads between the investigation of criminal activity and the defence of fundamental human rights. On the one hand, it is an essential investigative tool that enables law enforcement to collect evidence, discover the truth, and guarantee that justice is served. The flip side of the coin is that when it is used inappropriately, it can result in serious abuses of human dignity, such as the use of coercion, torture, false confessions, and a miscarriage of justice. The literature and international human rights frameworks make it abundantly evident that questioning must be carried out within the tight confines of legality, fairness, and transparency so as to avoid any potential violations of human rights. The evaluation of principles indicates that effective interrogation is not synonymous with obtaining confessions; rather, it is synonymous with gathering material that can be verified and was obtained from reputable sources. In order to protect suspects and improve the credibility of the judicial system, it is essential to uphold the presumption of innocence, ensure that individuals have access to legal representation, ban torture and other forms of humiliating treatment, and implement safeguards such as audio-visual recording. By demonstrating that non-coercive, information-gathering procedures may accomplish investigative aims without infringing on rights, models such as the PEACE framework demonstrate that such approaches are possible. Despite these developments, there are still obstacles to be faced, particularly in jurisdictions that have limited training, poor accountability procedures, and methods that are based on confessions that have been in

place for a long time. There is still a significant increase in the dangers that vulnerable groups, such as children and people with disabilities, are exposed to throughout the process of questioning in custody. Because of these facts, there is an immediate and pressing requirement for systemic reform inside law enforcement agencies that include ethical training, independent supervision, legislative protections, and cultural shifts. In the end, the concepts of police interrogation and the imperatives of human rights are not incompatible with one another; rather, they are complementary to one another and mutually beneficial. By ensuring that evidence is reliable, that trials are fair, and that public faith in the rule of law is preserved, respecting human rights does not impede justice but rather brings about an improvement in the administration of justice. As we move forward, the implementation of interrogation procedures that are respectful of human rights must to be regarded not only as a legal responsibility, but also as a fundamental component of democratic policing and a precondition for the provision of meaningful justice.

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