Indian Police System Essay, Research Paper

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The Indian constitution assigns responsibility for maintaining law and order to the states and territories, and almost all routine policing, including apprehension of criminals, is carried out by state-level police forces. The constitution also permits the central government to participate in police operations and organization by authorizing the maintenance of the Indian Police Service. Police officers are recruited by the Union Public Service Commission through a competitive nationwide examination(H 348). On completion of a nationwide basic public-service course, police officer candidates attend the National Police Academy at Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. They are then assigned to particular state or union territory forces, where they usually remain for the rest of their careers. About 50 percent of the officers are regularly assigned to states or territories other than their own in an effort to promote national integration(I348).

Their constitution also authorizes the central government to maintain whatever forces are necessary to safeguard national security. Under the terms of the constitution, paramilitary forces can be legally detailed to assist the states but only if so requested by the state governments. In practice, the central government has largely observed these limits. In isolated instances, the central government has deployed its paramilitary units to protect central government institutions over the protest of a state government. During the Emergency of 1975-77, the constitution was amended (effective February 1, 1976) to permit the central government to dispatch and deploy its paramilitary forces without regard to the wishes of the states (see The Rise of Indira Gandhi, ch. 1). This action proved unpopular, and the use of the paramilitary forces was controversial. After the Emergency was lifted, the constitution was amended in December 1978 to make deployment of central government paramilitary forces once again dependent on the consent of the state government. According to apologists for the central government, this amendment prevented the government from sending in paramilitary forces to protect the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, in December 1992.

The principal national-level organization concerned with law enforcement is the Ministry of Home Affairs, which supervises a large number of government functions and agencies operated and administered by the central government. The ministry is concerned with all matters pertaining to the maintenance of public peace and order, the staffing and administration of the public services, the delineation of internal boundaries, and the administration of union territories.

In addition to managing the Indian Police Service, the Ministry of Home Affairs maintains several agencies and organizations dealing with police and security. Police in the union territories are the responsibility of the Police Division, which also runs the National Police Academy and the Institute of Criminology and Forensic Science. The Central Bureau of Investigation investigates crimes that might involve public officials or have ramifications for several states. The ministry also is the parent organization of the Border Security Force.(h 389)