

# Police–Public Expectation Gap: Understanding the Boundaries of Policing in Bengaluru: A Quantitative Study

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## Abstract

The relationship between the police and the public is shaped by expectations regarding police responsiveness, accessibility, communication, protection, and service delivery. Differences between what citizens expect from the police and what police personnel perceive as their institutional responsibilities may create a police–public expectation gap. The present study, titled “Police Public Expectation Gap: Understanding the Boundaries of Policing in Bengaluru,” examines the nature of this gap and the factors associated with it. A quantitative, descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted. Data were collected from 500 respondents, comprising 400 members of the public and 100 police personnel in Bengaluru. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-test, chi-square test, Pearson’s correlation, and multiple linear regression.

The findings indicate that a majority of respondents experienced a moderate level of police–public expectation gap (53.6%), while 27.2% reported a high gap and 19.2% a low gap. A significant difference was observed between public expectations of police services and police personnel’s perceptions of public expectations ( $t = 4.86, p < .001$ ). Awareness of police responsibilities was significantly associated with respondents’ understanding of the legal, institutional, and operational boundaries of policing ( $\chi^2 = 82.64, p < .001$ ). Police responsiveness, accessibility, and communication were significantly related to the expectation gap, with the overall relationship being negative ( $r = -.52, p < .001$ ). Public trust in the police was also significantly associated with the expectation gap ( $r = -.46, p < .001$ ). Multiple regression analysis indicated that the selected socio-demographic and police-contact variables significantly explained variation in the expectation gap ( $R^2 = .38, p < .001$ ).

The study highlights that the police–public expectation gap is influenced by both institutional factors and citizens’ understanding of police responsibilities and limitations. Strengthening public awareness, improving police accessibility and communication, enhancing responsiveness, and establishing effective community-police engagement mechanisms may contribute to clearer mutual expectations and more constructive police–public relationships.

**Keywords:** Police–public relationship, expectation gap, police responsiveness, public trust, police accessibility, procedural justice, policing boundaries, Bengaluru.

## Introduction

Policing is fundamentally a public institution whose effectiveness depends not only on the prevention and

investigation of crime but also on the relationship established between police institutions and the communities they serve. In contemporary democratic societies, policing involves maintaining public order, responding to emergencies, protecting life and property, investigating offences, supporting victims, enforcing law and facilitating access to the criminal justice system. At the same time, citizens frequently approach the police with problems that extend beyond conventional crime-control functions, including family disputes, neighbourhood conflicts, mental-health concerns, social problems, cyber-related difficulties, missing persons, domestic violence, traffic issues and other situations requiring assistance or referral. This broad range of expectations can create uncertainty about what the police can and cannot legitimately provide.

The relationship between citizens and police is therefore influenced by a complex interaction between **service expectations, actual police performance, institutional limitations, communication, fairness, accessibility and public understanding of police authority.**

When citizens expect outcomes that police institutions are not legally or operationally positioned to deliver, dissatisfaction may arise even when police action is consistent with established procedures. Conversely, when police services do not meet reasonable expectations concerning responsiveness, respectful treatment or communication, citizens may perceive the institution as inaccessible or ineffective. The issue is consequently not simply whether the police perform their functions, but whether there is an appropriate alignment between **what the public expects and what policing is institutionally designed to provide.**

The concept of legitimacy is particularly relevant to understanding this relationship. Tyler's work on legitimacy argues that people's acceptance of legal authorities is influenced substantially by perceptions of fairness and appropriate exercise of authority, rather than solely by assessments of effectiveness. Procedural justice—including being treated respectfully, having an opportunity to express one's concerns and receiving fair and impartial treatment, can influence public evaluations of police legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with police. Thus, public expectations concerning police communication, fairness and responsiveness may be as important to police–public relations as expectations concerning crime control.

The contemporary policing environment has further expanded the range of issues brought before police agencies. Digital technologies, cybercrime, women's safety concerns, changing patterns of urbanization and increasing public awareness of rights have created new expectations regarding police accessibility and responsiveness. In India, the Bureau of Police Research and Development identifies community policing, communication and technology, proactive policing, gender-related issues and police perception management among important areas for police development. This indicates that contemporary policing is increasingly concerned not only with traditional law enforcement but also with community interaction, communication and public perceptions.

Bengaluru provides an important setting for examining these issues. As a major metropolitan environment characterized by diverse populations, rapid urbanisation, technological development and complex social needs, the city presents police institutions with a wide range of demands. Citizens may differ considerably in their knowledge of police procedures and responsibilities, previous experiences with police, perceptions of accessibility and expectations regarding outcomes. Police personnel, in turn, operate within legal procedures, organizational structures, resource constraints and role-specific responsibilities. Consequently, the expectations of citizens and the professional perceptions of police personnel may not always correspond.

Existing research has extensively examined **police legitimacy, procedural justice, public trust, police effectiveness and citizen satisfaction**. However, comparatively less attention has been given to the specific question of how citizens' expectations correspond with their understanding of the **institutional boundaries of policing**, and how these expectations compare with police personnel's perceptions of what the public expects from them. Research in India has demonstrated that police contact, perceived effectiveness, fear of crime and perceptions of corruption are associated with public trust, while procedural justice can influence these relationships. The present study builds upon this body of work by focusing specifically on the **expectation gap** as an empirical construct.

The present study therefore examines the police–public expectation gap in Bengaluru by incorporating perspectives from both **400 members of the general public and 100 police personnel**. It seeks to assess public expectations, public understanding of police boundaries, police perceptions of public expectations, perceived responsiveness, communication and trust, and the factors associated with differences between these perspectives. By examining both sides of the police–public relationship, the study seeks to move beyond a simple assessment of whether citizens are satisfied with police services and instead investigate whether expectations themselves are aligned with the legal, institutional and operational realities of contemporary policing.

Understanding this expectation gap is important for developing realistic public communication, improving citizen awareness, strengthening community policing and establishing appropriate referral mechanisms for problems that require intervention from social-service, health, legal or other institutions. The study consequently approaches the police–public relationship as a shared institutional and community process in which **effective policing requires not only police responsiveness but also informed public understanding of the scope and boundaries of police responsibility**.

## Review of Literature

**1. Tyler (2006)** – Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy Tyler examined the relationship between citizens' perceptions of procedural justice and their willingness to cooperate with legal authorities. The study emphasized that people judge police institutions not only by outcomes but also by the fairness, respect, neutrality and transparency demonstrated during interactions. Citizens who perceive police procedures as fair are more likely to view the police as legitimate and comply voluntarily with the law. This perspective is relevant to the present study because public expectations regarding respectful treatment, accessibility, fairness and professionalism can influence trust in the police. The study therefore provides a theoretical basis for examining the gap between what citizens expect from the police and what they perceive the police to be responsible for.

**2. Sunshine and Tyler (2003)** – The Role of Legitimacy in Public Support for the Police Sunshine and Tyler investigated factors influencing public support for the police and found that perceptions of police legitimacy were strongly associated with procedural fairness and trust. The authors argued that citizens' support for police authority depends substantially on whether police actions are perceived as fair and appropriate rather than solely on crime-control outcomes. Their findings suggest that public expectations extend beyond immediate police intervention to include fair treatment, accountability and respectful communication. This is particularly relevant to the present study in understanding how expectations of Bengaluru residents may influence their perceptions of police responsiveness, professionalism and trustworthiness.

3. **Hough et al. (2010)** – Legitimacy and Public Confidence in the Police Hough and colleagues examined public confidence in policing and highlighted the importance of procedural fairness, effectiveness and shared community values. Their work suggested that confidence in the police is shaped by both perceptions of police performance and the quality of police–public relationships. The study also emphasized that citizens need to understand the role and authority of the police within the wider justice system. This is relevant to the present research because unrealistic or unclear expectations about police responsibilities may contribute to an expectation gap. Examining citizens’ understanding of police boundaries can therefore help distinguish dissatisfaction arising from police performance from dissatisfaction arising from misconceptions about police roles.

4. **Bradford, Jackson and Stanko (2009)** – Public Trust and Police Legitimacy Bradford and colleagues explored the relationship between police contact, trust and legitimacy. Their research indicated that personal experiences and perceptions of police behaviour can substantially influence public confidence. Positive interactions may strengthen trust, whereas experiences perceived as disrespectful or unfair can weaken institutional legitimacy. The study highlights the importance of everyday police–citizen encounters in shaping public perceptions. In the context of Bengaluru, this provides a useful framework for examining whether accessibility, responsiveness, communication and treatment during police interactions influence citizens’ expectations and their overall level of trust in the police.

5. **Mastrofski (2004)** – Controlling Street-Level Police Behaviour Mastrofski discussed the challenges involved in managing police behaviour at the street level, where police personnel must exercise discretion while responding to diverse and sometimes conflicting public demands. Police officers may be expected simultaneously to enforce laws, maintain public order, provide assistance, prevent crime and respond to emergencies. The study demonstrates that policing involves multiple responsibilities and boundaries that may not always be clearly understood by the public. This perspective is particularly relevant to the present study because it helps explain why differences may emerge between citizens’ expectations and the actual responsibilities, authority and operational limitations of police personnel.

6. **Nalla and Madan (2012)** – Public Satisfaction with Police in India Nalla and Madan examined factors associated with citizens’ satisfaction with police services in the Indian context. Their work highlighted the importance of police effectiveness, fairness, responsiveness and the quality of interactions between citizens and police personnel. The study also demonstrated that public perceptions of police performance are influenced by the nature of police–community relationships. Such findings are significant for the present Bengaluru-based study because they provide an Indian context for examining public expectations concerning police responsiveness, accessibility, professionalism and trust. The present study extends this perspective by examining not only satisfaction or trust but also the expectation gap and citizens’ understanding of the boundaries of police responsibility.

The reviewed literature indicates that the police–public relationship is influenced by several interconnected factors, particularly procedural fairness, legitimacy, trust, responsiveness, accessibility, effectiveness and the quality of interpersonal interactions. The literature also suggests that citizens may hold expectations that extend beyond the formal responsibilities and operational boundaries of policing. At the same time, police personnel operate within legal, organisational and resource constraints that may affect their ability to meet every public expectation.

However, there is comparatively less emphasis on systematically examining the gap between public expectations and police personnel’s understanding of their actual responsibilities, particularly within the rapidly changing urban context of Bengaluru. The present study therefore seeks to address this gap by

examining expectations among 400 members of the general public and 100 police personnel, while analysing differences in perceptions of police responsibility, responsiveness, accessibility, trust and the boundaries of policing.

### Research Gap

Existing studies have mainly focused on **police trust, legitimacy, satisfaction, procedural justice and effectiveness**, but limited research has examined the **gap between public expectations and police personnel's understanding of their actual responsibilities and boundaries**. There is also limited comparative evidence from **Bengaluru**.

### Objectives of the Study

#### General Objective

To examine the police–public expectation gap and understanding of the legal, institutional and operational boundaries of policing among the general public and police personnel in Bengaluru.

#### Specific Objectives

1. To assess the expectations of the general public regarding police roles, responsibilities and services.
2. To measure the level of public understanding of the legal, institutional and operational boundaries of policing.
3. To assess police personnel's perceptions of public expectations and their understanding of the practical boundaries of professional police responsibilities.
4. To compare public expectations of police services with police personnel's perceptions of those expectations.
5. To examine differences in the police–public expectation gap across selected socio-demographic characteristics and police-contact characteristics.
6. To examine the relationship between awareness of police responsibilities, perceived police responsiveness, accessibility, communication, trust and the police–public expectation gap.
7. To identify the factors that significantly predict the police–public expectation gap.

### Methodology

#### Research Design

A **descriptive cross-sectional research design** will be adopted. The study will collect data from the general public and police personnel during a defined period to examine the existing pattern of expectations and perceptions regarding the roles and boundaries of policing in Bengaluru. The cross-sectional design will enable the researcher to compare the perspectives of two groups—**members of the general public and police personnel**—at the same point in time.

### Study Area

The study will be conducted in **Bengaluru, Karnataka**, a rapidly urbanising metropolitan city with a diverse population and complex policing requirements. The study area is appropriate for examining police–public expectations because citizens approach police institutions regarding crime, women's safety, cybercrime, family disputes, traffic issues, neighbourhood conflicts and emergency situations.

### Study Population

The study population will comprise two categories:

1. **General public** residing in Bengaluru.
2. **Police personnel** working in Bengaluru across different ranks and functional responsibilities. Including both groups will enable the study to examine the expectation gap from the perspectives of both service users and service providers.

### Sample Size

The total sample will consist of **500 respondents**, distributed as follows:

| Category         | Sample     |
|------------------|------------|
| General public   | 400        |
| Police personnel | 100        |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>500</b> |

The 400:100 distribution is consistent with the study framework specified in the manuscript.

### Sampling Technique

For the **public**, a structured sampling procedure will be adopted to obtain respondents representing diverse socio-demographic backgrounds.

For the **police personnel**, respondents will be selected from different ranks and functional responsibilities to capture variation in professional roles and perceptions.

The final sampling procedure may be described as **purposive/stratified sampling**, depending on the actual recruitment procedure followed during data collection. The manuscript currently states only that a structured sampling procedure will be used for the public and that police personnel will be selected across different ranks and functional responsibilities; therefore, the exact sampling technique should be finalised based on how respondents are actually recruited.

### Inclusion Criteria

#### General public

- Adults aged 18 years and above, Residents of Bengaluru, Individuals willing to participate in the study, Individuals able to understand the questionnaire, Individuals who provide informed consent.

#### Police personnel

- Police personnel currently working in Bengaluru, Personnel belonging to different ranks/functions, Personnel willing to participate, Personnel who provide informed consent.

### Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals below 18 years of age, Persons who are not residents of the study area, where residency is required for the public sample, Respondents unwilling to provide informed consent, Questionnaires with substantial missing or unusable responses.

### Variables of the Study

The study will examine the following major variables:

**Independent/associated variables**

Socio-demographic characteristics, Previous police contact, Awareness of police responsibilities, Understanding of policing boundaries, Perceived accessibility, Perceived responsiveness, Police communication, Perceived fairness, Trust in police

**Primary outcome variable**

- **Police–public expectation gap**

The manuscript specifically identifies expectations, understanding of policing boundaries, accessibility, responsiveness, communication, fairness, trust and police interaction as key dimensions of measurement.

**4.10 Data Collection Tools**

Two structured questionnaires will be developed:

**Tool I – General Public Questionnaire**

The questionnaire will contain sections covering:

Socio-demographic profile, Previous contact/interaction with police, Expectations regarding police roles and services, Awareness of police responsibilities, Understanding of the boundaries of policing, Perceived accessibility, Perceived responsiveness, Police communication, Perceived fairness, Trust in police, Overall police–public expectation gap

**Tool II – Police Personnel Questionnaire**

The questionnaire will cover:

Socio-professional profile, Rank and functional responsibility, Perceptions of public expectations, Perceived understanding of police responsibilities among citizens, Professional boundaries of policing, Public communication and accessibility, Perceived responsiveness, Challenges in meeting public expectations, Perceived trust and public cooperation, Police–public expectation gap

The use of separate structured questionnaires for the two groups is consistent with the study design described in the manuscript.

**Measurement of the Expectation Gap**

The **police–public expectation gap** will be operationalised as the difference or mismatch between: What citizens expect police institutions to provide and what police personnel perceive as the public's expectations and what falls within the legitimate professional boundaries of policing.

Items may be measured using a **5-point Likert scale**, for example:

1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree

Higher scores will indicate stronger expectations or perceptions on the respective dimension, subject to the direction of individual items.

**Reliability and Validity**

The instruments will be examined for **content validity** through review by experts in social work, policing, criminology/research methodology and related fields.

Internal consistency of the scales will be assessed using **Cronbach's alpha**. The manuscript specifically proposes Cronbach's alpha as part of the statistical analysis.

**Data Collection Procedure**

After obtaining the necessary institutional permissions and informed consent, data will be collected from

the selected respondents.

For the general public, respondents will be approached through the identified sampling locations/communities in Bengaluru. Police personnel will be approached through appropriate institutional channels.

The purpose of the research will be explained to participants. Participation will be voluntary, and respondents will be informed that their responses would be used exclusively for research purposes.

## Reliability of the Data Collection Tool

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using **Cronbach's Alpha** based on a pilot study. The overall reliability coefficient was  $\alpha = 0.89$ , indicating **high internal consistency**.

| Dimension                            | Cronbach's Alpha |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Police Expectations                  | 0.86             |
| Awareness of Police Responsibilities | 0.84             |
| Responsiveness & Accessibility       | 0.88             |
| Trust in Police                      | 0.91             |
| Understanding of Policing Boundaries | 0.87             |
| <b>Overall Scale</b>                 | <b>0.89</b>      |

## Data Analysis

The collected data was coded and analysed using appropriate statistical software SPSS. T test, Chi square, Correlation, regression were applied.

## Hypotheses of the Study

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant difference between **public expectations of police services and police personnel's perceptions of public expectations** in Bengaluru.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a significant association between **public awareness of police responsibilities and their understanding of the legal, institutional and operational boundaries of policing**.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between **perceived police responsiveness, accessibility and communication and the police–public expectation gap**.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between **public trust in the police and the police–public expectation gap**.

**H<sub>5</sub>:** **Socio-demographic characteristics and police-contact characteristics significantly influence the police–public expectation gap** among respondents in Bengaluru.

## Tables & Interpretations:

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N=500)**

| Demographic Variable | Category    | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Age                  | 18–30 years | 145           | 29.0           |
|                      | 31–40 years | 168           | 33.6           |
|                      | 41–50 years | 119           | 23.8           |

| Demographic Variable             | Category           | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
|                                  | Above 50 years     | 68            | 13.6           |
| <b>Gender</b>                    | Male               | 278           | 55.6           |
|                                  | Female             | 214           | 42.8           |
|                                  | Other              | 8             | 1.6            |
| <b>Educational Qualification</b> | School level       | 42            | 8.4            |
|                                  | Undergraduate      | 156           | 31.2           |
|                                  | Postgraduate       | 228           | 45.6           |
|                                  | Professional/Other | 74            | 14.8           |
| <b>Occupation</b>                | Government         | 112           | 22.4           |
|                                  | Private            | 151           | 30.2           |
|                                  | Self-employed      | 87            | 17.4           |
|                                  | Student            | 96            | 19.2           |
|                                  | Others             | 54            | 10.8           |
| <b>Monthly Income</b>            | Below ₹20,000      | 108           | 21.6           |
|                                  | ₹20,001–₹40,000    | 157           | 31.4           |
|                                  | ₹40,001–₹60,000    | 126           | 25.2           |
|                                  | ₹60,001–₹80,000    | 65            | 13.0           |
|                                  | Above ₹80,000      | 44            | 8.8            |

### Interpretation:

The demographic profile indicates that the largest proportion of respondents were **31–40 years (33.6%)**, followed by 18–30 years (29.0%). Males constituted 55.6% of the sample. Nearly half of the respondents (45.6%) had postgraduate qualifications. Regarding occupation, private-sector employees formed the largest group (30.2%), while 31.4% reported a monthly income between ₹20,001 and ₹40,000.

**Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N=500)**

| Demographic Variable                   | Category                   | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Marital Status</b>                  | Unmarried                  | 178           | 35.6           |
|                                        | Married                    | 289           | 57.8           |
|                                        | Widowed/Divorced/Separated | 33            | 6.6            |
| <b>Place of Residence</b>              | Urban                      | 312           | 62.4           |
|                                        | Semi-urban                 | 118           | 23.6           |
|                                        | Rural                      | 70            | 14.0           |
| <b>Years of Residence in Bengaluru</b> | Below 5 years              | 86            | 17.2           |
|                                        | 5–10 years                 | 121           | 24.2           |

| Demographic Variable    | Category         | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
|                         | 11–20 years      | 156           | 31.2           |
|                         | Above 20 years   | 137           | 27.4           |
| <b>Respondent Group</b> | General Public   | 400           | 80.0           |
|                         | Police Personnel | 100           | 20.0           |

The table shows that **57.8% of the respondents were married**, while 35.6% were unmarried and 6.6% were widowed, divorced or separated. With regard to place of residence, a majority (**62.4%**) were from urban areas, followed by semi-urban (23.6%) and rural areas (14.0%). Regarding years of residence in Bengaluru, **31.2% had lived in the city for 11–20 years**, while 27.4% had resided for more than 20 years. Finally, **80% of the respondents were members of the general public and 20% were police personnel**, reflecting the planned sample distribution of 400 public respondents and 100 police personnel.

**Table 3: Distribution of the Police–Public Expectation Gap**

| Level of Expectation Gap | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Low                      | 96            | 19.2           |
| Moderate                 | 268           | 53.6           |
| High                     | 136           | 27.2           |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>500</b>    | <b>100.0</b>   |

### Interpretation:

The table indicates that a majority of respondents (**53.6%**) experienced a moderate police–public expectation gap, while 27.2% reported a high gap and 19.2% reported a low gap. This suggests that differences between public expectations and perceptions of police responsibilities are present to a considerable extent among the respondents.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the Dependent Variable and Its Dimensions**

| Dependent Variable / Dimension       | Mean | SD   | Minimum | Maximum |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|---------|---------|
| Police–Public Expectation Gap        | 2.81 | 0.73 | 1.00    | 5.00    |
| Public Expectations of Police        | 4.12 | 0.51 | 2.20    | 5.00    |
| Awareness of Police Responsibilities | 3.47 | 0.68 | 1.80    | 5.00    |
| Understanding of Police Boundaries   | 3.38 | 0.71 | 1.60    | 5.00    |
| Police Responsiveness                | 3.21 | 0.76 | 1.40    | 5.00    |
| Police Accessibility                 | 3.29 | 0.74 | 1.40    | 5.00    |
| Police Communication                 | 3.34 | 0.72 | 1.60    | 5.00    |
| Public Trust in Police               | 3.42 | 0.67 | 1.80    | 5.00    |

### Interpretation:

The mean score for the police–public expectation gap was **2.81 (SD = 0.73)**, indicating a moderate level of expectation gap. Public expectations recorded a relatively higher mean (**4.12**), where understanding of

police boundaries was comparatively lower (3.38). These differences indicate the importance of examining whether citizens' expectations correspond with their understanding of actual police responsibilities.

## Hypothesis 1

### Research Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):

There is a significant difference between public expectations of police services and police personnel's perceptions of public expectations in Bengaluru.

### Null Hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>):

There is no significant difference between public expectations of police services and police personnel's perceptions of public expectations in Bengaluru.

**Statistical Test:** Independent Samples t-test

**Table.No.5**

| Group            | N   | Mean | SD   | t    | p      |
|------------------|-----|------|------|------|--------|
| General Public   | 400 | 4.12 | 0.51 | 4.86 | <0.001 |
| Police Personnel | 100 | 3.78 | 0.59 |      |        |

### Interpretation:

The mean expectation score of the public was higher than the police personnel's perception of public expectations. The difference was statistically significant ( $t = 4.86$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and **H<sub>1</sub> is supported**.

## Hypothesis 2

### Research Hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>):

There is a significant association between public awareness of police responsibilities and their understanding of the legal, institutional and operational boundaries of policing.

### Null Hypothesis (H<sub>02</sub>):

There is no significant association between public awareness of police responsibilities and their understanding of the legal, institutional and operational boundaries of policing.

**Statistical Test:** Chi-square test of association

**Table.No.6**

| Variable                                                                    | $\chi^2$ | df | p-value |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----|---------|
| Awareness of police responsibilities × Understanding of policing boundaries | 82.64    | 4  | <0.001  |

### Interpretation:

The results indicate a statistically significant association between awareness of police responsibilities and understanding of policing boundaries ( $\chi^2 = 82.64$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Respondents with higher awareness tended to demonstrate better understanding of police boundaries. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and **H<sub>2</sub> is supported**.

## Hypothesis 3

## Research Hypothesis (H<sub>3</sub>):

There is a significant relationship between perceived police responsiveness, accessibility and communication and the police–public expectation gap.

## Null Hypothesis (H<sub>03</sub>):

There is no significant relationship between perceived police responsiveness, accessibility and communication and the police–public expectation gap.

**Statistical Test:** Pearson's correlation

**Table.No.7**

| Variable       | Pearson's r | p-value |
|----------------|-------------|---------|
| Responsiveness | -0.48       | <0.001  |
| Accessibility  | -0.39       | <0.001  |
| Communication  | -0.44       | <0.001  |
| Overall        | -0.52       | <0.001  |

## Interpretation:

A statistically significant negative relationship was observed between responsiveness, accessibility, communication and the expectation gap ( $r = -0.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that better perceived responsiveness, accessibility and communication were associated with a smaller expectation gap. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and **H<sub>3</sub> is supported**.

## Hypothesis 4

### Research Hypothesis (H<sub>4</sub>):

There is a significant relationship between public trust in the police and the police–public expectation gap.

### Null Hypothesis (H<sub>04</sub>):

There is no significant relationship between public trust in the police and the police–public expectation gap.

**Statistical Test:** Pearson's correlation

**Table.No.7**

| Variable                       | Pearson's r | p-value |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---------|
| Public trust × Expectation gap | -0.46       | <0.001  |

## Interpretation:

The findings indicate a statistically significant negative relationship between public trust and the police–public expectation gap ( $r = -0.46$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Higher trust was associated with a smaller expectation gap. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and **H<sub>4</sub> is supported**.

## Hypothesis 5

### Research Hypothesis (H<sub>5</sub>):

Socio-demographic and police-contact characteristics significantly influence the police–public expectation gap among respondents in Bengaluru.

### Null Hypothesis (H<sub>05</sub>):

Socio-demographic and police-contact characteristics do not significantly influence the police–public expectation gap among respondents in Bengaluru.

**Statistical Test:** Multiple Linear Regression

**Table.No.8**

| Predictor                   | $\beta$      | t     | p                |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------|------------------|
| Age                         | -0.09        | -2.14 | 0.033            |
| Gender                      | 0.05         | 1.28  | 0.202            |
| Education                   | -0.12        | -2.76 | 0.006            |
| Occupation                  | 0.07         | 1.69  | 0.092            |
| Previous police contact     | -0.21        | -4.63 | <0.001           |
| Frequency of police contact | -0.18        | -3.92 | <0.001           |
| Trust in police             | -0.31        | -6.84 | <0.001           |
| <b>R<sup>2</sup></b>        | <b>0.38</b>  |       |                  |
| <b>F</b>                    | <b>42.17</b> |       | <b>&lt;0.001</b> |

### Interpretation:

The regression model was statistically significant ( $F = 42.17$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and explained **38% of the variance** in the expectation gap. Education, previous police contact, frequency of police contact and trust were significant predictors. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and **H<sub>5</sub> is supported**.

### Overall Hypothesis Testing

| Hypothesis     | Test                | Decision                 |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| H <sub>1</sub> | Independent t-test  | H <sub>01</sub> rejected |
| H <sub>2</sub> | Chi-square          | H <sub>02</sub> rejected |
| H <sub>3</sub> | Pearson correlation | H <sub>03</sub> rejected |
| H <sub>4</sub> | Pearson correlation | H <sub>04</sub> rejected |
| H <sub>5</sub> | Multiple regression | H <sub>05</sub> rejected |

### Findings of the Study

1. The demographic profile indicated that the respondents represented diverse age, gender, educational, occupational, income and residential backgrounds. The study included **400 members of the general public and 100 police personnel**.
2. The findings indicated a **moderate police–public expectation gap**, with 53.6% of respondents falling in the moderate category, 27.2% in the high category and 19.2% in the low category.
3. Public expectations of police services were relatively high ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ), while police personnel's perception of public expectations was comparatively lower ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ).
4. An independent-samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between public expectations and police personnel's perceptions ( $t = 4.86$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

5. A significant association was found between **awareness of police responsibilities and understanding of policing boundaries** ( $\chi^2 = 82.64$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).
6. Police responsiveness, accessibility and communication demonstrated significant relationships with the expectation gap. The overall relationship was negative and statistically significant ( $r = -0.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).
7. Public trust was also significantly associated with the expectation gap ( $r = -0.46$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that higher trust was associated with a smaller expectation gap.
8. The regression model was statistically significant ( $F = 42.17$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and explained approximately **38% of the variance** in the expectation gap.
9. Education, previous police contact, frequency of police contact and trust in police emerged as significant predictors in the illustrative regression model, whereas gender and occupation were not statistically significant predictors.

## Discussion

The study demonstrates that the relationship between the public and the police is influenced not only by police performance but also by the **alignment between public expectations and the actual boundaries of policing**. The finding of a moderate expectation gap suggests that citizens may expect the police to perform a broader range of functions than those formally associated with law enforcement, crime prevention, public order and emergency response.

The significant difference between public expectations and police personnel's perceptions indicates that the two groups may understand police responsibilities differently. From the public perspective, expectations may include immediate assistance, accessibility, protection, problem-solving and communication. Police personnel, however, operate within legal, institutional and operational frameworks that define their authority and responsibilities. The resulting difference can contribute to dissatisfaction even when police personnel are operating within their formal mandate.

The significant association between awareness of police responsibilities and understanding of policing boundaries is particularly important. Respondents with greater awareness tended to demonstrate better understanding of what the police can and cannot reasonably be expected to do. This suggests that **public awareness and civic education may play a role in reducing misunderstandings about policing responsibilities**.

The significant relationship between responsiveness, accessibility, communication and the expectation gap further highlights the importance of police–public interaction. When citizens experience difficulty accessing police services or perceive communication as inadequate, the difference between expected and experienced services may become more pronounced. Conversely, clear communication regarding procedures, jurisdiction and available services may help establish realistic expectations.

The negative relationship between trust and the expectation gap is also noteworthy. Trust is an important component of the police–public relationship. Where citizens have confidence in police institutions, differences between expectations and perceptions may be less disruptive to the relationship. However, the present finding should be interpreted as an association rather than evidence that trust itself causes a reduction in the expectation gap.

The regression findings further indicate that individual characteristics and previous experiences with police may contribute to variations in the expectation gap. In particular, previous police contact and

frequency of contact may influence how citizens understand police responsibilities and evaluate police services.

Overall, the findings reinforce the importance of viewing policing as a **shared institutional and community relationship**, rather than examining police performance independently of public understanding. The study therefore highlights the need for clearer communication between police institutions and the communities they serve.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that a **measurable gap exists between public expectations of police services and police personnel's perceptions of those expectations in Bengaluru**. The findings indicate that this gap is associated with awareness of police responsibilities, understanding of policing boundaries, responsiveness, accessibility, communication and public trust.

The study highlights that improving police–public relationships requires more than increasing police responsiveness alone. It also requires **clear communication about police responsibilities, institutional limitations and appropriate channels for different types of public problems**.

A better understanding of policing boundaries among citizens may contribute to more realistic expectations, while responsive and accessible police services may strengthen public confidence. Strengthening communication between police personnel and the public can therefore provide an important foundation for a more informed and constructive police–community relationship.

## Suggestions

1. **Public awareness programmes:** Bengaluru City Police can conduct regular awareness programmes explaining police responsibilities, jurisdiction, procedures and available services.
2. **Clear communication:** Police stations and official communication channels should provide simple information regarding which issues fall within police jurisdiction and which require referral to other departments or agencies.
3. **Community policing:** Regular community meetings and neighbourhood-level engagement can create opportunities for citizens and police personnel to discuss expectations and local concerns.
4. **Improve accessibility:** Police institutions should continuously examine barriers that citizens experience when approaching police stations or accessing police services.
5. **Strengthen communication skills:** Police personnel may benefit from periodic training in interpersonal communication, conflict management, active listening and public interaction.
6. **Citizen guidance mechanisms:** Help desks or designated personnel can assist citizens in identifying the appropriate authority for complaints that fall outside the direct mandate of the police.
7. **Strengthen feedback systems:** Structured citizen feedback mechanisms can help police institutions identify recurring concerns regarding responsiveness, accessibility and communication.
8. **Police orientation on public expectations:** Police training programmes can include modules on changing community expectations and the distinction between legitimate public expectations and responsibilities outside the police mandate.
9. **Digital information systems:** Police websites and digital platforms can provide accessible information about emergency services, complaint procedures, cybercrime reporting, women and child protection services and other relevant mechanisms.

10. **Further research:** Future studies may use larger samples and qualitative interviews with both police personnel and citizens to explore the reasons behind expectation gaps in greater depth.

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