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Analyzing The Role Of Federal Government In Policing In Pune With Special Reference To Salil Desai's Selected Works

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Abstract

This study explores the role of the federal government in policing in Pune, India. The study is structured around three primary objectives. First, it delves into the history of the federal government, and its role to improve and coordinate policing in Maharashtra when special reference is given to Pune region. Here, it traces the development of the involvement of the federal government over time and the pivotal historical reforms that have contributed to its evolution. Second, it analyses the impact of the federal government's policies, and its interventions on the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in Pune by shedding light on the specific measures, outcomes, as well as the challenges faced by a city to associate with the federal norms in the era of technology and post-modernistic culture. Lastly, the paper identifies and characterizes the key stakeholders engaged in the federal government's policing efforts in Pune, elucidating their roles, responsibilities, and their influence on policing strategies and outcomes. Through a meticulous synthesis of existing literature; especially the selected works of Salil Desai, this paper strives to contribute to understand the impact of role of the federal government in policing within the unique socio-political context of the Pune region and the difficulties faced by the state government to handle cases, despite appropriate assistance given by the central government.

Keywords: Federal government, Pune, Histoire of Federalism of Policing at Pune, Salil Desai

Introduction

The role of the federal government in policing in Pune relies on Maharashtrian intervention. “The state government of Maharashtra controls and administers the police force in Pune, which is headed by a commissioner of police, who is an officer of the Indian Police Service (IPS).” (Prashant 4) The central agencies and forces assist the state police forces in Pune, if requested by the state government or under specific circumstances authorized by the constitution or law. These agencies are the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the National Security Guard (NSG), which is a special force that deals with high-risk situations such as hostage rescue, counter-terrorism, etc. Toppr in his work ‘What Is a Federal Government? Legal Studies Questions’ states, “Constitutions, charters, and fundamental laws usually spell out how authority gets distributed. While each tier of government is responsible for some things, they often work together to divide and conquer certain tasks.” (1)

Salil Desai’s selected works can be seen as reflection of the functionality of these agencies and forces on the policing and crime in Pune. His novels depict the role of police officers in dealing with crimes and criminals in Pune city, as well as the relationship between the state and the federal authorities. Anvi Mehta in her article ‘Thirst for Thrill Motivates Salil Desai to Write Crime Fiction’ comments on Desai’s novels as reflecting the role of the federal government in policing in Pune, “Novelist located in Pune, India, Salil Desai is an Indian writer who specializes in writing murder mysteries.” (2)

Salil Desai, who was born in Mumbai, India, on October 19, 1968, is a renowned Indian author known for his contributions to the genre of criminal fiction. His primary literary focus is criminal fiction, where the police Inspector Saralkar solves the ‘Mystery Series’. The series features captivating narratives, an in-depth analysis of characters’ psyche, and the wise, long, and complicated police procedures. The novels in the series, such as *The Body in the Back Seat* (2012), *Killing Ashish Karve* (2014), and *3 and a Half Murders* (2017), exemplifies Desai’s talent for penning engrossing series on varied types of investigations. In fact, Desai enunciates the real incidents took place in Pune city, and exposes these facts in his novels. He incorporates a fictitious character Inspector Saralkar, who appears in the murder series. He is a police officer who resolves crimes that take place in Pune, and he abides by all sections and laws.

His novel *The Sane Psychopath* is an adaptation of an incident that took place in Pune in 2011. A bus driver conducted a vehicular homicide at the highway in Pune. Swapna Raghu Sanand in his article ‘What Makes a Normal Man Suddenly Become Violent? Author and Filmmaker Salil Desai Decodes the Psyche’ states, “A real-life incident served as the basis for the author’s crime thriller *The Sane Psychopath*, in which a mild-mannered and soft-spoken bus driver named Shankar Lande goes on an hour-long mindless rampage in Pune, killing ten people, injuring 70, and nearly totaling a hundred other vehicles.” (3) Here, Saralkar realizes that Shankar was awfully in pain due to his poverty-stricken life, His crop failed and he was not able to repay loans he had borrowed. He became sane as if how would he repay all money to the lenders. Saralkar tries to corroborate facts by taking his psychological condition in consideration, but he feels helpless when the federal laws find him a

criminal who had smashed many innocents on the highway. He pays respects to the law, and submits records by keeping his emotions aside.

Desai's works reflect the effects of power and authority in a federal government as shared between the national government and the governments of the individual states. In *Killing Ashish Karve*, Inspector Saralkar investigates the murder of a businessman who was involved in a land scam with a politician. He is the protagonist in the novel who solves the case in the heroic manner, and in a patient and diligent manner. When Saralkar finds that the CBI intervenes to solve the scam, and he has to deal with the hostile media and public who induce suspicion at few characters, he does not lose his patience and executes the federal policies in finding out the name of the criminal. At the same time, when he is asked to wrap up the case in the urgent manner, he does not terminate his patience and ratiocination in solving it. Saralkar employs all technological equipment to reach out to criminal, as the federal rule allows police team to utilize all the latest technology in rightful manner. He obtains call history of the suspects, and observes their movements with the help of their 'sim' fixed in mobiles. PSI Motkar (assistant police) started very sensibly by making a list of missed calls received on Ashish Karve's mobile, neatly dividing them into three columns. Most of the calls had been made by contacts saved under the names- Sanjot, Home, Shantanu, Office, Shreekant Nag, Mohit, Suchitra, Rohit, and Vijay More. They were the people mostly close to Ashish, Motkar reasoned, then second list were ostensibly acquaintances, and third list were of unidentified numbers." (*Killing Ashish Karve*, 51) "The aim of federal system is to improving working conditions and providing modern equipment to police officers to enhance their capacity to perform their duties effectively." ('The Exigencies of Police Reforms in India', 1)

Forensic science (a technical assistance) plays a significant role in helping police to resolve crime. The forensic science reports in *Killing Ashish Karve* assists Saralkar to corroborate facts. He studies reports further in a covert manner, he guesses as how wits were used by the murderer to see himself escaped and others be given in loop! When Saralkar finds that the forensic report states that the finger prints on Ashish's deceased body were found to have been of a thief Javed Tirkhey, the case pointed towards him as if he had killed Ashish. Here, Saralkar investigates further in order to know the reality, "How do you explain your fingerprints on a car in which a man has been found murdered, Javed?" (131). Javed replied, "It was a blue ford fusion, late at night, Wednesday, After I had driven some distance, I happened to glance behind and saw his body in half sitting position, sahib." (133)

Saralkar is the hyperbolic disguise of Odysseus who sought an aptronym for his name, *Outllis* (no name). He is a police official; it is bound in his duty to visit at locales of crime and to resolve it. Even if he resolves the case ably, he will not earn accolades in the world or will not become a popular man. Saralkar invests his time and energy in resolving the crime, and vows to finish the work assigned to him, despite the fact he knows his name will not become popular and immemorial. If he was detective, he would have gained a popularity, though his job to function like a detective. Otherwise, Salil Desai tries to ensure that police investigators are of no lower significance as detectives attain an image in society. He wishes a *kleos* to be served to police officials who solve mysterious crimes with their greet deeds in the manner as Homer lavishes praise of Odysseus's staunch

determination, "I carried wax along the line and laid it in their ears." (12. 116-7)

In *The Murder of Sonia Raikkonen*, Inspector Saralkar investigates the murder of a Finnish tourist who was found dead near a historical fort. He has to work with a Finnish detective who has come to India to assist in the case. He also has to cope with the involvement of the IB, which suspects that the murder may have links to a terrorist group. He also has to face the scrutiny of the international media and the diplomatic pressure from Finland (Desai's *The Murder of Sonia Raikkonen* 239). "The federal government enacts laws and policies that empower the state police force to deal with organized crime and terrorism more effectively, such as the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), which provides special powers of surveillance, evidence collection, and prosecution to the state government." ('The Exigencies of Police Reforms in India', 1)

In *3 and a Half Murders*, Inspector Saralkar investigates a double murder-suicide case in which a wealthy couple and their maid were murdered. Here, Saralkar realizes that the case may have been associated with a notorious serial killer who was arrested by the NIA years ago. He also has to deal with a mysterious caller, who escalates the difficulty of police team. He also confronts a rival officer who tries to get hold of this case ((Desai's *3 and a Half Murders* 154). In *Murder Milestone*, Inspector Saralkar investigates a series of murders that were seemingly associated with the old case that he had solved years ago. He repents that he may not have arrested the real criminal, and that the real killer is still not held. He is ordered to work with a team of NSG commandos who have been deployed to protect him from an unknown threat (Desai's *Murder Milestone an Inspector Saralkar Mystery*, 102). This line clarifies that central federalism has rights to deploy few government agencies at state level to assist police team in resolving the cases at ease. "Federal government deploys central agencies and forces, such as the CBI, IB, NIA, CRPF, and NSG, to assist the state police force in investigating and combating crimes that have national or international implications, such as terrorism, corruption, cybercrime, and organized crime." ('The Exigencies of Police Reforms in India', 1)

The federal government's role is limited by the constitutional division of powers between the center and the states, which provides right of law and order to the states. The federal government can only intervene in the state's police matters with the consent of the state government or under specific circumstances authorized by the constitution or law. Therefore, the federal government's role is largely supportive to the state government's role in the works related to policing. Understanding the roles, responsibilities, and influence of key stakeholders in the federal government's policing efforts in Pune is crucial for effective policy analysis and implementation. Simons Chavis in his article 'The politics of policing: Ensuring stakeholder collaboration in the Federal Reform of Local Law Enforcement Agencies' comments "The interplay between federal government agencies, state authorities, the local police force, and influential voices like Salil Desai shapes policing strategies and outcomes, ultimately affecting public safety and trust in the system" (489)

According to Deepti (2020), in her work 'Walking the Life of Transgender in Salil Desai's Novel- *3 and a Half Murders*' discussed, "Columnist, filmmaker, and writer Salil Desai did it all. He and his family had made Pune their home. As his fifth published work overall, *3 and a Half Murders* was the third installment in the Inspector Saralkar series he has authored." (1) He has also written *The Murder of Sonia Raikkonen* (2015), *Killing Ashish*

Karve (2014), and *Murder on a Side Street (2011)*. In addition to these, he has also authored a collection of short tales titled *Lost Libido and Other Gulp Fiction (2017)*. “As a columnist, he has written more than five hundred items, including news stories, features, editorials, and travelogues. They were once profiled in publications like *The Tribune*, *Indian Express*, *Reader’s Digest*, *The Hindu*, *The Times of India*, *DNA*, and so on. In every aspect of his life, he has succeeded and become an expert in his chosen fields.” (Rathi 1)

His selected works serve as inter- disciplinary modules through which societal perceptions, challenges, and the functioning of the policing system are well analysed. Readers observe the policing system, and the role of federal government in giving support to the judiciary and government offices in the cities located in the areas. His works are exemplar to providing the ample policing system in Pune that works in applicably assistance of the federal constituency. Police Saralakar and his assistant police constable Motkar work under the judiciary system, bearing extreme patience and poise, though they abandon their own family affairs during the investigations.

This article perceives the functions of police in resolving criminal incidents and acts, and the obeisance of the police employees to the federal obligations despite, at several moments, they carry emotional bonds with the criminals and their families, who should not at least suffer. Besides, they remain bound to serve under the federal policies and legalities, which are amply noticed as how Salil Desai shows his police employees.

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