
Examining The Role Of Police Personnel In Maintaining Law And Order: The Impact Of Public Perception And Engagement In Nagaon District, Assam

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How to cite this article: Shakil Hussain Siraji, Dr. (Md) Nazeer Hussain (2024) Examining The Role Of Police Personnel In Maintaining Law And Order: The Impact Of Public Perception And Engagement In Nagaon District, Assam. *Library Progress International*, 44(3), 7857-7876.

ABSTRACT

This study looks into the role of police personnel in maintaining law and order in Nagaon District, Assam, and draws special attention toward the influence of public perception and community engagement. The research primarily uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze data from 384 respondents who have been randomly selected for a broader demographic representation. The result shows a very strong, positive relationship between the public and law enforcement effectiveness ($\beta = .682, p < 0.05$) and that public engagement is a critical element to improve the perceived efficacy of law enforcement ($\beta = .681, p < 0.05$). Public perception further mediates the relationship between engagement and law enforcement efficacy, making it more powerful. Robust relations among the variables are further confirmed through model fit indices, pointing to the dual importance of trust-building and active participation as essential constituents of effective governance. Thus, the study findings suggest that fostering transparency, procedural justice, and active community programs can substantially improve perceived and actual effectiveness in law enforcement in maintaining law and order.

Keywords: Police personnel, law and order, public perception, Nagaon district, Assam, police-community cooperation, governance, transparency.

INTRODUCTION

The institution of law and order is a very integral part of any working society. In such an institution, the custodians of this very institution are the police personnel. Their role is more than just enforcing laws; it includes the protection of life and property, the resolution of disputes, and dispensation of social justice. The Indian police apparatus functions in the operational spaces of plural and complex socio-political environments, often marked by intrinsic problems unheard of, especially in most other areas. Socio-cultural diversity in the Nagaon District of Assam makes law enforcement services face multi-layered issues,

necessitating appreciation of the complex relationships between people and police personnel and the general institutional framework[1]. Among the largest districts in Assam and having one of the highest population densities, Nagaon comes with many diversities due to ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic factors. Migration and communal tensions have marked the district's history alongside occasional insurgent activities, which render it an interesting study base for an exploration of law enforcement dynamics.

Public perception is one of the major factors that can affect the police personnel in upholding law and order. Public perception refers to the mass attitude and opinion of the public toward the police department, hence influenced by factors such as accessibility of police officers, the fairness with which they deal, the effectiveness of disputes, and how they keep themselves impartial. In a district like Nagaon, where socio-cultural diversities may lead to fault lines within the community, the perception of police impartiality and fairness becomes even more crucial. A good public perception can foster trust and cooperation; it enables the police to deliver services better. It will lead to greater crime reporting rates, better compliance with the law, and community backing in resolving disputes. Conversely, inappropriate perceptions, often fueled by accusations of corruption, inefficiency, or unfairness, can erode the legitimacy and authority of the police, sow mistrust, and decrease cooperation from the public.

one cannot underrate the role of engagement between police and communities. Community engagement in policing refers to strategies and initiatives undertaken by law enforcement agencies in actively involving citizens in identifying and addressing local safety concerns. While conceptualizing community policing, one notices that all around the world, developing partnership between the police and community is building greater confidence and collaboration[2]. The majority of the communities in the district have some social-cultural uniquenesses, and community engagement can be a critical bridge to build mutual respect and understanding. In rural and semi-urban areas, however, the implementation of community policing has been subject to a plethora of challenges, among them lack of resources, inadequate preparation for police officers, resistance from within the institution, and a lack of public trust in the bona fides of such programs.

Nagaon's particular challenge has to do with its geographical, demographic, and historical context. As a central district in Assam, Nagaon has had its fair share of internal and cross-border migration in the course of the last few decades, thereby adding diversity to its demography[3]. This diversity, though a source of rich culture, has also been a source of tension-often where resources are perceived as scarce or unevenly allocated. The incidents of communal violence, social unrest, and threat to law and order in the district have posed severe tests to the sagacity and competence of the police. On top of this, the socio-economic conditions in the district are quite challenging in the sense that poverty, unemployment, and lack of education are equally responsible for making these sections even more vulnerable to crime and exploitation. These have complicated the task of maintaining law and order further, and they also influence how the community perceives the police and their effectiveness.

Another very important aspect of public perception is the one related to the accessibility and responsiveness of the police. Even in Nagaon, as in the case in most parts of rural and semi-urban India, the physical distance of police stations from remote villages and the inadequacy of personnel can impede accessibility. People residing in distant areas cannot reach police on time in times of need. In this case, the delay causes inefficiency. The reaction of the police

while resolving the complaints and dispute against them also influences public attitude towards the police force[4]. Delayed justice, partiality, or inefficiency can lead to doubts in the minds of people and get decreased confidence in the police force. In contrast, proactive policing, timely interventions, and fair handling of disputes can build trust and work on the relationship with the community.

Another factor that shapes the perception of the public is the attitude and professionalism within the police force. As per observations, the police force operates in Nagaon like every other place in Assam under great difficult conditions. Shortages of resources, long hours of service and sometimes the potential for political interference dilute the morale as well as behaviors in police officers resulting in from time to time improper behavior or insensitivity toward the public[5]. Training and sensitizing programs that center on the professionalism of police officers, whose actions address issues related to human rights and respect for people, are very useful in improving police-community relations. Addressing systemic issues-those concerning pay, lack of resources, high workload-will enable the police to provide better services with an overall good public image.

Community engagement initiatives have been successful in addressing a few of the above issues. Community policing, which engages the various communities to address or solve safety concerns collectively, can be transformative in areas like Nagaon. Interacting with the decision-making processes of community leaders, local organizations, and citizens can help the police gain crucial knowledge regarding specific concerns and needs of different communities. Initiatives such as regular community meetings, campaigns for awareness, and joint effort in especially addressing issues like drug abuse or domestic violence can inculcate a feeling of shared responsibility to preserve order in society[6]. Also, with the aid of technology including social media and applications over mobile devices, it would be possible to communicate better to make the police and community more appealing.

Media's role in shaping the public perception of police is also significant. With the integration of the world today, stories in the media regarding police actions have a lot of influence over people's sentiments towards them. More positive stories about the police being heroes or providing services to the community boost the image of the police, while negative stories such as misconduct and inefficiency tarnish their image. Improvement in the public perception at Nagaon, which still depends on the traditional modes of communications can be guaranteed by hosting local people through the local media to feature positive initiatives and success stories[7]. However, incidents of malpractices need to be addressed transparently and people made accountable for such malpractices to win their trust and credibility.

The study would primarily focus on public perception and engagement and its influence on the performance of law enforcement in Nagaon. It has been revealed by researchers that the willingness of people to cooperate and comply with the law is directly associated with their trust in the police. More likely to support police efforts and contribute to the preservation of public safety will citizens be when they believe the police are fair, impartial, and effective. In contrast, a lack of trust creates reduced cooperation, underreporting of crimes, and sometimes even hostility to police authority. Based on the determination of factors that influence public perception and engagement, the study attempts to identify strategies for improving police-community relations and enhancing the overall effectiveness of policing in Nagaon District.

Problem statement

The role of police personnel in maintaining law and order is a prime imperative for societal stability, though their strength largely depends on public perception and involvement. The police-community interface is complex and multi-dimensional in Nagaon District, Assam-landscapes marked by an astonishing diversity of socio-economic orientations. The police undertake activities toward ensuring safety and justice. Although safety and justice are guaranteed via policing, mistrust, scarce resources, and meager community cooperation may inhibit the effectiveness of such an endeavor. Public perception, influenced by aspects like transparency, accountability, and communication, affects the willingness to cooperate with the law enforcement machinery by citizens. Limited research has been done on how these dynamics work in Nagaon District. This is essential in order to identify strategies for fostering trust, improving police-community relations, and enhancing the overall effectiveness of law enforcement in the region.

Significance of the study

This study provides much importance because it reveals the critical role police personnel play in enforcing law and order in Nagaon District, Assam, influenced by public perception and engagement of policing. The research takes into account the socio-cultural and economic peculiarities of the region, providing insights into police-community relationships. This study may contribute to identifying challenges that law enforcement agencies face. It can inform strategies to improve police accountability and transparency and promote stronger collaboration between the community and law enforcement. Moreover, it helps bridge some of the existing gaps in research by exploring police-public interactions in Assam's rural and semi-urban areas. Results can be used by policymakers to establish focused interventions and training programs, thereby achieving trust and strengthening public safety, thus contributing to a more harmonious society.

Objectives of the study

- **To analyse the relationship between public perception of police and their effectiveness in maintaining law and order in Nagaon district.**
- **To assess the impact of public engagement in police-community initiatives on the perceived effectiveness of law enforcement.**
- **To examine whether public perception mediates the relationship between public engagement and the effectiveness of police personnel in maintaining law and order.**

Hypothesis of the study

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between public perception of police and their effectiveness in maintaining law and order in Nagaon district.

H2: Higher levels of public engagement in police-community initiatives have a significant positive impact on the perceived effectiveness of law enforcement.

H3: Public perception mediates the relationship between public engagement and the effectiveness of police personnel in maintaining law and order.

Scope of the study

The scope of this research study is being centered around examining the role played by police personnel in the maintenance of law and order in Nagaon District, Assam, with special emphasis on public perception and engagement. Geographically, the study is limited to Nagaon District, a region characterized by socio-cultural and economic characteristics that define the dynamics of police and community relationships. It explores how public perception influenced by factors of trust, accountability, and communication affects policing effectiveness and goes on to explore the role that community engagement can play in enhancing the outcomes of law enforcement. Perspectives from key stakeholders such as police, members of the community, and local leaders are included for a comprehensive understanding of police-public interactions. It scopes the recent trends and developments in policing to provide solutions to the contemporary issues and identify strategies for fostering trust and collaboration between the police and the community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

[8] explained that AI's use in predictive policing is primarily a spatial statistics exercise, making policing more effective and surgical. Its use in criminal justice risk assessment is largely an adaptive, nonparametric regression exercise, allowing law enforcement agencies to provide public safety with minimal restrictive means, potentially reducing incarceration. However, concerns about accuracy, fairness, and transparency are real, and there are tradeoffs between them that cannot be resolved through technical solutions. Solutions will be found through political and legislative processes, aiming to achieve an acceptable balance between competing priorities.

[9] investigated the organization of policing of an open drug scene in Denmark since drug possession has been partly decriminalized, following the introduction of drug consumption rooms in Copenhagen. The study used document analysis, interviews, and observations with a patrolling police officer to understand how decriminalization has led to a shift in policing logics, allowing for an alternative "governable identity" for drug-using individuals. This new logic allows for the violence and victimization experienced by marginalized people who use drugs to be identified as proper objects for police action. This study contributed to understanding how police can become potential allies in harm reduction initiatives and broader public health concerns.

[10] Decision-making processes are increasingly based on intelligence from 'big data', which are extensive but complex datasets. This evolution of analyzing complex data using prediction methods is emerging in quantitative criminology. In crime analysis, the large amount of crime data available is an example of big data, which can inform us about current and upcoming crime trends. A recent development in analyzing this data is predictive policing, which uses advanced statistical methods to gain useful insights and information, allowing police services to predict and anticipate future crime events. This article presented the results of a literature review and key informant interviews to provide insight into predictive policing, its effectiveness, and the applications of predictive policing.

[11] examined public perceptions of the "war on police" in the United States, focusing on media consumption, institutional trust, and political orientations. Using a national sample of

American adults, the research uses OLS regressions to examine correlates of public perceptions. Results show that perceptions of the "war on police" are pervasive, with political conservatism and trust in the police being significantly positively associated. Media consumption has inconsistent effects on perceptions, and sensitivity analyses align with the OLS models. The findings underscore the importance of multiple theoretical perspectives in understanding public perceptions of criminal justice-related political narratives and suggest further exploration of the linkages between these contemporary narratives and policy preferences.

[12] reviewed the literature on the role of news media consumption and awareness in shaping public attitudes towards police. A systematic search of multiple academic databases and Google Scholar was conducted. 42 studies were identified, examining exposure to high-profile incidents, awareness of negative news coverage, and consumption of specific news mediums. The research supported a relationship between negative perceptions of police and exposure to high-profile incidents and awareness of negative coverage. While some support exists for the influence of television news on attitudes, more research is needed on the role of different news sources in shaping perceptions. Future research should also determine causal pathways and how news about police is selected. This is the first meta-review of the research examining the relationship between news media and attitudes about police.

[6] investigated the alignment between public expectations of police use-of-force and the strict professional and legal guidelines for police officers. It aims to determine if a significant portion of the public disapproves of legally reasonable police use-of-force and the main correlates of these disapproving attitudes. The research, based on responses from the General Social Survey (GSS) from 1990 to 2018, found that a significant proportion of respondents expressed disapproval of legally reasonable, justifiable police uses-of-force, and this disapproval has increased over time. The study discusses the causes and policy implications of this misalignment.

[1] Organizational psychology research shows that employee perceptions of organizational justice significantly impact attitudes, behaviors, and behaviors. This is also evident in policing, where justice perceptions are linked to officer attitudes towards the public. Recent theories suggest that internal perceptions of justice and external attitudes may be influenced by organizational and supervisory practices. This paper investigated the relationship between officer perceptions of organizational justice and trust in the public. A survey of patrol division police officers found a strong correlation between perceptions of organizational justice and trust, even when other predictors are controlled.

[13] surveyed over 1,300 cities and counties to understand the impact of community policing in suburban and rural areas. Results showed no effect of community policing on safety perceptions and a positive effect on community participation in the metro core. Community policing was only related to youth services in suburbs and rural areas. Collective efficacy was positively associated with safety perceptions but only related to community participation in low crime communities. The study raised questions about how to better link collective efficacy and community policing in high crime areas.

[14] used roll-call survey data from 741 officers across three neighboring departments in 2016 and a replication with 452 officers from one of the original departments in 2019. Results show that experience with community policing consistently influences support for the practice, while

officer gender, age, and education do not. Other results do not replicate across department or time, but non-replicating significant factors are associated with officer support for community policing. Departmental and temporal aspects also contribute to the lack of replication or generalization of policing studies to other places or contexts.

[15] investigated police officers' attitudes towards community policing and order maintenance, and the impact of work environment on these attitudes. Survey data from a mid-sized police department was used to examine these roles. Results showed that officers support community partnerships but are less enthusiastic about order maintenance. They also show mid-level support for traditional law enforcement. Work-environment variables had inconsistent impacts across the three role orientations. The findings have practical implications for police leaders seeking to implement community policing and ensure street-level officers are carrying out partnership and order-maintenance activities. Top management must foster a positive work environment and model commitment to policing innovations. This paper contributed to the literature on officer attitudes towards community policing and order maintenance, incorporating traditional law-enforcement attitudes as a point of contrast.

[16] investigated the impact of community policing in Gonzales, a Caribbean community, on crime fear and safety perceptions. A quasi-experiment was conducted using a pre-post, comparison group design with two groups. Results showed that from wave 1 to wave 2, the treatment area experienced a small increase in fear but no significant change in perceived safety. From wave 2 to 3, the treatment area experienced a significant positive increase in safety perceptions, and a small reduction in fear. The study concluded that early community policing implementation in Gonzales may have increased fear but had no effect on perceived safety. More robust implementation was associated with a significant increase in perceived safety and possibly a small reduction in fear.

[17] discussed the challenges and strategies of policing in rural areas in East Africa, where crime rates are increasing. It argued that rural areas require distinct policing strategies to effectively combat crimes. The chapter also highlighted the interplay between economic, social, cultural, and political factors that promote and impede policing in Kenya. It concluded by recommending the need for specific approaches to address the unique policing needs of rural environments, which can inform the development of practical interventions to address crime and criminality in remote and rural areas of Africa. The chapter emphasized the need for a comprehensive understanding of rural policing issues in East Africa, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive approach to combat crime and criminality.

[18] explored rural policing in Uganda, focusing on the challenges faced by the police in rural areas. It revealed that rural policing in Uganda shares characteristics with other regions, such as inadequate resources, isolation from the center, less staff, less discretion, and fewer written policies. The chapter also explored the organization of the Uganda Police Force in rural areas, the police's response to crimes and law and order challenges, officers' perceptions of their duties in rural communities, and the differences between rural and urban policing in Uganda. It also discussed the prevalence of cases in rural areas and the blending of police strategies and cultural solutions, including witchcraft beliefs to counter disorder. The chapter also discussed two unique policing strategies: the use of 'crime albums', where photographs of suspects are displayed at the police counter for years, and the identification of potential suspects by secret ballot.

[19] investigated public perceptions of police militarization using legal socialization concepts, legitimacy and cynicism. A national sample of 702 American adults was analyzed using ordinary least squares regression models. Results showed that higher legitimacy reduced beliefs about police militarization while increasing support for associated practices. Cynicism increased beliefs about police militarization but did not affect support for it. The study suggested that perceptions of militarization are influenced by legal socialization.

[20] investigated the impact of traditional media, entertainment media, the Internet, and social media on attitudes towards police legitimacy among young adults. Results showed that reading news online leads to negative attitudes towards police legitimacy. However, when individual differences are considered, the effect of online news is weakened, and social media usage becomes marginally significant. The study also finds that media consumption's impact on attitudes towards police legitimacy varies by key audience characteristics.

[21] explored the impact of social media exposure during the COVID-19 pandemic on perceived threat and efficacy using PMT theory through the EPPM model. It highlighted the interaction between the EPPM model and SDT (self-determination) theory in 'Stay at home' behavior. The paper suggested that social media platforms can improve preventive results among people, and calls for crisis communication management from governments, security staff, and policymakers. Collaboration with leading scientists from various domains, such as epidemiology, governance, economy, and psychology, is suggested to create persuasive content tailored to social media format and healthcare protection campaigns. News should deliver the message clearly and reliably, following the EPPM model standard. Experts should combine appropriate images, data, and information according to the fear-driving model and provide reliable guidelines for citizens to ensure safety. Propaganda should focus on educating and emphasizing the effectiveness of complying with the norm.

[22] examined public perceptions and responses to various energy technologies, including large-scale infrastructure projects like wind and solar, fossil fuel extraction, and marine renewables, as well as small-scale consumer-facing technologies like electric vehicles, rooftop solar, and smart meters. The focus is on understanding public responses and their drivers, as public support can influence technology adoption and deployment. The review aimed to identify broad trends that can facilitate communication between policymakers, technologists, and the public, ultimately supporting the transition to a more sustainable energy system.

Research gap

Though there have been a lot of studies on the research aspects of policing, from community engagements and public perceptions to media's role and integration of advanced technologies such as AI in predictive policing, there is still much gaping in understanding the contextual and localized dynamics of police-community interactions in regions as varied as Nagaon District in Assam. Research studies have tried to illustrate the impact of community policing, organizational justice, and attitudes of the public in an urban as well as a Western context. The specific socio-cultural, economic, and demographic challenges police personnel face in semi-urban and rural Indian settings are not better addressed by research. Additionally, how local factors like migration, ethnic diversity, and historical tensions influence the perception of the police by the public has not been studied much. Community engagement and technologically enabled strategies have also been poorly studied, in general, with particular reference to scarce resource environments. In bridging these gaps, this research will help identify some localized

insights related to the concepts of public perception, engagement, and effectiveness of law enforcement with regard to practical recommendations on police-community relations within Nagaon.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

A cross-sectional survey was conducted in Nagaon District to study public perception about the police, involvement level, and their effectiveness to maintain law and order. The structured questionnaire that measured the stated constructs used a scale of 1 to 5. Pre-testing was done among a sample of 30 for ensuring clarity and reliability.

Population and sample

The target population of the study was the residents of Nagaon District, Assam. To obtain a representative sample, a random sampling technique has been carried out. Thus, every individual in the population had an equal chance of being selected. Through this process, the sample size of 384 respondents was calculated as the outcome of statistical power analysis aimed at striking a balance between precision and practicality.

Sampling method

Random Sampling: Every citizen from Nagaon District had an equal chance of being selected. The sample contained diverse categories of people cutting across varied age ranges, sexes, educational qualification, and occupations that represent the cross-section.

Data collection

Primary data from the sample population was collected through self-administered questionnaires. It sought from each respondent that he or she filled up the survey based on his or her perceptions and experiences regarding police personnel, the overall public engagement with the police, and the effectiveness of the police efforts in respect of law and order situations.

Data analysis

The study conducted data analysis by utilizing Structural Equation Modeling for modeling complex relationships of observed and latent variables. This hypothesized model was thus tested via SEM to see if indeed there are either direct or indirect relationships between the constructs under study. Composite reliability check for internal consistency was carried out on the measurement model to verify it in terms of validity and reliability. Structural models assessed the causal effect of variables by testing direct and indirect effects, examining how public perception impacts police effectiveness, public engagement impacts police effectiveness, and whether public perception mediates the relationship between engagement and effectiveness.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Statistical Analysis

The collected data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to assess the relationships among the constructs and evaluate the model fit. SEM was chosen due to its ability to simultaneously test multiple relationships between dependent and independent variables.

Adopted variables

Variable	Number of Items
Public Perception of Police	5
Level of Public Engagement	5
Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	5

The questionnaire employed a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) to measure the constructs. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was conducted with 30 respondents to ensure clarity and reliability of the items.

Using the random sampling approach, samples are drawn from a population where each potential participant has an equal chance of being selected. The population as a whole is often more accurately represented when individuals are selected at random from a larger pool of possibilities. The use of random sampling is one of the most straightforward approaches of collecting information from the whole population. The following is the formula for random sampling when a sample is chosen only once:

$$P = 1 - \left(\frac{N-1}{N}\right)\left(\frac{N-2}{N}\right) \dots \left(\frac{N-n}{N-(n-1)}\right) \tag{1}$$

Structural Equation Modelling

Structural equation modelling, or SEM, is a powerful statistical technique for investigating complex relationships between observable and latent variables. In order to assess hypotheses on direct and indirect correlations between variables, it provides a measurement model for verifying constructs as well as a structural model for assessing causal links. This study used SEM to assess the impact of AI-enhanced gamification on job performance and employee engagement. The Composite Reliability (CR) ratings were calculated throughout the investigation to assess the constructs' internal consistency. These significant CR values demonstrated a high level of reliability for the constructs in question. This suggests that each latent variable's assessment items are reliably linked to the underlying idea and that the measurement model is robust. The significance of these CR values provides further support for the validity of the findings by ensuring that the correlations shown in the model are reliable and appropriately reflect the connections between the variables.

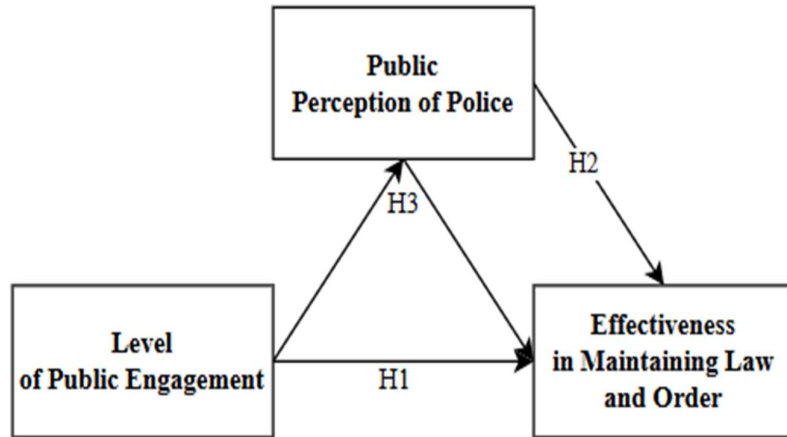


Figure 1 Conceptual frame work

Table 1 Demographic variables

Variables		Frequency	Percent
AGE	18–25 years	172	44.8
	26–35 years	90	23.4
	36–50 years	62	16.1
	51 years and above	60	15.6
	Total	384	100.0
Gender	Male	211	54.9
	Female	173	45.1
	Total	384	100.0
Education	No Formal Education	80	20.8
	Primary Education	147	38.3
	Secondary Education	113	29.4
	Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	44	11.5
	Total	384	100.0
Residential Area	Urban	200	52.1
	Rural	184	47.9
	Total	384	100.0
Occupation	Student	144	37.5

	Government Employee	25	6.5
	Private Sector Employee	38	9.9
	Self-Employed	98	25.5
	Unemployed	79	20.6
	Total	384	100.0

The demographic examination of the sample population (N = 384) offers insights into diverse characteristics. The predominant age group among respondents is 18–25 years (44.8%), followed by 26–35 years (23.4%), 36–50 years (16.1%), and those aged 51 years and above (15.6%). The gender breakdown reveals a somewhat greater percentage of men (54.9%) than females (45.1%). Regarding education, 38.3% possess elementary education, 29.4% have secondary education, 20.8% lack formal education, and just 11.5% have a bachelor's degree or above. The residential area has a fairly equal distribution, with 52.1% of the population living in urban regions and 47.9% in rural regions. In terms of occupation, students constitute the biggest demographic at 37.5%, followed by the self-employed at 25.5%, jobless persons at 20.6%, private sector workers at 9.9%, and government employees at 6.5%. This demographic profile emphasizes a varied representation in terms of age, gender, education, geographic location, and professions.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics

	Public Perception of Police	Level of Public Engagement	Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order
N	384	384	384
Mean	3.6672	3.7427	3.7583
Std. Deviation	.72520	.79163	.79340
Minimum	1.20	1.00	1.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00

Public Perception of Police, Level of Public Engagement, and Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order were all rated on a scale from 1 to 5 by 384 people. Between 3.67 and 3.76, which means that opinion was fairly good. All three variables have standard deviations of 0.73, 0.79, and 0.79. This means that all three variables show the same amount of variation in answers around the mean. With a minimum value of 1.20 for Public Perception of Police and all three other values at 1, this means that a small part of the group has bad opinions. Some respondents had very good feelings, as shown by the best number of 5.00 across all factors.

Proposed Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between public perception of police and their effectiveness in maintaining law and order in Nagaon district.

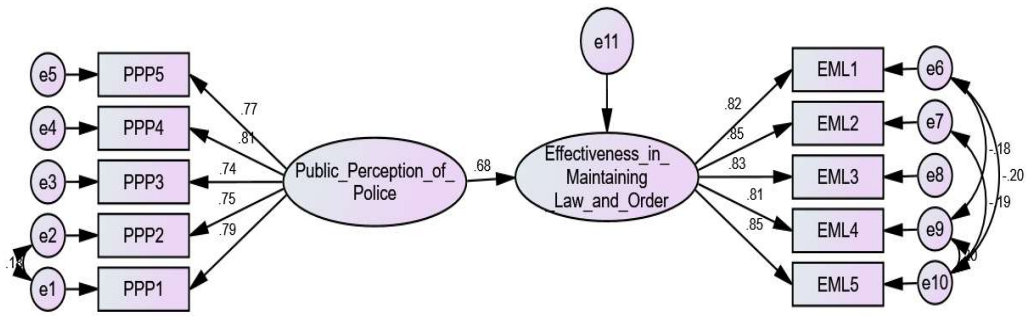


Table 3 Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	<--- Public Perception of Police	.682	.062	11.783	***
PPP1	<--- Public Perception of Police	.792			
PPP2	<--- Public Perception of Police	.754	.050	17.041	***
PPP3	<--- Public Perception of Police	.739	.058	14.817	***
PPP4	<--- Public Perception of Police	.806	.055	16.321	***
PPP5	<--- Public Perception of Police	.774	.056	15.614	***
EML1	<--- Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	.825			
EML2	<--- Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	.853	.049	18.741	***
EML3	<--- Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	.830	.050	18.252	***
EML4	<--- Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	.809	.056	16.600	***
EML5	<--- Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	.845	.058	17.083	***

Table depicts a hypothetical structural equation model that shows cases the interdependence

between Two variables, namely the public perception of police and Effectiveness in maintaining law and order. In the present model, the independent variable is the public perception of police, whereas the dependent variable is the Effectiveness in maintaining law and order. The findings of the investigation indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between public perception of police and Effectiveness in maintaining law and order ($\beta=.682, P<0.05$).

The standardized coefficient of 0.682, a positive association between public perception of police and Effectiveness in maintaining law and order, as shown in the route connecting these two variables. The correlation coefficient values (C.R. values) show large magnitudes, suggesting that the observed associations are statistically significant. The fit indices indicate that the model has a good fit, since the factors exhibit statistical significance with p-values over 0.05 (as shown in Table 4). Therefore, the total model fit was evaluated by using seven distinct fit indices, which together demonstrated a statistically significant positive association between public perception of police and Effectiveness in maintaining law and order.

Table 4 Model fit summary

Variable	Value
Chi-square value(χ^2)	37.430
Degrees of freedom (df)	29
CMIN/DF	1.291
P value	0.136
GFI	0.981
RFI	0.977
NFI	0.985
IFI	0.997
CFI	0.997
RMR	0.019
RMSEA	0.028

The quality of fit was acceptable representation of the sample data ($\chi^2 = 37.430$), NFI (Normed Fit Index) =0.985; IFI (Incremental fit index) = 0.997, GFI (Goodness of Fit) = 0.981, RFI (Relative Fit Index) = 0.977 and CFI (Comparative Fit Index) =0.997 which is much larger than the 0.90. Similarly, RMR (Root Mean Square Residuals) =0.019 and RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation) = 0.028 values are lower the 0.080 critical value. Results indicated a good fit for the model presented including RMSEA of 0.028, RMR of 0.019, GFI of 0.981, and CFI of .997.

H2: Higher levels of public engagement in police-community initiatives have a significant positive impact on the perceived effectiveness of law enforcement.

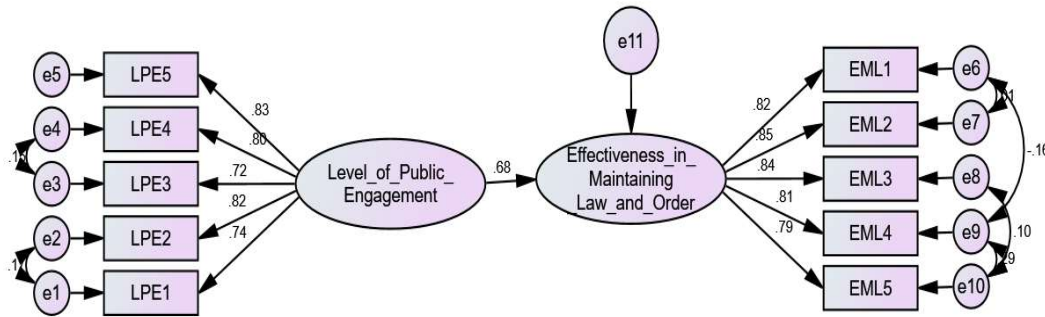


Table 5 Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	<--- Level of Public Engagement	.681	.070	11.024	***
LPE1	<--- Level of Public Engagement	.736			
LPE2	<--- Level of Public Engagement	.820	.064	16.991	***
LPE3	<--- Level of Public Engagement	.721	.073	13.164	***
LPE4	<--- Level of Public Engagement	.800	.071	14.645	***
LPE5	<--- Level of Public Engagement	.827	.072	15.234	***
EML1	<--- Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	.820			
EML2	<--- Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	.846	.048	18.980	***
EML3	<--- Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	.837	.054	17.072	***
EML4	<--- Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	.811	.059	16.041	***
EML5	<--- Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order	.791	.060	15.563	***

Table depicts a hypothetical structural equation model that shows cases the interdependence

between Two variables, namely the Level of Public Engagement and Effectiveness in maintaining law and order. In the present model, the independent variable is the Level of Public Engagement, whereas the dependent variable is the Effectiveness in maintaining law and order. The findings of the investigation indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between Level of Public Engagement and Effectiveness in maintaining law and order ($\beta=.681$, $P<0.05$).

The standardized coefficient of 0.681, a positive association between Level of Public Engagement and Effectiveness in maintaining law and order, as shown in the route connecting these two variables. The correlation coefficient values (C.R. values) show large magnitudes, suggesting that the observed associations are statistically significant. The fit indices indicate that the model has a good fit, since the factors exhibit statistical significance with p-values over 0.05 (as shown in Table 6). Therefore, the total model fit was evaluated by using seven distinct fit indices, which together demonstrated a statistically significant positive association between Level of Public Engagement and Effectiveness in maintaining law and order.

Table 6 Model fit summary

Variable	Value
Chi-square value(χ^2)	36.047
Degrees of freedom (df)	28
CMIN/DF	1.287
P value	0.141
GFI	0.982
RFI	0.977
NFI	0.986
IFI	0.997
CFI	0.997
RMR	0.017
RMSEA	0.027

The quality of fit was acceptable representation of the sample data ($\chi^2 = 36.047$), NFI (Normed Fit Index) =0.986; IFI (Incremental fit index) = 0.997, GFI (Goodness of Fit) = 0.982, RFI (Relative Fit Index) = 0.977 and CFI (Comparative Fit Index) =0.997 which is much larger than the 0.90. Similarly, RMR (Root Mean Square Residuals) =0.018 and RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation) = 0.027 values are lower the 0.080 critical value. Results indicated a good fit for the model presented including RMSEA of 0.027, RMR of 0.018, GFI of 0.982, and CFI of .997.

H3: Public perception mediates the relationship between public engagement and the effectiveness of police personnel in maintaining law and order.

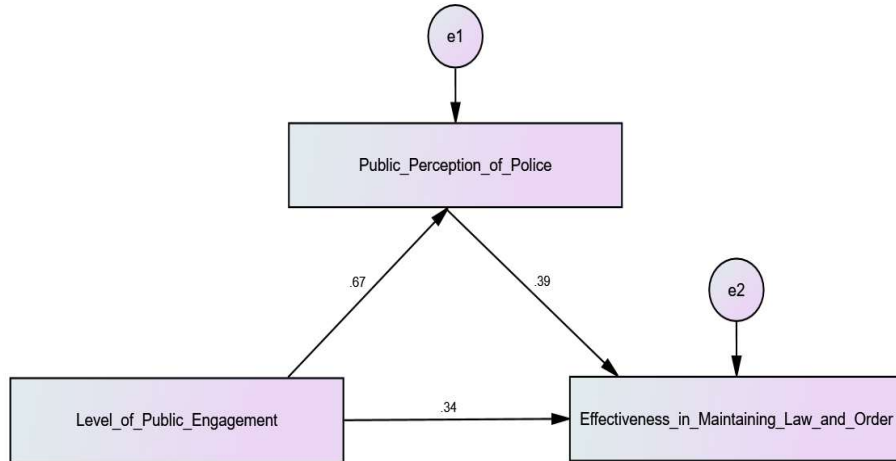


Table 7 Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Public Perception of Police <--- Level of Public Engagement	.665	.035	17.438	***
Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order <--- Level of Public Engagement	.344	.051	6.754	***
Effectiveness in Maintaining Law and Order <--- Public Perception of Police	.388	.056	7.612	***

The regression analysis show that the variables under study have both direct and indirect impacts. Public perception of police has been significantly impacted by the level of public engagement, with an estimated path coefficient of 0.665 (S.E. = 0.035, C.R. = 17.438, ***). With an effect size of 0.344 with S.E. = 0.051, C.R. = 6.754, ***, public engagement has a direct and moderate impact on maintaining law and order; with an estimated path coefficient of 0.388, S.E. = 0.056, C.R. = 7.612, ***, public perception of police directly determines maintaining law and order, making it a mediator of high significance. These findings suggest that public perception of the police has an indirect impact on effectiveness in upholding law and order, as does the degree of public engagement. P < 0.001 indicates that every route is statistically significant.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

Sources:

- <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1186/s40163-024-00207-9.pdf>
- <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/08874034231199922>
- <https://www.tandis.odihr.pl/bitstream/20.500.12389/21381/1/07286.pdf>

The discussion highlights the significance of public perception, engagement, and their combined influence on law enforcement effectiveness, supported by comparisons with existing studies. This study confirms that public perception of police significantly enhances their effectiveness in maintaining law and order, aligning with findings by RAND researchers,

identified procedural justice and perceived legitimacy as key factors influencing police-community cooperation (1) (2). Similarly, our results support the assertion that higher public engagement in community policing initiatives improves the effectiveness of law enforcement. This is consistent with studies emphasizing the role of trust and collaboration in urban communities to ensure safety and compliance (3).

Moreover, this study's findings reveal that public perception mediates the relationship between engagement and police effectiveness, underscoring the dual importance of community interaction and perception management. This observation is in agreement with broader research showing that procedural justice and fairness amplify the impact of community engagement on cooperation and legitimacy. These comparisons not only validate our hypotheses but also provide actionable insights, highlighting the need for law enforcement agencies to focus on transparency, fairness, and active community participation to strengthen public trust and operational effectiveness.

Conclusion

This study's results highlight the essential relationship between public perception, community involvement, and the efficacy of law enforcement in sustaining peace and order in Nagaon district. Hypothesis 1 (H1) is substantiated by a substantial positive correlation ($\beta = .682$, $P < 0.05$) between public perception of the police and their efficacy, highlighting that a favorable public image augments operational success. Hypothesis 2 (H2) is confirmed, indicating that increased public participation substantially influences perceived law enforcement effectiveness ($\beta = .681$, $P < 0.05$). The findings demonstrate that active participation in police-community programs cultivates trust and collaboration, which are vital for good government.

Furthermore, Hypothesis 3 (H3) emphasizes the mediating function of public perception in the correlation between engagement and law enforcement efficacy. The research indicates both direct and indirect impacts, with public perception strongly affected by public participation ($\beta = .665$), which in turn influences law enforcement efficacy ($\beta = .388$). The findings indicate that public perception magnifies the influence of engagement on law enforcement results, implying that police efforts to enhance transparency and cultivate community ties are crucial for improving both their perceived and real efficacy. These observations support comprehensive programs that combine perception control with active public engagement to achieve effective law enforcement. From the results, we can conclude that both public perception and engagement play significant roles in determining the effectiveness of law enforcement in maintaining law and order in Nagaon district.

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