Etymologically word accountable stands for responsible i.e. “Liable called to account”. Though this term has entered in the dictionary in the late half of the 16th century, yet administratively speaking the word of accountability has always been there in the realm of administration. In managerial term, accountability lies in senior officers who commands and direct the junior or subordinate for the attainment of a pre-determined goal. However, in a democratic system accountability always be with the people that is to say that administrative functionaries are at one hand accountable to the senior officer but ultimately they are accountable to the people for their functioning.

With the changing environment now police is not only confined to the maintenance of law and order and prevention and detection of crime but its function also include any other dimension through which it assist administrative machinery in a smooth functioning. Hence, police accountability has become wide and intense. It has spread to decision making, its implementation, monitoring, correctional and re-implementation until the to goal is achieved. Accountability may be observed to political, legislative, judicial, formal and informal level. However its more viewed form is formal. In the case of police administration at all most all form are maintained and desired for the reason that the ultimately police is
answerable to the aggrieved in particular and people in general. In this context one parameter to evaluate the efficiency of police may be whether if has show, efficiency in the containment of crime and maintenance of law and order and how far it has remained successful in winning the trust of the people. It is in this perception that present academic exercise has been made to examine whether police and people are in a consistent relationship or police changes itself as per the ideological and interest perspective of the party in power or to the people. It is in this context that the study has been conducted in Meerut town and rural areas encircling it. This stage may be mentioned that administration includes police administration in a democratic set up and to consider to be accountable to the masses in accordance with values to the constitution and administrative set up form accordingly, therefore it is of interest to examine whether police has performed its duties in the word and spirit as stated above. Obviously, citizen in any democratic set up wants police to be humane, efficient and function as per rule of law, while remaining honest impartial and fair. Obviously, this may be an interesting query to see whether police has attained all these objectives? Before these questions are examined, it may be of interest to view the concept of accountability in historical perspective.

Historically speaking accountability factor was there in the ancient
times. Kautilaya’s Arthashastra speaks that in those days the nature of police was community oriented and therefore it was accountable to the people. However, with the advent of administration in India the accountability shifted towards the sovereign and his bureaucracy. Though Shivaji Maharaj was known for pro-people administration, yet in the case of police he followed an embattled model. The police was simultaneous by accountable to both the people and sovereign and its bureaucracy.

Britishers became a political readers in India by the 17th century. They created a police administration which had the impact of both Indian and Scottish administration. However, the police administration of those days was responsible to the landlords and the company. Though queen Victoria after 1857 brought administration under the control of crown, yet in the case of police the system remained unchanged. It was not people friendly was the servant of crown. In 1854, the Torture commission was appointed to enquire into various allegations levelled against the Police. This commission’s report suggested a wide range of changes in the police system, which is very much visible in the provisions of Indian Police Act 1861, which remained unaltered even after the independence.

In post independence period the first and only police commission was setup in 1975 and its report was made public in the year 1977 with a
numerous recommendations. Though almost all the states constituted police commissions after independence to look into the organizational structure and functional activated of the police yet, its colonial character hardly underwent any change. In U.P. two police commissions in 1961 and 1971 were constituted but whether it was maintained that national or state police commissions recommendations were implemented in a very selective manner, and therefore a huge gap remained between people acceptance and implementation of the recommendations of the police commissions. It may be worth while to mention here that National Police Commission instead on police accountability towards people. The report mentioned that a government based on democratic canons can function with effective support to the common people. This included the fact that police should function as per the norms of constitution and rule of law. In the fourth report of National Police Commission that there is a need to direct accountability to the people at various level in the police hierarchy. In sume and substance it is obvious that in India, the accountability of police is towards people and not towards the sovereign alone as was there during feudal and colonial regime.

Where as the question of police responsibility is concerned, the basic principle has been to examine in rural and urban environment of Meerut District of Western Uttar Pradesh. This fact mentioned in universe of study
may be given as:-

The district of Meerut is situated in the upper Ganga Yamuna doab and lies between latitude 28°18’N longitude 17°7’14E. It is bounded by the districts of Muzaffarnagar in the North, Baghpat in the East and Bulandshar its the South. In the south-west it is bound by the district of Ghaziabad. The Ganga forms its natural boundary on the East and separates it from the district of Bijnore and Moradabad.

The city of Meerut is situated in the centre of the district. It has a history of pre-Vedic period. Originally it was surrounded by a mot and a wall with ten gates of some antiquity. The gates are known as Delhi, Lisari, Shorab, Shapir, Budhana, Sambooh, Indira, Baghpat and Hapur gates, the last two being comparatively recent. It is a well developed business centre. The Banias and Jains were known for their business but now the trend has changed and all communities are engaged in the different types of business without any let up or hindrances. At present, there are ten drug factories and three rubber industries, one spring industry, eighty three sports units and twenty seven thousand seven hundred small scale industries. Moreover there is a big market of handlooms; transacting a business of the tune of rupees fifteen crore to the different states of the country. The city produces sport material worth of rupees twenty crore sixty lakhs. Meerut is also famous for scissors industry and a big exporting centre of agricultural goods and agro
based products. According the census of 2001 the population of Meerut district is 5, 404,000 having a growth rate 26.01 percent in the decade 1991-2001. It forms a part of revenue division of the same name and is the head quarter of the commissaire. Politically, the district is quite vibrant. All of the national political parties have their grassroots bases here. Its communal sensitiveness, paucity of civic amentias and rising rate of unemployment, has given rise to crime, considerably. The statistics indicate that from the last decade there has been a fourty percent rise at crime front.

Socially, the district is dominated by Brahmans, Banias, Jats, Tyagis and Gurjars. Apart from this, Muslims are also there in dominant number. With the herald of development, an exodus from the village to the cities is visible. This is also true in the case of Meerut. The phenomena has helped in the growths of crime. Another change experienced in the district is on the academic front. Even the smaller towns have inter colleges and degree colleges, as such the rate of educational growth has considerably gone up. It may be noted here that as 32.5 percent of the population are illiterate. On the communication and transportation front the development is very much visible.

The purpose of this brief discussion is to establish that district and town is a developing one. Obviously, this has affected the crime scene and
require a very intense surveillance on the part of law and order agency because crimes like murder, dacoity, and abduction and also sex crimes have so increased that the district is known for its criminality in the state and on national and international level. Obviously, in such situation if the police force is not very responsive and dynamic, the people can not be assured peace and without peace there can not be proper and smooth development. Therefore, an effective and active organization is the need of the hour.

Since the universe of study is large enough to be studied. Therefore, at micro level we have selected two villages of Jani and Mawa police station of Meerut district, and in the urban settings an identical number of police stations that is, Brahmampuri and Civil Line have been chosen. These police stations represent the mix demographic structure of the town and district. From the universe, three stratified cluster of common man, leadership and police functionaries have been sorted out. From the cluster we have purposively taken twenty sample of leadership representing various political parties and social groups. Whereas eighty police personnel of different cadre have been taken as sample from four police stations.

Four hundred sample two hundred each from rural and urban segments have been taken from the cross section of the society. The sampled respondents have been provided a closed ended structured scheduled and
have been asked questions related to police functionary, its behaviour and attitudes towards the common people. Response gathered in this process has been classified analysed and conclusions have been drawn accordingly.

The crime scenario of the district Meerut has been over viewed from 2007-2009, which indicate that the theft, house breaking, vehicle theft are being witnessed at an high pace. At the same time murder, attempt to murder, crime against women have also shown a rising trend. The other side of the crime is riot has also shown same upward trend. In totality it may be mentioned that crime in rural sector has been rising in comparison of urban settings. Percentage wise dowry death and other incidents under local Act has also shown an upward trend. This trend need to be curbed. However paucity of staff is a great hurdle in the way. This has been shown in table 4.29, 4.30, 4.31, 4.32, and 4.33 etc.

With the paucity of police personnel and a rising graph of crime, how people take police efficiency and accountability has been revealed by the people of both urban and rural environment.

It may be noted here that the sampled respondents belong to socials and economically deprived section of the society, who generally are at receiving end in respect of police behaviour and treatment. In their opinion though police patrol the beat almost regularly, yet fifty percent of the
respondents are not aware about the S.H.O. and C.O. of the area. Perhaps due to the reason that these officials fail to cultivate and intense relationship with to the people. This has been confirmed by the fifty five percent of the respondents that police-public relationship is not encouraging in the universe, as a result of which police personnel seldom take suggestions from the people in respect of containment of crime and maintenance of law and order. Obviously, in such a situation accountability of police towards people falls in gray area. It has been revealed by the respondents that the attitude of the police is mostly aggressive towards them. Therefore common people still either fear or try to avoid police personnel, whenever they are tried to be contacted. People have got their suggestions for creating a congenial environment with police. They have unequivocally suggested for conducting conferences and private meetings with police officials so that a trust worth environment may be built between police and common people.

The respondents further suggested that police behaviour towards people is often inhumane and discourteous, when meeting and conference will be conducted between the police and people possibility of an attitudinal change may be there in the behaviour of police towards people.

It is a common observation that police is more supportive to the members of ruling party than the common man. This has been substantiated
by fifty five percent of the respondents that police personnel keep rule of law aside in favour of people in power. The respondents have suggested that a code of conduct for the politicians have to be framed and implemented in this respect by the political parties and a back-pat of police personnel by the senior officers viewed of the police personnel have done some good job.

In brief, it may be concluded that people are not happy with the police functionaries and so with the accountability factor.

People’s perception put police in a tight corner, political leadership is not aware to this. It is worth while to note here that the leadership is comparatively coming from the youth, who are well educated and coming from the urban and rural segments, mostly from the communities of other backward class as and predominantly are Hindu. Professionally most of them are farmers or business men. All are aware about the democratic political system as existing in the country. For all of them police behaviour is just towards the people. However, eighty percent of the leaders reveal that police seldom consult them in respect of law and order situation and often prefer not to consult them. However, those who are being consulted, extend their suggestions to the police and police also accept their suggestions. 80 percent of the leaders admitted that the police behaviour is partial and is in the favour of ruling political party. They provide undue advantage to the
party and people in power and often avoid them. An identical number of respondents admit that police personnel behaviour is irresponsible, for the reason that they are being pressurised by the governing party and it is bifurcated on the cast lines, not only this, they does feel in corruption and avoid to discharge their duties properly.

Thus in the eyes of political leaders police organisation seem to be partly efficient and therefore they have got some suggestions to improve its image. Fifty percent of the respondents feel that police personnel should remain committed towards people and inspite of party in power and its pressures twenty percent of them suggest that the recruitment policy of police personnel need to be amended. An identical number of respondents consider that the problems being faced by the police force need to be taken care so that police can act effectively and efficiently.

In sum and substance the leadership does not keep police in a good esteem. In their opinion the police personnel are not neutral in their attitude, behaviour and performance, rather they go by cast affiliation, party affiliation and with the man in power. As a result of which the interest of people are subverted. And crime often escalates, law and order situation declines and people feel deprived. It is therefore required that the police need to have a neutral, yet effective and efficient functional approach.
From the people’s perception and the perception of leadership, it is evident that police is not performing up to the expectation of masses. How police personnel take this commentary in respect of their performance is other side of the coin.

We drew eighty purposive samples from the cross section of the police cadre from four police stations namely, Brahampuri, Civil Line, Jani and Mawana. Out of eighty samples fifty percent pertains to the cadre of constable, twenty five percent to the cadre of head constable, twenty percent to the cadre of sub-inspector and five percent to the cadre of inspectors.

Most of them belong to a mature age group of 41-50 years of age. Eighty percent of them are male and twenty percent are female. Academically 36.25 percent are graduate followed by post-graduate 22.5 percent, 83.75 five percent are Hindu and the rest are Muslims. The members of other backward class and schedule caste constitute about 76.25 percent of total constabulary. A majority of them have joined the services about a couple of decades, back out of which almost an identical number of police personnel are having a decades experience as police man and the rest of couple of decades. Sixty five percent of the police personnel are coming from farming communities and rest fall in business class. In fine police personnel are of mature age and coming from other backward class and
schedule caste segments.

They are aware about the fact that India is a democratic country and police is accountable to the people. 66.25 percent of them are also aware that police has got an accountability towards people’s representatives. However, in ninety percent of the cases constables perform instance public-relation. This response pattern is not akin to the response of the common people on the court. The gap between the two response pattern provide some points to ponder over. Those respondents who negatively feel that due to shortage of police personnel and lack of time, the exercise is not carried out efficiently.

A majority of the police personnel feel that people avoid in extending their cooperation to the police in the maintenance of law and order, and detection and prevention of crime for the reason that people have got selfish nature and therefore do not want to help other at the time of need. This is negative commentary made by police personnel against people for which common man need to ponder over. This has further being confirmed by them that only 23.75 percent of people representatives come forward to advise them in respect of performance of their duties.

There are ninety percent of the police personnel consider that their behaviour should be just and gracious towards the people and police need to discharge its duties with the consent of the people. Yet, some times they use
limited force while containing law and order situation in the area. 91.25 percent of the respondents revealed that some times use of force become compelling in the maintenance of law and order an prevention of the atrocities against weaker section. This has also been admitted that in normal practise, there is no use of force by the police personnel, yet to stop anti-social element and prevent uncalled for situation force is being used by the police personnel and then 82.5 percent of the police personnel accept that due to all this police image is negative in the mind, of common man.

It has been stated by 31.25 percent of the respondents that police behaviour is decretive towards the people. Interestingly 86.25 percent of the respondents admit that they do not apply third degree method while detecting or preventing the criminals and crime. However peoples perception portrays police in other colour. They also admit that use of third degree method is illegal, unconstitutional and inhumane.

The police personnel at intermediary level admit that the role of police is influenced by cast consideration, for the reason that in the process of selection and while making postings cast consideration is other wise pushed up which result into police-politicians nexus and constitutional values, ideology and system is often negatively effected.

On the basis of this resume it becomes apparent that police personnel
are aware about the happenings in the system. Yet, they go by the interest of governing elite, higher ups and the common interest, or the people is jeoperdised very value contrary is this the entire administration, including police personnel, are suppose to be committed to the people.

A broad observation of the policing system of different democratic countries shall support that – A law and order system if is not people oriented then it may not attain objectives for it. Needless to mention that other social agencies and the people came forward in making the police force to act effectively and efficiently in discharging its duties.

In this respect some suggestions laid down by the National Police Commission and mentioned in the chapter-three of this study, and may be of immense help in ensuring police accountability towards common mass.

On the basis of present study and observational research work based on field work in the universe of study, some suggestions may be extended down towards police reforms and accountability of police administration towards common mass of the society. These suggestions may be useful in order to change the present character and role of police in the society in changing scenario where proper communication and inter changing accountability is must.
Suggestions

1. To amend the Police Act 1861 according to the changed circumstances and scenario: 1861 police act was colonial in nature and its goals to be achieved at that time. The motto of police during particular time period, was to maintain law and order in favour of British rule at any cost. But the independence in 1947 from this rule changed the whole arena and democratic system introduced in India. So the need of the time was to change this act according to democratic rule in India, but till now no serious change has taken place in the colonial act of police 1861. So according to the changed rule and democratic process, the act 1861 should be amended accordingly and be humane and democratic in rule of law.

2. To develop a multifaceted accountable police and administrative system at all levels of duty implementation: The main problem of police mass interaction is the lack of police accountability towards its duties and towards the common mass of the society. It leads the growing imbalance and gap in society and declining faith with police system in society.

In order to solve this situation, there is a need to develop a
accountable police and administrative system with goal oriented one and humane and democratic nature. At all levels of system, every police personnel should be assigned duties according to need of the time. These personnel should be accountable towards duties with a high psychology of helping the deprived one needing police help. These police personnel should be in a situation to work without any undue pressure of any time. Police administration and civil administration should cooperate with other and must be accountable in mutual interaction so that law and order can be maintained smoothly and properly.

3. Redressal of Police Grievances: The another Important one suggestion for police reforms is the redressal of police grievances. Now a days, police system is facing many serious challenges in order to maintain law and order. In short, these grievances are as – lack of police personnel according to growing population, very limited facilities and over work, lack of modern equipment and working with old ones, traditional trainings and limited financial support of government.

According to the change of time, all these grievances should be solved if we want a rapid and accountable police system.
4. **Code of Conduct for political leadership and police authorities:**

Based on field work, this suggestion came out in the scenario from the public, leadership and police personnel, that should be an accountable code of conduct for political leadership and police authorities.

Political leadership in power should be liable in their behavior towards the police personnel. There should not be undue pressure from the political side. Police officers should be accountable and well behaved with the lower ones of their order.

5. **Public Support to the police system:** This is another part of the coin, that is very important in successful public accountability and reforms.

The public should also be made accountable in their fundamental duties and the circumstances prevailing around.

Without proper public support, no system can work successfully.

As an essence, it may be mentioned clearly, if we want a changed police system accountable for society and well behaved, we need to incorporate these suggestions in the police administration.

Only then, we can say proudly, that we are a part of democratic police system. We also need to fulfill our fundamental duties first than except from others.