



## NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS OVERSHADOWED BY CRIMES DESPITE POLICE VIGILANCE IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The topic of my journal article is New Year celebrations overshadowed by crimes despite police vigilance in India. New Year's celebration including community gatherings and social interactions which are emotionally stirring, can become a source of both community bliss and community problems. Despite the preventive measures law enforcement authorities take including increased police patrols, personnel deployment, and restrictive measures, crime during these festive times remains rampant in India. This research aims to identify the relationship between celebratory atmospheres during New Year events and crime that occurs in those atmospheres. It looks into several issues, such as how useful police monitoring was, whether there were any patterns in the commission of particular crimes, or whether there was any socio-cultural, economic, or legal dimension in the crimes committed. Based on case studies, crime data, and interviews with choosers the author attempts to determine what is missing in the strategies of law enforcement and what can be done to enhance the situation objectively, concerning the creation of safe environments for celebration. The results should be of interest to the decision-makers, the police, and the civil society in helping to manage the tensions between crime prevention during celebratory societies and the protection of people's enthusiasm.*

**Keywords:** New Year Celebration, Crimes, Law Enforcement Authorities.

### A TALE OF CONTRAST

New Year celebration doesn't only mark the beginning of a year but also symbolizes a new beginning, new hope, and optimism for people, they often make resolutions on this day, and create vision boards for the upcoming year thus marking a hopeful year ahead. It has been celebrated for thousands of years. 'The earliest known celebration was in Ancient Mesopotamia

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around 2000 BCE. However, the modern celebration as we know it today began in Rome in 46 BCE. The then emperor Julius Caesar reformed the calendar making January 1<sup>st</sup> the first day of the year. The date was chosen in honour of Janus, the Roman god of beginning, ending and transition, symbolizing both reflections of the past and anticipation of the future.’<sup>1</sup> People across the globe celebrate the new year in different styles, and various cultural traditions are attached to it, in Japan, people clean their houses, this represents removing old energies and making space for new positive energy. In demark, there is the tradition of smashing the plates on New Year’s Eve while in China people mark the beginning of the year by bursting firecrackers. New Year celebration involves various things like nightclubbing, alcohol consumption, parties mostly prevalent among younger demographics, and midnight countdown among other things. Sydney, New York, and Dubai host elaborate fireworks shows to mark the New Year. But this modern culture of celebration like late-night clubbing accompanied by heavy alcohol consumption and other various things has also knowingly or unknowingly given rise to many criminal activities like drinking and driving, negligent or rash driving, theft, assault, and murder. So, while the new year brings an atmosphere of happiness and celebration, on the other hand, people often use this celebration to take revenge and harm their rivals.

### **STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND UNDERLYING CAUSE OF CRIMES**

On 2025 New Year’s Eve, ‘Mumbai police penalized over 23,000 motorists for various violations which include cases of drunk driving, causing traffic obstruction, issued fines to 17,800 vehicles, collecting approximately ₹89.2 lakh through e-challans. A total of 333 individuals were caught driving under the influence of alcohol. While in Delhi police issued over 4,500 challans for traffic violations, marking a 34% increase from the previous year. Among these, 558 were for drunk driving, up from 416 in 2024.’<sup>2</sup> It is important to note here that in Delhi, unlike in previous years, this time no such heinous crime has been recorded. Customs officials across major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai reported a surge in the

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Happy New Year 2025: Why the world celebrates New Year’s on January 1st and what are some of its traditions?’ The Economics Times (India, 31 December 2024) <

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/new-updates/happy-new-year-2025-why-the-world-celebrates-new-years-day-on-january-1st-and-what-are-some-of-its-traditions/articleshow/116818372.cms?from=mdr> > accessed 8 January 2025

<sup>2</sup> ‘Mumbai Police penalize 23,470 motorists for violating norms on New Year eve’ *Business Standard* (India, 1 January 2025) < [https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/mumbai-police-penalise-23-470-motorists-for-violating-norms-on-new-year-eve-125010100839\\_1.html?utm](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/mumbai-police-penalise-23-470-motorists-for-violating-norms-on-new-year-eve-125010100839_1.html?utm) > accessed 8 January 2025

detection and seizure of narcotics, including weed and cocaine. This increase indicates heightened smuggling activities during the festive season.

Various sociological and psychological factors contribute towards the commitment to crime, and through this article, the author would like to shed some light on a few of them. Society plays a major role in shaping an individual's personality and way of thinking, sociological factors that are responsible for instilling a criminal mindset in a person include an individual's interaction with his neighbours, peer group, and family, inept parenting, discrimination, poverty, lack of educational attainments, and unemployment all contribute to a criminal mindset. Take for instance, a poor in order to satisfy his hunger may steal money or other valuable things, an atmosphere of celebration and crowded streets and public places provide a good opportunity for the same, another instance where if someone has hostile interaction with their peers may also exploit such event to take revenge. There are some theories that advocate for a link between a person's past experience and future behaviour. Past trauma or abuse or even exposure to physical violence in the initial years of life may normalize aggression towards others in the person's mind. Childhood negligence also sometimes fosters the feeling of abandonment and individuals find it difficult to express their emotions which gives rise to aggressive behaviours and anger issues. Various personality disorders like antisocial personality disorder, narcissism, impulsive behaviour, bipolar disorder, drug addiction, low self-esteem, genetic predisposition and sometimes biological factors are also underlying causes behind these criminal activities. There are some theories from sociological school that explain factors behind criminal mindset, these are, 'Colayanni's Theory- according to Colayanni's theory even the personal psychological factor of crime is a result of the social conditions, that surround the life of the criminal, especially from the economic perspective. It highlights that criminals can be corrected by the elimination of the bad material conditions that surround their lives. Donald Taft's Theory- according to his theory, the criminal is produced by the society itself, and heredity is not a part of the genesis of crime. The person looks like the raw materials that his life has shaped since his birth, and the delinquency is a result of the corrupted environment in which he was born and grew, namely due to the social factor alone.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Amar Kr Pandey, 'The Sociological School of Criminology: Exploring Social Factors Behind Crime' Legal Service India < <https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-19106-the-sociological-school-of-criminology-exploring-social-factors-behind-crime.html> > accessed 10 January 2025

## **ROLE OF POLICE VIGILANCE**

Law enforcement agencies utilize various strategies to manage and control New Year festivities. So, for example: police departments are structured to perform pre-event planning as a step of risk assessment. During this period ministries, local governments, event organizers, and security agencies can be consulted, and working regulatory permits, safety codes and a set limit on the number of participants can be imposed. The day one already of the event police department's operations allocation is complemented with more manpower and this entails actively staffing strategic areas like entry gates, transportation hubs, and heavily populated areas with mobile patrols to respond to any disturbances instantly. Additionally, riot control and bomb disposal teams are placed on standby. Management of the crowd also heavily relies on technology. To aid the supervision of the large population high-definition CCTV cameras and drones are utilized, while officers are in constant contact with command centers using advanced communication tools. Road closures, diversions, public transport upgradation, parking restrictions and crowds, etc. help ease traffic and regulate the population better. To control excessive alcohol consumption checkpoints are set up for DUI tests along with breath Analyzer tests as well and to prevent fires fireworks are permitted only in safe locations. Additionally, event sites are accompanied by emergency medical services to cater to people with minor injuries and medical issues. Raising awareness and providing emergency contacts is important so, building campaigns that incorporate the two forms is part of the most important processes during planning and preparation. The police functions are now further supplemented by community members who volunteer to help with crowd control and provide useful information. As law enforcement, they engage in a preventative strategy of scanning the area for illegal activities, such as pickpocketing, harassment or vandalism with quick intervention units on standby to quell the chaos.

These strategies aside, police have a particularly hard time controlling large crowds. Due to packed venues, the risk of stampeding rises and the chances of alcohol-induced ruckus become more likely. Other resource constraints, including personnel and equipment, may also make it difficult to do effective work in busy cities with many hotspots for celebrating. Furthermore, due to the unpredictable nature of crowds, even minor disruptions can trigger massive incidents. High-pressure situations also make coordination with other entities, such as fire and medical departments – necessary for effectively managing the situation – quite difficult. Other dangers such as terrorist attacks or any other security-related incidents require special attention

and proper arrangements regarding the security. A problem that is frequently encountered during an event is traffic congestion in the vicinity of the venue, with a lack of public enthusiasm, such as pushing barricades and, failure to vacate the area when asked to.

## REAL-LIFE INCIDENTS

Every year we come across various unfortunate incidents ranging from minor mishappening to heinous crimes that occur during New Year's celebrations, the frequency of these incidents is higher in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru than in small cities. Take for instance, during the '2025 New Year's celebration in Delhi's Rohini a 40-year-old man named Dharmendra was beaten to death just for asking his neighbours to lower the volume of the music so that his children could sleep peacefully, leaving the three young children fatherless.'<sup>4</sup> 'Another incident occurred in Bengaluru where a video went viral on various social media platforms that captured a woman in a highly drunken state wrestling with two security officials, however, the video drew controversies regarding the consent of the woman.'<sup>5</sup> Another very heinous crime occurred during the 'New Year's celebration in 2023 when a 20 years old girl named Anjali Kumari was hit and then dragged by a car for 10-12 km for around 90 minutes later found mutilated and naked on the road of the national capital, police investigation revealed that seven men were in the car at the time of the accident and all were in a drunken state.'<sup>6</sup> Many other minor incidents occur almost every year during this time, for example, this year in 'Delhi's southwest district a thief was arrested with 5 mobile phones and one auto amid a New Year's celebration.'<sup>7</sup> There is a list of cases that are reported every year in various corners of India.

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<sup>4</sup> Devanshi Mehta, 'Man murdered on New year's Eve in Delhi' *The Times of India* (Delhi, 4 January 2025) <[http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/116929997.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/116929997.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)> accessed 13 January 2025

<sup>5</sup> Muskaan Sharma, 'Drunk Bengaluru woman faces off with security on New Year's Eve, video sparks debate over consent' *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi, 3 January 2025) <<https://www.hindustantimes.com/trending/drunk-bengaluru-woman-faces-off-with-security-on-new-years-eve-video-sparks-debate-over-consent-101735819170866.html>> accessed 13 January 2025

<sup>6</sup> Ujwal Jalali, 'Delhi's New Year's eve turned night of horror: A recap' *The New Indian Express* (Delhi, 16 January 2023) <<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2023/Jan/16/delhis-new-years-eve-turned-night-of-horror-arecap-2538256.html>> accessed 13 January 2025

<sup>7</sup> Ani, 'Delhi Police arrests thief with 5 stolen phones amid New Year celebrations' *Hindustan Times* (Delhi, 2 January 2025) <<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/delhi-police-arrests-thief-with-5-stolen-phones-amid-new-year-celebrations-101735797795492.html>> accessed 13 January 2025

## **PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND MEDIA ROLE**

Public perception to a very large extent is shaped by how the media reports these incidents, either through traditional channels or through social media platforms. The debate between New Year parties as chaos or as a celebration is highly influenced by media reporting these events, the choice of words, negative contextualization, partial reporting or selective reporting of incidents, and displaying of dramatic images these all can evoke a sense of fear or can instill a sense of crisis in the minds of people. Fear-induced reporting can create anxiety, mistrust, and pessimism in people whereas if the right choice of word is made or if positive incidents are shared among people, balanced reporting is done and transparency is maintained then an atmosphere of optimism, pride, and courage can be created and public trust in law enforcement agencies can also be maintained.

## **SOLUTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

For the mentioned problem, technology, personal touch as well as community involvement are inherently intertwined and this balance needs to be maintained. AI-powered crowd management techniques are among the most cutting-edge approaches to solving these issues. Surveillance cameras that are outfitted with facial recognition and behavior analysis tools can be used to intelligently assist in the security of any environment, functioning as an AI to look for unusual behavior or actions during large events. With the help of weapons detection systems that are in the backend, security gets alerted as and when people have weapons or act suspiciously. AI-enabled drones can now serve as aerials to pinpoint problem areas within the crowd that would be difficult to do on foot, giving them an edge over human ground experts. The application of artificial intelligence together with traditional crime prevention measures would undoubtedly enable the police to substantially enhance their capability to uphold law and order in society while reducing the number of crimes committed. The safety of everyone who attends an event is in everyone's best interest and that's where the community comes in. Businesses, community elites as well as residents should work in union with local authorities as well as local event planners for a sense of shared ownership to be created and for the event to also be successful. Workshop and awareness initiatives should be employed prior to the event taking place to help individuals understand threats and how to stop them. Furthermore, the creation of community volunteers to help with crowd control will enable them to have extra eyes and ears for help. At the personal level, however, some actions can prevent such a situation from occurring. Participating individuals should be advised to be alert, refrain from carrying

excessive cash and valuables, and stay in well-lit densely populated areas. Also, one can improve one's security by using technology in the appropriate way such as employing safety apps that let users communicate with friends or summon help in the case of emergencies. Parents with children need to agree on a point to meet if they are lost and teach them how to keep safe. In addition, police should be proactive by investigating possibilities for violence or crime and assigning adequate forces in these targeted zones before the start of the event. Options of sharing intelligence between local, regional, and national security structures help crimes to be predicted, planned against and contained before they happen. Public declarations of the penalties that would be imposed for certain illegal acts, together with the announcement about additional security measures taken, may prevent the would-be offenders. Finally, an efficient communication line between law enforcement, event organizers, and the general public is essential. Hotlines that function during emergencies, updates on social networks and mobile applications that assist people with information or advice on a more secure way to protect themselves by highlighting places that are crowded, roads that are blocked, or other incidents in real-time during events are also very beneficial.

## **CONCLUSION**

New Year's celebrations can be both overly challenging and exhilarating. While the events are rich in culture and encourage people to better themselves along with the society around them, they also serve as a reminder of the traumas faced in the past and crimes carried out on such days. With the help of societal structures prisons are shaped that help in fostering the businesses of crime. New Year also is the perfect time for crime due to the overindulgence, recklessness, and lack of safety measures during the celebrations. There has also been an attempt to balance celebrating New Year with feeling safe however there does remain a great difficulty in doing so. As much as trust does help keep people in line during times of celebration, an extreme inability to portray the New Year celebrations in an entertaining manner may lead to a ruinous time. And quite frankly, fixing these issues is complex and requires more than just a single-layer approach. Whether it be being more responsible with the types of technologies being used or focusing on the community more and educating them while embracing innovation, everything is a must. People need to realize how deeply rooted these problems truly are. Trusting law enforcement, communities, and individuals fully is the goal.