

COMMUNITY POLICING EXPERIMENTS /OUTREACH PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

Over the past few years, CHRI's police unit under access to justice programme has been collecting and compiling experiments on Community Policing and Outreach Programmes in the different states of India. In an attempt to bring a holistic picture of community policing initiatives throughout India, the unit seeks to update this section regularly and anybody interested to share/wanting to contribute to this section, can contact Doel Mukerjee at doel@humanrightsinitiative.org.

1. Community Policing: Friends Of Police, Tamil Nadu

The Friends Of Police is a holistic and pro-active concept that lends a psychological approach to policing. It is a true example of police public partnership where citizens have been empowered and with the help of the police.

Friends Of Police provides opportunities for ordinary citizens to effectively contribute to the prevention and detection of crime. Any member of the public, male or female who is not involved in civil or criminal case can become a member of FOP. The members of FOP can provide useful information leading to solving of crimes. FOP members can also prevent any abuse of Police power because of easy accessibility to the station house officer and other senior personnel.

Role of FOP:

- Beats and night Patrols
- Assistance in traffic
- Crime prevention
- Information collection
- Assistance in Law and Order Maintenance
- Involvement in Prohibition Work.

Friends of Police movement have been found helpful in creating channels for receiving the right information at the right time. It has also helped the police to come closer to the community. It has tried to impart fairness, transparency and impartiality in the working of the police. This system is functioning effectively in all districts of Tamil Nadu over the last five years.

2. Samarth Yojna Community Policing Experiment, Coimbatore City

Coimbatore City, rightly called the 'Manchester of South India', is a city which has witnessed two communal holocausts, religious and ethnic riots, rampant violence, inhuman brutality and increasing criminal activities etc. It was because of this appalling situation that, Mr.K.Radhakrishnan, IPS, decided to implement the community policing experiment to bring the situation under control. The main objectives of this experiment was to perceive and resolve the communal problem and also to win the confidence of the people whose faith and confidence in the police had gradually eroded. To achieve the objectives of the community, the following measures were taken:

Area Committees were formed and they were taught all aspects of community policing which helped them to trace and resolve small local issues. Regular meetings were held with the committee members and this forum helped the police to “discuss and solve current problems and also provided valuable information to the police on new, unfolding communal dimensions.”

A number of **Workshops and Seminars** were arranged on Attitudinal Change for Police Officers so that it enabled the police officers to give up their rigid colonial mindset and interact with the community in a friendly and cordial manner.

Problems Resolving

An effort was made by the police officers to resolve conflicts or problems through consultation with Area committee members, other governmental agencies, and the Municipal Corporation. The police have been successful in finding solutions to several local problems through effective intra and inter agency consultations.

City Vigilance Committees were formed to prevent incidence of property crimes and to give information on the designs and whereabouts of absconding terrorists. This effectively resulted in seizure of contrabands, explosives, detonators, lethal weapons, black money, sandalwood, drugs etc.

Interface with Pressure Groups

The police interacted with various pressure groups like Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, lawyers, professors, students, doctors and 42 Jamaths to build good contact and establish good rapport.

Students-Police Interface

Effective student police interaction helped the police to reconstruct peace and harmony. The students were deputed when there was a shortage in police station staff to check vehicles on the roads, check baggages in Railway Stations and Bus Stands etc.

Slum Adoption Scheme

This scheme was adopted to disengage slum dwellers from engaging in any anti social activity in future and to secure easy access for the police into the slums. The main objective was to detect and prevent crime through proactive policing.

3. Trichy Community Policing

Before the advent of community policing initiative in Trichy, the crime rate was very high. There were racial and religious conflicts, rioting, murder, mayhem and other anti social activities. The police not only had to challenge forces of fundamentalism and lawlessness they also had to instill a sense of confidence amongst people. To achieve this, Mr. Tripathy, an IPS (contact :jkt_2001@rediffmail.com) officer introduced the following community policing strategies.

- Beat Officers' System
- Complaint/Suggestion Box System
- Wide Area Network (WAN)
- Help line for Women in Distress
- Slum Adoption Programme

Beat Officers' System

The city was divided into 57 beat zones and each beat was manned by 4 constables called Beat Officers. This instilled pride in them and empowered them to make independent decisions, made them more responsible and responsive to public needs. Policemen were also encouraged to attend to civic problems to gain goodwill of the people. Through all this, the police succeeded in creating an atmosphere that was citizen friendly and was conducive for anyone to confide any information. The people also appreciated the efforts of the police and volunteered assistance to police in crime prevention.

Complaint Box System

Complaint Boxes were kept at different locations of the city to receive information from public who may prefer to remain unidentified and yet participate in their effort to assist the police. Such letters were collected daily and acted upon quickly to encourage the informants.

Wide Area Network (W.A.N.) was introduced in July 2000 linking all, police stations and offices with Internet connectivity and email service. This facility has brought the police closer to the public, making the police more responsive, transparent and interactive.

Help Line for Distressed Women

To reach to those women who need help and assistance, a help line was launched on 15th August 2000 to receive distress calls round the clock by a team of police, activists and students. They visit the victims; provide counseling, legal help, medical support etc. The Trichy police went one step further by promoting awareness on gender issues and women's rights. It focused on rehabilitation of 144 victims, by providing accommodation, education, vocational training, and employment, along with their children, with the help of NGOs, Women Organizations, and Social Welfare Department etc.

Slum Adoption Programme

Due to poverty and other socio economical factors, slums have become the breeding ground for criminals and other anti social elements. To access these areas where the police had difficulty in gaining entry, attempts were made to improve the living condition of the people. Mass awareness programmes were conducted on hygiene, evils of drug/alcoholism, and AIDS. Women self-help groups were formed, vocational training was imparted and assistance was given to them for manufacturing and marketing their products.

In collaboration with the public, and NGOs, a Community Centre was also built. Medical camps were arranged, youth activities in sports were sponsored, and an initiative was taken to improve the environment of the community by tree planting. All these initiatives yielded an unbelievable result! 162 potential criminals volunteered to reform themselves and were rehabilitated with the help of NGOs, government and private agencies.

Accolades

- The initiatives were recognized by International Association Of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Washington and conferred International Community Policing Awards 2001, at Toronto.
- It was also selected for international innovations Awards Programme of CAPAM during a conference at Glasgow, Scotland, September 2002.

4. The Tuticorin Experiment

In this experiment, a number of police camps in the form of Spot Redressal of Public Grievances were organized in communally sensitive villages. The main objective of these camps were to restore the confidence of the people on the police force, to improve the police public relationship and to maintain law and order situation. In these camps nobody is allowed to act as a mediator between the police and the public. The police officers sit on the ground with the village people and petty matters which have the potential of becoming law and order problems or even grave crimes are settled on the spot to the satisfaction of both parties.

As a gesture of goodwill, the police attend and participate in the religious festivals and also arrange sports activities to build rapport with the community.

5. 'PRAHARI': The Community Policing Initiative In Assam

Community Policing in Assam was started on 3/7/1996 when a meeting of the citizens under Panbazar Police Station in Guwahati was convened by the S.P. city Shri Kuladhar Saikia, to discuss the concept and launching of "neighbourhood watch scheme" to promote policing through community participation. The community policing initiative was also aimed at changing the attitude of the average policeman at the police stations towards the public, to make them people friendly and to improve their living and working conditions. The goal of **PRAHARI**, was to tackle social problems and bring the police and community closer.

The '**Project Prahari**' of the Assam Police, was first launched in a remote village of Thaikarguri in Kokrajhar District, where five innocent persons were brutally murdered by the villagers. The incident occurred after the deaths of several children due to various diseases. Eleven persons were arrested in connection with the brutal killings. When the villagers were questioned about the brutal deaths they strongly justified their actions by saying that the children were murdered for sacrifice to the local gods.

Very low level of education and lack of medical facilities has led to belief in witchcraft in different backward parts of Assam, particularly in the lower Assam districts of Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon and Dhubri and many innocent persons have become the unfortunate victims of this superstition in the last few years. Due to low level of education, helplessness in life threatening situation, lack of medical facilities etc. people are forced to depend on quacks and when they fail to cure the diseases they put the blame on someone else and sometimes, the quacks themselves face the wrath of the people. There are also instances when witchcraft was used as an easy way to make money during dull season.

However, the encouraging thing is that due to police efforts and '**Project Prahari**', in one particular village, the persons, once involved in witch-hunt are now encouraging others to root out this practice.

In all **PRAHARI** villages, the police have taken an initiative and formed Community Management Groups (CMG) or Community Liaison Groups. These groups are formed at the state, district and PS

level where eminent and non political persons from the society come together with the police to voice their complaints and give their suggestions for providing better policing to the society. These groups function in close association with the local police in various unique activities that are going on in 48 villages.

Community wells, canals, hand pumps etc. have been built in these villages with the joint initiative of the police and the community. There has been an effort to harness natural water resources by building reservoir and links to meet drinking water scarcity. Roads and bridges have been repaired, community centers have been built, employment generation activities have been started by promoting self-employment initiatives and modern agricultural techniques have been introduced to increase productivity. Through all these initiatives the police have tried to improve their image by addressing those issues that generally creates a criminogenic atmosphere and induce people to commit crime.

6. 'AASWAS': Assam Police

This initiative was taken by the Assam police to combat violence and insurgency and also to extend a gesture of affection towards children and those undergoing trauma. The **Project Aashwas** was launched on the 14th November 2001, coinciding with the Children's Day, by the Honorable Chief Minister of Assam, Shri Tarun Gogoi. The nodal officer is Mr. B.J. Mahanta who can be contacted at: 0361-2456971. Sensitization campaigns have been undertaken in several districts of Assam. **Aashwas** has identified a cluster of seven villages in each of seven districts where there is a history of ethnic or terrorist violence and such campaigns have integrated the community with the police and have evoked a tremendous response.

7. Community Policing Initiative In Himachal Pradesh

In order to mobilize public support and involve active public participation in prevention and detection of crime and maintenance of law and order, a Community Policing Scheme was introduced in Himachal Pradesh in November 2000. It was initially introduced in 22 out of 83 police stations in the State.

Under this scheme a police station is divided into sectors corresponding to wards of Panchayat /NAC. Bigger wards have more sectors. All the household members in a particular sector constituted the People's Policing Committee of that sector. Each sector has an Active group consisting of 6 respectable persons of that locality, one Home Guard, one Chowkidar, and one Police Constable / Head Constable as Secretary. One member of the Active Group is the convener of the group. As a result of positive feedback of the State, the scheme was introduced to all the police stations of the state.

Vishwas Yojna

- Visit of school children to police stations to remove fear of Police from the minds of children, to add transparency, awareness and better understanding of the police force.
- Production of educative, documentary film 'Aap aur Hum' prepared by Mr. Zahur Zaidi IPS (who may be contacted at: 01892-222244), explains how the police functions at police stations, traffic posts, the rules for police officers at various levels, and also highlights the

rights and responsibilities of citizens vis-à-vis police working. A 1000 video cassettes/CD's are being distributed to schools free of cost.

- Village Touring by District Superintendent Of Police-During such visits, the policemen discuss the problems faced by the rural people and other law and order related issue.
- Police Assistance Centres: These centres are established at important places especially those, which attract tourists. Under this scheme, 116 Police Assistance Centres have been established upto June 2003. These centres have gone a long way in instilling sense of security and protection in the minds of general public, especially tourists.

Suvidha Yojna:

In order to avoid delay in registration of cases and harassment to the general public, this scheme was undertaken. Under this scheme, girl students of schools and colleges in the state are given training in unarmed combat by police teams in order to instill confidence in them while dealing with eve teasers and other anti social elements.

Separation Of Law and Order and Investigation at Police Stations

Detective wings have been created in 20 Police Stations of the State exclusively for investigation of crime especially of a heinous nature. The staff posted in these wings is not deployed for any other duty except in emergency and they concentrate on detection work only.

Sanrakshan Yojna

Under this scheme police stations with the assistance of the Community Police Team prepare a list of all citizens who are above sixty-five years of age and are living alone. A policeman or a community police volunteer then goes and visits the residences of such citizens at least once a week to enquire about their welfare and to render such reasonable assistance as they may require.

Women Cell

Women cells have been established in all districts of H.P., which are manned by lady investigating officers so that victims of woman related crimes can express themselves freely without hesitation to the women officers as compared to their male counterparts.

8. Community policing experiment in Punjab, Ludhiana

The community policing experiment in Ludhiana was launched on October 12, 2002. Thirty member community groups were set up in 400 beats and community members were to sit together every fortnight or once a month to discuss major problems confronting the area. Each group comprising a beat officer, associated with the resource center was to "police the community".

9. Community Policing in Punjab, Amritsar

In Amritsar, Mr G.S. Sahota, DIG, Border Range took the to provide a single-window redressal cell facility to solve various problems of the people.

Since a lot of people visit police stations for passport verification, arm licenses and for grievances such centers were equipped with computers, telephones and a senior SP was appointed as in charge of the one-stop service. It was proposed that the centre would have helplines, have doctors of the Health Department to take care of the accident cases etc. The centre would also establish women and

children help lines and in addition improve the police public relations. Subsequently, Community Policing Centres were opened in six police ranges in the state.

10. Community Policing Initiative in Kolkata, West Bengal

The community policing initiative in Kolkata involves the civil society and the police personnel. These programmes are:

Drug Awareness Programmes:

Drug Awareness Programmes are organized throughout the year by the Detective Department in various educational institutes and slums. In partnership with the local people and leading NGOs of the city drug de-addiction camps are also organized for the drug victims. The World Anti Drug Day is observed every year on the 26th of July.

Sports Activity:

Kolkata Police organizes the **Friendship Cup Football Tournament** every year for the local clubs of Kolkata. Over 500 clubs participate in this 3-tier tournament. The Kolkata Police also organizes **Inter School Football Tournament** for school students of Kolkata every year in which over 50 schools participate.

Nabadisha:

This is a programme for the street children of the city. Apart from providing health check ups, informal literary camps are organized for them. Rotary Club, Lion Club and Vikramshila Education Resource Society work in partnership with the Kolkata police in this project.

Prabaha:

This is a weekly blood donation programme organized every Saturday in a police station by rotation. Members of the Police Force as well as local residents participate in this project. Blood Group Directories are also published at the end of each year.

Bravery and Honesty Award:

The Detective Department on behalf of the Kolkata Police organizes this award ceremony every year. Citizens are selected for their acts of bravery and honesty and are felicitated so that others follow the examples set by them.

Counseling Centres:

The Detective Department of the Kolkata Police along with several leading NGOs of the city have opened counseling centres for women, juveniles, elders, drug or alcohol addicts manned by trained counselors and psychiatrists.

Claude Martin Fund:

Financial assistance is given to deserving ex-prisoners in the State Of West Bengal through the Claude Martin Fund. The Trustee of this fund is Honourable AG of High Court and the Administrator of the fund is the Commissioner of Police who is authorized to render financial assistance to those ex-prisoners who has set an example in the community.

Poor Box:

This fund was formed in 1934 from the voluntary contribution of the public, contractors for erecting stands in the Maidan, compounding cases of minor breaches of rationing rules, and charges for keeping the unclaimed properties under Police custody by the carters for the temporary and emergency relief to the needy and distressed people of Kolkata.

11. "Sahayata": A Community Policing Initiative in West-Bengal, Nadia District

'Sahayata' is a Bengali word meaning assistance. It is an experiment that has been conceived as a service delivery platform to resolve, through counseling, disputes within family and also between neighbours. In this experiment the police is an active agent in resolving disputes, and that too through an inexpensive and prompt system. Community involvement has been kept as its prime objective.

The main objectives of this project were.

1. Involving people in the resolution of disputes.
2. Ensuring speedy delivery of justice in a cost-effective manner.
3. Ensuring a reconciliatory situation for the parties for achieving long lasting solution.
4. Develop a sense of belonging with the State, with an ultimate bearing on national integrity.

Steps Taken:

In 2001, Sahayata Centres were set up at all the Police Stations. The first Centre came up at Thanarpara and the remaining centers followed in quick succession. Complaint Boxes were placed outside these centers having proper glow-sign Boards to enable people to drop their complaints.

Though the venue was within the police station compound, yet the 'Sahayata' centre was located in a separate accommodation away from the Police Station building. This was helpful as people felt less inhibited and did not suffer from the apprehension of going through strict police formality in lodging their complaints.

Panels of citizen volunteers were enrolled to enlist community participation. Women and students were given adequate representation. Social functions were organized at each Police Station to inaugurate these centres. Senior police Officers and community leaders spoke at great length, explaining the concept behind this initiative to generate mass awareness about this initiative.

Police personnel with the right aptitude were selected as nodal officers to act as interface at the centres. They provided technical assistance to citizen volunteers in the field of dispute resolution.

This experiment has proved to be a very effective, prompt and inexpensive way in rendering justice and preventing crime and it has also found widespread appeal because of its applicability among community members.

12. Community Policing in Diamond Harbour, West Bengal:

Due to an increase in criminal activities in Diamond Harbour area, the police in South 24 Parganas the police along with local businessmen have set up local resistance groups known as **RG party** to deal with crime in the rural areas. The main objective is to stop villagers from committing crimes when they are idle. The idea is to involve these people in guarding the villages instead of arresting them after they have committed some crimes. Members of RG parties have been provided with torches and caps sponsored by local businessmen.

According to the Sub-divisional police officer, Mehmood Akhtar, the idea based on community policing, was to make people “confident and involve them more actively in maintenance of law and order”, to make people realize that policing does not mean beating up and terrorizing the common man but to work with the common man and for that the community’s support is extremely important.

13. “MAITHRI”: Community Policing In Andhra Pradesh

“Maithri” a community policing initiative was launched in the year 2000, by the Andhra Pradesh Police throughout the state of Andhra Pradesh. The mission of Maithri was to ‘render courteous, compassionate and caring responsive police personnel and increase public confidence in police with respect to maintenance of peace and order and a feeling of safety from crime.’ It rests on the belief that contemporary community problems require a decentralized and personalized police approach, which involved citizens in the process of policing themselves.

Objectives Of Maithri:

- To meet the needs of small and varied groups of people in the community by actively involving them in the process.
- To organize proactive measures to prevent and detect crime.
- To provide personalized quality service to the people at the decentralized level.

Process Of Maithri:

The process of Maithri can be understood by using the acronym CAMP which is:

- Consultation:

The community is consulted on a regular basis to know and enumerate all their felt needs and they are actively encouraged to suggest all possible legally acceptable solutions.

- Adaptation:

Adaptation means changing or devising new policing methods and adopting appropriate legal procedures for solving the local problems.

- Mobilization:

Once the felt needs of the community and their solutions are identified, necessary manpower, material and financial resources are mobilized for implementing the solution.

- Problem Solving:

After the resources are mobilized, the actual work of solving the problem is launched and completed.

The programme is a great success and by August 2002 as much as 25% of the habitations were covered under 'Maithri' with as many as 6900 Maithri committees with a membership of about 2.7 lakh citizens.

14. Mohalla Committee Movement Trust, Mumbai

Citizen-police committees were set up in the wake of the 1992-93 Hindu-Muslim communal riots that paralyzed Mumbai (Bombay) and killed 1000 people. The Mohalla Committee was formed under the initiative, of former Mumbai Commissioner, J.F. Ribiero. The chairman of the Mohalla Committee Movement Trust was Mr. Deshmukh.

After the 1992 riots, people from all walks of life who were the survivors came together and along with the police worked out a simple workable idea that became a reality. The Mohalla Committee which is also known as the Peace Committee, has now become a part of the civil society structure in a city that usually has little time or mental space.

The concept works on the simple principle: Give people some power and make them responsible for it. Every Mohalla Committee and there are 24 in the city - has a sizeable number of people from the area who are regarded as elders, or who have a standing of their own, or have the charisma to make others listen to them. The primary task of the committee members is to maintain more than cordial relations between the two communities, largely Hindus and Muslims. The members intervene in disputes, even personal or domestic quarrels if need be, organize little meetings or a variety of programmes and liaison with the nearest police station in their efforts to maintain peace. If trouble breaks out they broker peace too. If rumours go around they defuse them before it can cause any harm.

15. Community Policing Initiative In Pune

In Pune Community policing initiative was taken up by the police after the 1992 riots which killed thousands of people and destroyed the confidence of the people on the police system. To prevent future communal flare-ups and to restore the public confidence Mohalla committees were set up throughout Pune. There are 30 odd Mohalla committees in Pune where committee members work with the police to maintain peace and order. Mohalla committee meetings are held before the onset of every festival to maintain peace and communal harmony in the locality. In this way, every beat officer should hold a meeting of the **Mohalla** Committee once in every month. Likewise the Senior Inspector of Police of the concerned police station holds a meeting at least once in every three months which is attended by the Assistant Commissioner of Police.

CHHATTISGARH

Over the last two years or so, there has been some attempt in community policing in Chhattisgarh.

16. The Parivar Paramarsh Kendra, Raigarh District, Madhya Pradesh

A unique effort in community policing where the Kendra focuses on resolving family conflicts, by identifying the causes that contribute to family discord. Here the Kendra takes up a social decision making role and strives to save a family from being broken. It mainly acts as a center for counseling family problems. The idea behind such a venture is to improve the social environment, in a city by solving family disputes. By solving personal problems at an early stage, the police personnel have found that this often prevents criminal tendencies within an individual to further violate the law.

The Kendra was formed under the umbrella of the District Police, Raigarh and was initiated on 26th October 1996. Though the programme lacks statutory backing, the Kendra has been functioning successfully over the last seven years and has contributed a lot to society. By satisfying the community by involving them in performing such an important service as saving families from breaking, the police has also effectively improved their image from being authoritarian and be a more people-friendly police.

Other Community Policing Initiatives In Madhya Pradesh are,

- Gram Raksha Samiti
- Nagar Raksha Samiti
- Balmitra Thanas
- Childline
- Medical Relief to Injured
- Police Help the Visually Challenged
- De-addiction Camps
- Centre for Social Justice and Empowerment
- Operation Vishwas
- Operation Hamdard

Madhya Pradesh Police is also the pioneer in running several experiments in the area of **impact assessment** of these initiatives. For more details Mr. Swaraj Puri IPS ; ADG, Community Policing Nodal Officer may be contacted: swarajpuri@rediffmail.com

17. Gram/Nagar Raksha Samiti, Rajnandgaon, Chattisgarh

In this Community Policing experiment, Core Groups or **CLGs** are formed at the S.D.O.P level, Police Station level, Beat level and Village level. At each of these levels the Core Group comprises of 15/20 members, 4/5 members, 2/3 members and 5/15 members respectively. The main coordinator in this system is the S.D.O.P. At the village level, the Head Rakshak coordinates the core group, which is called the Raksha Samiti.

It was felt that it was imperative that the police are sensitized about their need to interact with the public and to cater to the expectations of the public. Likewise it was considered necessary that the public be educated about certain things like Cognizable and Non-cognizable offences, Bailable and Non-bailable Offences, basic laws, rights of general public and the conditions under which the police work.

In this experiment, the community's support was sought,

- To help police in any type of crime prevention
- Giving information to police about any anti social or criminal activity in the area.
- Taking care of villagers and properties of every villager
- Helping police in arrest of proclaimed offenders
- Disaster Management
- Maintaining law and order.

Apart from that the police along with the public took initiative in organizing:

- Nasha Mukti Abhiyan (Drug de-addiction Programme)
- Parivar Paramarsh Kendra (Family Counselling Centre)
- Blood Donation Camps
- Tree Plantation
- Jan Jagran Abhiyan (Mass Awareness Programmes)
- Chalit Thana (Mobile Police Stations)
- Meetings and Conferences

Together with the community the police has been able to prevention and detect crime. The community has helped the police in solving several cases, apprehending criminals and recovering stolen goods. Involving the community and educating the them about the origin and purpose of the Naxalism effectively addressed the Naxalite menace in this area. Drinking water huts were opened and village patrolling was initiated in the villages. To assist the police in their work, the Village Rakshaks have been given whistle, lathis and torches by the up-sarpanchs. 42 members have also been given awards by the honourable minister of the district on the occasion of Independence Day 2002, for putting forward their honest efforts in assisting the police in crime control.