

## **New Community Policing Initiative for Mumbaites**

Crimes in India have shown a steady increase over the last couple of years and needless to say to engage with the police and to find ways of building better communications between the people and the police in order to tackle the situation, civil society groups in India have taken initiatives in building synergies between police and civil society for better governance. Maharashtra already boasts of a Mohalla Committee Movement Trust formed after the communal riots that engulfed the state in 1992-93. While these initiatives were taken up by the police, however, for the first time a unique initiative was started by a few concerned citizens.

Named *Public Concern for Governance Trust* (PCGT), this community policing experiment has the capability to mobilize public opinion and increase public participation and activism towards creating more transparent and efficient governance. The mandate of the PCGT is to ensure enactment of laws and policies, to promote honesty, transparency and accountability in governance. The organization also takes up causes, which affect large segments of society, particularly the poor, and it promotes islands of integrity and excellence among government and civil society actors.

As a part of its ongoing strategy on community policing, the PCGT has initiated a Participative Policing Project. The First Phase of the Participative Policing Project of PCGT intends to plan and implement activities at three levels i.e by building public awareness, secondly through professional backup and lastly through synergy.

Building Public Awareness involves educating the public on the role of the police force and its limitations and constraints and publishing proactive guidelines to facilitate increased understanding of rights and responsibilities of citizen's vis-à-vis the police force. Professional Backup entails developing training courses on Conflict Resolution and Mediation for the police or by working at two levels i.e at the Constabulary College, Mumbai or with a mixed group of police personnel and civil society activists. This would dovetail with identifying areas in which civil society could complement the services of the law enforcement agencies in curbing crime, communalism and corruption and initiating measures leading towards setting up Help Desks at Police Stations.

The proposed activities of the project involves, *initiating values and ethics among Police Force and Civil Society*; to identify public concerns and their prioritization through sample surveys, research, focused group discussions with individuals and other groups including NGOs; to identify the specific issues/problems causing grievance to civil society and law enforcement agencies (related to the concerns mentioned above) through experiences of public and police officials; initiating dialogue between the Police and Public and thereby develop and suggest remedial measures for the identified concerns; conducting Attitudinal Change Lectures, Workshops and Seminars among the Police and Civil Society and taking police to educational institutions to instruct students about civic values and lastly by increased interaction of the Police Force with other professional groups on specific issues of Ethics in Governance.

For more detailed information on the initiative, **Shabnam Siddqui**, who is the **Programme Manager of PGCT** may be contacted at: [pcgt@vsnl.net](mailto:pcgt@vsnl.net) or **Dr Doel Mukherjee** who is the **Project Coordinator (Police Unit, CHRI)** at [doel@humanrightsinitiative.org](mailto:doel@humanrightsinitiative.org)