

Focused Group Discussion with Police Personnel at Maana Police station

Venue: Mana Police Station, Raipur

Date: 19/02/06

Time: 7:30 pm – 9:15 pm

Seating: Informal

Style: Interactive, Focused Group Discussion (FGD)

A focused group discussion was organized between the police personnel posted at the Mana Police Station and representatives from Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative on February 19, 2006 at the police station campus.

Purpose: The purpose of the Focused Group Discussion was that the Community Policing experiment at Mana has now run for a year and a half. Although in the process the Inspector General of Police has rewarded the police station staff, the SHO is slated to receive an award from the State Government and the SI Mr. Tigga shared that the police station has seen increased witnesses since the project started yet the facilitators felt that somewhere aspirations remained unfulfilled. There maybe expectations or problems that the police have been unable to speak about. Similarly the community reflected that the police should take more proactive steps to reduce crime in their area. The facilitator's observations were based primarily on the research findings of Mr. Asthana and the law and order registers maintained by the Police Station and the Community Liaison Groups.

Process: The FGD started with the introduction of the participants and the CHRI facilitators. After the introduction through a series of concerns and sharing of views it was proposed to discuss with the police station staff their perceptions, expectations and various other needs for continuing to be an effective partner in this experiment.

Concern 1: What are the awards received by the police station?

Facilitator's Notes: It was informed that the police station had received an award each from the IG and SP of the concerned police station respectively for their effort in community policing. The SHO, Mr. Dubey is slated for a State Level Award on Human Rights.

Concern 2: Does everyone in the police station understand the processes of community policing? How has the experiment benefited the police station; the individual, or has it had a negative impact on the police station?

Facilitator's Notes: This concern was based on Mr. Asthana's research in which 87.5% of the interviewed personnel shared that they informally discussed about the experiment amongst themselves. However 18.75% of respondents did not express any opinion. Replying to this observation the police personnel shared that at the time when the research was in process, some of the officers were transferred and new police office were

not oriented to community policing initiative of the Thana. They felt that the respondents who did not express any opinion belonged to these uninformed new entrants.

Concern 3: Has the experiment achieved its desired results? What is in your opinion has been a big impact? And if no impact has taken place what are/is the reason (s) for this?

Facilitator's Notes: Replying to a question in Mr. Asthana's research on whether they thought that the desired momentum is not being achieved in the programme, 50% of the personnel replied in the affirmative, The SHO Mr Dubey shared that the project has been unable to increase more affiliations to the CLG community and he gets to see same faces in most of the meetings. So he wanted aggressive marketing of community policing not by the CHRI facilitators but by the CLG members. According to the participants, the new improved police public relationship is the biggest impact of this project. This reinforced Mr Asthana's research, which stated that 93.75% personnel felt that police-public relations have improved because of the experiment.

Concern 4: Crime has gone down by how much percentage? Have the number of people visiting the police station increased? Do women visit the police station?

Facilitator's Notes: The Participants shared that due to lack of crime record tabulation they cannot empirically prove whether crime has gone down or not but they feel that issues of illicit liquor and gambling has gone down considerably. The reader of the police station, Mr. Johar Lal Patel said that he would do the tabulation and would provide it to the CHRI staff to cross check the impact empirically. The participants unanimously admitted that the number of people visiting police has increased over the last one year. This included women and women groups.

Concern 5: *Road accidents.* How to reduce the accidents?

Facilitator's Notes: This concern was based on the facilitator's observation of increased road accidents in the NH-43 over the last few months. The police shared that they are unable to control the rise primarily because the accidents are caused to over speeding and negligence. Having identified that the road between Abhanpur and Pachperinaka (Raipur) is vulnerable to road accidents, police have placed speed breakers at regular intervals like the one in Mana Basti. The SHO shared that proactive measure like teaching traffic rules to schoolchildren must be taken. The SHO agreed to go to the schools to educate the students.

Concern 6: Public Perception of police.

Facilitator's Notes: Reinforcing the research finding that 62.5% of the police personnel felt that there is more respect amongst the public for police personnel, majority of the participants believed that this is so. When asked that why 37.5% did not express an opinion on this option, the participants again shared that these respondents must have been the new entrants in the police station. The police shared that this new and improved relationship has increased crime related information in the Thana. It must be noted here

that Mr. Asthana's research recorded 75% respondents thinking similarly on the issue. Mr. Tigga, SI, informed that now when they go to any village unlike before the children surround them and start playing around them. According to him this shows that even the children are not scared of police any more.

Concern 7: Lack of Public Interest in the project.

Facilitator's Notes: Disclosing that in Mr. Asthana's research 32% of the Thana staff felt that lack of public interest is the primary reason for the project not gaining the desired momentum, the facilitators asked for solutions to the participants. The SHO shared that the CLGs should be motivated to become change agents. The CLGs should also advocate for enhanced participation by their respective villages. The SHO disclosed that there is a system of *Chalit Thana* in which the SHO/SI/ASI go to the villages and talk on the issues of law and order. He agreed to inform the CHRI facilitators of the dates of such meetings where they along with the CLG members can place the issue of community policing and increase the membership of the CLG community. One participant Mr. Bhagwati Prasad Verma suggested that CHRI should facilitate processes solving their basic issues first and once they are solved people will associate more with the project.

Concern 8: Is there any hesitation in attending the law and order meetings?

Facilitator's Notes: The interview results by Mr Asthana showed that 81.25% respondents replied that there was more thrust between public and police. Following it further on when the participants were asked whether due to this increased thrust do they feel hesitant in attending the community meetings, the participants at the FGD said **NO** without any exception. However this reply does not compliment the research finding by Mr. Asthana in which 56% shared that they feel hesitant in attending the community meetings. The contradictory findings do not come as a surprise to the facilitators as each research techniques have their limitations. In the FGD the participants may not have shared their true feelings because of the presence of their SHO.

Concern 9: Does the community come with *Pairavi* (unethical references) for cases? Do they take undue interest in cases and visit the police station?

Facilitator's Notes: The participants shared that some CLGs come with *Pairavi* (unethical references). The SHO shared that the extent of such *Pairavis* are however low primarily because unlike the members of the Village Defence Committee, the CLG members are not given identity cards. He said that more *Pairavis* come from Sarpanch, who are ex-officio members of Community Liaison Group (CLG). Sometimes villages, which have strong groups, like Boriakala also, come with such *Piravi*. It is however a bit difficult to believe the police's analysis of correlating strong groups with *Pairavi*. This potentially biased analysis by the police may be due to fact that they want to defeat the purpose of increased accountability, which results out of strong community groups.

Concern 10: What are your perceptions of beat policing today? Has your perceptions changed over the last one year? Are you happy with the beat structure?

Facilitator's Notes: The Participants shared that they know the roles of beat officers and were well versed with the beat patrolling system. The participants were informed that the research showed that prior to July 2004 38.43% personnel reported that they were performing their duties between 75% to 100% time and this percentage in performing beat duties has gone down to 31.25% in the post July 2004 period. Listening to the question attentively the Reader Mr Patel along with the SI Mr Tigga shared that this may be true because of the increased VIP duty over the last one year. They shared the number of flights have increased and so has the VIP movement due to increased political and economic processes. The other police officers along with the SHO then pitched in support to this analysis. The police participants informed that they were happy with the beat structure. When the facilitators informed them that one village *Baroda* wanted to shift from beat two to beat one, the SHO accepted of receiving an application from village Baroda and shared he would soon take a decision on it.

Concern 11: Transfer of the police officers from Mana police Station since July 2004?

Facilitator's Notes: The Reader of the police station Mr. Johar Lal Patel informed that around ten police officers have been transferred from the police station since July 2004. He agreed to hand over the details of the transferred police officers and new police officers posting in the police station since July 2004. This information is to facilitate training and sensitization on Community Policing of the new police officers.

Concern 12: How can more people be brought into the fold of community policing? Presently are you happy to interact with the people who are coming for these meeting?

Facilitator's Notes: The following suggestions were given by the participants to increase public's participation in community policing:

- Hold large village level meetings.
- The Kotwars must be sensitized to perform their duties.
- Call special Gram Sabhas on issues of law and order.
- Solve basic issues of the villages.

Concern 13: The SHO addressing the Mahila Mandals and the school children.

Facilitator's Notes: The SHO agreed to address the Mahila Mandals and school children in the villages falling under Mana Police Station in the coming months.

CHRI's Presentation: CHRI made a small presentation summing up the details of the minutes recorded in the beat registers over the past one year. Following were the findings based on the minutes recorded by the police and public in their respective registers:]

- Gabling was under control in 9 out of the 12 villages. In three villages public were not satisfied over police's action.
- *Satta* was under control in 11 out of the 12 villages.
- Illicit Liquor was under control I 10 out of the 12 villages.
- Anti-social activities like passing remarks, public nuisance etc were under control in 10 out of the 12 villages.
- 10 out of 12 villages were not satisfied with the patrol timings and frequency in their villages.

SHO, Mr. J.P.Dubey's and CSP, Mr. Rajesh Aggarwal's Feedback: Both the officers asked the reader to note down the names of the unsatisfied villages under different categories and informed the facilitators that they will take proper action soon in consultation with the community.

ANNEXURE 1

List of Participants:

1. Mr. J.P.Dubey, **SHO**
2. Mr. R. Tigga, **SI**
3. Mr. Jayanath Singh, **Constable**
4. Mr. Johar Lal Patel, **Constable, Reader**
5. Mr. P.K.Shukla, **Constable**
6. Mr. Bhagwati Prasad Verma, **Constable**
7. Mr. Vrindvan Prasad, **Constable**
8. Mr. Ramnath Bhagat, **Head Constable**
9. Mr. Yogeshwar Singh Thakur, **Constable**
10. Mr. Vijay Narayan Pathak, **Head Constable**
11. Dr. Doel Mukerjee, **CHRI**
12. Mr. Anshuman Jha, **CHRI**
13. Mr. Daniel Woods, **CHRI**
14. Ms. Sohini Paul, **CHRI**
15. Mr. Shashank Thakur, **CHRI**
16. Mr. Sunil Chattriya, **CHRI**
17. Mr. Sumit Kumar, **CHRI**