

April 4, 2003

**Proceedings of March 10, 2003 Meeting on
Community Policing**

Dear Sir,

The CHRI would like to thank you for taking a keen interest in the series of workshops that were conducted in Chhattisgarh under the theme "*Police Reforms too Important to Neglect, too Urgent to Delay*" between June 2002 to March 2003.

In Bhillai after the overwhelming response of the people, the CHRI with the support of the Chhattisgarh State Human Rights Commission were able to take the work one step ahead by discussing as to how to implement *community participation for democratic policing* with the support of the local law enforcement agency. For this a one-day workshop was organized on December 1, 2002 to understand the dynamics of community policing. A short concept note was also circulated at the workshop.

Well known experts in the country, Mr. Abraham Kurien IPS (presently, DG, Prosecution, UP) and Mr. J.K. Tripathy IPS (presently Jt. Com. Of Police, Chennai) along with the local experts from Chhattisgarh, Mr. D.M. Awasthi IPS (DIG Admin, Chhattisgarh); Mr. Rakesh Mishra IPS (SP Raigarh); Mr. G.P. Singh IPS (SP Rajnandgaon) were able to share their expertise and experiences with the participants.

The discussions between the police and community led to a set of *Recommendations* (enclosed as background note to March 10, 2003 follow-up meeting). It was proved beyond doubt that the enthusiasm of the people and the police in Bhillai is possibly leading to a new initiative where a bond will be created between the two groups. With this hope, the Chhattisgarh State Human Rights Commission and CHRI organized the follow-up meeting to discuss the possibilities for

implementation of some of the recommendations. The discussions were spearheaded by a short address by Mr. K.A. Jacob (Chair, Chhattisgarh State Human Rights Commission), Mr. Lalit Surjan (Editor in Chief, Deshbandhu), Mr. Ashok Juneja (Senior Superintendent of Police, Durg District). The meeting was attended by approximately 55 participants, lawyers, doctors, teachers, academicians and members of the civil society. A participant's list is enclosed. A few media personnel also covered the programme to reach the message to many more people. Ms. Brigitte Wutherich, Attache to the Embassy of Switzerland also attended the meeting.

Following were the main recommendations made by the participants:

- Improve police and public interface
- Train police personnel and public
- Advocate for a better legislation.

The following were the decisions taken at the meeting:

- ☛ Bhilai to be taken on a pilot project basis for community policing:
 1. Regular police public meetings will be organized sector wise. The citizens will decide the intricate details of the meetings and prepare an agenda to facilitate the discussions. There can also be core groups in each sector to facilitate the process. At least once in two months one meeting should take place, on the last Sunday after two months, at evening at a common meeting place such as town hall, community center etc. As for the modalities at the meeting, it was decided that any person who does not attend three consecutive meetings would not be entertained further for such meetings. It is important for the groups to understand WHEN the meeting will take place? WHERE i.e. the place? WHO will participate? WHAT is to be discussed? HOW it will benefit the town? It is necessary to record each of these meetings.
 2. The Superintendent of Police has agreed to put out an order that every police station will have regular community police meetings and as far as possible the senior officials will interact with the community. A pyramidal structure starting from Superintendent of Police (SP) to Assistant Superintendent of Police to the police station-level can ensure that there is continuity in representation from the side of the police.

3. More people have shown a keen interest to join the Nagarik Suraksha Samiti Samitis provided they get clearance from the SP's office.

☞ As for the voluntary responsibilities the following participants expressed willingness: (a) Ms. *Shail Verma* of Smriti Nagar Cooperative Society will initiate. (b) Ms. *Gurmeet Dhamayee*: at Nehru Nagar/Katul Board (c) Mr. *Rakesh Mishra* of Risali area (with a population of 35000.) Training and education to the police and public can be taken forward by Mrs. *Anita Upadhyay* (through theater), Ms. *Nandita Daga*/ Mr. *T.S. Thakur* (Principal of School)/Ms.*Anita Shankar*/ (school teacher); Dr. *Tirtheshwar Singh* (NCC Coordinator); Stress management by Mrs *Shail Verma*; Kalyan Mahavidyalaya (Dr. *R.P. Agarwal*) can do training provided the curriculum can be provided by CHRI.

☞ It is important to involve the government in the early phase so as to gain support from the initial stages. If this initiative at Bhillai can show some continuity, then we can advocate for this process to be replicated in other parts of the state. Bhillai can set an example for the state of Chhattisgarh.

☞ The responsibility of CHRI/SHRC will be to give regular guidance and to write letters to show solidarity with the people.

☞ CHRI will try and run the legal awareness programmes from Raipur Radio station so that the whole state may be covered.

☞ Need to institutionalize community policing. However, this can be only be possible once pressure is built through continuous efforts in engaging the police and public.

☞ The police and the community can organise once a year, a programme/event (a cultural show or event). This has been experimented by the Mumbai Police to bring the community closer. The event can take place on Doordarshan /Radio/or a stag event in Bhillai city on any special occasion. The SP will explore this possibility.

☞ A HELP LINE may be setup to attend distress calls and counsel victims etc. The procedure is to collect an application form from the nearest MTNL office. There are three kinds of forms, for local calls

(with a range of 200 Kms) national calls and international calls. For Durg district, local calls can cover the full district. For this purpose there is a security deposit of Rs. 10000 (which is refundable); a non-refundable deposit of Rs. 3000; a monthly rental of Rs. 2800 per month. However at the time of installation, three months rental must be paid. The total cost to run such a scheme is roughly Rs. 46000 a year, which is a small amount for a township. For this purpose, a citizen's body may approach an industrial house/Lion's club/Rotary club etc.

☞ A Public Relations Officer may also be deputed to enhance police-community relations.

The community in consultation with the police chief of Durg district took these concrete decisions. **We hope this momentum will not be lost.** We will appreciate if each of you takes an active interest for your town to make it a better place to live and also build a good rapport with your local policemen. Before starting a meeting, there must be an agenda and sufficient notice of at least 10 days must be given to the participants. Also, do remember to inform the local police station and drop in a word at the Durg Senior Superintendent's Office, Tel/Fax: 2322071.

Please do write about your views regarding starting this initiative on community policing to the Chhattisgarh State Human Rights Commission; Old Malaria Grounds, Gandhi Chowk, Raipur, Chhattisgarh Tel: 0771-2235590 – 94/Fax:0771-223590 **AND** CHRI: N8, Second Floor, Green Park (Main), New Delhi– 110016;Tel:011-26850523/26864678/Fax:011-26864688.

Thanking you once again for the support and interest in our work.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Doel Mukerjee
(Project Officer)