



IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY POLICING IN PREVENTION OF CRIME

SANTOSH. PUJAR¹, Dr. R.N.MANGOLI ²

¹Ph.D Research Scholar, Dept of Criminology & Forensic Science, Karnatak University, Dharwad.

²Research Guide, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Rani Channamma University, Belagavi.



SANTOSH. PUJAR



Scan The Above QR Code
For Article Details

ABSTRACT

Community policing in essence, is collaboration between the police and the community that identifies and solves community problems. The police no longer the sole guardians of law and order, all members of the community become active allies in the effort to enhance the safety and quality of neighbourhoods. Community policing has far-reaching implications. The expanded outlook on crime control and prevention, the new emphasis on making community members active participants in the process of problem solving and the patrol officers' pivotal role in community policing require profound changes within the police organization. The neighbourhood patrol officers, backed by the police organization, helps community members mobilize support and resources to solve problems and enhance their quality of life. Community members voice their concerns, contribute advice, and take action to address these concerns. Creating a constructive partnership will require the energy, creativity, understanding, and patience of all involved.

The present paper aimed to understand the relationship between the police and public, to know the importance of police and community relationship in prevention of crime, to know the system evolved for commoners being encouraged to involve in assisting the police and to explore why Community Policing is less in India when compare to abroad. Secondary data sources have extensively been utilized like books, journals, articles and internet. Resultantly, it was found that the Community Policing can play a very important role in prevention of crime in society being responsible for both law enforcement and community members by police-community meetings, public awareness programs, police and citizen involvement.

Key Words: Police, Community policing and Crime Prevention

©KY Publications

INTRODUCTION

Police plays a contributor to the civil peace and harmony of the society. At many arenas though, even they fall short of reach and are not able to extend their arms of help towards the people they are responsible to. At such a point of time the civil custodians of moral, ethical and social security are at power with the governance to deal things with in a harmonious way. The community is a unity of members from the society who as a responsibility come together and spread themselves to the corners where police fails to be present on time and play the moral police with a view to assist the them in rendering justice to maximum number of individuals.

Several institutions involve itself in this tedious job of keeping the societal duties under check and safeguarding the rights. Many religious organizations as well as Non Governmental institutions have set up groups working with the community safeguarding them and also seeking guidance and training from the police

in community protection. Many people try to contribute to the society at individual levels by providing their services to traffic control and providing information about offences in their neighborhood.

Definitions of Community Policing

According to Adams (1994:894) community policing refers to "... a shift from a military-inspired approach to fighting crime to one that relies on forming partnerships with constituents." The prime objective of the police is to fight crime.

As per Stipak, (1994:115) "*Community policing is a management strategy that promotes the joint responsibility of citizens and the police for community safety, through working partnerships and interpersonal contact.*" Van Rooyen (sj: 20) sees community policing as a "... *philosophy and strategy which is based on a partnership between the community and the police to find creative solutions for contemporary community problems, crime and other related matters.*" To Mastrofski, Worden and Snipes (1995:540) community policing means "... *making the police more co-operative with those who are not police.*" (Cherita Morrison, 2001)

It is an evident fact that, the police as active partner have an obligation to convert the passive role of the community into that of a fully active partner (Van Heerden, 1982: 132). The community, as a passive partner, has a duty to help and support the active partner. A partnership in policing implies assistance from the community in keeping order (Mayet, 1976: 119).

Objectives

- To study the role of community policing in supporting the institution of policing for smooth governance.
- To review the various community policing institutions functional in different parts of India as a social aid
- To suggest progressive measures for improvisation on public police relationship.

Methodology

Universe of the Study

The present work contributes towards understanding the role and importance of community policing in establishing a civilized society as well as governance with peaceful police-public co-operation. Here the researcher also aims to present the currently established community policing organization as a trend setter for states in India which have had no initiation for these techniques to instigated police public bond. Reviews on community policing from journals, internet and various newspaper sources have been observed closely and concentrated on as the targeted essence of this work.

Tools and Techniques

Community policing is the responsibility of both law enforcement and community members. There are ways to improve the society in reduction of crime, problem solving by police-community meetings, public awareness programs by police and citizen involvement or participation tasks. The present work reviews this improvisation trend with the aid of secondary data collected from various sources like books, journals, articles and internet. It is an effort laid down to upgrade the skills and capabilities of law enforcement in curtailing increased number of crimes.

Importance of Community Policing

The strength of police personnel per unit area in the country i.e., per 100 Sq. Kms. was 52.9. However, it should be noted that the area coverage being a constant, the density of population is expected to progressively increase with times. The UTs of Chandigarh and Delhi have recorded significantly higher density values at 5,278.1 and 5,146.7 policemen per 100 Sq. Km. respectively as in the past which is much higher than the national average of 52.9 in 2012. The highest number of police men per one lakh population was reported in Mizoram (1,003) followed by Manipur (930) and A&N Islands (820) while Bihar occupied the lowest number (67) followed by D&N Haveli (77) Uttar Pradesh (89) and Daman & Diu (90) against 138 at the national level.

One is well aware that detecting a crime is an essentiality to partake further criminal adjudication. But considering the statistical index above this process of detection is highly difficult by the involvement of police

alone as police men cannot be at every place where an offence occurs here the duty of the civil police within each individual of the society comes to play. It is difficult for police men to administer their duties efficiently without concrete public co-operation. There is hardly any emphasis required on the necessity of public participation in police work which could be in either of the following ways.

- The Criminal Procedure Code itself empowers a common man to arrest a person committing a non-bailable, cognizable offence in his presence and hand him over to the police without delay as per Section 43(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.
- The Section 37 of the code enjoins over each person the duty to assist the magistrate or police in preventing the escape of a person whom they want to arrest or to help in preventing breach of law.
- People are required to inform about the commission or the intention to commit an offence to the Magistrate or a police officer according to Section 39 of Criminal Procedure Code.
- Every officer employed in connection with the affairs of the village or residing in a village is obligated with the duty to report certain offences or matters relating to maintenance of peace and order and safety of person or property as Section 40 of Criminal Procedure Code states.

NHRC Guidelines on Police Public Relation

The guidelines issued by National Human Rights Commission on 22nd December, 1999 posted on each police station mandate the following for improvisation and bridging the gap between police and public:

- To provide a toll free, telephone number for public to convey crime information to the police.
- To maintain transparency in the investigation process by registration of offences and recording progress of investigation and complaints and providing access to information about the case.
- Monthly meetings of the Station House Officer with the public, enabling people to voice their grievances and also provide the police as opportunity to inform people about the Law and order situation

Community Policing in India

Community policing is in its infancy in India as the system has not yet gained momentum here. Though there are some community policing organizations in a few states it is not too widespread. Below is review of some community policing initiatives taken across the country along with the attempts made by them to bridge the gap between community and police and progress made in the direction of this attempt by them.

Community Policing in Mumbai

One of the community policing initiatives in Mumbai is the Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT). This is an experiment which was expected to have the capability to mobilize public opinion and increase public participation and activism towards creating more transparent and efficient governance. The mandate was to ensure enactment of laws and policies, to promote honesty, transparency and accountability in governance. The movement took up causes, which affected large segments of society, particularly the poor, and it promoted islands of integrity and excellence among government and civil society actors. As a part of its ongoing strategy on community policing, the PCGT had initiated a Participative Policing Project. The First Phase of Project intended to plan and implement activities at three levels i.e by building public awareness, secondly through professional backup and lastly through synergy. Mr. J.F. Ribeiro was the spear heading this experiment as he was also the pioneer of the Mohalla committee movement in Mumbai.

Friends of Police, Tamil Nadu

The Friends Of Police a holistic and pro-active concept lended a psychological approach to policing. It has been a true example of police public partnership where citizens have been empowered along with the police. Friends Of Police has been providing 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-1.Beats and night Patrols, 2.Assistance in traffic, 3.Crime prevention, 4.Information collection, 5.Assistance in Law and Order Maintenance, 6.Involvement in Prohibition Work.

This experiment was been able to create channels of information flow between the police and the citizens. This was often useful while locating information and solving cases. The experiment also helped the police to come closer to the community. It tried to impart fairness, transparency and impartiality in the working of system and has been effective over the last five years in Tamil Nadu.

AASWAS. : Assam Police

An initiative of the Assam police to combat violence and insurgency and also to extend a gesture of affection to the children and those who have undergone the trauma of facing violence was the AASWAS Project. It was launched on the 14th November 2001, coinciding with the Childrens Day, by the Honorable Chief Minister of Assam,Shri Tarun Gogoi. Sensitization campaigns were undertaken in several districts of Assam. Aashwas identified a cluster of seven villages in each of seven districts where there has been a history of ethnic or terrorist violence and such campaigns have integrated the community with the police and have evoked a tremendous response to enable its continuity.

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 was divided into sectors corresponding to wards of Panchayat /NAC.Bigger wards had more sectors. All the household members in a particular sector constituted the Peoples Policing Committee of that sector. Each sector had 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 was the convener. As a result of the positive feedback of the State, the scheme was introduced in all the police stations of the state.

Community policing experiment in Punjab

Community Policing Resource Centers (CPRCs) were set up in Punjab, which were autonomous registered societies jointly managed by representatives of the community and police officials. The CPRCs were designed to make law enforcement services more friendly and accessible to ordinary citizens and more responsive to their needs and as a result, to build public confidence in the police. These units included one for victims of crime, one for nonresident Indians, and a unit set up specifically to serve women. As a result of this experiment, the reporting of domestic violence tripled in Punjab.

Community Policing in Diamond Harbour, West Bengal

Due to an increase in criminal activities in Diamond Harbour area, the police in South 24 Parganas district along with local business community set up local resistance groups known as RG party to deal with the crime in the rural areas. The main objectives were:

- a) To stop villagers from committing crimes when they were idle. The idea was to involve these people in guarding the villages instead of arresting them after they have committed some crimes.
- b) Members of RG parties had been provided with torches and caps as sponsored by local businessmen. According to the Sub-divisional police officer, Mehmood Akhtar, the idea was based on community policing as it makes the people confident and involves them in maintenance of law and order. The initiative was also to make the people realize that policing does not mean beating up and terrorizing the public but to work with the them to solve their problems.

MAITHRI: In Andhra Pradesh

Maithri was an initiative which was launched in 2000, by the Andhra Pradesh Police throughout the state. 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 build in a feeling of safety from crime. It rests on the belief that contemporary community problems require a decentralized and

personalized police approach, which involves citizens who finally learn how to police themselves.

Objectives of Maithri-

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

These were a few of the community policing attempts made in India which turned out to be helpful and individually successfully for these states.

Measures to enhance Police-Public Relation

Public help can only strengthen the essence of service that the governance aims to deliver to the society the system of policing. But the common experience says that law abiding citizens are more concerned about coming in contact with the police as compared to the violators, as it is a routine encounter for the latter. This situation hinders the clean citizens from reporting offences to the police fearing the repercussions and torture and continue to be victimized while the offensive ones' knowing that the police are harassed by their acts do not fear adopting to severe volatile forms. Involvement of community into policing can aid the following purposes:

- A closer liaison could help people see police as a friend and an ally rather than an enemy distressing them further.
- An institution initiating community policing could propagate intensive open discussions between police and public helping exchange grievances and problems amongst themselves and coordinate as a team.
- A strong bond between the police and the public is as important to prevent the instrumentation of the policing order at the mercy of politicians and superiors.
- It could be a reminder to both that they have a duty to oblige to and are collectively masters and servants of law owing to their contribution to the same.

Conclusion

Crime prevention is a bridge between a successful governance and an enriched society. This could be simply gained by an educated and a well informed citizenry. A peace loving society is also a strength and reorganization of a society that is immensely bond with and strong in social values, and in turn is an example for the youth of the culture as an example for future enhancement and lively living. This is a state that could be achieved in a place where the governance and the governed are at par and in solace with each other. The initiation of community policing serves this purpose to the hilt and effectively.

REFERENCES

- Adams, C.F. 1994. *Fighting crime by building moral communities*. Christian Century .
Crime Research in South Africa (www.crisa.org.za) - Volume 2, Number 2 (April 2001) -cher.pdf
H.J.N. Van Rooyen. 1995.*Community Policing*. Thorold's African Books,The university of Virginia,Virginia.
Mastrofski, S.D., WORDEN, R.E & SNIPES, J.B. 1995. *Law enforcement in a time of community policing*.
Criminology .
<http://www.nhrc.nic.in/>
<http://www.nipsa.in/community-policing-in-india-a-long-road-ahead/> retrieved on 6th June 2013
www.cops.usdoj.gov/default.asp?Item=36.