ABSTRACT

1. Introduction
Community policing is a collaborative effort between Police and Community to identify various issues of crime and disorder. It entails citizens and policemen working together for handling the identified issues and chronic problems. This concept brings the police and community into a closer working relationship for the mutual benefit of both and calls for greater responsibility on the part of police and citizens. Accountability of both is inbuilt in this working relationship. Community policing thus involves law enforcement agencies and local populace in effective implementation of criminal justice system. Though an immensely popular term, it has a different meaning for different police organizations and the persons handling the issue.

Starved of resources and plagued with crime, disorder and violent activities of organised crime/terrorists, law enforcing agencies world over have come to understand that they alone can not cope with the menace. Involvement of community is the key to handle not only the traditional crime but also the modern crime like money laundering, trafficking of women and children, narcotics trade etc.

The researcher has studied community policing in urban areas of Maharashtra with Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur as its focus. The rationale being that in rural areas, the community having compact environment continues to police itself to a considerable extent as compared to the urban
environment of anonymity. During the process of urbanisation, an agrarian community is transformed into a non-agricultural one with emphasis shifting from personal and close relationships to impersonal, contractual ones slackening the social control mechanism. Thus, the need for police to reach out and seek active involvement of citizens in urban areas for both identifying as well as finding solutions to the peculiar crime and disorder related local issues.

2. Objectives Of Research

The objectives of the research have been to study following issues

- To trace the journey of community policing from a soft public relation exercise to its use as a genuine problem solving approach
- To study the difference between traditional policing methods and community policing. To find out whether the latter would lead to specific benefits in urban areas e.g. prevention/detection of crime, increase in service/execution of summons/warrants, facilitation of re-entry of criminals to the society and other related topics.
- To understand whether communities are genuinely empowered in urban India for this collaborative effort.
- To study whether the concept of community policing is equally acceptable to all levels of police officers.
- To analyse some international best practices in the developed as well as developing countries to see if they can be replicated in urban India.
- To propose a system suited for successful administration of community policing in urban scenario to achieve concrete results.
- To assess whether the systems of Home guards and Civil defence are useful for community policing.
- To find out if community policing can be linked to National Social (NSS) Service or National Cadet Core (NCC).
3. Methodology

The researcher has used both the sources of data - primary and secondary. ‘Crime in Maharashtra’ the annual crime journal of the state has identified three places in the state having more than 8000 crimes per year, i.e. Mumbai, Nagpur and Pune. Since the focus is urban sector, the research identified 10% police stations from these three cities and studied the status of community policing by collecting primary data from this sample through questionnaires filled in by field level officers of the rank of Inspectors/ Sub Inspectors. Supervisory ranks also have been involved in the survey to analyse their opinion on the relevance of community policing and its status in urban Maharashtra. The researcher also discussed the issue with senior police officers who have worked in Mumbai, Nagpur and Pune. Their interviews and responses to the questionnaire have shown leadership level perspective of the issue. A questionnaire was administered to the post graduate students as representatives of citizens to understand their perception of community policing and its status in urban scenario. System of community policing in rest of the country has also been studied to a limited extent. The researcher studied the available literature on the subject both written and that available on the net. Law enforcing agencies all over the world have been carrying out different experiments in the field. In India itself a variety of projects have been undertaken by state police organisations and robust literature is available that is mainly operational in nature. The researcher has studied community policing projects of Chicago police and Minneapolis police of US and ‘Mohala Committees’ and ‘Dakshta Samities’ in Maharashtra.
4. Hypotheses

The research project has following hypotheses

4.5.1 Community policing is more popular with police leaders than with field level officers.
4.5.2 Community policing is considered more of a philosophy than a practical tool by grass root level officers.
4.5.3 Training on community policing to police officers is inadequate
4.5.4 There is scope for extending community policing initiatives in Maharashtra.
4.5.5 Citizens are not adequately informed about the benefits of community policing and their participation is superficial.

5. Findings And Conclusions

Some of the major findings that the researcher arrived at are enumerated as below

- Community policing has high rate of acceptance amongst police officers of all ranks. Therefore the hypothesis that it had acceptance at the leadership level more than the field level, was not found to be correct.
- It is considered a very useful tool by officers of all ranks for various crime and order related issues. Therefore a number of projects have been undertaken in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur as well as in the country.
- Citizens as represented by students too have shown faith in community policing. However they distrust and fear police.
Citizens’ participation in the community policing is superficial and they are not empowered as equal partners in these initiatives.

Need for community policing in urban areas has been reflected in the response of officers of all levels and students.

While community policing has been accepted as a useful, long-term tool and strategy by the respondent police officers, they have found training on the subject very inadequate and have near unanimously highlighted the need for training at the basic and in-service levels.

Need for a separate budget for community policing initiatives was noticed during the research. It was observed that though community policing activities are considered useful and beat officers are encouraged to undertake the same, there is no budgetary provisions for the same in Mumbai, Pune or Nagpur.

Beat system that transpired to be the basic system of community policing in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur, needs strengthening. The research shows that there have been more sundry responsibilities given to the beat officer and less emphasis on his developing partnership with the community in a systematic way.

Citizens not being equal partners in community policing initiatives, most such projects initiated by individual officers become weak after his/her departure as citizens have little stake in continuing such initiatives.

Citizens’ partnership needs a formal structure. In most countries a licensed police officer is paired with a civilian for the purpose of giving citizens’ perspective and input to law enforcement agencies. Even an under developed country like Uganda has paid ‘Community Liaison Officers (C.L.Os). However there is no such system in Mumbai, Pune or Nagpur.
• The research shows that there are a number of committees at the police station, division/subdivision and zone/district levels in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur. However the committees do not meet regularly, have no formal agenda or systematic follow up. Due to lack of accountability and evaluation, they are not functioning as effective tools of community policing.

• The researcher studied the syllabus of Civil Defense/ Home guards, both being closely related to the police department. Utilizing the services of home guards/ civil defense officials for community policing was acceptable to officers of all ranks.

• Using the services NCC and NCC cadets too has been considered. The researcher went through the curriculum of both NSS and NCC and found them to be based on the concept of students’ involvement in community activities. It can be easily extended to involve community policing initiatives.

6. Recommendations
The instant study has come up with concrete recommendations for different levels of police leadership in their roles in conceiving and implementing community policing.

Vision- Senior leadership should have a clear vision about the role and utility of citizens’ participation in law enforcement for mutual benefit of both. Clarity of vision is essential even for the middle and implementing level police officers and it needs to be realistic and inclusive one. Citizens irrespective of their religion/ caste/ gender should be invited to join in community policing. Special emphasis needs to be given to involve women and weaker sections.

Broad policy guide line for the implementation of community policing should be clearly announced for its successful execution. It should be
regularly revised to account for the changing circumstances. The broad policy should cover the needs of the pluralist society of India. Beat System that is the foundation of community policing in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur should be strengthened with additional manpower and resources. Beat officers and staff need to be given training in engaging the community for meaningful collaboration. Instead of introducing new projects, this time proven system if rejuvenated in a systematic manner can be the best tool of community policing.

Equal partnership of citizens in specific projects for implementing in different areas/localities in rural and urban context should be decided in the beginning of the financial year and should be regularly monitored. Current committees created for community policing in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur need genuinely interested and empowered citizens for them to become useful tools of community policing.

‘Separate budget’ for community policing activities is crucial for their administration. It has been observed during the study that one of the main reasons for community policing remaining at isolated project levels is that no separate funds are earmarked for the subject in Mumbai, Pune or Nagpur. The budget provisions can be used for recruiting community liaison officers by the police station/ beat officers on contractual basis or other community policing activities.

Manpower for implementing the community policing projects is crucial. Currently Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur expect the beat staff to carry many more tasks than beat work; and to undertake community policing programmes without either additional resources or manpower. As seen during the research, U.S. and U.K. have specific posts for community liaison work that are filled with full/part time civilians.

Training needs of the uniformed and civil component of community policing teams must be attended to for successful administration of community
policing programmes. The research has shown a strong need for basic and in-service training of police men. Training of community liaison workers and citizens is equally important for them to understand the concept and be meaningful partners.

Accountability for implementation of community policing programmes should be an integral part of the strategy. Police officers and civil employees should be given specific tasks and held accountable for them, this was found missing during the study. Committees formed at different levels should be held accountable for specific initiatives e.g. communal peace, crime prevention, night patrolling etc.

Regular monitoring and systematic review of community policing activities and projects by middle and senior level leadership is essential for policy making and implementing. Regular follow up ensures mid term corrections and project failures can thus be avoided. Further this ensures institutionalizing of the process.

Evaluation of all community policing initiatives e.g. different committees at police station levels is essential but has been found to be ignored in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur. This has resulted in general claims of acceptance/success without any hard data to back to the same. Citizens committees need true representation of the community and genuine work in areas of crime prevention/detection and order.

The research has shown that Home Guards and Civil Defense are two existing systems that can be utilized for administering community police effectively by enlisting the co-operation of their semi trained work force. Most of the respondents have responded positively to this idea and have talked of under utilization of this readily available resource.

Police leadership in collaboration with the education department can also introduce the concept ‘community policing’ in the curriculum of NCC and
NSS. These students can then be actively involved in community policing activities.

A two day training module on community policing for the field level officers has also been developed.

The research thus shows that though law enforcing agencies have a number of tools for fighting crime, terrorism and human trafficking, community policing is a valuable emerging strategy. If studied and applied systematically, it can add value to the working of police and earn it the collaboration and good will of citizens thereby enhancing its capabilities many folds.

7. Conclusion

Community policing is a philosophy and at the same time it is a strategic process and a useful tool. Currently it is being used in a random and ad-hoc manner in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur. Basic and in-service training on the subject is not provided to police officers working in the above urban centers. Image of police thus continues to be poor among citizens. Community policing needs to be pursued in a systematic way to show better results in crime and law & order issues.

However community policing can not be a substitute for other equally important police processes and strategies. It is one of the strategies to maintain order and for prevention, detection and investigation of crime. There are many other tools too; over-emphasis on a particular strategy shall not be beneficial to the performance of the organization. Community policing must go hand in hand with other professional policing tools i.e. collection of intelligence, surveillance of criminals, analysis of crime trends, skilled interrogation, investigation of crime etc.

The study reflects that for community policing to be successful policemen need to improve the quality of their routine interaction with citizens,
demystify their procedures and be accessible to the common man while launching specific community policing initiatives. Successful community policing shall involve a major change process in the functioning of the police department as well as in the willingness of the community to get genuinely involved in policing itself.

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