



WORKING PAPER:

Building Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Policing in South Asia and the UK have developed from completely different sources. South Asian Policing is frequently armed and based on a British Colonial Model designed to subjugate countries under a colonial power and predicated towards public order control and administrative duties.

UK policing is largely unarmed and based on support of the law and protection of people and property. Extensive resources support a professionally independent organisation focussed on crime prevention and detection, with few administrative duties.

Community Policing, which has made some headway in the UK and needs to be seriously invested in Bangladesh, tends to focus on local problem identification and solutions, with community involvement as an essential ingredient. It provides a model, which enables under-empowered victims, often women, girls and the poor, with a voice to express their views. It highlights the level of gender-based violence and can offer solutions. This paper provides a discourse of the above, drawn from Community Policing initiatives in Nepal and Bangladesh where it is being developed.

This paper gives a brief background of the roots of policing in South Asia, and compares this to British Policing. It will provide a discourse of how policing approaches in Britain and in South Asia have converged on Community Policing, from surprisingly different starting points.

It will then provide a discourse on the nascent mechanisms of Community Based Policing in Bangladesh and how they can be used as a mechanism to progress gender equality.

An old but apposite reminder of what we mean by Community Policing is timely:-

'Community Policing is a new philosophy of policing based on the concept that police officers and private citizens working together in creative ways can help solve contemporary community problems related to crime, fear of crime, social and physical disorder and neighbourhood decay. The philosophy is predicated on the belief that achieving these goals requires that police departments develop a new relationship with the law abiding people in the community, allowing them a greater voice in setting local priorities and involving them in efforts to improve the overall quality of life in their neighbourhoods' (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 1990)

The structure of civil policing in most of South Asia has its roots in the 'British Colonial Model' imposed by a colonial power to assist in the administrative control of countries without independent sovereignty. This makes the relevance of this conference greater, as nearly all of the participant countries find the roots of their policing systems within this model. An understanding of its foundation and ethos provides a starting point on the process of reform. The similarities between the policing systems in South Asia and the UK are few. (Anderson and Killingray 1991,2)

The British Colonial Model was actually developed from the one used by an adversary of Britain, Emperor Napoleon of France. In turn, his model can be traced back to another colonial power, Rome. It serves to remind us that the British were not the only colonists (Igbinova 1981; Cole 1999).

The British eschewed the French approach of transposing their existing policing system, and created a new model appropriate for control of a subjugated population. (Mawby 2003) This was developed from a model first tried in another British colony,

Ireland. It presupposed a lack of public consent and was used throughout British controlled Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

As a mechanism for the control of a subjugated population it bore military characteristics, with police separated from the community, living in barracks and armed. The predominant tasks were public order combined with significant administrative functions. The mandate was from the power of the Colonial presence rather than the needs of the host community. There were distinctions from military approaches, with some decentralisation in India and Nigeria. The model was applied throughout the area of British Colonial control, administered from an office in London.

Officers were recruited from Britain with direct entry. Local recruits were at lower ranks with few if any opportunities to progress. The official language was English. Investigation of crimes was usually only undertaken when the victim was from the expatriot community. A reflection of the skill shortage was that detectives from Scotland Yard in London were often called in to assist.

The mechanism of crime prevention was left to a poorly paid and trained force of Chaukidars and Dafadars. They were locally based in villages, with a responsibility to report to the police once a week. Their main role was again in support of the colonial power, reporting on political agitation to their colonial masters. Many countries have allowed this poorly resourced system to become even more ineffective.

Since achieving independence most South Asian countries have chosen to keep and slowly adapt the British Colonial Model. This does not sit easily within the context of policing independent democracies trying to uphold a rule of law and meet international law and treaty obligations.

One of the reasons is that the nature of this type of policing tends to be only responsive to events, with little input towards the prevention of crime and proactive problem solving. Power emanates from the top with little concern of issues important to the local communities where such policing takes place. Control by the executive and the lack of separation of powers can be open to abuse and politically motivated manipulation of police activity.

The proportion of GDP spent on policing tends to be much lower in South Asia than in Western Countries, with low salaries resulting in police seeking 'rent' or 'bokshish'

just to exist. This in turn creates a culture of rule breaking and is often the precursor of far more serious corrupt practices.

The British Policing Model saw its roots in private property protection by such groups as the 'Bow Street Runners', where the emphasis was on the prevention of crime, using a mechanism of uniformed patrol. The initial emphasis was on the provision of a police 'service' rather than a 'force'. The motive for the formation of the police was to protect the private property of the sections of society who were becoming wealthy as a result of the industrial revolution. A function not provided by the state in an effective way. So there were few, if any, administrative functions. Over time some arose when 'financial' offences for non payment of taxes or compliance with regulations were criminalised and made subject of punishment by the judiciary.

Since the introduction of 'modern' UK policing in 1839 there has been a single point of recruitment, at constable level. There were a few schemes with direct entry at Inspector level, but these failed. One of the fundamental differences is that in the UK all police are 'officers'. Unlike their South Asian counterparts all hold the 'office' of constable, and are individually accountable for the exercise of that office. Because of the roots of policing coming from a need identified by the community they live within the community and are not routinely armed. The promotion system is designed based on merit, not seniority. In South Asia the link to administrative functions is best illustrated by the close link between police and the civil service, including recruitment, salaries and conditions. Whilst a loose link with the Civil Service once existed in the UK, it was only linked to a qualification for promotion and was broken decades ago. There is no parity with Civil Service pay rates, conditions or promotion.

The formation of modern British policing was often locally based, with much of the funding being provided locally, through taxes, and the influence of local 'elites' was significant (Wall 1998). This reached its height in 1939, when there were nearly 200 separate Police Forces in the UK. These were reduced to 43 by the mid 1970 through amalgamations forced through by the British Home Office in the name of both efficiency, and to render central control more effective.

Low salary issue was also the case in Britain during the earlier part of the 20th century. When some isolated problems of corruption were exposed the complacency that had existed towards the issue of policing was realised. The shock of this saw a deliberate government policy to make police more professional, effective and

accountable. Raised salaries attracted more highly qualified recruits, and the proportion of GDP spent on policing increased exponentially. Home Office control tightened through administrative requirements of Chief Police Officers to be more 'Economic, Efficient and Effective' (Home Office circular 111 of 1984) in the use of their resources.

There were a number of reasons for this. Concerns about drugs, organised crime and terrorism were highlighted in the media and become election issues. Long before the famous mantra 'Tough on Crime and the Causes of Crime' which was Tony Blair's successful slogan when he first won power, Law and order had become a political issue.

But this more professional approach had drawbacks, undermining the previous local nature of policing in Britain. As Britain transformed from a manufacturing economy to one of a service provider there was huge pressure from Trade Unions challenging the jobs losses in the manufacturing sector. The confrontation between the Thatcher government and the unions put police in the middle. Large scale demonstrations, some of which turned violent, put strains on both police resources and the 'neutral' position associated with the control of law and order by police. Local communities began to see the police as 'enemies' who were supporting a remote and often hated government. From the other side, government ministers applied pressure for the police to be more ruthless in their tactics.

At this point it is apposite to describe the biggest difference between the two models I am describing. In South Asia the police are under the control of, and are accountable to the government of the day. This is not the case in the UK. Chief Police Officers are operationally independent of government control. They are accountable to Parliament, not the executive. Politicians don't like this. Of course diplomacy requires police to listen to elected representatives, but the decision lies with the police, and is only answerable to Parliament. This constitutional separation of powers is the cornerstone of British policing.

Societal changes of approach towards gender equality opened up policing to woman as never before and 'woman friendly' policies were adopted to ensure equal treatment of all. Positive support to women in the police has seen great changes in their representation. There are now a significant number of women chief police officers holding the most senior ranks.

I will now go on to describe how the two systems of policing I have described have begun to converge, through Community Policing.

In the 1970's the fallout from the unrest in Northern Ireland began in earnest in the UK. The approach taken was that terrorism is a crime and so it prompted the police to be taking a more active role in security and the investigation, prosecution and imprisonment of those involved. The fear of terrorism, and attempts to prevent it, caused a radical rethink of approach. Concern was expressed that the extension of Human Rights Law and other libertarian philosophies were being used by those who violently opposed government policies to make arrest and prosecution very difficult. Also there was none of the 'shame' associated with a conviction for crime. When terrorists were caught they were seen as 'martyrs' by their supporters. The usual deterrent of arrest and imprisonment simply did not work.

The visionary head of the UK Anti Terrorist Squad, Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Grieve said 'Communities defeat terrorism'. He set about developing mechanisms within the community that had a dual effect. Moderate voices within communities were encouraged to be heard. Police were encouraged to speak to community leaders about such issues, explaining the consequences, listening to the community and generally becoming more engaged with them.

At the same a system similar to the British Colonial Model improved the flow of information about activities within the community allowing the police to have a much better idea of what was happening.

This system was then further developed through another Chief Police Officer, Sir David Phillips, to construct an 'Intelligence Led' approach to investigation. (NCIS 2000:7) This removed the emphasis on investigation of crime after it had occurred. He focussed police activity on the known serious criminals, using surveillance and gaining knowledge about their activities so that prosecutions were more likely to succeed and that the true deterrence of imprisonment was focussed on those who created the greatest harm to society and their communities. Once arrested special prosecutors were employed to focus on a successful prosecution, with the maximum sentence.

This 'top down' pressure for more community based policing was more than equalled by pressure from within communities themselves for more involvement in policing issues. Large amounts of taxes were allocated to policing, yet local people saw the amount of local policing reduce. There was a visible lack of police on the streets. Legalist requirements for paperwork, central rather than local needs, and forced economies had reduced the profile of the traditional local patrolling police.

Innovations from other countries such as 'Neighbourhood Watch', where concerned individuals within communities combine to look after each others property and interests, proliferated in the absence of local police patrol. Private security companies providing security guards, who were often low skilled, low paid and low interest, grew at a rate that caused alarm. CCTV cameras were positioned extensively to replace the eyes of a patrolling officer. These innovations began to cause concern about the impact on society.

In an effort to combat this imbalance 'Neighbourhood Policing' was trailed in London at the behest of two Chief Officers from there. Hart and Beckett designed a system which incorporated many of the basics of traditional policing. Geographic responsibility of junior police to a community was introduced, gathering intelligence took place together with consultation with the community. Policies reflected the priorities of the local community, in a far more sensitive way.

Whilst the scheme was considered a success in its effects, the cost of such an initiative proved prohibitive. The paperwork was still required. Central needs continued to draw officers away. The impact was that more police were needed to make this model work, and that cost money.

Many hard liners saw this as 'soft' policing. By being responsive to local needs some 'crimes' were considered less important, and not enforced with vigour. This offended the 'crime and punishment' approach, which saw discretion as weakness.

The academic foundation of this approach can be traced to the idea that **'Community Policing is seen as a philosophy, with compatible organisational and operational strategies'** (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux 1990). This seminal approach was unpopular with centralist, hard line enforcers. To them ideas of 'philosophy' were often restricted to the idea of 'crime and punishment'!

In support of this approach came another seminal work of 'Problem Oriented Policing' (Goldstein 1987). This approach broke down crime into three basic categories. These are an offender, a victim and a place where they come together. By impacting on any of these then crimes could be prevented. As most crimes happen within a community Goldstein argued that stronger community action could reduce crime. This stunningly simple insight resonated with politicians who wanted to be seen as responsible for reducing crime. It appeared a 'win, win' solution. The whole approach to crime prevention was reviewed and refined with the introduction of the concept of 'situational crime prevention' using the environment to act as a factor to reduce crime.

Local police commanders were quick to seize on the opportunities to reduce demand and thus be more efficient. Many of the high profile successes seized the public imagination. The police were made to look better and fear of crime in communities reduced, making people more likely to become involved in more problem solving. Regeneration of slums and environmental improvements generally improved the quality of people's lives.

As confidence in police improved this opened the lid on crimes not usually reported, where the victim previously had no voice. Crimes against the unempowered, either through factors of gender, race or sexual orientation became more obvious. Domestic violence became recognised as the most prevalent crime in the UK. People woke up to the fact that most murders are domestic in nature, with women the most frequent victim. For some reason the idea had been accepted that a man killing his wife was less serious than a stranger doing so. This approach began to change. 'Fear of crime' became a political issue. The reality that most ordinary people wish to live a fear free life was accepted. This was then compared to the lives of women living in fear of violence from their husband.

The increase in the number of women police combined with community policing to make this a serious issue. Recognition of so called 'hate crimes' meant that these are now treated seriously by police when they are disclosed. These are motivated by bigotry against people from another race or with different religious or sexual beliefs, and have a serious impact on the quality of life of the victim. 'Hate' is now seen by the law and judges as a reason to increase the normal length sentence for a crime.

The main message of the preceding section is that Community-based Policing is now seen as the basic philosophy of British Policing.

In relation to South Asia my comments are restricted to my experience gained in Nepal and Bangladesh. I have described the roots of policing common to most of South Asia.

I consider policing in South Asia to be influenced by a completely different set of issues than in the UK. However I think that the pressure for Community Policing is building, and will continue to do so. This is due to a range of factors.

One of the benefits of life in South Asia is the strength of community living and family life. People take care of their families and neighbours far more than in Britain, where the 'state' is expected to shoulder that responsibility. This very simple but excellent approach to life means that the foundations for community policing already exist.

As I have described, the South Asian model of policing is mainly concerned with reaction to events, with police waiting in Thanas for crimes to be reported.

In Bangladesh in the 1990's some enlightened police officers had learned about Community Policing, and recognised the opportunities it offered. The leadership of the day had the vision to allow experiments to take place. This often arose from UN postings, or attendance at training course outside South Asia. They set up schemes locally based where the elites within communities were responsible for providing resources to enable local police to operate in conjunction with communities to deal with local problems from a 'problem solving' approach. Details of this will be provided later.

Some donors also provided funding for schemes based on community policing, aimed at increasing the voice of poor communities in dealing with local matters.

In Bangladesh Shalish courts formed a strong basis for community justice. Other informal justice systems have also developed in some minority communities in the country. Both systems generally have the support of local communities and often dispense pragmatic justice, actually aimed at solving the community problem under discussion. There are difficulties when the problems under consideration extend into

more serious issues which are within the remit of national or international law or treaties. They can also be inclined to over represent the interests of local elites.

These informal systems are seen as providing a bridge between the existing, and often unsatisfactory, policing system, and the community. An example briefly is in one village, where the Inspector of the local Thana heard that domestic violence was a problem. He asked the community forum to identify the man in the village who beat his wife the most. They did so. The Inspector then sent a letter to the man saying that if he continued he would be arrested and locked up! The impact was not only on the one violent husband. All of the men in the village became aware that beating your wife was unacceptable. This is a classic example of a 'problem oriented approach' response being effective.

A recent survey (Read 2006) discovered that of over 6000 people surveyed in 14 different locations more than 70% expressed dissatisfaction with the service provided by police. Over 90% of police and a similar proportion of members of the community wanted more women police. Throughout this survey both police and community respondents constantly referred to the need for more community based policing.

One of the immediate benefits to be seen is that of transparency. Where police activities are undertaken in the open, then communities will be able to make their own judgements on the honesty and fairness of that activity. The initial scheme involved members of the public giving police money to pay for particular activities seen as necessary **FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY**. This was done in an open and transparent way to enable activity for the benefit of the community. It was not perceived as corrupt or inappropriate. So it had community support and improved relationships. The scheme in Mymensingh is referred to later.

In Nepal the driver for the introduction of community policing arose from the vision of some senior police, together with the political situation, where local administration had folded due to the pressure of the Maoist insurgency. There is an old saying the 'Nature abhors a vacuum'. The vacuum caused by the lack of local government enabled the introduction of a number of 'community police service centres' in urban areas. These were led by local elites who used their money to start the centres, which tended to follow the agenda of the founding and funding group. In some areas of Pokhera, where the main business was tourism, then the activities were based around issues that had a bad impact, such as drug dealing, crime and environmental

blight. Other nearby locations focussed their community policing on women's issues, domestic violence, dowry matters and anti trafficking activities.

One of the benefits of this approach was illustrated after one of the many landslides in Nepal. In 2005 a whole village near Pokhera was washed down a hillside. The community were left with nothing. In the Pokhera the 5 community police service centres joined together and collected over 3 lac rupees and a large amount of clothing. They were able to respond within hours to bring relief to their neighbours, providing food and warm clothing.

Through support from donors the concept of community policing has now become widespread, and there are currently over 200 such schemes. With the current political changes in Nepal the opportunity to spread community policing to rural areas now seems quite high.

I hope that this demonstrates that although coming from different directions, the move towards community policing in Britain and South Asia is motivated by community based need.

A conference such as this works to extend knowledge of community based policing, and to give support to those visionary individuals who are prepared to review the existing structure and identify ways that policing can be made more effective. The beneficiaries are communities, and the police themselves.

In Bangladesh¹, security is not confined as a development issue – it is also a gender issue. The country has made significant strides in framing laws to guarantee equal rights and legally protect women from violence and discrimination. The Constitution guarantees equal rights and prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex thereby giving women opportunity to participate in public life. Bangladesh has been party to international conventions on women's rights and ratified the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW) in 1984, although it retains reservations on Article 2 and Article 16.1(c). Following up from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), Bangladesh formulated a National Policy for Women's Advancement (1997) to implement commitments made at that

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Conference and under various laws upholding women's equal rights. Finally, in 2005, the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) demonstrated a commitment to gender equality by mainstreaming gender in its goal-setting and policy implementation plans.

Although existing national legislation does ensure far-reaching gender equality and protection against discrimination and violence, there is widespread ignorance of the law and significant resistance to implementation of gender equality in the courts, the law enforcement agencies and in society at large. Implementation of laws and policies guaranteeing equal rights and opportunities for women has faced many barriers. Constitutional rights and commitments under international conventions have not always been transformed into laws and policies protecting women's equal rights. Even when progressive and far-reaching policies have been formulated, such as the National Policy for Women's Advancement, changes in key provisions made in 2004 may have the potential of reinforcing discriminatory laws and practices against women.

Despite the existence of legal provisions, there is a disconnection with the operational framework dealing with human security and the environment that is hostile to the poor, the marginalized and vulnerable. Women and children are the worst victims of this. A study conducted in 2000 by United Nations Population Fund shows that 47 % of Bangladeshi women were physically assaulted by their husbands and partners. The Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association in a survey carried out in 2002 found that violence against women is on the rise. It is therefore not surprising that the national population census found hundreds and thousands 'missing' females from households. The demographic profile of Bangladesh now shows a lower proportion of female to male ratio at 49:51.

Accessing legal protection is not easy for women in Bangladesh especially for those living in rural areas. District Family Courts responsible for settling marriage, divorce, maintenance, guardianship and custody cases are located far from rural areas. The distance of these courts, lengthy and expensive process means that fewer women go to court for redress. Women instead turn to *Shalish* for resolution of family problems, land disputes, rape and abuse. *Shalish*, composed of village elders and often the elites, usually resolve matters in ways that mainly benefit men and protects the family or village honour. Women's interest is seldom considered and their rights very rarely protected. The Arbitration Councils at the *Union Parishad (UP)* level, activated upon

request to decide on family issues, is comprised of Chairman and other members of the *UP*, who are elected from the surrounding villages. They typically have ties to local elites and political parties, are often ill informed about the law, and hold women in low regard. Here too, as in *Shalish*, women's concerns and interests are usually not addressed satisfactorily on either legal or moral grounds.

The police in Bangladesh, whose role is to protect human rights and human security, is seen as an institution that neglects human rights. The majority of the population do not benefit from police presence or action. There is deep distrust between the public and police. Weak implementation of legal procedures and ineffective and improper investigation by the police often result in low rate of convictions and high level of acquittals in violence against women cases. Police function under a number of limitations. The regulations that govern police procedures and systems are antiquated and need reform. Police recruitment is non-transparent as is transfer and promotion. The majority of police functionaries are poorly paid and the system lacks incentives for good policing or pro-active action.

Inadequate skills of police are a hindrance in the way the police interacts with the public especially the poor and women in general. Instead of creating and maintaining a partnership with the community, for ensuring community safety by being pro-active in investigation, prevention and problem solving, existing police culture emphasises control and oppression.

Non-Governmental-Organisations (NGOs), long known for their service delivery and rights based work have increasingly turned to strengthening of mechanisms delivering justice and upholding rights at the community level. A growing number of NGOs are working on activating the *Shalish*, on supporting Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), providing legal education and legal aid, on strengthening local government by training *UP* members besides generating awareness on gender equality issues. Mobilising the community, either in separate groups of women and men or mixed groups, has helped to demonstrate the strength of collective action and voice of poor women and men. Experiences in many parts of Bangladesh show that mobilisation at the community level has been a prime factor for accessing resources, services and justice for the poor, for women and other excluded and vulnerable groups.

Community-based policing, a relatively new concept in Bangladesh, is being explored by a few – the Police, NGOs and CBOs as a way to bring the community and the police together in resolving problems at the community level. Briefly put, community-based policing is about the police and community *together* finding solutions to crime and violence related problems in ways that aim at *prevention*. It is about the police moving away from the traditional response of addressing the problem after its occurrence. Instead, it is about focusing on prevention of crime and violence by understanding and addressing its causes, as well as “constructing safer communities by building on their strengths”. (The World Bank 2006)

Existing examples of community-based policing show that it can take many shapes. These will depend on the context, the initiator and the process of forming community-based policing. The main elements of community based policing philosophy may be summarised in a single sentence as-:

‘A belief or intention that they (the police) should consult with and take account of the wishes of the public in determining and evaluating operational policing and that they should collaborate with the public wherever possible in identifying and solving local problems’. (Bennett 1994)

Although in its infancy, examples of community-based policing initiatives in Bangladesh provide evidence of the interest that already exists, and *the potential of taking this concept further*.

Different examples of community-based policing exist in Bangladesh. They range from initiatives taken by senior policemen in forming citizen’s committee in urban areas for promotion of law and order to community-led initiatives involving women, men and the youth. All are playing active roles in community-based policing.

Other examples initiated by NGOs in both urban and rural areas highlight the importance of ownership of the initiative by police *and* community members – community driven initiatives increase the sustainability factor. Most existing initiatives also demonstrate the need to integrate a stronger gender analysis and perspective in community-based policing as many of the problems raised at the community level are related to violence against women issues and family law violations.

A summary of the identified highlights of initiatives reads as follows:

- Potential for gender-responsive community-based policing exists, though further clarity is needed amongst practitioners on in what that constitutes or what its basic principles are.
- It can be a powerful mechanism to promote basic citizenship issues and achieve human rights of women, vulnerable and excluded groups of people.
- Sustainability issues, particularly in NGO-led community policing initiatives, require considerable attention.
- Baselines for assessing impact do not exist in a consistent manner in NGO-led community-based policing initiatives.

Based on the above findings, The Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE) / The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GTZ) approach for initiating a Gender-responsive Community-based Policing Project is premised on existing good practices in community mobilisation, gender sensitive programming and community-based policing initiatives underway in Bangladesh. The aim of this approach is to go where the interest and potential lies, where there is experience and expertise on community mobilisation, legal aid and legal literacy, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and some form of working relationship with the justice sector, police and local government.

This bottom-up approach will complement other top-down approaches such as the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) / Department for International Development (DFID) Police Reform Programme (PRP). PRP focuses on institutional and macro level changes, aims at reforming the Bangladesh Police Service by strengthening training, human resources procedures (recruitment, promotion), participation of women in Police Force, and securing political will at the national level.

Synthesising the discussions held with the Police, NGOs, CBOs, government representatives at national and local levels, donors and with women and men at the community level in Bangladesh, successful Community Based Policing brings benefits to the following -:

At community level

- All community members especially poor women and girls, excluded and vulnerable groups who lack voice and are unable to access mainstream services and reducing the fear of crime.

- Community-based organizations who are working on upholding human rights and various aspects of access to justice including community policing.

Within formal structures there is a need to build on the relationships between different organisations within the formal structure whose duties overlap, sometimes from a different direction and with differing priorities.

- Police personnel at the local police stations (Thanas) – their case load decreases, their reputation and social acceptance is enhanced, while security increases as a result of community-based policing initiatives and the improved flow of information.
- Village Police – by increasing their interaction both with Thanas and the community, thereby revitalising their role in the prevention of crime and communicating with the police on community affairs.
- Union Parishad (UP) – increasing efficiency of communicating with the police on community affairs and revitalising their role in prevention of crime
- A safer community results in an increased cooperation, also strengthening the role of UP as a friend and support of the community.
- Ansars- Village Defence Party (VDP) – (this is large body of uniformed ‘part time’ staff) the role of Ansars in community-based policing initiatives is strengthened.

Activity is required by a number of groups who can act as agents for change (As distinct from beneficiaries as these groups are also the targets to influence and change):

- Police at various levels
- Village Police
- Ansars-VDP
- Union Parishad
- NGOs

A working definition of gender-responsive community-based policing can be formulated as:

For the benefits to flow to the community the following are necessary:-

- A partnership approach between police and the public built on respect of local diversity and context using mechanisms that ensure that the safety and security needs of the community members – especially the vulnerable groups – are addressed.
- Building on strong trust, relationships in which the police and the police department are seen as supporting members of the community.
- An organizational strategy that allows the police and community to work together in new ways to solve problems of crime, disorder and safety.
- A part of law enforcement and access to justice approach with focus on crime prevention and control mechanism.

This will result in gains from both directions and -:

- Make communities a better and safer place for all their members.
- Contribute towards making the police force a more professional, responsive and accountable institution.

A number of partner and resource organisations have expressed interest in the concept of Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing and are ready to work within their existing programmes to explore ways of initiating gender-responsive community-based policing. These were identified in the conceptualisation stage and reaffirmed in the project formulation mission. Bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors in Bangladesh have started a harmonisation process in the Access to Justice sector – mainly to inform one another of current and proposed work, and where possible, establish linkages for synergy and greater learning amongst one another. The harmonisation process has produced a rudimentary mapping that shows the sub-sectors, the nature of programming and partnerships of current and future work. This mapping highlights the probability of linking with programmes as partners or resource organisations in the Access to Justice Sector. The potential for scaling up at the end of the project period with examples of good practices and linking with other pieces of work is high.

A key initiative involving the police is the police initiated community-based policing in Mymensingh. This innovative approach was initiated by senior police officials posted at Mymensingh district police headquarters in response to the poor law and order situation existing in Mymensingh in the early 1990's. Started in 1992, community-based policing activities still continue today as a model of proactive policing. The modus operandi is based on the principle of the police and the community finding

solutions together not only in response to current problems, but also as a pre-emptive measure. (Tilley and Laycock 2002) The initiative is fully owned by the police and the community, decisions are taken jointly and funds are locally raised to support the activities. A few other districts such as Chandpur have adopted a similar programme with success. The Mymensingh example is testimonial to the commitment senior police have towards maintaining law and order in a responsible and proactive manner – in line with Police Regulation of Bengal 1943, Article 33. Mymensingh also proves that institutionalisation of community-based policing is possible. In linking with Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing, the Mymensingh example provides a case for existing best practices to be documented and communicated to others interested in this concept. Senior Police involved in such initiatives are resources to be identified during the Inception Phase – both as role models and also as possible trainers. They would complement the training provided by the Police Training Academy. It is further envisaged that the Mymensingh example will be a starting point for planning and implementing Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing. The inception phase will involve members of the Mymensingh initiative in joint planning as key partners. It is conceivable that one or more CBO and NGO-led community-based policing initiatives will interface with the Mymensingh example by incorporating existing best practices from Mymensingh. The actual nature of the interface will be further explored in the inception phase.

The other initiative involving the police is the UNDP/DFID supported Police Reform Programme (PRP) which emphasises top-down reform at the normative and operational level through its five major components - Crime Prevention; Investigations/Operations/Persecution, Human Resources Management/Training, Strategy/Oversight and Communication, and through the development of 11 model Thanas across the country. A sixth component on anti-trafficking will be added to PRP in 2007. Besides several general areas of improvement sought under this programme, it also includes promoting gender mainstreaming and gender equality. Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing visualises linking with PRP once the initial implementation of PRP commences, possibly by the time the mid-term review of Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing occurs. This allows for a strategic partnership with a national police reform programme at the stage when both PRP and Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing are fully functional. Identification of particular police stations and nature of partnership will be determined at that stage.

Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Programme (UPPRP), currently in the final stages of design for DFID funding, builds on an earlier UNDP funded and managed Local Partnerships for Urban Poverty Alleviation Project. The scope of this proposed £60 million project in all six Corporations of Bangladesh and about 23 municipalities is reaching a total of 3 million urban poor. The initiative targets extreme urban poor, especially women and girls among the slum and non-slum poor in a range of municipalities and city corporations providing a platform for working with those with least access to justice in urban Bangladesh.

Local Partnership for Urban Poverty Alleviation Programme's (LPUPAP) community mobilisation processes have enhanced the ability of poor women to successfully manage and control the bulk of project resources and community generated savings; to assume leadership and management roles, to assume greater mobility, voice and community status across community mobilisation processes whether they be group formation and leadership, community contracting, managing savings accounts, loans, or general decision making participation in political processes. The strong demand for enhanced security from dynamic community level organisations and structures provides a readymade platform for gender-responsive community-based policing initiatives. (see Hanmer et al 1998).

The UPPRP staff with external technical assistance on gender-responsive community-based policing will integrate human security issues into the community development planning process – reducing the need for additional facilitators and also avoiding the confusion generated by separate projects with different actors. Field visits to community groups under the LPUPAP Project indicate the possibility of activities on gender-responsive community-based policing to start immediately in selected municipalities.

In the inception phase, both LPUPAP and UPPRP will be requested to identify up to 3 project sites where linking with Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing has the potential to yield maximum benefit for the local community.

Light House, a local NGO, with funding from Asia Foundation has initiated a Community Oriented Policing pilot project at Bogra. This pilot initiative consists of 9 Community Police Forums (CPFs), 5 with the municipality and 4 in rural communities. Representatives from different walks of life are present in these forums along with a Sub-Inspector of Police. Coordinators from Light House currently

facilitate the activities of the CPFs. A community police desk has been set up in the police station. Each CPF also has an Alternate Dispute Resolution Forum (ADRF) which resolves the disputes reported in the forum. This has proved to be extremely effective in addressing local issues leading also to an increase in the reporting of Violence against Women (VAW) cases. However, for cases like rape, dowry and acid throwing that are outside the purview of the ADRF, victims are advised to approach the police station, without any support or follow-up. Thus far, the approach can form pillars for community-based policing in a more sustainable way. One 'hook' would be for the CPFs to raise funds for some of their activities - besides generating their own funds. It would give the CPF members greater ownership in decision-making. CPF members visited during this mission saw clearly possibilities of girls and boys policing the neighbourhood (in a municipal ward) sustained by funds generated from the community.

Madaripur Legal Aid Association (MLAA), also a partner of Asia Foundation's Community Oriented Policing, implements strategies similar to that of Light House. One of the biggest barriers to women accessing justice is entering the police station. The barriers are not just about the location of the police stations - it is often caused by the attitude and behaviour of police towards women and girls, especially when they are poor.

MLAA's strong gender team sees the possibility of the role of CPF extending all kinds of support including accompanying women and girls to Thanas and using their presence as ballast to buffer women against poor behaviour and poor policing practices. This much-needed role will make the CPF more gender responsive, establish a more direct relationship between the local police, CPF and women, and it will give the CPF a deeper sense of responsibility and ownership over the process. The possibility with MLAA is expanding the role of CPF and making the members more responsive to needs of women in accessing the formal justice system.

MLAA, Nagorik Uddyog (NU) and Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Development Society's RDRS experience of ADR is a springboard for future community-based policing. RDRS works in the Northwest, with federated structures in 260 unions and women's leadership development activities in a further 360. MLAA operations in Gopalpur, Shariatpur and Madaripur are focused on ADR with the formation of Federations and Arbitration Committees respectively. Gradually these initiatives are taking the place of the traditional Shalish in the remote villages. NU are working in 9 unions spread

across Barisal, Rangpur, Tangail, Pirojpur and Munshiganj areas women's leadership development initiative brings together women with potential leadership qualities in a forum that includes elected women representatives. Presence of confident and well-informed women committed to improving the conditions of rural women, together with community mobilization, and formation of ADR committees is a substantial base for the future extension of the community-based policing services in rural areas. The challenge here would be to assess the nature of technical support needed by the over-stretched police to extend their duties by including community-based policing. MLAA, NU and RDRS would be required to realistically assess support and resources needed, and find strategic ways of channelling these to the police. There is more than sufficient experience on ADR and community mobilisation between MLAA, NU and RDRS to design a methodology that uses community strength to support and motivate the police in taking responsibility for gender-responsive community-based policing.

While actual linking with Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing is likely to happen at a later stage of the project or even in the scale up phase with the following projects, it will be important to maintain communication and exchange lessons learnt with these two programmes from the beginning of Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing to ensure synergy at the conceptual and programmatic level.

Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) on-going work under the Legal Reform Programme particularly the Legal Aid Programme is another top-down programme working at the district level. The possibility of this programme going into Phase II will open up the potential of linking with Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing by providing legal aid services at the community level. Gender Fund focus for the next two years is on women and human rights where funds for piloting are provided to local organisations. A possible extension for gender-responsive community-based policing - building upon good example of piloting work with partners - would connect with CIDA priority areas such as trafficking in Bangladesh-India border areas.

The Promotion of Legal and Social Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh Programme (PLSEW), being jointly implemented by GTZ and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MWCA) in 9 districts aims at addressing the legal obstacles that women face at the local level. The project offers gender training to shalishes and supports Alternative Dispute Resolution Committees, which, with the help of local

NGOs, build on the tradition of village Shalish. Members of the UPs are being trained to implement arbitration processes in accordance with the Muslim Family Law Ordinance and other laws. Support will be offered in legal advice and assistance services for women. In addition to improving delivery of justice through these formal and informal mechanisms, the project is working closely with other donor partners and national stakeholders to promote a stronger normative framework and better legislation in the area of women's rights and empowerment. The project is working with the MWCA to train relevant units of it in women's legal rights awareness, to facilitate policy dialogue between MWCA, other ministries and civil-society organizations. Furthermore it wants to build capacity of MWCA monitor achievements of gender related commitments by key ministries according to PRSP priorities. This paves the path for inter-ministerial communication, if not cooperation, as envisaged in the Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing conceptual framework.

Community policing is a way of thinking and at the same time an organizational strategy that allows the police and community to work together in new ways to solve problems of crime, disorder and safety and fear of crime. It is built on two core elements: first, it requires the transformation of methods and practice of the police, and second, taking steps to establish a relationship between the police and the public. Under the community policing philosophy the ultimate goal is the creation of a professional, representative, responsive, and accountable institution that works together with the public. Police become more than crime fighters - for this reform to take place, ownership at all levels of the police is necessary.

There are difficulties in some of the schemes described. Limited ownership of the reform initiatives currently being undertaken by the UNDP PRP by Bangladesh Police is now being rectified. Additionally all community policing initiatives, with the exception of Mymensingh, are NGO driven with no built-in mechanisms for exit and sustainability. The police do not drive or own these programmes. Mechanisms (institutional and communication oriented) will need to be designed to ensure ownership of all initiatives from the police services so that the police drive the initiative.

Grafting police reform onto UPPRP respects the key principles of community driven, demand responsive partnerships between the community and the police for crime prevention and increased access to justice for the poorest. Where such demand is absent, the project must resist the temptation to articulate such demand for the community / police. A realistic assessment of demand for such partnerships will need

to be defined in order to ensure adequate technical capacity to support UPPRP processes.

An evaluation of existing community policing initiatives with an emphasis on gender aspects is required in order to design support for refinement and consolidation of these models to ensure impact on poor women and girls. The design must also include robust joint monitoring initiatives and mechanisms for NGO exit and sustainability.

It is envisaged that these focused partnerships in rural and urban areas will run in parallel with a wider implementation strategy aimed at improving the image and capacity of the police service to respond effectively to human security issues. These include human resource issues such as numbers of women police, availability of police in rural areas, increased accountability, rewards and sanctions, introduction of pro-poor, women and child friendly training modules, etc. In the absence of such a parallel strategy – these pilot initiatives will fail to gain momentum and remain stand-alone examples of best practice.

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