

# Public Concern

The Quarterly Newsletter of Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT)

July 2018

## Profile

Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT), a registered trust, founded by concerned citizens, mobilises public opinion, increases public participation and activism towards promoting honesty, transparency and accountability in governance.

## Vision

To strive for good governance, contain corruption, uphold and inculcate values and enhance Sadbhavna in the citizens.

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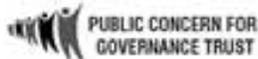
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## DISASTER MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP



*Students getting trained for Disaster Management at Civil Defence Staff College, Churchgate*

Public Concern for Governance Trust in collaboration with Civil Defence Organization of Maharashtra conducted five Disaster Management workshops for children from different communities. The aim is creating a cadre of young men and women who will respond during a disaster.

## VOICES

### EDITORIAL



When the drafting committee of the Constitution of India got down to the task of framing a Constitution for the newly Independent country they had at the back of their minds the history of the land, its diversity and the population mix. The need was for a strong Constitution that shall keep the young nation united, harmonious and provide for the aspirations of all classes and manner of citizens.

The partition had brought in its wake serious communal riots that threatened to tear the young nation apart. Though a vast majority of Muslims had chosen to remain in India, insecurity in their minds as to what the future would bring was definitely present. The advent of the Islamic dynasties and then that of European powers had brought in religions which had their birth outside the shores of the country. Large numbers of natives had been converted to Islam or Christianity and many invaders had also settled down. The country thus had vast numbers of followers of these religions. Adherents of Sikh and Buddhist religions commanding sizeable following also considered themselves as separate religionists and had demanded a separate State for themselves, a position accepted by the British rulers, for whatever reasons. The geographical boundaries as had emerged were a part of one nation perhaps for the first time.

It was in this backdrop that the framers, faced with the need of meeting diverse aspirations, taking all interests along but above all keeping the country united, adopted the model of the Constitution that they finally did and provided therein the freedom of religion and worship for all. Secularism, recognising the plurality of the religions with the Government maintaining equidistance from all but giving equal respect to every religion became the policy. Secularism became the answer to the need of the framers. It is not as if the Constituent Assembly did not have vocal and powerful advocates of Hinduism, however, there was no desire then to impose any religious views over those of others.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan one of the most profound Philosophers has pointed out in his book the "Hindu View of Life" that Hinduism, lacking the essentials of a religion such as a Pulpit, a Preacher and a Scripture, was not a religion but a way of life. Hinduism itself suffered from differences in thoughts, practices and interpretations across different regions. The different sects within Hinduism and the rigid castes make one single view of Hinduism acceptable to all, virtually impossible.

In the years since Independence, members of religious minorities have distinguished themselves in all fields, be it culture, be it administration, be it sports, science or the defence of the country bringing laurels to the country and international acclaim. The social and cultural diversity of the country has been enriched by their contributions, as they have

been able to go about their work secure that they are free to enjoy religious freedoms ensured under the Constitution as equals.

If the framers of the Constitution were faced with the problem of keeping the country intact, the situation today is not much better. The radicalisation of youth, in all religions, is a major worry, particularly as the number of young in this country increases. Infringement of their religious freedoms and imposition of majoritarian views would push them to the extreme fringe creating problems for the security of the country on a scale that cannot even be imagined. Secular principles of governance are very much the need of the day even now, perhaps more so. It is only through Secular values that we can ensure a vibrant, united and progressive country and any deviation shall lead to major problems and possible divisions of the Country. Giving up time tested principles is what India can ill afford.

As the country stands at crossroads in an important phase of its history, what it needs is a Statesman who shall have genuine secularism at heart, not just paying lip sympathy for political purposes, and a capacity to assure and carry together all sections of citizens as equals. This country cannot prosper and progress unless all are on board.

JAI HIND.

— Sanjeev Dayal

## RIGHT TO INFORMATION

### RTI Sessions

RTI Cell of PCGT Mumbai, in collaboration with Desai Foundation For Change organized an RTI session on April 27, 2018, at Somaiya Centre, Fort. The speaker for the session was RTI Activist Mr. G. R. Vora. The participants were from all levels of society and the session was highly appreciated.



*The audience at Somaiya Centre, Fort*



*Mr. Gaurang Vora giving the presentation*

### RIGHT TO INFORMATION (RTI) WORKSHOP AT MAJLIS



*RTI Workshop at MAJLIS*

PCGT organised yet another RTI workshop for NGO, MAJLIS, which works meticulously in the field of women's rights, education and empowerment. The workshop was conducted by Ms. Kiran Burma, RTI Programme Executive at PCGT, in the office of MAJLIS at Santacruz on 3rd May, 2018. The workshop's main focus was to explain to the audience the RTI Act 2005, its working, application and the procedure of filing an RTI application. Some RTI success stories were also shared.

## SUCCESS STORY

### Issuance of Miss Ranjana Gangadia's Caste Certificate

Miss Ranjana Gangadia did not get her caste certificate even after two years of submission of application. She approached PCGT who promptly pursued the matter by filing an RTI application asking about the timeline and action taken on the issuance of caste certificate, by attaching the token receipt. After thirty days, there was no reply from PIO, hence the First Appeal was filed. In March 2018, at the First Appeal hearing, the PIO said that he did not receive the RTI application. We showed that it was dispatched from the official website of India Post. Appellate Authority asked PIO and other staff members to investigate this matter and find out why it took nearly two years to issue this certificate. Then, one of the employees took us to the Setu Suvidha office, and then within 21 working days she got her caste certificate.

**YOUTH FOR GOVERNANCE**

**ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**



*PCGT Chairman Julio Ribeiro at Worli Naka during the Campaign*

A Road Safety Awareness Campaign was conducted in collaboration with Mumbai Traffic Police from 28th May to 8th June 2018. Forty junctions were covered in the South and Central Mumbai regions. Volunteers of PCGT from different colleges across the city such as V. G. Vaze College, R.J. College, Thakur College and Raheja College participated in the campaign.

The traffic awareness campaign kick started at the Sunder Mahal junction at Marine Drive near Pizza By The Bay. Senior Inspector of the Colaba division was present to flag off the event.

Those who did not wear helmets while riding two wheelers, or had not worn seat belts while driving, or were talking on mobile phones while driving and while crossing roads, were endangering their own lives. They were advised not to

do this again and be responsible citizens who obeyed the law. They were given Public Concern for Governance Trust badges identifying themselves as responsible citizens. The intention was to appeal to their fine sentiments and good sense.

The campaign covered junctions on Colaba, Azad Maidan, Kalbadevi, Malabar Hill, Tardeo, Worli, Nagpada, Byculla, Bhoiwada, Wadala. 2500 PCGT Responsible Citizens badges were distributed to the citizens who obeyed traffic laws and safety rules.

Many motorists appreciated these efforts and gave a thumbs-up sign on seeing the volunteers standing with the posters. They also commended the efforts taken by PCGT to instil discipline on the streets of Mumbai City.



*Colaba Division Police Inspector talking on Road Safety with a Biker*



*Co-rider appreciating our efforts*

## KUCHH AUR

### REPORT – WE THE CHANGE MAKERS



In its efforts towards bringing about good governance, PCGT employs various techniques including educating and sensitising children, youth and community to various topics of concern by holding sessions. A workshop on 'We The Change Makers' was conducted for the interns and staff of PCGT by Trustee Ms. Rekha Shahani on 11th May, 2018 from 9:30 am onwards at lofC, Worli, Mumbai, to help citizens become efficient and responsible change makers and imbibe in them values that will be useful in every sphere of life.

The day started with Quiet Time, where participants reflected. This appeared difficult initially, to just sit and pen down thoughts. By the end of 20 minutes however, all had something to share. Ms Poonam Lalwani from LIFE Trust visited and after a brief introduction she and Ms. Shahani shared an example from their life experience on how honesty, efficiency and trust affect everything.

What had been written in the Quiet Time was shared and reflected upon. Some participants expressed desire to thank or apologise to their near ones and were given 10-15 minutes to make the calls. One participant called her parents to apologise to them as she hadn't been able to give them time recently. In the short time that she did manage to spend with them, she felt she had been short-tempered with them. She was quite overwhelmed during the call and got tears in her eyes when the parents responded positively and were understanding towards her current situation. They reassured her that they weren't hurt by her behaviour. She expressed her love for them.

After such an emotional experience, the mood was lightened by a session on 'Laughter is the best medicine'. Mrs.

Anand shared a little about her life and how laughter had helped her find happiness in small things. She narrated that she went to school walking barefoot as it prevented splashes and protected her uniform. Her jokes were thoroughly enjoyed by all. No participant could share anything as opposed to ma'am's inner child and joyful nature. Young participants seemed old.

Ms. Vidhi from Jagruti Foundation conducted a session on Iron Power. She gave information on Vitamin D, balanced diet and Iron. Vitamin D and Iron deficiency affects one's energy levels. To be efficient and effective change makers one needs to look after one's self and be mindful of what one ate. Being change makers could be quite draining and one needs the energy, strength and good health to keep going. All doubts were cleared and everyone sang a verse or two to change the mood.

The health session was followed by lunch. Sitting together and sharing food and experiences was quite enriching to the bodies and minds of the participants. Savouring the new relationships and Icecream and cupcake, the participants headed back to ponder over chits and bookmarks given to them by Ms. Shahani.

Dr. Anand then came to share his knowledge. He showed them the Pocketbook of Peace. The husband and daughter of the author of the book were murdered during the terrorist attack in 2008. Instead of becoming bitter and vengeful the author chose the path of peace. The 11th day quote was shared with the participants. It said "The more fun you have, the greater your value to yourself and to your society. The more fun you share with others, the more fun you have." Dr. Anand encouraged them to laugh and enjoy and exhorted them to laugh such that the sky would tear apart. It was carefree and genuine like it came from deep within. The participants laughed so much that the cheeks ached. It clearly showed that they did not laugh enough and the cheeks were not used to it. Laughter has to be an everyday exercise.

Participants shared their reflections and views on the

chits and bookmarks and gained insightful learnings from each one. They were on compassion, honesty, relationships, life and other such topics. Noticing participants' need to stretch, they were asked to follow Ms. Yashasweeta Kokate, Programme Executive, as she danced and also played ring-around-the-roses waking up the child in everyone.

There was again a Quiet time session to help recall learnings and then they were shared. Everyone got bookmarks with Rekha ma'am's autograph and chits with meaningful messages. The session ended with a quick and fun-filled football game and pictures to look back upon in remembrance of the beautiful memories made.

The participants left with newfound knowledge and a piece of the wisdom that they had gathered from the inspiring people they met.

Some of the Learnings that were shared :

- We must earn respect. Only when you accept you can respect
- Laugh everyday
- Be a good soul
- Be compassionate. Don't pity
- Let go of what is harmful
- Everything is a choice. Not making a choice is also a choice.
- Believe in yourself. Don't be too affected by what others think
- Be self motivated
- Fear is a block. It is a stressor. It makes us lie. Remove fear and half the problem is gone
- Don't take relationships for granted
- Life is beautiful
- Live a conscious life
- It doesn't matter where you are from. It matters where you are going.



## CIVIL DEFENCE WORKSHOP



The workshop began with a brief but succinct explanation of what civil defence comprises of. This included a brief history about the origin of civil defence, its need and importance in society. Post the introduction, a few theoretical and practical lectures were conducted by the staff.

**Activity :** The first activity started off with the staff showing us a small presentation on the topic 'Disaster Management'. They explained various Natural Disasters (Earthquake, Floods etc.,) as well as man-made Disasters (Terrorist Attacks, Accidents etc.,) and how to handle / prevent them. This included division of a calamity into 3 stages namely before, during and after. A basic course on cardio pulmonary resuscitation in emergency situations, which involved certain methods of

deduction and identification of the injury as well, was then explained. Post lunch we were taught about various methods to save persons from situations of danger including fire, floods with the help of easy lifts and manoeuvres. This was followed by a session of learning various types of knots and their usage in various situations. This was followed

by a practical demonstration of tying various bandages to victims. After this, they took us to the Model Room and gave a presentation on managing disasters in the City by showing a model of the City and also showed models of various bombs used by terrorists (Napalm Bombs etc.,). After this activity the staff took us to the ground where there was a display of various equipment. They taught us how to use various basic lifesaving equipment like Fire Extinguishers, Life Jackets, Raft-building etc.

**Learning :** Participants learnt several important things through this workshop. The primary aspect was a basic understanding of civil defence which can be defined as 'an effort to protect its citizens from military attacks and natural disasters. They learnt about the manner in which to react during an emergency situation without losing a sense of calm. They also learned about CPR and knot-tying techniques.



## A PRAYER FOR SECULARISM



Hindu Rashtra, which would make my country a saffron Pakistan, is profoundly anti-national

The Archbishop of Delhi has spoken. The faithful have heard.

What did they make of his message? To be careful while voting? That is the most likely interpretation. And that is what he probably wished to convey.

Christians who voted BJP in 2014 – and there were too many of them to count – have had second thoughts much earlier than May 8, when the Rev. Anil Couto's circular was distributed to all the Churches in his Diocese.

Archbishop Couto spoke about “the threat to the democratic principles enshrined in our Constitution and the secular fabric”. He is not the only Indian to have raised such concerns. I know countless Hindus, good, solid citizens of our country, who have condemned the covert and overt attempts to demolish institutions, attacks that portend the end of our secular fabric.

BJP bigwigs, Rajnath Singh and Amit Shah, have understandably taken umbrage at what Shah calls “the polarisation of voters on communal lines”. Shah himself is adept in the art of communal polarisation. To accuse a cleric like Anil Couto, an uncomplicated individual hailing from my mother's village in Goa, amuses me not a little.

K. J. Alphons, the Christian face in the NDA cabinet, wants ‘godmen’ to keep away from making political statements. But when his own party appoints a ‘godman’ as Chief Minister, how can its adherent stop a religious leader of a minority community from voicing concerns that are vital to that Community's very existence?

The truth is that the BJP Government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as distinct from the previous BJP-led Government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, doubts and questions the patriotism of the minorities! This is totally unacceptable.

I remember my own brief interaction with K S Sudershan, the predecessor of the present RSS Chief. He talked incessantly of ‘80%’, by which he excluded Muslims and Christians from the mass that constitutes this country's population!

Ever since the Modi government was installed, Muslims have been subjected to a steady onslaught that has terrorised the entire community. It will not be long before ‘they’ come for the next target in true fascist tradition.

Christians have been routinely accused of converting poor Hindus through inducements. The Catholic Church has given up force or inducements as vehicles of conversion, declaring these methods as immoral, ages ago. Charitable work for the poor continues and at times the recipients of such love and care may be tempted to convert.

The Government has come down heavily on foreign donations to curb such activity dubbed as ‘missionary’. But care, love and attention continues to be showered on the poor and needy.

Archbishop Couto in the letter to his flock has appealed to them to pray and fast on every Friday till the 2019 elections are completed. His fond hope is that the surfeit of prayers and penance will convince Divine Providence to ensure a more benign and just ruling establishment in Raisana Hill.

I am not sure if prayers and fasts will stop the Modi – Shah Juggernaut from rolling on! Only hard-headed politics can achieve that.

I, for one, am preparing for the Hindu Rashtra! I am trying to figure out, to start with, what the Hindu Rashtra really means. I have lived and worked in what I always knew was a majority Hindu Country. My circle of friends and persons I dealt with on a daily basis, at work or at play, was predominantly Hindu.

My bosses in the Police were predominantly Hindu and with a couple of exceptions were extremely

kind and good to me. Vasant Vinayak Nagarkar, who trained and mentored me in my initial years, made me stay with him and his family in his own home for four entire months at the very beginning of my service!

My ancestors, as I have often said, were Hindus. They came to India five thousand years ago in the Indo-Aryan migration. Four hundred years ago they were converted, along with thousands of other Hindus cutting across the Brahminical order of castes, to Roman Catholicism, the religion of the Portuguese who came by sea and conquered our territory.

You can call it an accident of history. But I rather like the religion I was born into. It has taught me the values of truth and justice, so important in the profession of policing, and it taught me the concept of Service which the Indian Police Service, to which I belonged, required of me.

I am a patriotic citizen like the vast majority of Christians in this land. I expect the rulers in Hindu Rashtra to allow me to worship in the way I want to. That I am sure they will allow me. I will expect them to not falsely accuse me of converting poor Hindus to Christianity by humanitarian work that captures imaginations, because such work should be undertaken not only by Christians but by all who are better placed to help those in need.

I should be prepared for second class citizenship that denies top jobs like that of a judge in the Supreme Court, a governor of a state, the chief of defence staff or the Intelligence Bureau. What I will not accept is being accused falsely of being anti-national and pilloried on that count.

If that happens this land of mine will be nothing less than a saffron Pakistan! This is what Church leaders like the Archbishop of Delhi are apprehensive about. He should not be faulted for ringing the alarm bell!

**Julio Ribeiro**

*The Times of India, Mumbai  
Monday, May 28, 2018*

**RTI CLINIC IN MUMBAI**

**PCGT :**

Every Tuesday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

For appointments and details :

**Call** : 022-2352 6426 / 2352 6452

**Address** : B/2, Mahalaxmi Chambers  
22, Bhulabhai Desai Road,  
Mumbai-400 026

**E-mail** : publicconcern@gmail.com

**RTI CLINIC IN PUNE**

**Pune Municipal Corporation**

Every Friday between 11 a.m. & 2 p.m

For appointments and details :

**Call** : Mr. Marutirao Sail

**Tel** : 020-6400 5613

**Address** : Nagrik Suvidha Kendra  
Pune Municipal Corporation  
Shivaji Nagar, Pune-411 005

**E-mail** : pcgt@rediffmail.com

**Visit us at :** www.pcgt.org

**DONATIONS TO PCGT**

All activities of PCGT are undertaken from the funds received from the donors. People who want to donate any amount of ₹ 1,000/- and above may please issue cheques in favour of 'Public Concern For Governance Trust'.

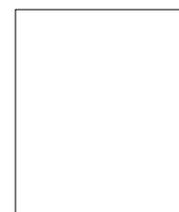
Donations to PCGT qualify for deduction u/s. 80G(5)(VI) of the Income-tax Act, 1961.

**VOLUNTEERS**

People who believe in the Vision & Mission of PCGT are welcome to work as volunteers and contribute to various programmes undertaken by PCGT. They can contact us at our Office at the address given below or call on 022-2352 6426

✂ tear along this line

**BOOK POST**



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