

Public Concern



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

October 2020

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 Sadbhavana in the citizens.

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ADIEU SHRI S. S. PURI



With profound grief Public Concern for Governance Trust informs of the sad and sudden demise of its trustee Shri Sukhdev Singh Puri at Canada on October 16th. Shri Puri was 78 years old.

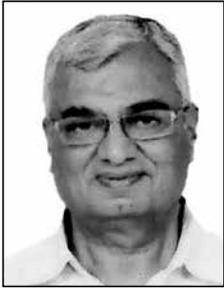
Shri Puri joined the Indian Police Service in 1967 and was allotted to Maharashtra Cadre where he held several sensitive assignments. He earned the respect and admiration of the ranks and public who regarded him for his fair play and for adhering to law and rules. A law graduate himself, he rendered the State yeoman service in revitalizing the Prosecution Department. He was in the drafting committee for the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crimes Act which proved to be a game changer in the battle against Organised Crime.

He joined PCGT as a Trustee in October 2011. He gave fillip to the RTI work of the Trust providing guidance, thrust and necessary insights so that timely and necessary interventions could be made with concerned authorities for the poor and helpless who approached PCGT, securing for them relief and succor. He was also a member of many studies undertaken by PCGT, where his ideas, views and suggestions were greatly appreciated and provided strength to the recommendations. Shri Puri was a constant source of inspiration and guidance to the young interns at PCGT, many of whom were mentored and groomed by him.

We mourn the loss of a stalwart among us and Pray to God for Peace to his Soul and for strength to his family to bear this loss. Shri Puri is survived by his wife Smt. Jyoti Puri, a daughter and a son.

EDITORIAL

Mental Health A Lasting Stigma



A young man and a rising star of the film world was found dead in his bedroom three months ago.

The attention of the nation remains riveted to that event. The investigating agencies are looking into several aspects of the case and this write-up is not about the investigation. The tragic death, however, does throw up several facets which need deeper reflection by the Society for they represent ills that pervade us and need to be addressed.

Let us begin with the stigma that surrounds a discussion around mental health. Why do we shun from admitting and discussing mental health issues frankly and fearlessly? Every person afflicted by a mental health issue is not “mad” and does not need to be confined to a mental asylum. Why should we regard a person with mental health issues permanently incapable of his profession and discard him from our Society. Just as we go through phases of physical health issues, we may go through mental health issues also. These issues need to be addressed by clinical psychologists/psychiatrists and recovery is mostly total. Sometimes it requires monitoring and management just as a chronic physical infection does. It is true that just as any infection in the body if left untreated could turn into a festering wound, a mental health issue when

left untreated would assume more serious dimensions.

Most people have reasons to feel depressed at sometime or other. A chronic depression, however, is something begging for attention by specialists. We need to build a Society where mental health can be admitted and looked at by specialists in that field without attaching disgrace to it. There is nothing wrong with having a mental health issue. Just come out and discuss it.

It was, however, shocking to see on TV those who claimed to have treated the young star over several days, reveal what he was suffering from and what line of treatment was being followed. The covenant of confidentiality that exists between patients and the doctor should never be breached, even after death of the patient. A momentary glory on TV may be earned but speaks poorly of the professional ethics and is in bad taste.

Debate on the death continues on some TV channels. Some of us feel nauseated by it, others point out that these channels get good TRPs and hence the incessant discussion. Inquisitive queries are made from far and wide and people while agreeing that too much discussion on TV is happening, still feel inclined to catch news on the same channels. However, high TRPs are earned when people watch, if they don't, TRPs will fall and channels may be forced to look elsewhere for revenues. Perhaps, people watch such news as titillation from the subject helps suppress the

bad news emanating from the COVID scene.

An important social mien is the need for the siblings to stay connected and remain in touch and be available for each other in whatever way they could. This is particularly important when parents either pass away or move on in life. There is a special bond that exists between siblings. In these days when joint family systems have broken down and nuclear families is the norm, this bond is more relevant and it is necessary to be able to hold hands in moments of crisis in each others lives and to help see them through such phases.

Some videos have come to notice revealing the state of the young star in days prior to his death. Young people need to think whether it is correct to share personal videos made in vulnerable moments, particularly after someones death, which may show one or the other partner in a weak moment. Such memories should be treasured for personal viewing and not shared on social media, whatever be the provocation, as they could become subject of ridicule and derision.

Finally, one wishes the soul of the young person peace for peace has not come to it after the death. An intelligent, forward looking man with lots of aspirations has been lost. Rest In Peace young man and may God be with you.

— Sanjeev Dayal

PCGT PUNE

9TH LATE SHRI B. G. DESHMUKH MEMORIAL LECTURE

Symbiosis Law School, Pune (SLS-P), a constituent of Symbiosis International (Deemed University) organised the prestigious 9th Late Shri B. G. Deshmukh Memorial Lecture in association with the Pune Chapter of the Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT). The lecture was held on the virtual platform, Zoom on 15th September 2020 at 4:30 p.m. The event was compered by Dr. Bindu Ronald, Deputy Director, Symbiosis Law School, Pune, who warmly introduced the panel to the student attendees.

Dr. Shashikala Gurpur, Director, Symbiosis Law School, Pune, Dean, Faculty of Law, delivered the Welcome Address introducing the Speaker, Shri. Shekhar Dutt to the viewers and the P.C.G.T Advisory Board. She introduced Mr. B. G. Deshmukh by highlighting his achievements and his contributions to society and mentioned the scholarship SLS-Pune has dedicated to him.

Mr. Dutt began his address by paying his respect to Shri B. G. Deshmukh for his incredible service to his country, both as a Civil Servant and as the head of several NGOs. Further, he spoke about the positive relationship between security and good governance and the dangers to world security by various threats like poverty, casteism, communalism and newer threats like food security and energy security. He eruditely remarked: "People

require not just simply an animal existence, but they demand and seek for individual freedoms, like the right to



Shri. Shekhar Dutt regaling the audience

identity, a free society and more." Mr. Dutt went on to express hope for India to rise above the economic distress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and stressed upon the importance of the ambition of the people to rise up again. He spoke optimistically about how India's "great legal infrastructure, an efficient political system and youthful and energized population"

have made us a self-sustaining global power. He also went on to highlight the importance of CDS (Combined Defence Services) and the collaboration of the three Security forces - the Army, the Air Force and the Navy.

Mr. S. C. Nagpal, IRS (Retd.) Chairman of the Pune Chapter of the PCGT delivered the Presidential Address in which he spoke of the importance of patriotism in national security and contributing to the growth of the nation. Mr. Nagpal concluded his address by thanking and acknowledging the efforts of Dr. Gurpur and the staff at SLS-Pune for successfully organising this event despite the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

A Thank you speech was followed by a Question and Answer session that was moderated by Mr. Satish Khot, in which the student attendees posed questions to Shri Shekhar Dutt.



Section of the audience

KUCHH AUR

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed a lot of things in our personal as well as our professional lives. The largest group of people to be affected were the children of various age groups, this increased the responsibility of PCGT to reach out to the students through the Kuchh Aur program that was catering to the needs of the students from standard VIII to XII, need of the hour made us start catering to the students from standard III to XII also. Stories, activities and songs depicting various values were introduced to students of classes III to VI. Students enjoyed our daily sessions and the principals from various schools encouraged us to interact with their students. We were indeed lucky to reach out to about 1500 of them from various schools & communities.

'The Joy of Living' which is the theme of our sessions this academic year also reached out to the teachers of various schools. A special module comprising of 5 sessions was conducted for the principal and staff of Podar International School (SSC Section). The subtopics under the theme were as follows:

1. The Joy of Living is in the Joy of Giving,
2. Peace - a way of life,
3. Nature, our best friend,
4. Music and unity,
5. Knowing ourselves.

Various educators and friends from different backgrounds and countries were invited to speak to these teachers and share their experiences. Dr. Sangeeta Srivastava shared her experience and expertise on music, Mrs. Vijayam Kartha shared her expertise & experience during the session on nature, our best friend Ms. Ada Mackay, a retired teacher from Australia spoke to the students of Std. X sharing with them about life in her country. The sessions involved anecdotes, stories, quiet time, reflection & a lot of sharing. The

teachers were encouraged to write down their blessings in the gratitude journal.

6 module sessions were held for the students of Standard X of Pragnya Bodhini High school, Goregaon, Mumbai. Under the Joy of Living, the sub themes that were covered were : The Leader in You, Dreams Matter, We the Change Makers, Communication - A Way of Life, Enjoying the Rules and the Importance of 2nd October which happens to be the birthday of two important Indian leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri. The 7 "S" of Mahatma Gandhi, i.e. Satyagraha, Seva, Sarvodaya, Swaraj, Simplicity, Swadeshi and Sabarmati was spoken about. The slogan of 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kissan' given by the second Prime Minister of India, and stories from his life were highlighted.

The Interns played an important role in sharing their expertise and knowledge with all the members of the community and in schools under the Kuchh Aur program. Mr. Amar Madnani, a law graduate & a businessman, shared with them his experience & the role of Indian Constitution. It was fantastic to hear their views and thoughts for a new India.

From reviewing films on Peace, to making posters for PCGT events, the Interns participated in all activities of Kuchh Aur. We were happy to touch the lives of more than 1500 students via the digital media.

The situation was even worse for our Community Students during the pandemic. As many students belong to under-privileged areas where they don't have access to strong internet connections, television or



Session with Ms. Rekha Shahani

laptop, they faced many difficulties connecting to the online sessions.

The lockdown has caused a lot of emotional issues to the students. Keeping their mental health and need for counselling in mind, online sessions were started for them. We were able to remind them about small pleasures of life, spoke to them about the importance of appreciating themselves and touched topics like Compassion, Kindness, Peace, Respect and Relationship.

Through these topics we taught them various life lessons and stressed on how we have to be compassionate to others by helping, sharing and caring. Peace is the one topic that received



S. M. Shetty High School

KUCHH AUR

a tremendous response, it allowed students to understand their negative thoughts. Inculcating the habit of taking a pause and thinking positive thoughts like your passion, hobbies, etc. was the biggest take-away from the session.

Through these sessions students shared their hobbies and also sent us their drawings. Many students made Thank You cards and gave it to local shopkeepers to show their gratitude for the service they provide.

We feel so blessed to have the opportunity to connect to these enthusiastic students through the sessions despite the lockdown.



Pragnya Bodhini High school

YOUTH FOR GOVERNANCE

PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN FROM JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2020

Sr. No.	Name of the Webinar	Date	Name of Speaker	No. of Students viewed / attended	College
1	Future of Education after C19	17/07/2020	Mr. Sudhir Puranik	419	H. R. College
2	RTI: A tool for Democracy	08/08/2020	Mr. Sumit Mullick	322	C.W.C. Law College
3	Why Civil Service is a dream Career?	28/08/2020	Mr. V. P. Raja	1600	Menon College
4	Leadership & Team Building	12/09/2020	Mr. J. F. Ribeiro	518	Sophia College
5	Corporate Governance	17/09/2020	Mr. Prasad Chandran	1100	R. A. Podar College

PROJECT CYBER WATCH



The ongoing pandemic has changed more than what we expected, right from our sleep cycle to entire societal structure. Social Media has become an integral part of our lives. It has now become a new channel of communication and a platform of sharing information about anything and everything.

Keeping this in mind, PCGT's Cyber Watch project focused on raising awareness about cyber abuse on various social media platforms along with ways of reporting it and necessary precautions to be followed.

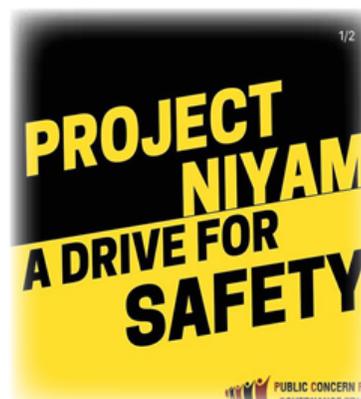
An online survey was conducted with approximately 200 respondents in an attempt to understand the user behavior and perception towards cyber abuse.

In a span of a week, the project saw a daily average viewership of 3500 people on Instagram while more than 200 on Twitter.

Additionally, a comprehensive handbook of the survey conducted on staying safe on the internet will be circulated to all the respondents.

PROJECT NIYAM

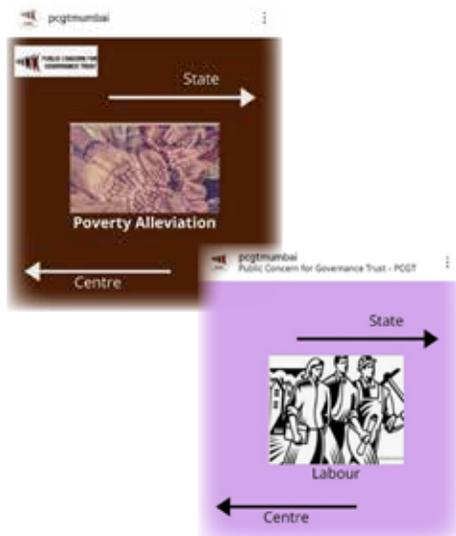
To raise awareness among the citizens about lockdown rules and educate truckers on safety norms



YOUTH FOR GOVERNANCE

PROJECT JAGRUTI

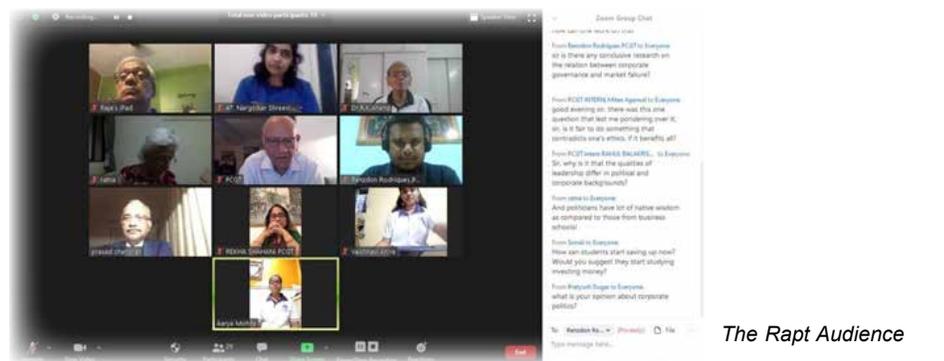
To list down all the welfare schemes of the central and state government and spread awareness through digital platform and make citizens aware of their entitlements. We have researched 110 schemes from the websites and making it simpler for citizens to understand.



Posters of a few topics that the team researched on during the project that included schemes on education, healthcare, labour, loans, compensation, employment, MSME, poverty alleviation, and welfare scheme for farmers.



Chief Information Commissioner Mr. Mullick addressing the audience PCGT Trustee Mr. Prasad Chandran sharing his views PCGT Chairman Mr. Julio Ribeiro sharing his views



The Rapt Audience

POCSO TEAM



Some snaps from the webinar

stakeholders of the safety of our children is a more effective way to protect the children.

The physical and psychological health of the child, including their capacity to reach out to the parents and/or teachers, is dependent on the approach of the latter as well as the environment at home. The first group of stakeholders we always bank on are the teachers; we were able to successfully engage over a 100 BMC school principals and teachers in our efforts to make them aware of the law and empower them with tools to ensure safety of their students.

In these efforts we invited renowned psychologist Dr. Harish Shetty to speak during our Panel Discussion: Safety of Children against Sexual Offences During Lockdown to them about the importance of mental wellness of the parents and teachers which directly affect the behaviour of the child and changes his emotional health. We also had Mr. Yatin Game, Secretary of District Legal Services Authority, Mumbai to update us on the court procedure being followed for cases related to POCSO Act during the lockdown.

India has one of the largest proportions of population in the younger age groups in the world. Over 35% of the population of the country has been found to be in the age group of 0-14 years. As per the 2011 census, 41% of the population account for under the age of 18 years. With schools closing and our incapacity to work on the ground during the pandemic, we felt the connection between different stakeholders and their focus on child safety was losing, and at the same time the number of child sexual abuse cases saw an increase during the lockdown.

It is rightly said that awareness is the key but our team feels that focused awareness among the

PCGT NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT 2020

The second edition of the National Youth Parliament (NYP) was organized by PCGT in association with Pravin Gandhi College of Law (PGCL), Mumbai on August 1 and 2, 2020. In view of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, the NYP was held virtually this year on Zoom.

The NYP witnessed participation from more than 150 students across the country in five mock committees. The mock committees simulated at the NYP and issues discussed in each committee are as follows:

- All India Political Parties Meet (School Committee) : *Review of India's Environmental Laws.*

The Closing Ceremony of the NYP was graced by the presence of the **Hon'ble Mr. Justice Madan B. Lokur** (Former Judge, Supreme Court of India) as the Chief Guest, who addressed the students on "Constitutional Morality". The NYP therefore served as an ideal platform for students



Hon'ble Mr. Justice (Retd.) Madan B. Lokur addressing the students on "Constitutional Morality" at the Virtual Closing Ceremony of PCGT NYP 2020



Group Screenshot with the Chief Guest of PCGT NYP 2020

to understand the legislative process and functioning of the Parliament as well as to analyze and further research upon the issues that are current and relevant from a socio-legal perspective.

- Lok Sabha : *The application of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958*
- Rajya Sabha : *The effectiveness of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016*
- Joint Session of Parliament : *The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2019*
- Maharashtra Legislative Assembly : *The agrarian distress in Maharashtra with special emphasis on the model of Loan Waivers.*



Group Photograph of the participants in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly – one of the five mock committees simulated at PCGT NYP 2020

WEBINARS ORGANIZED BY PCGT

The following webinars / virtual sessions were organized by PCGT from July to September 2020, witnessing participation from students across the country:

Topic of the Webinar	Date and Time	Speaker(s)
Draft EIA Notification 2020	August 19, 2020 - 5 to 6 pm	Ms. Sumaira Abdulali (Founder, Awaaz Foundation)
Relevance of Ethics and Values in Personal and Professional Life	August 21, 2020 - 5 to 6.30 pm	Mr. V. P. Raja (Trustee)
Leadership Development and Team Building	August 24, 2020 - 5.30 to 6.30 pm	Mr. J. F. Ribeiro (Chairman) and Mr. V. P. Raja (Trustee)
Ethics and Professional Standards in a Modern Law Firm	August 30, 2020 - 11 am to 12: 30 pm	Mr. Pratik Pawar (Partner, JSA), Ms. Shanaya Cyrus Irani (Principal Associate, JSA) and Mr. Siddhesh Pradhan (Associate, JSA)
Role of Civil Servants in ensuring Good Governance	September 8, 2020 - 5 to 6.30 pm	Mr. M. R. Reddy (Trustee) and Mr. V. P. Raja (Trustee)
Right to Information: Path to Swaraj	September 27, 2020 - 6 to 7:30 pm	Mr. Shailesh Gandhi (Former Central Information Commissioner)



Webinar on Ethics and Professional Standards in a Modern Law Firm (August 30, 2020)






Public Concern for Governance Trust
in association with
VG Vaze college of Arts, Science and Commerce
presents a webinar on

ROLE OF CIVIL SERVANTS IN ENSURING GOOD GOVERNANCE



MR. M. R. REDDY

EX-IPS
TRUSTEE, PCGT



MR. V. P. RAJA

EX-IAS
TRUSTEE, PCGT

Date: **Tuesday, September 8, 2020** | Time: **5 to 6:30pm**

Dimple Jangid: +91 99675 55760 Tanmay Patil: +91 97020 80889

Webinar on the Role of Civil Servants in ensuring Good Governance dated September 8, 2020

Webinar on Draft EIA Notification 2020 by Ms. Sumaira Abdulali (Founder, Awaaz Foundation) dated August 19, 2020

THE FIFTH LATE NARAYAN VARMA MEMORIAL LECTURE






5th Late Narayan Varma
Memorial Lecture Meeting: On

**'COVID-19,
"NOW, NEXT & BEYOND,
A DISCUSSION"**

Thursday, 20th August 2020 | 5:30pm to 7:30pm
Zoom (link will be sent separately)

PANELIST

Dr. Hemant P. Thacker
Physician

Hvovi Bhagwagar
Clinical Psychologist

CA Sanjay Dhruva
COVID Survivor

Discussion Moderator – A senior professional

Event organized by BCAS Foundation, The Chamber of Tax Consultants, Dharma Bharathi Mission and Public Concern for Governance Trust

This year, the 5th Late Narayan Varma lecture meeting will be on the subject, "COVID-19, Now Next & Beyond, A Discussion", where we will have eminent medical experts telling us how to deal with the virus, both clinically and psychologically. We will also hear from one of us, a CA who successfully battled with, and overcame the virus. We are hopeful that this educative and positive discussion will help us to a great extent to not only take the requisite precautions, but also to instill in us, a sense of positivity in dealing with our present circumstances.

The late Narayan Varma lecture has been held for the past four years by the BCAS Foundation, Dharma Bharathi Mission (DBM) and Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT). (The Chamber joined this initiative in 2018) in the memory of Late Shri Narayan Varma and his "Always Live Life to the Fullest" spirit. At this meeting, BCAS Foundation, DBM and PCGT will also present the Narayan Varma Memorial awards to persons/institutions that have done outstanding social work.

The Fifth Narayan Varma Memorial Lecture was jointly organized by the Bombay Chartered Accountants Society (BCAS), The Dharma Bharathi Mission (DBM), Chamber of Tax Consultants (CTC) and PCGT, via Zoom on 20th August 2020. The Guest Speakers Dr. Hemant P. Thacker – Physician, Hvovi Bhagwagar – Clinical Psychologist & CA Sanjay Dhruva – COVID survivor, gave an informative talk on COVID-19 “ Now, Next & Beyond”. The talk was followed by felicitation. PCGT awarded the Narayan Varma Memorial Award to Mr. Arjun Kadam, an ex inten of PCGT, now a lawyer practicing law in the Bombay High Court, for his selfless and pro-bono service in Law Colleges, Educational Institutes and Communities, in the awareness of RTI / RTS



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

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.

Visit us at : www.pcg.org



PUBLIC CONCERN

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