

Public Concern



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

January 2021

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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EDITORIAL



Sanjeev Dayal used to edit our Quarterly Newsletter. I will be doing this starting from this edition.

Our two previous trustees and outstanding I.P.S. officers, M. R. Reddy and

Sanjeev Dayal, have stepped down from the Board for personal reasons. On 7th January 2021, I handed over the Chairmanship of P.C.G.T. to Mr. V. P. Raja, I.A.S. (Retd.). Mr. Raja, in the three years he served as Trustee had displayed his total commitment to our objective of grooming young men and women to be ethical and humane in their relationship with people, even those who thought differently from them.

Mr. Raja took charge of our Leadership Programmes where young people organize Talks, Conclaves, Seminars, Mock Parliaments after selecting the subject of the talk and the speaker who they would like to hear. The young students organize the events themselves in order to build their confidence and hone their leadership skills. Our staff member in charge of these programmes, Shivam Jain Kakadia, has succeeded in motivating hundreds of students to participate in these Leadership Programmes through the N.Y.P. (National Youth Parliament) and Campus Ambassadors initiatives.

The first N.Y.P. was held in Balasaheb Apte College of Law in Dadar in 2019. Former Supreme Court Judge, B. N. Srikrishna presided. This year we organized two such editions of the N.Y.P., one in the N. M. College of Law in Andheri and the other in Pune at the V.I.T. (Vishwakarma Institute of

Technology). All three editions of these Mock Parliaments attracted more than a hundred students each, many from States outside Maharashtra.

The Campus Ambassadors (C.A.) Programme started with 18 students in colleges in Mumbai and Pune in the year 2019. This year it has 50 C.A.s, a quantum jump! The Campus Ambassadors organize talks and discussions on topics in which the respective college students are interested. P.C.G.T. provides the online platforms and helps, if required, by approaching speakers who have expertise on the subject.

Our YFG (Youth For Governance) project is naturally involved with the C.A.s as their work overlaps. The YFG brings the University's N.S.S. on the table. The N.S.S. has been collaborating with Renzdon Rodrigues, our staff member in charge of the YFG. Renzdon's communication skills are immense! The tie-up between the YFG and the C.A. programme has encouraged both, vertical and horizontal co-ordination between our projects and our staff in charge of them.

Another initiative is on its way to fruition. Sonali Shelar, a former intern who gave up the idea of a corporate job to fulfil her dream of helping those in need, particularly women, is in charge of this new initiative. It involves co-ordination with the Mumbai Police to enforce the POCSO Act and other laws that protect women and children from Sexual Predators. Much has already been done in this field before the Covid struck and much will be undertaken after the lockdown ends. The lighting of vulnerable areas in slum pockets where women and children feel

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KUCHH AUR

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader”

PCGT in its initiative to engage young students introduced the mentorship programme for Std. VIII to XII under their project of KUCHH AUR, from 1st October 2020. The students were made aware about the role of the mentor and the mentee. Besides being a role model the mentor would also be a good listener which would help the mentor to obtain feedback on the progress that the mentees were making and also listen to their issues, problems and concerns if any.

As all the schools were under lockdown we focused on four schools whose students would go through the programme. 50 students from Pragnya Bodhini High School, Sardar Vallabhai Patel Vividhalakshi Vidyalaya, Dr. Mohammed Ishaq Jamkhanawala Girls High School and Purshottam High School, all belonging to the State Board, Mumbai, have been a part of this mentorship programme that is going on through Zoom and Google links. We wish to thank the Principals Ms. Seema Shaikh, Mr. Sunil Patel, Dr. Sangeeta Srivastava, Ms. Saba Patel, Ms. Prema Kotian.



Session with Pragnya Bodhini High School

The purpose of starting this program was to encourage the students who were forced to be indoors to find their calling through the sessions which exposed them to different individuals who are experts in their field, sharing their knowledge & expertise. This in turn would help the students to find their own purpose in life. Interacting with students from

different schools was an effective way for these students to learn various skills, communication being one of them. Some of the sessions that were held under the mentorship program were oral communication skills, relationships, leadership, music movement, SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound), ethics, governance and lessons in responsible citizenship. They were also taught the SWOT analysis. We thank Mr. Paul Machado and Mrs. Anjum Panna for taking sessions with the Mentees and interacting at length with them.



Mr. Paul Machado taking a session with the Mentees

Trustees of PCGT, Mr. M. R. Reddy and Mr. V. P. Raja took a session with them where the Mentees were exposed to the life of a police officer and an IAS officer. Questions kept pouring in for both the speakers by the students and it was indeed heartening to see them interacting without any inhibition.

We would like to thank Tamanna Meghrajani, Ketayun Mistry and Aditya Bharadwaj from Government Law College for conducting sessions with the Mentees on 'Relationship'. Focus was on self, family, healthy, unhealthy, abusive practices, setting boundaries and conflict resolution. These were conducted in three sessions.

The Mentees observed the Vigilance Awareness Week from 27th October to 7th November, 2020. During this period, we had speakers like Mr. Prabhakar Vartak, Mr. Anil Chopra, Mrs. Jyoti Tanna, Dr. Ratna Magotra who shared their experiences in their personal and professional lives that had put them at a cross road to opt for ethical decisions.

Besides the Mentorship programme, sessions were held with different schools to focus on values like Compassion, Kindness, Peace, Respect and Courage. The students shared their own examples on values.



Vigilance Awareness Week



Session with the Mentees

Our regular sessions with the different communities in Nerul were held online and the students were very enthusiastic to attend them. We are indeed grateful to Mr. Santosh Surve for his enthusiasm in ensuring that the community sessions carry on during this lockdown.

Two batches of interns from various colleges have been a part of the Kuchh Aur programme. They have conducted sessions with the mentees and in the community on values like Sports, Dreams, Acceptance, Nature, Gender Equality, Domestic Violence which are an integral part of life and helping others as part of humanity.



Mr. Raja addressing the Mentees

YOUTH FOR GOVERNANCE

PCGT together with St. Andrews College organized a webinar on 6th Oct., 2020, on the topic "Substance Abuse During Lockdown". Dr. Harish Shetty, a well known psychiatrist was the guest speaker for the webinar. 300 and more students actively participated virtually. Dr. Shetty spoke on the mental stress on young students, he explained the different kinds of drug abuse and informed to be prepared to fight this long menace with motivation and support at any stage of life.



Dr. Shetty addressing the audience



The rapt audience



Dr. Anand addressing the audience

A webinar was conducted by SIES College of Commerce and Arts along with PCGT on 22nd October, 2020, on the topic "Imbibing Ethical Values for Joy & Success in Life". PCGT's Founder trustee Dr. R. K. Anand was the guest speaker for the webinar. 200 participants from different colleges across Mumbai joined the virtual meeting. Dr. Anand explained to the students on communal harmony. He shared his life's experience on honesty, forgiveness and empathy towards human beings. He also asked students to focus on 4 major values purity, honesty, unselfishness & love. It was very well received by the students.

A webinar on 27th November, 2020 with P.C.G.T. and VK Krishna Menon College of Science and Arts was held on the subject "Technological Development in India vis-à-vis Social welfare". Mr. Mahesh Zagade, IAS Retd. as well as Advisory Board Member of PCGT Pune was the chief speaker for the webinar. Mr. Zagade spoke on technology and social welfare. He said they both go hand in hand. He spoke of human evolution, corporates controlling human resources and corporate driven social welfare. It was a very interesting webinar. 450 students attended the webinar from all across Mumbai and Pune.



A workshop cum webinar was conducted by PCGT in collaboration with Lala Lajpatrai College of Commerce and Economics on 30th November 2020. The topic for the workshop was "Power of Now". Mrs. Rekha Shahani, PCGT Trustee was the guest speaker for the program. 80 students attended the workshop. The webinar was very well received as it was made student friendly. It was a very interactive session. Students shared their problems with the speaker on their personal chat. Which was then resolved by the speaker who answered all their apprehensions.

Mrs. Rekha Shahani conducting nose activity with students

Two major webinars were conducted by PCGT in the month of December.

1. Role of Journalism in a democracy by Mr. Siddharth Varadarajan, Founding Editor, The Wire, on 8th December, 2020. This was held in collaboration with HR college of Commerce and Economics. More than 500 students attended the program.



2. Human Rights in India by Adv. Colin Gonsalves, Senior advocate, Supreme Court of India on Dec 10th observing International Human Rights Day. This was in association with Hinduja College.

More than 1200 students attended the webinar from different colleges of Mumbai, Raigad, Thane and Palghar.

(from left to Right) Mr. Siddharth Varadarajan, The Rapt Audience and Mr. Colin Gonsalves.

WEBINARS ORGANIZED BY PCGT

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

Topic of the Webinar	Date	Speaker(s)
Importance of Youth Parliaments	October 1, 2020	Adv. Shivam Jain Kakadia
The Social Reality of Caste & Feudalism vs. the Constitution of India & the Rule of Law: Questions from the Hathras Event in U.P.	October 2, 2020	Dr. Menaka Guruswamy (Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India)
Freedom of Press	October 15, 2020	Ms. Faye D'Souza (Independent Journalist)
Fake News in the Digital Era	October 24, 2020	Ms. Kavitha Iyer (Independent Journalist)
Fourth Industrial Revolution	November 2, 2020	Mr. Mahesh Zagade (Ex-IAS)
Transparency in Governance with special reference to RTI	November 4, 2020	Mr. Shailesh Gandhi (Former Central Information Commissioner)
Educational Reforms in India	November 12, 2020	Mr. Neel Duttaroy (Fellowship Recruitment Manager, Teach For India)
Ethics in Legal Profession	November 20, 2020	Mr. Mihir Desai (Senior Counsel, Bombay High Court)
Human Rights	November 25, 2020	Dr. Rashmi Oza (Reader and Former Head of Dept. of Law, University of Mumbai)
Democracy and the Rule of Law	November 26, 2020	Adv. Shivam Jain Kakadia
Constitutional Governance	November 26, 2020	Hon'ble Mr. Justice Madan B. Lokur (Former Judge, Supreme Court of India)
The Effect of COVID-19 on Mental Health of Students	November 28, 2020	Dr. Harish Shetty (Leading Psychiatrist)
LGBTQ+ Rights in India	December 1, 2020	Mr. Akshat Agarwal (Research Fellow, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy)
A Vision for Virtual Courts	December 26, 2020	Hon'ble Mr. Justice R. C. Chavan (Vice-Chairperson, Supreme Court e-Committee and Former Judge, Bombay High Court) and Hon'ble Mr. Justice G. S. Patel (Judge, Bombay High Court)



Dr. Menaka Guruswamy talking about the Social Reality of Caste & Feudalism vs. the Constitution of India & the Rule of Law on Oct. 2, 2020



Ms. Faye D'Souza enlightening the audience on Freedom of Press on Oct. 15, 2020



Ms. Kavitha Iyer speaking at the Webinar on Fake News in the Digital Era on Oct. 24, 2020



Mr. Neel Duttaroy speaking about Educational Reforms in India on Nov. 12, 2020

WEBINARS ORGANIZED BY PCGT



Dr. Rashmi Oza deliberating on Human Rights on Nov. 25, 2020



Hon'ble Mr. Justice (Retd.) Madan B. Lokur addressing the audience on Constitutional Governance on Nov. 26, 2020



Dr. Harish Shetty regaling the students on the Effects of COVID-19 on Mental Health of Students on Nov. 28, 2020



Group Screenshot after Mr. Shailesh Gandhi's Webinar on Transparency in Governance with special reference to RTI on Nov. 4, 2020



Hon'ble Mr. Justice G. S. Patel at the Webinar on 'A Vision for Virtual Courts' on Dec. 26, 2020



Hon'ble Mr. Justice (Retd.) R. C. Chavan addressing the students on 'A Vision for Virtual Courts' on Dec. 26, 2020



Poster for the Webinar on LGBTQ+ Rights in India dated December 1, 2020



Poster for the Webinar on Ethics in Legal Profession dated Nov. 20, 2020



Poster for the Webinar on A Vision for Virtual Courts dated December 26, 2020

WOMEN AND CHILD SAFETY (POCSO) VERTICAL

Engagement of the stakeholders:

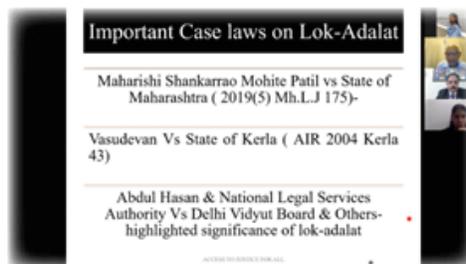
Increased awareness among the stakeholders of the safety of our children is a more effective way of prevention. The awareness programmes are in many cases limited to talking to children about their safety, teaching them to identify 'good touch' and 'bad touch', body boundaries, etc.



and while that is important, we believe it is not enough. They may understand all the details but these are children who cannot be responsible for their own breakfast or even cross the road by themselves, how can we expect them to protect themselves against sexual predators, or even approach their parents or teachers with an issue like this? They will only get the confidence to speak up and reach out to their parents, siblings, and teachers if the latter are educated about child safety and regularly engage in healthy conversations with the child. Keeping this in mind, we decided to engage the stakeholders in a more focused manner.

The stakeholders targeted this time was the youth. Two programmes were organized to raise awareness among college students:

- a. A webinar on 'Sexual Harassment of Children: Why We Need to Pay Attention Now!' conducted by Ms Sonali Shelar, head of the Child Safety unit, PCGT, was organized in collaboration with Government Law College, Mumbai on 10th October 2020. Provisions of POCSO Act, lack of implementation, and measures that can be taken by individuals were discussed. The event saw a participation of 181 students.
- b. A 'One Day Certificate Training Course' on 'POCSO Act & Judicial Procedure' was organized on 9th November, conducted by Secretary of the District Legal Service Authority, Mumbai Suburban, Mr. Vikram Singh Bhandari. During the course, POCSO Rules, POCSO Act, victim centric amendments to CrPC, duties of police and medical professionals, and important judgements related to child safety were discussed. The total number of participants was 161.



Street Illumination Project:

After getting sanction of funds of almost 2 lac rupees for the

maintenance and energy charges for the installation of street lights in 9 areas of Colaba, 29 spots that need street lights have been identified in 8 locations (namely Shivari, Dharavi, Cuffe Parade, Wadala TT, Antop Hill, Malwani, Airport area, and Shivaji Nagar) with the help of Aangan Trust in October 2020. PCGT wrote to the BMC Commissioner, Mr Iqbal Chahal to take up the installation of 172 light poles in the aforementioned areas that will significantly improve the safety of women and young girls because of better lighting.

On ground assistance to victims:

- a. Regular counselling to the 4-year-old victim we assisted in March 2020 is continued, her behavioural changes are closely monitored along with her performance in studies and her overall interest in playing games, watching cartoons, etc. to identify signs of trauma or distress. Timely action and careful parenting by the mother of victim has so far kept her mentally healthy. She will be provided professional help if any signs are seen.
- b. PCGT is assisting a 15-year-old victim of rape by getting her compensation under Manodhariya Scheme. We are also closely following the case to make sure that the accused who is a family member does not get bail as that will be problematic for the mother. The victim is currently in the care of the State at Children's Home, Dongri.

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unsafe, through co-ordination with the Municipal Commissionarate has proved to be a significant achievement of PCGT in this year.

The "Kuchh Aur" programme has been from its start a successful project. Since our Trustee Rekha Shahani took charge, the number of committed schools who have joined the programme has increased. Mrs.

Shahani takes numerous sessions herself, while mentoring our staff member, Yashasweeta Kokate on how to go about the task in Hindi and Marathi medium Municipal schools. A whole new set of values have been introduced in these schools. We hope to open childrens' minds to good values that should stand them in good stead in their future lives. And my

own view is that we are succeeding. How did I come to this conclusion? When I saw the children welcoming Yashasweeta with broad smiles and good cheer!

In my next newsletter I shall write about our RTI / RTS as well as about our Interns' Programme, which has been our major success.

– Julio Ribeiro

PCGT NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT, PUNE

The maiden edition of the National Youth Parliament, Pune (NYP Pune) was organized by PCGT in association with the Vishwakarma Institute of Technology, Pune (VIT Pune) on October 3 and 4, 2020. In view of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, the conference was held virtually on Zoom platform.

The NYP Pune witnessed participation from more than 100 students across the country in four mock committees. The mock committees simulated at the NYP Pune and issues discussed in each committee are as follows:

1. Lok Sabha : *Discussing the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019*
2. Rajya Sabha : *Discussing the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020*
3. All India Political Parties Meet : *Assessing the impact of the National Education Policy, 2020.*
4. Press (consisting of reporters in the above committees)

The Closing Ceremony of the NYP Pune was graced by the presence of the **Mr. Shailesh Gandhi** (Former Central Information Commissioner) as the Chief Guest, who addressed the students on “*Timely Justice Delivery*”. The NYP Pune therefore served as an ideal platform for students 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.



Group Screenshot with the Chief Guest of NYP Pune



Group Photograph of the participants in the Lok Sabha – one of the mock committees simulated at NYP Pune

RTI CLINIC IN MUMBAI

PCGT :

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

For appointments and details :

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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.pcgt.org



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