Community Policing Actually Works

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WHEN her husband deserted Sayema and their eight-year-old daughter Parveen and married another woman three years ago, she found no other way than to work as a domestic help for their livelihood. After his second marriage, Rafiq lives with his new wife in a house adjacent to Sayema's house in the same area but do not provide them any food. But this was not the end of her ordeal as her husband did not stop beating her. "All these years, I didn't know where to go for justice, whom to appeal for it," the 45-year-old woman of Namuza union parishad (UP) of Bogra said while blood dripped from her left ear hit by her husband Rafiq, a cattle broker.

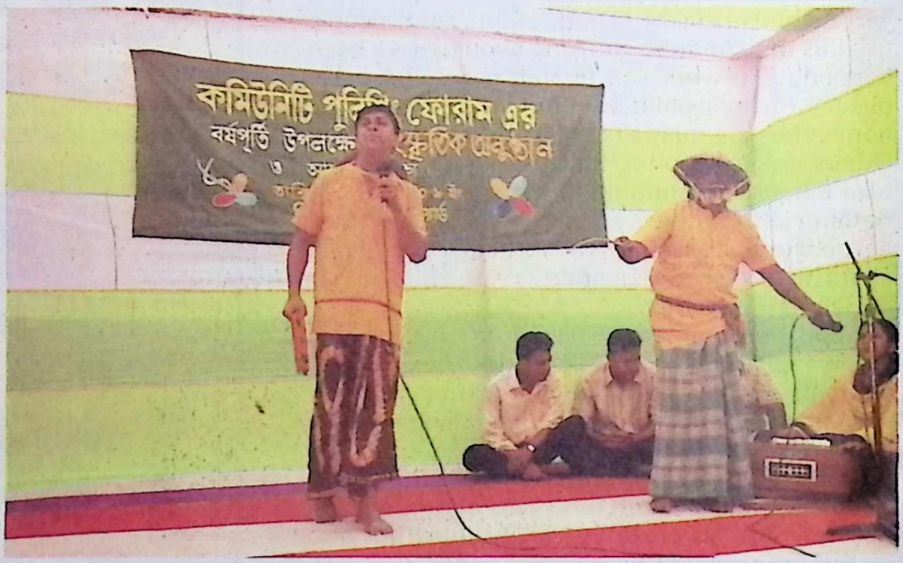
The ill-fated woman found someone to tell about her miseries once the community policing forum (CPF). started working in her area to listen to and solve community problems.

As this correspondent was visiting a CPF office in Namuza in Bogra last week of March, Sayema and her daughter Parveen rushed there, both crying. "When Parveen was crying for food, her father grabbed her and tried to beat her. As I intervened, he beat me up and tore my ear," Sayema said, wiping the tears rolling down her cheeks.

The CPF men brought her husband to their office, registered Sayema's complaint in front of him and asked Rafiq not to leave the area before his trial ends.

The CPF are scheduled to meet in the second week of April to decide on Sayema's case and 28 other complaints of community problems.

Collaboration between citizens and police in addressing community problems in some areas of Bogra has made striking examples of social benefit. It has also developed trusting relations and narrowed the gap in understanding and creating respect between police and citizens.



A *gambhira* on the occasion of one-year of community policing in Bogra underway.

Community beneficiaries have reported 'unexpected good result' of the collaboration in addressing drug addiction, gambling, theft, harassment of women, land dispute and dowry-related problems and other community problems. Meanwhile, local police authorities said it has cut their workload to concentrate in community problems and resulted to lowering petty crimes.

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