

Crime Stoppers in India

March 2007

“To develop Crime Stoppers as an effective crime-solving organization throughout the world, with the primary objective of the tri-partite organization, Community, Media and Law Enforcement, working together to solve crime and to create a safe, secure world, through justice, for our children and children's children.”

Thus reads the combined mission and vision statements of Crime Stoppers international. I would aver that never in the history of CSI have those statements been so relevant at one time on one day.

9am on the 12th March 2007 in Hyderabad saw the launch of the Crime Stoppers India Foundation (CSIF) ~ “Crime Stoppers in India” ~ to the world’s largest democracy. With a potential human intelligence pool of 1.1 billion people being provided with a safe and secure medium to pass on information to the India Police Service, the global influence of CSI has taken a major step.

Many high-level guests including the Honorable Shri Justice G. S. Singhvi, Chief Justice of High Court, Andhra Pradesh, attended the launch. Other honoured guests of note included:

- Shri Justice M. Jagannadha Rao, former Judge of the Supreme Court & former Chairman Law Commission of India,
- Shri M. A. Basith, IPS, Director General of Police, Andhra Pradesh,
- Shri J. Harinarayan, IAS, Chief Secretary to Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
- Shri Justice V. S. Malimath Former Chief Justice, Kerala & Karnataka High Court.
- Gary Lewis, represented the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime.

The CSI delegation consisted of Vice-President Michael Gordon-Gibson representing President Gary Murphy, who was unable to travel due to unavoidable work commitments, Peter Price, Chairman of Crime Stoppers Australia and Henk Munting, co-founder of Crime Stoppers (M) in the Netherlands both of whom are CSI Regional Directors. Richard Carter, Legal Counsel to CSI, Kevin Anderson, CSI IT committee chair and Greg MacAleese, founder of Crime Stoppers represented MCA, the Crime Stoppers training operation whose input throughout the four-day visit around the genesis of Crime Stoppers, governance, IT and tip-taking support was invaluable and gratefully received by Dr Gandhi, the local board and call takers.

Based on the success of Crime Stoppers in over 20 Countries, Crime Stoppers Foundation was established in Hyderabad, within the Andhra Pradesh region of the country.

The driving force and founder president, Dr Gandhi PC Kaza, has worked tirelessly and at great personal expense, following his attendance at the 2006 CSI conference in Albuquerque. In a little over four months he has put in place the bedrock and foundation stones for a credible Crime Stoppers operation. He has the support of a distinguished board of directors brought together from the police, business community and the media all of whom are much respected within their individual fields of expertise.

Dr Gandhi has also provided a modern, secure, future-proofed facility to handle the calls and has put in place a team of dedicated call takers who must be the most highly qualified Crime Stoppers staff in the world. He has a cross-section of scientists from a number of varied forensic disciplines most of whom hold the attainment of a PhD.

Dr Gandhi describes his foundation as a non-profit, non-government, public charitable trust with the following objectives.

- To create awareness among citizens about the need to proactively provide timely information to the Crime Stoppers India Foundation which in turn makes available such useful information to the police or any other law enforcing or administrative agency.
- To act as facilitators of information to police and other public service agencies by creating a data warehouse with a repository of anonymous information relating to crimes, criminals and other unlawful, unsocial, unethical practices committed by the individuals, groups of people or organizations.
- To inspire confidence among people to become part of global and national crime fighting team to ensure crime free and violence free environment in India.
- To extend assistance, guidance and support to the providers of information relating to crimes, criminals and other unlawful activities by providing witness support and victim support services.
- To ensure confidentiality of information provided by the citizens to protect their anonymity and safety.
- To establish linkages with the media and the police as well as other public service agencies to receive and act on the information provided by the public for upholding rule of Law, Dharma, through truthful and non violent means.

It is the intention of the foundation that Crime Stoppers India will be extended to all major cities by the end of 2007 and by the end of 2008 to all state headquarters.

Dr Gandhi's ultimate aim is to, through the agreed CSI nine-point certification process, to apply for CSI membership for CSIF as a region in its own right. Many of the points have already been covered and it is expected that CSIF will have attained accreditation by the annual conference in Bermuda in November.

The inclusion of such an important region will add to the global influence of CSI and be the template that other South Asia countries can use to initiate a Crime Stoppers program.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has been most supportive of Dr Gandhi's initiative in India. The Chief of the Anti-Trafficking section, Brian Taylor, recently spoke to several UNODC Field Office colleagues at the HQ in Vienna and took the opportunity to give them a brief overview of the work of Crime Stoppers International, and encouraged them to consider the possibilities of introducing similar schemes in their respective areas of responsibility.

India and the United Nations have recently taken steps to strengthen police countermeasures against Human Trafficking by establishing a network of nodal officers from across the country in collaboration with UNODC. There have been discussions with Dr. P.M. Nair Project Coordinator, Anti Human Trafficking, for the UNODC based in new Delhi, and Dr Gandhi about the use of his CSIF, once it becomes established, to support the UNODC / IPS Anti-Human Trafficking effort. This could be by way of a publicity campaign to disrupt the organised criminal networks involved in this crime by targeting possible nexus points and regional centres asking for information from the public that, in turn can be fed to the relevant LE agencies in the relevant countries. Gary Lewis indicated that trafficking is in most cases an interstate crime and there needs to be a strong level of coordination among law enforcement agencies in the source, transit and destination states. CSI would be very interested in developing any inter-region assistance.

Summary of the first month of Crimestoppers in India

- Average 8 calls per day.
- Bulk of the calls were received through Telephone
- 25% from e-mails, 10% through letters, SMS, Fax, Telegrams and personal appeals
- 50% of calls pertaining to issues that can be handled by police and other law enforcement agencies

- 50% relating to problems faced by average Indian citizen in the day to day life
- Other issues are broadly listed as:
 - Intermediate Board Mass Copying and Leakage of Question Papers
 - SSC Exams Mass copying
 - Unauthorized schools
 - Un-licensed training institutions
 - Fees over charging in academic institutions
 - Campus violence
 - Child labour
 - Missing children
 - Domestic violence,
 - Neglect of elders by children
 - Women trafficking
 - Human trafficking
 - Environmental pollution,
 - CD piracy
 - Pornography

And many more...

Since many of the issues were unexpected and unimaginable at the time of concept, it was deliberately decided to go slow at the outset until actual trends and problems faced by people were known.

Information pertaining to the Indian police agencies was passed on to the respective Commissionarates of Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Visakhapatnam. Other Government departments have also been given relevant information for appropriate action.

Largely the information sent to the police agencies has been immediately followed up by the respective authorities and several cases have been solved because of their actions and many issues are under active investigation.

A number of women trafficking cases have been solved and the persons responsible have been arrested and the women restored to their families. Cases of corruption have been followed up and the information has been found to be true and the necessary action is in progress.

It is Dr Gandhi's intention to extend the CSIF operations to all districts of Andhra Pradesh by the end of June and expand to other states by the end of August this year.

CSI commends Dr Gandhi for his vision, drive, and altruism to bring Crime Stoppers to South Asia.

Michael Gordon-Gibson,
Vice President, Crime Stoppers International

