

Role of Information and Communication Technology In Indian Police

Balbir Kumar*

Abstract

As a productive part of the society, human being realised the requirement for police organisation when he needed his personal and property protection but could not do this work by himself. So, trained police body has been accepted to provide better protection than the general population. The police have always been considered as a vital arm of the state in ancient times, in the British period or even today. Maintenance of law and order is perceived as the milestone for a democratic system of government in any developed society. Maintenance of law and order is must for regulating the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society of India. Police performance in India is under a close attention of the public. The introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are rapidly changing the way of public interact not only with each other but also with private businesses, government institutions. Information Technology improve effectiveness and efficiency, capacity to store and process large volumes of data, it also improve intelligence and investigative capabilities and make ready access to criminal records and other kinds of relevant data. ICT in policing make possible the collection, storage and rapid dissemination of information, it enhances public safety and reduces crime. This paper is an attempt to discuss the role of ICT in policing, its challenges and suggestions.

Introduction

The major law enforcement agency, police have been recognised as an important part of the state administration. Police is the major player to give greatest security to the public by controlling the crimes and maintenance of law and order. In the ancient times the major job of the police personnel was to maintain law and order and establish the sovereignty of the state. (Chaturbedi, 2006) Police is the state subject thereby, making state governments

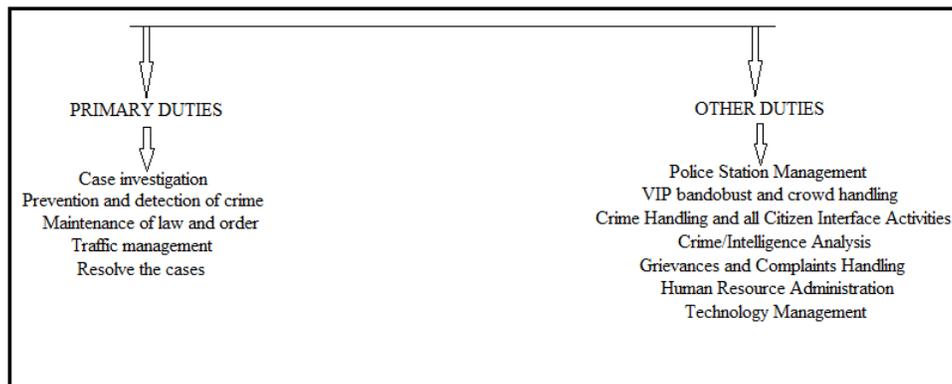
* Guest Faculty, Department of Evening Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh. Mobile-9878758680
Email:balbirnada@gmail.com

responsible for maintaining law and order and preventing crime. In modern times due to the process of liberalisation, privatization and globalisation the police force is facing the new challenges.

There is a large police set-up in every Indian state, which is divided for the smooth functioning in to the various levels namely police stations, police *chowki* and police posts. Police station works as the key interface with the public and also performs its duties as the main supplier of information to the police *chowki* and police posts which are under the department. The major issues like: fast growth of population, rapid process of urbanisation, increasing disparities between the rich and poor, illiteracy, human rights, Right to Information, natural and unnatural calamities, human trafficking, exploitation of female children, corruption in public life, cyber crime, terrorism, will increase the pressure on the policing. For dealing with these issues the police officials are performing number of duties to implement the will of the state which are shown in the table no. 1

Table: 1

DUTIES OF INDIAN POLICE FORCE



The head of the police force in every state police will be responsible to the State Government for the administration of the police force throughout the state and also for giving advice on security matters. The primary duties of the Indian police force can be listed as under these points (Chaturbedi 2006; ICTD Poject 2007):

- Case investigation
- Prevention and detection of crime
- Maintenance of law and order
- Traffic management
- Resolve the cases

These are the major functions of the police personnel which are being performed by the police right from the beginning. But, with the passage of time the activities of the police are also increasing day by day. Indian police is also performing other activities which can be discussed as under:

- Police Station Management
- VIP bandobust and crowd handling
- Crime Handling and all Citizen Interface Activities
- Crime/Intelligence Analysis
- Grievances and Complaints Handling
- Human Resource Administration
- Technology Management

In a county like India, district police is expected to run day to day work related to the criminal activities and maintenance of law and order and also to meet minor emergencies. Police forces also provide services to give help in cases of disasters like aircraft and train accidents, bus accidents, earthquakes and floods, etc. Policemen provide every service to the society whatever is expected.

Concept of ICT

ICT is an umbrella that includes any electronic tool or communication device comprising of; radio, television, cellular phones, video camera, calculator, computer network, hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications are linked with them, such as videoconferencing, online lectures and distance learning. With the increasing access of ICT technology, a major change has taken place from readiness to practice of ICT for different purposes. These revolutionary technologies have a greatest potential to achieve good governance goals in India. Each and everything from business to governance is changing.

Today, the police officials also bound to face increasing heavy pressure from all the stakeholders, not only from the public and media for detection, investigation and prevention of crime but also from its employees, for the efficient working and service conditions. So, ICT is the only solution for bringing the effectiveness in the police working.

Role of ICT in Indian Police

Policing is a very complex and sensitive activity which requires the integration of multiple data sources in a short time period. ICT tools help the police force for better and timely service delivery with the economy, effectiveness and efficiency. These benefits can be discussed in detail

Electronic Identification

Through the ICT identification of a person becomes very easy. Police can use number of methods to trace a person to control the crime and maintain the law and order. Whatever method of electronic communication is used by a person it becomes important means of electronic identification.

- Digital signature of a person
- Bank account number
- Telephone/mobile number
- Driving license number
- Passport number
- Permanent Account Number (PAN)

Police can find any person quickly to maintain security in the society with above mentioned sources. These sources provide the detail information about the person.

Electronic Transport (E-Transport)

The major activities related with the transport system can be handled easily with the electronic devices. E-Transport aspect covers number of activities such as: registration of all types of motor vehicles, Issue of driving licenses, Issue of Permits for the light and heavy vehicles, Tax and fee collection through cash and bank challans and control of pollution through checking etc. Thus, electronically saved data will be useful for the effective traffic management.

Online Verification and Fingerprints Reader

Biometric technologies and fingerprint reader are also helping in law enforcement and to improve the operations of the police. Biometric technology helps in online verification and recognition of people across different geographical locations. It provides accurate

information of the suspected person and provides a scope for quick decision-making on related security issues.

RFID (Radio Frequency Identification)

Recently automatic identification procedures have become popular in providing the number of services. These can provide information about people, goods and products. It is a technology which uses radio waves to transfer data from an electronic tag or label, attached to an object, through a reader for the purpose of identifying and tracking the movement of material across the country. This technology is used by the police authorities so that transportation systems can be verified to prevent movement of unauthorized materials which can affect the public safety. The tag's information is stored electronically. The exact location of every police officer can be most effective for the delivery of police services. Such a system proves as an important tool for the collection and providing information of the location of the officers.

CCTV (Closed Circuit Television)

When the environment is not suitable for human beings for gathering of information then CCTV systems can continuously do this work. This equipment can be used to see and observe different parts of a process from a central control room; it can be placed at public places that enable the police to collect large volumes of video for the analysis of a particular event of any incident. Collected information from the video can be transmitted to the mobiles of police officers so that they can control the every situation and arrest the suspected persons from locations of large population gatherings.

Human Resource Management (HRM)

HRM is very important activity to manage the available human resources for the achievement of goals. The strength of a police force is distributed, according to requirements of the department, divisions, sub-divisions, districts. (Bunyard: 1978) ICT has the full potential to bring economy in the police recruitment, selection, training, promotions and to make the records of personnel, their salaries and allowances. In the recruitment process of the police, use of ICT starts from the advertisement, forms filling, written test information, date of interview of the eligible candidates and finally selected candidates etc. With this, police

department should ensure that personnel are properly trained in working with the latest technology.

Police-Public Interface

E-Police will help to built citizen confidence. The first step to using ICTs would be in the interface of police with the public. Police is the body to secure the life and property of the public. Through ICT public will be able to view information regarding status of their complaints and the police will be able to provide feedback on the same. The major activities can be performed online such as: online foreigner registration, stolen vehicle database, passport verification and live updates and alternative routes to control the traffic etc. This will bring reduction in paper work and reduce the duplication in the working of police. With this, transparency will be increased and services will be provided between the limited time period.

Real-time Information Access

In a large geographical area which is very hard to check and administer the Global Positioning System (GPS) and Geographical Information System (GIS) are used to track the information about a particular area and movement of suspected and terrorists etc. with the available data and video. The available information provides the ability to coordinate all the activities for better tracking, reporting, and taking action. Thus the technology enables the police personnel to take action proactively. GPS is very useful to track a suspect vehicle, enable decision making regarding traffic routing and minimizing overcrowding and it provides information to know that whether the patrol units are near to respond to an emergency.

Intelligent Sensors

With the increasing population and urbanisation the numbers of vehicle on the roads are also increasing, the main purposes of the traffic police are: to decrease in road accidents, provide easy traffic flow and enforce traffic rules and regulations. Intelligent sensors provide real-time information to for better traffic management. Camera system in cars has become an important instrument to record video of events which is improving and becoming more cost effective to control the crimes.

Centralized Information Storehouse

Police holds and maintain a large volume of data in a standardized manner for the efficient retrieval and analysis of the data. There may be two data basis, one of police personnel and other of criminals. Personnel database hold records of their current and previous postings, service record, family background, posting and promotion etc. which can be accessed within a second. For the criminals, police personnel analyze the data and identify important information by just typing the name of a criminal, it can be very useful for the maintenance of law & order. Such type of analysis may helps in identifying and forecasting crime, decision making for the future and to prevent the society from the further attacks and manmade calamities. Today, policing requires greater analytical skills to use information in an effective way.

Challenges before the Police

Criminals remain one step forward from the police in making use of the latest technology including ICT. Indian police force in facing number problems in the maintenance of law and order such as:

- Lack of adequate and proper techniques in policing, very poor in service conditions, lack of career progress facility for the large number of the constabulary despite the recommendations of several commissions, committees.
- Lack of integrated information systems for the smooth functioning of the police.
- Lack of ability to share information with other related state level and national level agencies.
- Multiple entries of the same data and limited ability to analyse information because of different locations and analytical skills.

This makes it necessary that the Indian police should also prepare its personnel to keep pace with the changing times and to deal with the day today problems. These problems demands for some suggestions which can be discussed as below:

Suggestions for the Improvement

Some suggestions can be listed for the improvement in the functioning of the police force. The society may become a peaceful place where each and every citizen can live without fear.

- Most of police activities require processing information so police need to invest in ICTs to increase their capacity to store and process large volumes of data.
- In the new era the main emphasis are on customer service and performance measures. Thus, ICT in policing should design to meet the requirements for information under the new system of management.
- For the accountability purpose, police department should regularly pass crime and accident data to the road traffic authorities and insurance companies so that they can act in a proactive manner rather than a reactive manner.
- On-line integration of all the required information for police service also saves the time of the police, so the technical skills and knowledge is required for the police personnel to put the information online.

These suggestions can be proved helpful in controlling the crime and maintenance of law and order in the society. To meet the problems of the coming years it is important to have a police force which is up-to-date with the knowledge of ICTs in routine work.

Conclusion

The main emphasis on accountability and transparency in the police functioning increased the work load on the police force. Indian police force is one of the most important force which tries to build the confidence of the public and it is trying to bring effectiveness and efficiency in the maintenance of law and order in the community. This will help to bring more crime to justice for the fair judgements with the help of a modern and efficient policing process. ICT not only promise to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the police force in controlling and detecting crime, this may also increase their professional qualifications, status and organisational legitimacy.

References

- Bunyard, R.S. (1978) Police Organisation and Command. First Edition London: Macdonald and Evans Ltd.
- CGG (n.d.) Creating People Centric Police Administration: A Management Toolkit [online] available at <http://www.cgg.gov.in/publicationdownloads.pdf> (Accessed 11-12-2011).
- Chaturbedi, J.C. (ed.) (2006) Police Administration and Investigation of Crime. Isha Book Publishers.
- ICTD Project Newsletter (2007) ICT in Law Enforcement [online] available from http://www.nisg.org/docs/29_October%2007.pdf (Accessed 8-12-2011).
- Koper, Christopher S., Taylor, Bruce G. and Kubu, Bruce E. (2009) Law Enforcement Technology Needs Assessment: Future Technologies to Address the Operational Needs of Law Enforcement. [online] available from <http://privacysos.org/sites/all/files/lockheedPERFdoc.pdf> (Accessed 13-12-2011)
- Sachdeva Sameer (2002) E- Governance Strategy in India [online] available from http://www.indiaegov.org/knowledgeexchg/egov_strategy.pdf. (Accessed 10-12-2011).