

Executive Summary

Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS) is a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) of Government of India (GoI). It was conceptualised (2008) by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in consultation with all stakeholders, including the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the State Governments, the Department of Information Technology (DIT), Government of India and the National Informatics Centre (NIC). CCTNS is a centrally sponsored programme aimed at creating a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of policing at all levels, especially at the Police Station level by adopting the principles of e-Governance and creating a nationwide networking infrastructure for evolution of IT-enabled tracking system.

CCTNS was implemented in Odisha from 2013, and as of March, 2023 an expenditure of ₹176.16 crore has been incurred on it jointly by the Government of India and Government of Odisha. Audit noticed that there were deficiencies in planning, implementation, and monitoring of the project since inception. There were irregularities in the tendering process adopted by the State Crime Records Bureau, resulting in extension of undue benefit to the selected software services provider.

Data digitisation and migration was the most important activity and constitutes a major component in the successful implementation of CCTNS project. Proper digitisation and migration of past records into CAS database would help the police in efficient search and matching of records while enquiring/investigating a case. As per the contract, System Integrator was to digitise old/past case records of 10 years from 2001 to 2010 as well as open cases (on-going investigation/trial) even if the case had been registered prior to 2001. It was noted that, instead, SCRB decided (December 2012) to only digitise old/past records for the period from January 2003 to December 2012, which was not in compliance with the contractual terms.

The process of data migration from the system used earlier (Crime and Criminal Information System and Common Integrated Police Application) was incomplete and incorrect, due to the absence of digitisation of key documents and material errors in digitisation of data from physical records. This in turn meant that CCTNS could not be utilised for retrieval of data as intended, for the period prior to 2013.

There were deficiencies in implementing essential controls such as mapping of Police Stations with the correct reporting authorities which adversely impacted effective supervision of the status of criminal cases through the system and resulted in continued use of offline, manual processes for this purpose. There were also deficiencies in the controls for user access management, resulting in continued access to cases by police personnel who were no longer in charge of these cases.

Application controls to ensure identification of accused/ criminals as well as complainants had not been implemented, resulting in multiple IDs for the accused/criminals and complainants in the system. This adversely impacted the main objective of the system- to keep track of all cases associated with an accused/ criminal and registered by the same complainant- and resulted in data inconsistency. There was significant control failure in enforcing chronological sequencing and logical sequencing of actions, resulting in untenable and illogical recording of events, such as registration of First Information Report (FIR) prior to registration of General Diary (GD) entries and recording of Arrests and Seizures prior to recording of FIRs. For instance, in 412 cases during January 2018 to March 2023, the FIR dates were recorded prior to GD dates, which reflected lack of data integrity. These instances indicate a material risk of interventions at the back end of the database, to modify data in the system without authorisation.

Business rules had not been mapped correctly into the system through implementation of necessary application controls, which resulted in discrepancies such as recording of 5,566 missing complaints of children below 18 years without registration of FIRs, which was pre-requisite and mandatory. Despite having provisions in the system for registration and maintenance, non-cognisable cases had not been recorded by the Police Stations in CCTNS.

Due to the absence of clear executive instructions to mandate the utilisation of the system and dispense with maintenance of manual records, the Case Diary Module had not been utilised by the Police Stations. Only 18,513 cases diary records were available in the database, when there were 7.44 lakh FIRs registered as per the manual records during January 2018 to March 2023. CCTNS had not been utilised as intended for the generation of Charge Sheets, due to which significant manual interventions were being made by Police Stations. Since the Police Stations continued to make use of manual records and processes instead of the CCTNS, Court Disposal Memos had not been recorded in CCTNS, resulting in incompleteness of the database and reduced oversight for reporting authorities through the system.

The maintenance of crucial system logs had not been ensured, resulting in the absence of a trail for actions such as deletion of critical records via the back end of the system.

As a result of the above deficiencies, the main objectives of implementing CCTNS had not yet been achieved and there remained residual risks of errors and chances of manipulation since the burden of compliance had not shifted from individual police officials to the system.

Good Practices

Director, SCRB had designed and implemented a color-coded ranking tool for districts and Police Stations for monitoring the performance of Superintendents of Police (SsP) like timely supervision of cases, generation of arrest memos, *etc.* This initiative had resulted in better use of CCTNS apart from effective monitoring. The other initiatives in the new state specific systems are as under:

- **Arakhi Mobile App** introduced by Odisha Police under the CCTNS Project helps the investigating officers in on-the-spot creation of digital record, generation of various forms easily, capturing activity digitally in chronological order, generation of case diaries for prompt and effective investigation.
- **Redesigning of CCTNS dashboard** as a single sign-on for all CCTNS modules, aimed at rearranging the entire information of the database using data analytics, to make it more informative and interactive.

Recommendations

Government should ensure that

- *tendering process is conducted in compliance with Rules, in a fair and transparent manner. Change of scope of projects should be avoided after selection of the system integrator;*
- *appropriate steps should be taken to digitize physical records and data related to those records, to enable migration of legacy data into the system;*
- *user access management in CCTNS is compliant with business rules, so that the officers in charge are correctly mapped to roles and cases and police stations are also correctly mapped to reporting authorities;*
- *deficiencies in GD numbering and FIR numbering should be fixed so that duplicate GD numbers and gaps in FIR numbers do not occur in the system;*
- *chronological and logical sequencing of actions is enforced in the system, to preserve data integrity;*
- *use of CCTNS is mandated for registering missing persons, non-cognisable cases, case diaries, arrest memos, seizure memos etc., in real time and maintenance of parallel manual records is dispensed with, in a phased manner with clear timelines;*
- *business rules like ‘Serving Notice’ under section 41A of CrPC; mandatory registration of FIR in respect of missing persons below 18 years, automatic marking of cases under sections SC&ST POA Act, POCSO Act as SR cases, automatic marking of cases under defined sections like rape/POCSO etc., as ‘sensitive’, are incorporated in CCTNS and the system maintains a master data for Courts, to facilitate recording of data on forwarding of cases;*
- *use of CCTNS is mandated for managing Chargesheets, and Court Disposal Memos in real time and maintenance of parallel manual records is dispensed with, in a phased manner with clear timelines;*
- *appropriate application log and DBA log should be maintained to track users’ actions and fix responsibility in case of gross errors/manipulation in records;*
- *appropriate validation and input controls are implemented to maintain data consistency;*

- *synchronisation process should be rectified to maintain consistency of data between the offline and online database apart from ensuring data backups of the offline servers at police stations;*
- *no primary record should be deleted and in case deletion is required, soft deletion method as mentioned in the system design documentation is adopted along with appropriate application and system logs;*
- *a supervisory dashboard is developed to identify exceptional events by the technical team at headquarters and take necessary action. Further, periodic exception reports may be monitored by higher authorities; and*
- *adequate training is imparted to users for smooth implementation of CCTNS.*