



CCTV in Police Stations: SC

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Why in News

Recently, the **Supreme Court** (SC) has asked the **States and Union Territories Governments** to ensure that **CCTV** (closed-circuit television) **cameras** are installed in each and every **Police Station**.

Key Points

- **Background:**
 - **2015:** In the case of *D K Basu vs State of West Bengal*, the **SC** directed that **CCTVs** should be installed in every **police station and prison** to **check human rights abuses**.
 - **2018:** The SC asked the Ministry of Home Affairs to set up a **Central Oversight Body (COB)** to implement the plan of action with respect to **videography in the crime scene during investigation**.
 - Recently, the **SC** has found that the majority of the states and UTs **lack the details** of installing CCTVs in police stations.
- **Latest Directions:**
 - **States** and **UTs** should **ensure that CCTV cameras are installed** at each and every police station, at all entry and exit points, main gate, lock-ups, corridors, lobby and reception as also areas outside the lock-up rooms so that no part is left uncovered.
 - CCTV systems **must be equipped with night vision** and **have audio as well as video footage** and it shall be mandatory for the Centre, states and UTs to purchase such systems which allow storage of data for maximum period possible, **at least one year**.
 - The Centre should install CCTV cameras and recording equipment at the offices of investigating agencies, including the **Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI)**, the **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** and **National Investigation Agency (NIA)**, which **conduct interrogations and have the power of arrest**.
Oversight Bodies should be **extended to state and district level**.

- **Constitutional Dimension:** The current directions by the SC are furtherance of the fundamental right enshrined in **Article 21 (Protection of life and personal liberty)** of the Indian Constitution.
 - **Article 21:** States that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.
 - The expanded scope of **Article 21** has been explained by the **SC** in the case of ***Unni Krishnan vs. State of Andhra Pradesh*** (1993) and the **SC** has itself provided the list of some of the rights covered under Article 21 on the basis of earlier pronouncements and some of them are listed below:

The right to go abroad, The right to privacy, The right to shelter, The right to social justice and economic empowerment, The **right against solitary confinement**, The **right against handcuffing**, The right against delayed execution, The **right against custodial death**, The right against public hanging, Doctors' assistance, Protection of cultural heritage, Right of every child to a full development, Right to pollution free water and air.
- **Data Related to Violence in Custody:**
 - According to **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** data, **between 2001 and 2018, only 26 policemen were convicted of custodial violence despite 1,727 such deaths** being recorded in India.

Only **4.3% of the 70 deaths in 2018 were attributed to injuries** during custody due to physical assault by police.
 - Apart from custodial deaths, **more than 2,000 human rights violation cases were also recorded against the police between 2000 and 2018**. And only 344 policemen were convicted in those cases.
- **India is not a signatory of United Nations Convention Against Torture** which requires states to take effective measures to prevent torture in any territory under their jurisdiction and forbids states to transport people to any country where there is a reason to believe they will be tortured.
- **CCTV:**
 - It is a **Television system** in which **signals** are not publicly distributed but are **monitored**, primarily for **surveillance and security purposes**.
 - **Components:** It consists of basic components that do not vary much from system-to-system. At a high level, these include **a camera (with a lens), cabling, a digital video recorder (DVR) or network video recorder (NVR), and a video monitor**.
 - **Security Uses:**
 - It is one of the **most important physical security controls to address terrorism and other security threats**.
 - CCTV has incomparable value as a **forensic tool** as well as in **detering all types of physical and electronic threats**.

Source:IE