Role of Technology in Policing

Why in news?

At the NCRB Foundation Day, the Union Home Minister remarked that the second phase of the Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) project is set to be completed by 2026.

What is ICJS?

- ICJS is an initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs to enable seamless transfer of data and information among different pillars of the criminal justice system, like courts, police, jails and forensic science laboratories, from one platform.
- National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) will be responsible for the implementation of the project in association with National Informatics Center (NIC).
- **Objectives**
    - Interoperability of data across all pillars of criminal justice system
    - National crime & criminal data search across all pillars
    - MIS Dashboard and reporting of FIR/Case/ Case pendency/ Prisons/ Prisoner status
    - Data analytics for forecasting/ predictive trends in crimes
    - Seamless data sharing across all pillars through a common network connectivity
- **Five pillars**
    - Police (Crime and Criminal Tracking and Network Systems)
    - e-Forensics for Forensic Labs
    - e-Courts for Courts
    - e-Prosecution for Public Prosecutors
    - e-Prisons for Prisons
- **Phase-I (2018-2022)-** Individual IT systems have been implemented and stabilized and search of records have been enabled on these systems.
- **Phase-II (2022-23 to 2025-26)-** The system is being built on the principle of ‘one data one entry’ whereby data is entered only once in one pillar and the same is then available in all other pillars without the need to re-enter the data in each pillar.



. Conceptual diagram of ICJS implementation

What initiatives were promoted for leveraging technology in policing?

- **Crime and Criminal Information System (CCIS)**- It was initiated in 1995 to create a database that can be used for crime monitoring by agencies such as NCRB, State Crime Records Bureaus (SCRBs) and District Crime Records Bureaus (DCRBs).
- **Common Integrated Police Application (CIPA)-** It was initiated in 2004 by NCRB to enter FIR details into the system and print out copies and the ability to create and manage police station registers on the system.
- **CCTNS-** The Crime and Criminal Tracking Networks and Systems was conceived as a response to the Mumbai attacks of 2008 to create a comprehensive and integrated system for effective policing through e-Governance.
- **ICJS**- One crore fingerprints had already been uploaded and if these were available to all police stations as part of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS), there would no longer be any need to pursue criminals.
- **Fingerprint-based criminal record data fetching system-** It was unveiled by the Indore Police Commissioner in which a small thumb impression machine can be added to a phone to capture fingerprints at checking points, public spaces, etc.
- It avoids the long waiting period in fingerprint analysis as part of investigations.

What are the challenges in deploying technology in policing?

- **Privacy**- The Supreme Court in K.S Puttaswamy declared a fundamental right to informational privacy as paramount and noted that any measure that sought to collect information or surveil must be legal, necessary, and proportionate.
- **Mass surveillance**- Integrating fingerprint-based criminal record data fetching system to the list of predictive policing practices will give birth to mass surveillance.
- **Caste based targeting**- Nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes were ascribed “criminality by birth” and considered as “hereditary criminals” under the colonial Criminal Tribes Act, 1871.
- It has been replaced with the murky Habitual Offenders (HO) provisions, which have acted as a tool for police to continue to attribute criminality.

References

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