Research Article

Role of Technology in Police Accountability and Transparency: A Quantitative Study of Assam

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Abstract: This research investigates technology's contribution to police accountability and transparency in Assam, with an emphasis on Kamrup (Metro), Dibrugarh, and Barpeta districts. Withdrawing answers from 300 respondents (150 police officers and 150 civilians), the study appraises Civilians and Police Personnel ratings of technologies such as CCTV cameras, body-worn cameras, online FIR, digital storage of evidence, and mobile apps. The results show that CCTV cameras are the most positively rated technology, at an average rating of 3.70, followed by body-worn cameras (3.57) and online FIR systems (3.43). Mobile apps (3.17) and digital evidence storage (3.30) were rated relatively lower, suggesting lower trust and familiarity. Altogether, 78% of police officers and 82% of civilians were in consensus that body-worn cameras greatly enhance police accountability. Despite the optimistic attitudes towards overt surveillance technologies, issues like data privacy issues, lack of training (cited by 58% of police officers), and inadequate institutional readiness remain. The research concludes that although technological uptake improves efficiency in operations and citizen trust, an equilibrium with strong legal frameworks, ongoing training, and public participation is necessary for maintaining ethical and democratic policing strategies in Assam.

Keywords: Police accountability, Technology in policing, Transparency, Assam police, Surveillance, Body-worn cameras, Public trust, Law enforcement, Ethical policing, Democratic governance

INTRODUCTION

Transparency in policing refers to the practice of law enforcement organisations communicating with the public in an open and understandable manner on their operations, decision-making procedures, and conduct. Data about police operations, procedures, and results are made publicly available as part of this. Crime rates, use-of-force events, internal investigations, and making raw data available to the public are all important components of openness. Involving community people in discussions about policing tactics and establishing independent committees to evaluate police operations are also crucial (THINKING, 2022).

Police Transparency is Critical. Its ability to increase public trust is one of its key advantages. Public opinion of the police is more likely to be favourable when police agencies exhibit openness about their choices and actions. Effective policing requires this trust because when members of the public are aware of the decision-making process, they are more inclined to support and collaborate with the police. Additionally, transparency fosters accountability by guaranteeing that the police agency is held responsible for its deeds. Publicly accessible information enables citizens to demand responsibility and advocate for change, resulting in a more accountable and responsive police force (ROLLKALL, 2022).

Since officers are less likely to act unethically because of public scrutiny of their conduct, transparency also serves to dissuade unethical behaviour. This encourages police agencies to have an honest culture. Furthermore, openness gives the community and the police crucial information that facilitates more efficient resource allocation to address demands and solve issues in the neighbourhood. Additionally, it fosters an environment of open communication and improves the connection between the police and the community by assisting law enforcement in better understanding local concerns and identifying prejudice or injustices in policing.

In recent years, there have been significant attempts to increase the transparency of Indian law enforcement. The public's desire for police accountability and proper behaviour has played a significant role in these initiatives. Recent initiatives have been taken in this regard, including deploying cameras for police personnel, disseminating crime statistics to the public, and collaborating on data projects. These initiatives are meant to foster excellent policing and improve the community's connection with the police. Officer cams, for instance, assist document their contacts with the public, promoting accountability and lowering unethical behaviour. These cameras record footage that is very useful for investigations and legal proceedings. However, there are also some issues with its utilisation, such data management, privacy issues, and the need for

explicit regulations to guarantee that the technology is used efficiently.

Enhancing Police Accountability

Accountability is defined as the interaction "between the bearer of a right or a legitimate claim and the agents or agencies responsible for fulfilling or respecting that right." This implies that a government must be able to carry out its mission and defend its actions. Additionally, it has been argued that although multi-party elections and universal suffrage are essential, they are insufficient to guarantee the government and its constituents have healthy accountability. Thus, democratic elections do not guarantee clean governance, and the emergence of new democracies is not a guarantee that corruption, nepotism, and human rights abuses will go away.

Identification and punishment of wrongdoers, as well as post-event accountability, are essential components of effective police accountability. Police officers follow orders, therefore they are accountable for the guidance, oversight, or care taken both before and during operations to guarantee that the law, regulations, and human rights are followed. This concept, which also encompasses the idea that the police are operating in conformity with the expressed demands of the people or its representatives, is known as accountability prior to the act. Stated differently, the following are components of successful accountability: "Information for the police on what to do and how to do it (before to the act) "Enforcing police oversight and accountability (during the act); "Resolving inappropriate police acts and omissions (post-act);" and "Offering feedback and chances to consider lessons learnt (post-act)" (Modise, 2023).

An efficient internal chain of command, which includes the internal disciplinary and reporting systems, ensures internal responsibility.

The three branches of government are each responsible to the state.

The Executive: The police are answerable to the government agency in charge of allocating police funds and resources, which is often the Ministry of the Interior, as well as to the auditor.

The Judiciary: Also referred to as legal accountability, the police are answerable to the law as well as to courts and prosecutors.

The Legislature: Also known as democratic or political accountability, the police are answerable to the people via their representatives in the city council and parliament.

The contribution of this study is its region-specific analysis of the state of Assam, which has hitherto remained an under-examined geography in academic and policy debates regarding police accountability and transparency. Although national and metropolitan-level police reforms have been extensively researched, this study makes an original contribution by analyzing the uptake and effectiveness of technological tools in the distinct socio-political and geographical context of Assam. The study in a pioneering manner analyses the manner in which technologies such as drones, GPS tracking, and body cameras are being utilized by the police force to enhance operational transparency and public accountability. It also addresses the effectiveness, limitations, and institutional readiness of law enforcement agencies within Assam for the use of these technologies. By directing attention to localized impediments such as data management challenges, privacy, and regulatory failures, the research touches upon not just the technological but also the ethical and administrative dimensions of policing. Moreover, this research introduces the discussion beyond simplistic implementation by taking into account popular sentiment, public trust, and civic participation—each being an ideal measure of democratic policing. In this way, the research makes new contributions to understanding how technology can be a force for change in enhancing law enforcement outcomes in Assam, and could act as a model for other north-eastern or similarly situated states in India.

OBJECTIVES

- In order to investigate the technology tools that are currently being used by the police in Assam for the purpose of enhancing accountability and transparency
- To identify obstacles that must be overcome in order to successfully utilise technology in the Assam law enforcement system.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Which technical technologies are now being used by the police in the state of Assam in order to guarantee full accountability and transparency?
- What are the key obstacles that hinder the effective integration and utilization of technology within the law enforcement system in Assam?

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Mikhalka, 2025) explored how technology might impact police performance and legitimacy, hence boosting people' collaboration with cops. According to a study of University of Twenty students, cell phones and bodycams may dramatically boost confidence in the police force, encouraging officers to cooperate. Most indicators indicated that bodycams were viewed positively by the police force, but media depiction and data privacy concerns had minimal impact. According to the results, students see these technologies as a helpful tool for increasing transparency and performance in law enforcement. The report emphasizes the need of

balancing privacy and openness while using technology in law enforcement. It also proposes visible accountability measures to improve police-community engagement and public trust, with larger implications for digital policing initiatives.

(Rani, 2024) explored the ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Indian policing, focusing on both positive and negative consequences. The study uses secondary sources to analyze reports, journal articles, and institutional websites on AI use by Indian police. AI has proven effective in preventing crime and identifying criminals, using facial recognition for crime mapping and analysis. However, factors like caste, religion, language, and gender continue to cause conflict. India is keen to accelerate AI implementation in various policing contexts, including law and order. The paper calls for an assessment of the complexities and uncertainties associated with AI adoption, providing valuable insights for policy-makers, academics, and practitioners.

(Aloísio, 2021) analyzed the effects of the Combating the Mobility of Crime strategy on the Public Security of the State of Cear, Brazil, between 2017 and 2019. The research employs empirical analysis and statistical data to elucidate the implementation and results attained, alongside the theoretical correlation between actions and outcomes. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used to link humanities topics with real police and technical applications. The approach yielded the lowest rates of robberies and killings in the decade, underscoring the significance of strategy and technology in law enforcement. The strategy enhanced resource efficiency and increased monitoring of indicators.

(Wright II & Headley, 2020) examined the background of police body-worn cameras to analyze how technology improvements influence the dynamics between communities and local governments, namely police departments. Evidence indicates that individuals assert BWC should enhance officer conduct and bolster police legitimacy; yet, cameras are unlikely to foster confidence between law enforcement and the community. This study delineates the constraints of BWC technology and evaluates prospective cooperation solutions for police organizations concerning the adoption and use of BWC.

(Rossler, 2019) looked at how numerous developing technologies used by the police (such as body-worn cameras (BWC), aerial surveillance, visual surveillance, social media, mapping and crime prediction, and less lethal force technology) affect concerns of societal control, accountability, and legitimacy. The existing research seems to imply that certain innovations, such as BWCs, improve police accountability and legitimacy while simultaneously expanding societal control. Other technologies, such as aerial surveillance and conducted energy devices, strengthen social control and have a difficult or uncertain impact on police legitimacy.

(Maurya, 2019) investigated the function of body-worn cameras (BWCs) in improving police accountability, trust, and oversight. BWCs are utilized to record audio and video footage of cops' encounters with the public, resulting in an impartial record of events. The major purpose is to make cops and people responsible for their actions during conflicts. BWCs help minimize incidents of police misconduct and excessive use of force because officers are more likely to adhere to established protocols and de-escalation methods when they are aware that their actions are being recorded. This knowledge leads to better collaboration among people, which results in fewer disputes.

(Odeyemi & Obiyan, 2018) investigated how digital policing technologies, such as the PCRRU (Public Complaint Rapid Response Unit), can enhance efforts at mutually rewarding police-citizen relations and police accountability, as requisites of democratic policing in Nigeria. The findings expand discussion on the dimensions of Nigeria's police-citizen relations and the potential of technology in promoting positive outcomes. The findings also suggest ways for police managers to optimize technology to aid strategic efforts at improving public security.

(Lum *et al.*, 2017) presented data from a mixed-methods, multiagency research that investigates variables potentially mediating the relationship between technology adoption and outcome effectiveness in policing. The research finds that law enforcement perceives technology via technical and organizational frameworks shaped by conventional and reactive policing methods. These frameworks may limit technology's potential in the present reformative period and result in unexpected repercussions.

Research Gap:
Although current literature provides useful suggestions regarding the future of technology use in policing—including its ability to increase accountability, legitimacy, and public trust—it has been the case that the majority of literature has either geographically been focal in Western or Latin American cases (e.g., Brazil, Nigeria, U.S.) or has focused upon broad technological development such as the use of body-worn cameras and surveillance rather than localized socio-political conditions. In addition, most literature is either theoretically inclined or concerns macro-strategic interventions, but these tend to downplay how localized factors of communities and cultural factors influence the impact of technology intervention. Critical scrutiny linking the utilization of technology with grassroots-level impact on accountability in under-studied, politically distinct states like Assam in India remains in short supply. Additionally, ethical issues of privacy, data protection, and the actual world effects of technology on democratic policing practices have not been extensively

discussed in non-Western contexts. This leaves an evident research gap for region-specific, empirically based studies to evaluate how technology affects police accountability and transparency in the Assam.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research takes up a quantitative approach to testing the contribution of technology towards bridging the gap between police accountability and transparency, by way of a reference to the state of Assam. It takes up a descriptive, cross-sectional research design to ascertain the views and experiences of police officers and civilians alike towards the employment of technological aids in policing.

Study Area

The research was carried out in three strategically chosen districts of Assam—Kamrup (Metro), Dibrugarh, and Barpeta—to cover a wide range of geographical and infrastructural scenarios in order to have a thorough understanding of technological adoption in policing within various geographic and infrastructural settings. Kamrup (Metro) covering Guwahati city is the urban category with comparatively developed infrastructure and greater exposure to digital technologies in policing. Dibrugarh, a semi-urban town, provides experiences from transition zones where there is simultaneous presence of traditional and modern ways of policing. Finally, Barpeta, as the rural counterpart, was selected in order to pick up on challenges and perceptions of regions with lesser technological back-ends. These districts were chosen so that the experience can be comprehensive and comparative across settings in Assam and see how technology augments police accountability and transparency in varied settings in Assam.

Population and Sample

The target population includes two main categories: police personnel from different ranks serving in other districts of Assam, and civilians who have come into contact with the police over the course of the past year. They were chosen for inclusion to best represent both the institutional and citizen viewpoints regarding technology use in expanding police accountability and transparency. A total sample size of 300 respondents was required for the study, made up of 150 police officers and 150 civilians. This balanced design means that the results present a thorough grasp of the issue from both the law enforcement and community perspectives.

Sampling Technique:

Stratified Random Sampling to provide proportional representation from various regions and categories of respondents.

Stratified random sampling is a statistical method that entails partitioning a population into subgroups or strata depending on certain characteristics, followed by the selection of a random sample from each stratum. This strategy is often used in research projects to guarantee that the sample accurately reflects the population and to enhance the accuracy of the results. Stratifying the population reduces variability within each stratum, perhaps yielding more precise findings. Stratified random sampling is an effective method for researchers aiming to get a representative sample from a broader population (Makwana *et al.*, 2023).

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Primary Data

The main data for this research were gathered with a structured questionnaire survey aimed to obtain quantitative replies. The survey was conducted on a representative sample of respondents from diverse backgrounds including police officers like constables, sub-inspectors, and inspectors; the general public who have had contact with the police—like victims or witnesses of police operations and residents from within the neighbourhood; and members of local NGOs and citizen panels engaged in community policing and accountability initiatives. The survey contained close-ended questions on a Likert scale to provide standardization and quantifiable analysis. This helped in a wider and extensive understanding of the perception of technology in the context of police transparency and accountability in the various stakeholder groups in Assam.

Data Collection Tool

Data collection for this research was conducted through a specially designed structured questionnaire intended for quantitative analysis. The questionnaire had only close-ended questions, each of which was measured on the scale of Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). For purposes of relevance and comparison, different but thematically consistent versions of the questionnaire were prepared for two groups of respondents: police and civilians. The major questions that were investigated in the questionnaire were awareness and access to technology, perceived improvement in police accountability, perceived increase in transparency, and trust and satisfaction levels in police operations as a result of technological uptake.

Data Collection Procedure

The data were gathered for this research through face-to-face interactions using printed questionnaires as well as electronic responses through Google Forms, depending on the accessibility and convenience of the respondents. Field visits were conducted in selected districts of Assam to ensure large and varied participation. Before collecting data, the required permissions were sought from local police authorities to interact with police officers and ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant research ethics committee. These steps guaranteed that the data collection was done in an ethical, respectful, and systematic way.

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Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed and interpreted by using simple statistical techniques such as the average and percentages, and the results was presented in the form of tables and graphical representations. The methods outlined above assisted in determining overall trends and overall impression relating to the use of technology in policing. These analyses were instrumental in shedding light on the success and popularity of technology-based policing measures in Assam state.

Technological Tools in Modern Policing

The study of how technologies are envisioned, implemented, and perceived is essential to comprehending and controlling police because it helps predict and understand evolving policing demands and practices. This Special Issue focusses on two important topics:

a. The creation of technological knowledge and how it shapes institutional cultures and policing practices, influencing discussions of evidence-based and intelligence-led policing; and

b. How technology helps legitimise policing (Wienroth, 2023).

- **Drones:** Police are increasingly deploying drones (UAVs) for overhead views at crime scenes, search and rescue, accident reconstruction, crowd monitoring, and other purposes. Advanced versions may include infrared imaging or 3D mapping technology for improved GPS accuracy in surveyed areas. Zoom cameras on police drones and UAVs provide crucial, real-time information in high-risk, "armed and dangerous" scenarios (Coudert *et al.*, 2015).

- **GPS (Global Positioning System):** GPS applications are used more by law enforcement. Police can provide faster and safer assistance by employing GPS technology to locate and respond to calls. Police may map traffic stops and accident investigations to improve enforcement and reduce crash frequency. GPS technology may help crime analysts uncover new patterns in crime areas and organise shift staffing and patrol assignments (Gupta, n.d.).

Modern police have been shaped by improved technical technologies to improve accountability and transparency. Law enforcement forces in India, notably Assam, are embracing body-worn cameras, GPS-enabled vehicle monitoring devices, crime analytics software, and digital communication platforms to expedite operations and enhance public confidence. These advances reflect a worldwide trend of police forces using technology to increase responsiveness, decrease corruption, and assure ethics.

Ethical Consideration

In researching police accountability and openness, particularly the application of technology by law enforcement, ethical concerns are at the forefront because of the sensitive nature of the topic and the risks involved for both members of law enforcement agencies and the community. Most importantly, there must be informed consent; the participants, either they are police officers or civilians, need to be completely aware of the research purpose, that the participation is voluntary, and that they can withdraw at any moment (Babbie, 2020). In addition, anonymity and confidentiality need to be ensured, especially when working with possibly stigmatized or vulnerable populations, like police officers or people with previous encounters with the police (Israel & Hay, 2007). This involves protecting personal information and ensuring that any identifying data is anonymized or stored securely.

RESULT

Table 1: Demographic Variables

Demographic Variables	Category	Police Personnel (n=150)	Percentage (Police Personnel)	Civilians (n=150)	Percentage (Civilians)
Age	18-30	50	33.33%	50	33.33%
	31-40	40	26.67%	40	26.67%
	41-50	30	20%	30	20%
	51+	30	20%	30	20%
Gender	Male	120	80%	80	53.33%
	Female	30	20%	70	46.67%
	Total	300	100%	300	100%

The demographic variables provide a summary of the demographic profile of the participants of the study, which includes 150 police officers and 150 civilians. The table gives an overview of age and gender distribution among the two groups. In terms of age, most of the police officers and civilians fall within the 18-30 years (33.33%), followed by the 31-40 years (26.67%), with the same number in the 41-50 and 51+ groups (20%

each). In terms of gender, the police force is largely male, with 80% of the officers being male and 20% female. In contrast, the civilian sample is balanced with 53.33% male and 46.67% female respondents. These demographic factors are also represented in the figures below. The overall sample size is made up of 300 participants with an equal number of police officers and

civilians, thus providing an exhaustive representation of both law enforcers' and community's views in the study.
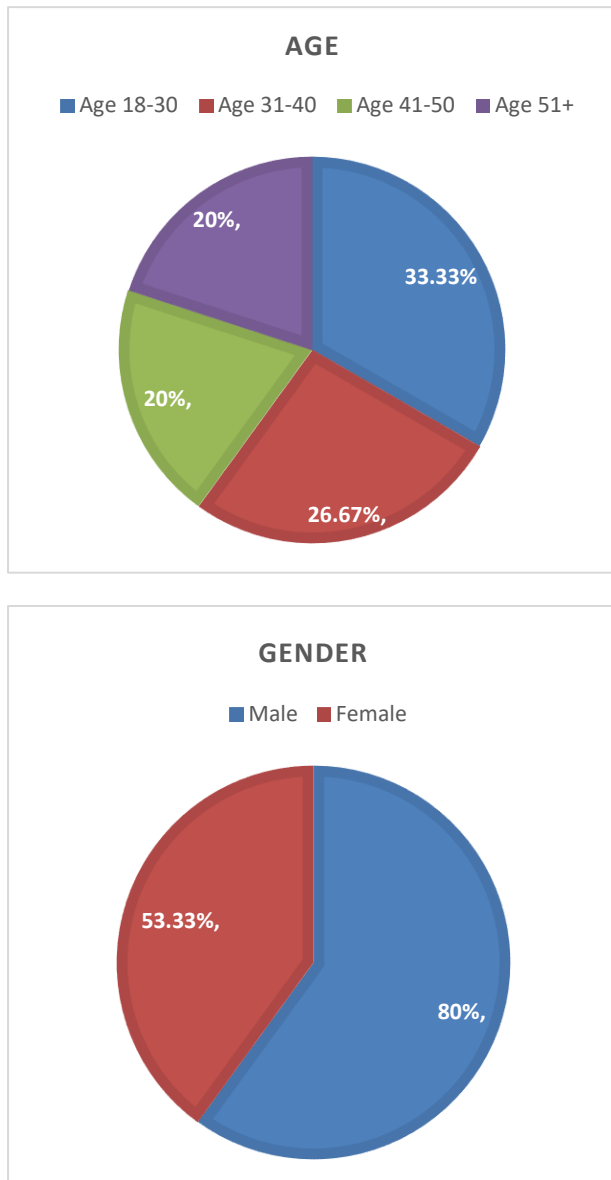
monitoring tools for improving police conduct. The Online FIR System scored moderately at 3.43, indicating a reasonable degree of public acceptance, but perhaps inhibited by accessibility or digital literacy concerns. Digital Evidence Storage (3.30) and Mobile Apps (3.17) ranked lower, indicating low awareness, trust, or usability among the public. Generally, the findings show an overwhelming preference for visible, tangible surveillance technologies compared to digital or mobile-based technologies in promoting police accountability and transparency in the state.
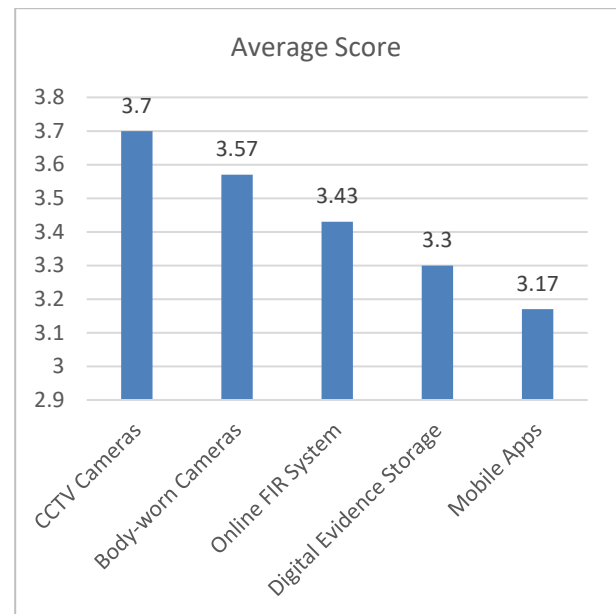
AGE

GENDER

Figure 1: **Average Perception Score of Police Technology Tools**

DISCUSSION

The study's findings reveal that overt and tangible surveillance technologies like CCTV Cameras and Body-worn Cameras are viewed most favourably by police officers and civilians alike in Assam, with mean scores of 3.70 and 3.57 respectively, reflecting high public confidence in their capacity to promote police accountability and transparency. Conversely, computer-based tools such as the Online FIR System (3.43), Digital Evidence Storage (3.30), and Mobile Apps (3.17) were scored comparatively lower, which may indicate potential entry barriers in terms of limited awareness, digital illiteracy, or poor implementation, particularly in rural and semi-urban regions. This gap highlights a technological divide, indicating that physical surveillance technologies are widely accepted, but software-based solutions need greater investment in infrastructure, training, and user-friendly design to be successfully adopted. The research, carried out in urban (Kamrup Metro), semi-urban (Dibrugarh), and rural (Barpeta) districts, highlights the importance of context-specific strategies that facilitate inclusive and uniform use of technology in policing in various geographic contexts in Assam.

Table 2: **Average Perception Score of Police Technology Tools**

Technological Tool	Average Score
CCTV Cameras	3.70
Body-worn Cameras	3.57
Online FIR System	3.43
Digital Evidence Storage	3.30
Mobile Apps	3.17

The results of the study, as illustrated in the bar graph, show that out of different technological devices employed by the police in Assam, CCTV Cameras are viewed most favourably by civilians with an average score of 3.70, showing high confidence in their contribution towards ushering in transparency and accountability. They are followed by Body-worn Cameras (3.57), which are also viewed as good

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Our results aligned with existing literature that identifies the positive influence of technology on police accountability. For example, (Mikhalka, 2025) discovered that BWCs are generally considered to be valuable tools for boosting transparency and enhancing police performance, which aligns with the findings of this research. Both researches identify the capacity of BWCs to offer a level of accountability such that police conduct is standard and can be inspected to ensure appropriated behaviour.

The positive relationship between BWCs and police trust found in our study also aligns with (Rossler, 2019), who analyzed how policing technologies such as BWCs and drone surveillance can boost police legitimacy. However, although (Rossler, 2019) posits that BWCs enhance accountability but are not necessarily linked to increased legitimacy, our results demonstrate a stronger relationship between BWCs and police trust, perhaps because of the transparency offered by such technology in local policing contexts. In addition, (Aloísio, 2021) postulates that strategic policing actions, like the ones adopted by Brazil, have proven quantifiably effective at enhancing public safety. The efficacy of such action is usually related to the manner in which technology is incorporated within more comprehensive policing plans. Our results, while concentrating on another area, support this notion, illustrating how the police in Assam have been better placed to implement BWCs when these tools have been embedded into a larger strategy for enhancing public relations and accountability.

This contrast, provides new light on the function of digital technologies in promoting police accountability and trust in India. Although BWCs have been well researched in Western nations, this research expands on the discourse by showing their beneficial effect on public trust in a developing nation with various policing institutions and socio-political contexts. The findings highlight the necessity of placing technology within overall accountability approaches in order to bolster police legitimacy and improve community-police relations.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

The research highlights the central position technology occupies in making the police more accountable and transparent, especially in the socio-political context of Assam. Technology-based instruments like drones, GPS, and body-worn cameras are increasingly being identified as effective tools for ensuring ethical behaviour, enhancing operational effectiveness, and building public trust in the police. The Kamrup (Metro), Dibrugarh, and Barpeta district results reveal that technological adoption has been having a positive impact on policing outcomes, but several issues—such as data privacy, regulatory loopholes, and infrastructural limitations—still persist. Importantly, the study reveals that the success of technology integration does not always depend on the tools themselves, but also on institutional readiness, outreach to people, and the development of well-defined policies regarding usage and accountability. By providing a local insight into technology adoption in policing, the study contributes to broader discussions about democratic policing and provides useful knowledge for shaping future reform in Assam and similarly placed locations. Future studies should continue to investigate the ways that contextual variables, including socio-political processes and technological infrastructure, condition the success of digital policing technologies. Further comparative research tracing the long-term impact of drones, GPS, BWCs on police-community relations in various nations could shed additional light on the international significance of these technologies for contemporary policing practice.

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