

Operational Experience

Progress So Far

1. Pursuant to the grant being accepted, RTI Applications for obtaining all orders issued under Section 144, Cr.P.C. between 01.01.2021 till 31.12.2021 were filed between 24.02.2022 and 01.03.2022 with the concerned authorities in multiple cities including New Delhi, NOIDA, Guwahati, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Lucknow.
2. Subsequent to filing RTI Applications, replies have been received from NOIDA, Bhopal, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, stating that the information sought for was not available with the concerned office. For New Delhi, the RTI Application came to be transferred *suo motu* by the Office of the Commissioner of Police to all police districts of the city.
3. Subsequently, from 24.03.2022 onwards, replies to the parent RTI application began coming in, which followed either one of three courses: (i) provided information, (ii) offered to provide information upon making due payment, (iii) offered an opportunity to inspect original records and follow-up with a separate request for copies.
4. As of today, replies from ten of the fifteen police districts of New Delhi have been received, and even all ten districts have not yet furnished complete information. After having taken necessary steps, including inspecting original records at the police stations, a total of 3,956 orders have been made available to us, spanning the period between 01.01.2021 till 31.12.2021.

Current Position:

5. In light of constant engagement by authorities in New Delhi, we are currently in process of continuing data-collection with the Delhi Police by filing subsequent RTI applications and going physically for inspections at police stations across the city.

Operational Challenges

6. Comprehensive data-collection at a single city-wide level has defied assumptions made at the start of the project. The total number of orders thus far for a single city is nearly 4,000, and remains incomplete. It is likely that this figure will cross 6,000 orders for a single city.
7. The time for such comprehensive data-collection was also underestimated — in the proposal data-collection was assumed to last over a month, however due to the overwhelming nature of responses for a single city, it has taken close to 3.5 months and counting.
8. To replicate this data-collection exercise across any other city necessarily requires an identical amount of time and effort, if not greater given that the

researchers are based out of New Delhi and are not fluent in regional languages in which the information is likely to be provided.

9. While data-analysis has begun, it is yet at a nascent stage. To include another city would result in pushing back data-analysis even further, extending the period of the study much beyond the proposed timeline.

Way Forward

10. In light of the above, it is suggested that the scope of the project be restricted to a focused study on usage of Section 144, Cr.P.C. in New Delhi rather than a study across cities as initially proposed. While there is an obvious drawback in being unable to offer a comparative analysis of usage of this power across cities, the staggeringly high reliance on these powers in a single city itself makes it a unique and rich source for analysis. Especially, since there are no existing studies engaging with Section 144, Cr.P.C. at the ground level, let alone with a raw data set spanning thousands of orders.