Introduction

The Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) technology was introduced to the UK under Home Office Crime Reduction Programme in 1998 in an attempt to reduce crime and be able to cut down the fear of crime and victimization. This research paper essentially brings out the impact and effectiveness of the CCTV technology on the society and also examines the cost to benefit ratio of the huge investments made. The data and analysis documented in this paper come from 13 out of the 684 CCTV projects undertaken in the UK. An astounding amount of £170 million was on offer by the government for this project, which pretty much reflects the faith and conviction that the UK had in this technology. However, the conclusions drawn from the paper don’t really imitate that the impact of CCTVs was an immaculate success.

What makes it interesting?

The whole concept of the CCTV is grabbing the attention of the community in the modern day world. They are everywhere; from parking lots, to shopping malls, telephone booths, busy crossings, famous streets, jewelry shops, railway stations and airports. People look at them curiously when they see little cameras moving, tilting and zooming in and out. No matter what the statistics and experts have to say, the common man certainly feels more secure psychologically! People feel someone’s watching them continuously, day and night. Thus, the innocent feel safer and the malefactors feel more susceptible of being caught.

The Q&A

There are several questions put up in this paper; some of which have been answered and some remain unanswered. These questions give the readers an explicit view of the research carried out and the conclusions drawn from them.

Some of the big questions are as follows:

The biggest one: Does the CCTV really reduce crime? Well, for some people, it does. For most others, it doesn’t! Statistics from the research reveal that CCTVs lead to displacement of crime rather than its reduction.
Does the CCTV help reduce the fear of crime? Yes, it does. The CCTVs do make a psychological impact and people feel safer under the presence of these cameras.

Does the use of CCTVs compromise privacy? Again, to some, it does. To most others, it doesn’t. However, most people in the UK were told that they were caught on camera 300 times a day; there were no real protests against the use of these cameras. Most people were in favor of the deployment of these cameras, once they got used to them.

Is the huge money involved justified? The answer, most likely is a no. Again, as per the statistics, the cost-effectiveness ratio clearly suggests that the investments clearly outweighed the monetary gains accounted for.

Research Methodology and Study Analysis:

The assessment of CCTVs comprised largely of two methodologies:

1. Quasi Experimental research technique: Aims to achieve the Level 3 of the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale i.e. measures of crime before and after the program in experimental and comparable control conditions.

2. Realistic evaluation techniques were used to investigate the effectiveness of the various installations and circumstances under which these installations were made.

The study identifies various areas to evaluate various aspects:

Target areas comprised of the areas covered by the cameras. Next were the control areas: these were selected on the basis of comparison between socio-demographic and geographical characteristics and crime problems. For measuring displacement and diffusion effects, Buffer Zone was identified.

Public attitude surveys were carried along; absolute changes in the police crime were taken into account, to study the crime patterns graphical approach were used. Spatial analysis was carried out to measure geographical crime trends.

These results have been well documented in tables and graphs, making them easy to understand.

The results that came out can be summarized as follows:

- Police-recorded crime decreased in 6 out of the 13 systems. However, in only three cases might this decrease be attributable to CCTV, and in only two areas was there a significant decrease compared with the control.

- Some crime types showed an increase following CCTV installation: This was accounted as success as it brought more crime to books. E.g.: Residential areas

- Information exchange between control room operators and the police was helpful in handling shoplifting offences in urban centers. Partnership between CCTV control rooms, the police, and other agencies helped overcome problems like anti-social behavior, alcohol-related offences etc.
The technical aspects related to CCTVs

There are several technical aspects associated with the CCTVs which affect their effectiveness and efficient working. If figured out well before implementation, these can really improve the performance of the system. The technical aspects cover the following:

1. **Type of cameras used:** There are mainly two types of cameras available:
   a. **Static cameras:** These are high power cameras which capture images at high resolution and have a static view.
   b. **PTZ (pan, tilt, zoom) cameras:** These are movable, comparatively low resolution cameras which are capable of moving and can capture a wider view.
2. **Lighting:** At places where the cameras have to be used at night, or under dark areas, extra lighting needs to be put in place in order to capture clear views.
3. **The storage capacity for this digital media was limited and there needed to be a trade-off between the number of images stored and their quality.**
4. **Density, coverage area and positioning:** Essentially deals with the no. of cameras per unit area, the amount of area covered by a camera (should be maximized preferably) and the positioning: more important and busy areas should be covered extensively.

**Conclusion**

This report is more or less, a complete evaluation of the CCTV and one can build up his/her own opinion regarding the impact of CCTV technology after going through this report. The general conclusions that could be drawn out of it are as follows:

- CCTV technology has not been as effective as it was expected to be.
- There was a lack of realism in what could be expected out of CCTVs.
- CCTVs have lead to more of a displacement of crime rather than reducing it.
- Measuring merely the reduction or fear of crime is not the correct measure of evaluating the effectiveness of the CCTV.
- The cost-effectiveness of CCTV projects have depicted an overall loss i.e. the investment has not kept up with the benefit.
- The effectiveness of the CCTV largely relied upon the relationship and communication link between the control room and the end-users i.e. there needed to be good police support in order to be able to put the use of CCTVs to proper effect.
Strength and weakness of report

This report is overall, an excellent work of research and a lot of effort has been to put in to bring out the exact picture of the impact of CCTVs. The statistics collected and the skill put in to evaluate them in the apt manner is quite commendable. Also, the study has tried to cover as many aspects as possible, CCTV systems marked differently both in terms of location and type, helping to assess the impact of various systems. It is a well documented report having support of graphs and tables. The report has been documented in various chapters with each comprising of a summary. This approach enables the readers to get a detailed idea of what the report has to say, without taking the pain of going through each and every line.

A few points of concern with respect to this report are as follows:
The content of the paper, combined with the statistical data and references is enormous. This report concerns and brings out the facts about the experiment in UK. However, its relevance in Indian context could entirely be different.