



An Evaluative Study on Resources, Training and Level of Knowledge in Handling Crime Scene Photography amongst Police Officials at Sikar District of Rajasthan

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Abstract

Crime scene photography is one aspect that should be upgraded with time for better and significant results in crime scene management. The present study focuses on the resources, training and level of knowledge about crime scene photography existing among police officials in Sikar district of Rajasthan. There is a great need to evaluate the resources, training and knowledge existing among police officials about crime scene photography, so that our criminal justice system is able to obtain sufficient and significant results from crime scene and helps in delivering justice.

Keywords: Police; Crime; Crime scene photography; Justice; Technology

Introduction

Crime scene management is one of the most important and crucial tasks performed by police. Crime scene is the place where potential evidences are found or have some link with the crime committed. The crime scene management is a task divided in different small steps that should be performed with the help of field expert. Crime scene photography is one step of that task and is very important because it helps in developing a visual demonstration of the crime scene in court rooms. Crime scene photography helps the jury or judge and the lawyers to make a visual scene of the actual crime scene to know the situation and the circumstances of the crime scene. Crime scene photography also helps the investigating officer as it can be kept for long term record and if in case reconstruction is required photographs help in recreating the actual same scene. Crime scene photography works as an supportive evidence to the actual evidence as it proves the

positions and dimensions with visual presentation. Crime scene photography should be done by an expert as it requires professional skills and knowledge about the digital camera and about the depth of field, lightning conditions and other features of the camera according to the conditions and the circumstances. Digital camera is recommended for good resolution pictures which get printed on the paper.

Review of Literature

From crime scene to court room the crime scene photography plays an important role. The investigator needs the photographs to reconstruct the crime scene and to represent the crime scene in court room with visual representation. The photographs are recorded for long time and even helps lawyer and judges to understand the circumstances on crime scene as they rarely visits the crime scene [1].

Without disturbing the crime scene photographs should be taken. To record all the aspects of crime scene numerous photographs should be taken in an order because photographs are not just records but they can be used to reproduce the events. The crime scene must be photographed with long, mid and close range so can make a relation between size and distance in the photographs. A log should be prepared with information of the photographer, date, time, camera used, location, weather conditions, lightning and other basic details [2].

Camera-DSLR having 12 MP or higher pixels with Pop-Up Flash, Hot-shoe, and Compact Flash Card/Secure Digital Card is most recommended photography equipment. The camera settings that need to get adjusted is the flash, aperture, exposure, shutter, ISO, and the depth of field [3].

Research Methodology

This research was designed in a manner that stressed on the information related to working of investigating team on crime scene photography. 120 samples were collected from all 24 police stations from Sikar district of Rajasthan. SHOs and Investigating officers of all the police stations were interviewed. Convenient sampling was used to sample the Head-constables depending on their availability in the police stations. The 120 officials were personally interviewed with a structured interview schedule. Anonymity and confidentiality of their response was assumed to the subjects.

Results

- Although cell phones and other personal electronic devices with integrated cameras are not recommended for crime scene photography unless their use is an operational necessity (National Forensic Science Technology Center) [4], 80% of the respondents use mobile camera on crime scene photography only 20% use digital camera. When asked why they use mobile camera, most of them stated that they are not aware of new technologies like using DSLRs or they do not have cameras at their police stations.
- 34% of respondents prefer to take photography for every crime scene while remaining 66% never prefer to take photography at the crime scene. Thus, crime scene photography which is such an important component of documentation of crime scene management and has evidentiary value in the court is often ignored by the police personnel.
- Only 1% of respondents use scale during crime scene photography remaining 99% never used any scale during crime scene photography.
- Crime scene photography must encompass different types of photography including long-range, mid-range

and close range photography. Only 1% of the respondents have knowledge about different types of photographs while remaining 99% have poor knowledge about different types of photographs.

- 100% respondents agreed that they do not have any expert in their police station for crime scene photography.
- 100% respondents never attended any training program on crime scene photography.

Observations

Based on the research findings and the observations made by the researcher, the following points were noted:

- The ongoing photography on crime scene at ground level is much different from ideal conditions of crime scene photography which should be followed.
- There is great need to look in the matter of crime scene photography because it is not so effective and accurate as the quality is being compromised using the mobile phones.
- There is no such expert in police to handle modern technologies.
- Most of the police personnel have very less knowledge about crime scene photography as they have not undergone any training program or workshop on crime scene photography, different types of photographs and their uses.
- The captured photographs from crime scene are in poor quality with raw frame without any scale measurement.

Conclusion

On crime scene the working of police is totally different from the ideal scenario. This is all due to lack of training, knowledge and lack of resources.

Photography is affected because of lack of experts and knowledge about the photography. They are not aware about the methods of sketch and basic requirements of sketching. They have never had training on photography and sketching [5-8].

Suggestions

The major focus of this paper is on how the police perform in crime scene photography. Some of the suggestions are:

1. It may be useful to train police personnel on crime scene photography.
2. The government should include forensic science and criminology in recruitment and in advanced training programs.
3. Training programs should have proper evaluation to check the performance of trainees.
4. Regular workshops and seminars should be conducted

on crime scene photography.

5. Field experts should be recruited for technical management on crime scene like photography and sketching.
6. All the required resources like DSLR camera, tripods and other equipments should be provided at the earliest.
7. Taking crime scene photographs should be made mandatory for crime scene management.

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