



SIPG

CASE STUDY SERIES 6

Innovative Solutions for Effective Governance and Public Services

Case 8- 'Unnatural Death' App: A Digital Solution to Identify the Unidentified

A case from India 

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The case studies for this series are collected from real-life cases of civil servants working in different South Asian countries. This collection initiative attempts to document different innovative solutions for effective governance and public services. If you know of other such instances of acts, please email us (parvez.yousuf@northsouth.edu), and we will get back to you to collect more information.

‘Unnatural Death’ App: A Digital Solution to Identify the Unidentified

S M Mashrur Arafin Ayon, Md. Parvez Hasan Yousuf, and Hasan Muhammad Baniamin

Problems in Tracing Unidentified Dead Bodies

The identification of unidentified bodies has long been a challenge for law enforcement agencies worldwide, and the situation in West Bengal, India was no exception to this problem. The traditional identification methods were often time-consuming and prone to errors, leading to delays in notifying families and potential misidentification. This not only caused immense distress to families of missing persons but also hindered police investigations.

A tragic incident took place in Baguiati, West Bengal, where the bodies of two missing teenagers were found. But their identity could not be traced quickly. The police tried using conventional methods to identify the corpses. Later on, the dead bodies were identified only after a delay, drawing widespread criticism from the general mass towards the police.

Technology to Trace the Untraced

To address this pressing issue, the West Bengal Police, in collaboration with the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), developed and launched the "Unnatural Death" app. This innovative mobile application serves as a centralized platform for recording and sharing information about unidentified bodies found across the state. The Baguiati incident catalyzed change, prompting the authorities to seek a technological solution to prevent such occurrences.

Equipped with tablets, police officers at every police station are trained to use the app. When an unnatural death occurs, the officer handling the case reaches the scene, captures photographs of the deceased, and uploads them to the app along with other pertinent details, such as the location of the incident and the autopsy center. This information is then accessible to all police stations and the CID, enabling faster and more efficient identification of such unidentified dead bodies.

Furthermore, families of missing persons who have filed a missing person report can also access the app to view photographs of unidentified bodies. If they recognize a deceased individual, they can notify the authorities through the app, facilitating quicker identification and closure for grieving families.

Implementing the "Unnatural Death" app has yielded significant positive outcomes. It has streamlined the identification process, reducing delays and improving accuracy. This has relieved the families of missing persons and enhanced the efficiency of police investigations. By leveraging technology, the West Bengal Police has taken a crucial step towards ensuring that every unidentified body is identified and every missing person is accounted for.

PROBLEM

The identification of unidentified bodies was a significant challenge, leading to delays in notifying families and potential misidentification.

SOLUTION

The launching of the "Unnatural Death" app allows quicker identification by police and families of missing persons.

OUTCOME

The app has improved the identification process, brought relief to families, and enhanced the efficiency of police investigations.

Declarations

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