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Rising Trends of Street Crime in Punjab

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Abstract

Crime is not a result of any single act that is why crime prevention cannot be left alone to only one department. All crimes have certain socio-economic and psychological consequences, however, amongst them crime against property has serious consequences for citizen's safety and economic activity in any society. Street crimes, which constitute major portion of crime against property has consistently increased in the province of Punjab in the last few years. Street crime prevention is of great concern for the policymakers in general and police department in particular. The gathered crime data in Punjab signified that there is a sharp increase in the street crimes in the province, however, police department still lack both resources and capacity to detect and investigate these street crimes. As street crime has evolved over a period of time where offenders use modern communication tools and resort to violence, the state response has been found lacking. Various public policy initiatives against street crime in Punjab are mostly designed to control street crimes rather than its prevention. The focus of these initiatives has remained on prevention through policing measures and increasing deterrence against crime. Despite all the challenges posed by street crime, some of the countries have successfully implemented strategies for the prevention of street crimes. They have adopted a whole-of-system approach and handled the issue of street crimes not only from criminological perspective but also as a social phenomenon. Various strategies adopted by developed countries signify the importance of addressing various social factors contributing to rising trends of street crimes in urban centers. These initiatives not only increased the cost of committing crime for the offenders but also worked on creating conditions where criminal offenders find it less lucrative to commit crime. Punjab has invested hugely in technological support for the police departments in Lahore but there is a dire need to replicate this model in all city district governments by addressing other social determinants of street crimes.

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Introduction

Crime and criminals have always plagued societies and its history is as old as history of mankind itself. The most important aspect of crime prevention is its capacity to survive all policy interventions. The amount of fear it creates and public reaction it generates has always made it compelling for the policymakers to adopt various crime prevention strategies. The United Nations sited prevention as the first imperative of justice and defined crime prevention comprising of strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crime from taking place and limiting the potential harmful impact on individuals and societies (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d.). Amongst various types of crimes, crime against property, and especially street crime creates perception about the safety and security in the society. Street crime, which is a criminal offence happening in public places, has received a lot of attention during last few decades due to high economic and psychological cost attached with it. In modern criminology studies and policing practices it is treated as a separate head of crime.

Street crime prevention is of great concern for policymakers and the myth that crime often increases or decreases due to wholly mysterious or uncontrollable reasons is withered away (Scheingold, 2011). Crime prevention is a specialized field in sociology and criminology. Amongst all crimes, street crime is of serious concerns for policy makers and practitioners, which is mostly committed in a crude and reprehensible manner by people who are without any training. They are up against an army of trained and motivated professionals who are backed by political leaders and concerned and committed citizens. Therefore, when the street crime increases, it becomes a source of concern and frustration for all stakeholders (Scheingold, 2011). Despite all the challenges of its latency and spatial complexity, some of the countries around the world have been successful in bringing it down, if not eliminating it altogether. They have been able to do it because they addressed the problem in a holistic manner and adopted a joined-up approach of all those departments, which can influence the socio-economic factors, which contribute to abstention from delinquent behaviors. All initiatives directed at policing and criminal justice mechanisms, social interventions to reduce crime, individual

treatment of offenders, and victims and situational mechanisms were used in an integrated manner (Machin & Marie, 2011).

There is a general perception that the increased number of police would ultimately result in the less crime rate attempted by the criminals, while sociologists espouse the view that police only make minimal contributions for the reduction in crime and other social institutions like family and labour market have far more effect on delinquency (Farrington et al., 2002). In recent times, the use of technology and increased investments on police departments to support their street crime prevention strategies have produced positive results. The future of securing urban centers against all law and order issues and especially street crime is investment towards the safe city initiatives. In Pakistan street crimes in last few years are rising due to the negligence and lack of resources provided to the police department, however, a coordinated whole of system still lacks for its prevention.

Statement of the Problem

Crimes against property especially street crimes are rising in Punjab. Thereby, its prevention and detection has become a challenge for the police department. Street crimes are rising due to the lack of investment in technology-driven policing and ignoring an integrated approach to control it. Additionally, other socio-economic indicators of the province are contributing to high crime rates. These incidents are not only creating negative perception about the police and criminal justice system but also adversely affecting the social and economic activities in the province. This study aims to explore the causes for the rise in street crimes in Punjab and see whether police alone can solve this problem or not.

Significance and Scope of Study

Crime against property is very significant for determining safety and security in a society and amongst them street crime is noteworthy as it takes place in public places. Street crimes have psychological, social, and economic impact on the society, which also require a whole-of-system response for its prevention. Due to limitations of data, the scope of study would be crime against property and based upon some hypothesis, discussion of crime trends in general, and street crimes in particular will be focused. As all recent initiatives of Government of the Punjab are concentrated in Capital City Lahore, so the prime focus of this study

would be to study crime trends in Lahore, investigating the cases, and analyzing conviction rates. Furthermore, this study would also analyze street crime trends in the entire province and its correlation with other social determinants of crime.

Review of the Literature

Street crime denotes all crimes taking place in public places. Hallsworth (2005) explained the phenomenon that unifies all forms of street crime, which occurs in public space and involves illegal acquisition of property possessed by an individual or group of individuals. It is different from other categories of crime in public places like public disorder or assault and only include acquisitive crime in public places. Wright and Topalli (2013) proposed that the decision to commit street crime is motivated by a perceived need for fast cash to facilitate offender's participation in street culture. The socioemotional context compels the street offenders not to choose legitimate sources of earning and he/she is caught in self-perpetuating cycle of illicit action. They enter a state of psychosocial encapsulation where their prime motive is seeking maximum gain and are least threatened about long-term formal and informal sanctions (Hayward, 2007). Hayward (2007) argued that rational choice theory of crime and its situational prevention has become irrelevant for modern day violent crimes. These days the criminal decision-making strategies of young people are by-products of a set of subjectivities and emotions, which have deep linkages with modern day material values and culture of modern consumerism. Decision for committing crimes are not rational and so the strategies for situational crime prevention do not address the problem comprehensively.

Farrington et al. (2002) has stressed on policing focused on risk factors. They contend that for crime prevention the truth appears to lie in between two competing theories that more police would achieve results of less crime and the other one that police make only minimal contributions to crime prevention in the context of more powerful social institutions, like family and labour markets. Scheingold (2010) opined that street crime becomes a political issue because of general dissatisfaction among masses due to increase in number of incidents. He further explained that stratification rather moral deficiencies tend to push the urban poor towards exploiting illegitimate means for earning especially through violent street crimes. To him the solution for

controlling street crime lies in increasing the risk of committing the crime by more rigorous policing leading to their prosecution and by increasing the rewards for alternate sources of earning in the job market (Scheingold, 2010).

Tilley et al. (2004) suggested that out of four approaches through which crime can be reduced, only one is under the control of police and criminal justice system. This traditional approach reduces crime in three ways, incapacitating offenders, deterring known offenders, and deterring potential offenders. The other three approaches employ social crime reduction methods, which focus on improving informal social controls, individual treatment mechanisms, which primarily hinges on changing thinking about crime and situational mechanism for crime reduction through increasing the risks and decreasing rewards for committing crime. The success of each method depends on how effectively it has been targeted and implemented (Tilley et al., 2004).

Research Methodology

A qualitative research design has been adopted for this study due to various social, political, and institutional factors. The data for the current study is collected through primary and secondary sources. Previous studies carried out on the subject, both international and national, have been perused to ascertain various factors contributing to the increasing crime rate and their impact on street crime prevention strategies, which are formulated and implemented in the world. Data have also been collected from official websites and various public offices in the province and interviews to conduct an analysis of the situation and come up with suggestions to counter the rising trend of street crime in the province.

Organization of the Paper

This paper is organized into three sub-sections, section-1 discusses various geographical and social determinants of crime, gives explanation of street crime typology, and its characteristics and then elaborate on various factors, which make street crime an urban phenomenon. Furthermore, section-2 sets the stage with a brief discussion on crime trends in the province of Punjab and various other factors contributing to the increased crime rates, street crime classification in the province, and necessary initiatives are undertaken by the government for its prevention and to analyze viewpoints of some practitioners. Moreover, section-3

discusses some international best practices, with a detailed overview of the Street Crime Initiative (SCI) of the UK government. After these main sections, the study is concluded and followed by a few recommendations for the policymakers.

Section 1: Geographical and Social Determinants of Crime

Crime is considered a number one problem for the public and it affects all sections of societies and countries to certain varying degrees. Due to this reason crime prevention and control has found a central place in the public policy agenda all over the world. Criminality is a historic phenomenon, which had been studied by sociologists, economists, psychologists, and criminologists. The reason for crime being researched in various academic disciplines is the number of factors, which can be attributed as determinants of crime (Kizilgol & Selim, 2017). Amongst all these factors, the most important are social and economic factors, which have greatest influence on an individual's decision to commit the crime. The relationship of crime with economic factors is extremely complex and for the purpose of analysis, we can take unemployment as one of the factors of the economic condition of a country. The evidence suggested that during periods of economic slow-down and recessions the rate of unemployment increases. At the same time, governments' expenditure on crime prevention decreases which directly results in an increase in crime. The effect of unemployment on crime is greater on property crime than violent crime and any decrease due to better employment conditions are short-lived (Arvanites & Defina, 2006). The historic work of Cantor and Land (1985) established a link between crimes with the business cycle in the country in two ways. The first is through which criminal motivation is altered by changing economic conditions and various social controls. The second path is by influencing the availability of targets of criminal activities and thus altering the opportunities for criminals (Arvanites & Defina, 2006).

There are a lot of social determinants of crime as well and as per one of the theories, people commit crime when society attaches material values to acquisition of various goods and at the same time, there are barriers to get those goods (Khan et al., 2015). Criminality can also be explained by strain theory when society attaches value to various cultural goals like wealth and status but there exists a gap on how to achieve these goals regarding the best solution/practices to be followed to reduce the

street crime rate. This gap between the targets and the means to achieve these targets creates frustration in individuals and they resort to criminality (Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, n.d.). Sociologists have employed social disorganization theory, which concluded that criminal tendencies in individuals are higher in areas, which are characterized by poor housing and health conditions and face other socio-economic disadvantages. Even in these poor neighbourhoods, the decision to get involved in crime is taken rationally by individuals and they weigh up the benefits and disadvantages of their actions and make decisions accordingly.

Another important dimension of street crime is the demographic characteristics of street criminals, which are predominantly young, poor, and male. However, these demographic characteristics cannot be termed as motive for committing street crimes, which as discussed above is to get easy and fast cash. As said that demography is not destiny, so there is a high probability that street criminals are young, poor, and male, but all young, poor and male citizens are not street criminals (Wright & Topalli, 2013). A relationship can be drawn between the demographic characteristics and skill level of these individuals. The options of crimes for the street criminal for moneymaking are finite as most of them do not hold any technical expertise to commit any high-tech crime. The only option for these criminals is to commit offences requiring little or no skills like snatching, robbery, and theft (Wright & Topalli, 2013). There is also a strong positive correlation between the past and future offending of street criminals.

Street Crimes Typology and its Characteristics

In order to understand various dynamics of street crimes, crime-centered typologies are drawn out and are distinguish street crimes from other conventional crime on the basis of offender-victim relations, spatial features of crime, and the techniques employed for committing crime. Street crimes are considered a separate crime typology because they have distinct characteristics and are clearly different from other crime types. There are different ways in which street crime can be classified, some break street crime in different types that occur in public places, while others also include some of the crimes taking place in private spaces as well. Various criminal justice systems in the world broadly consider snatching, robbery, mugging, assault, motor vehicle theft, arson, and drug

crime as street crimes. Additionally, for the purpose of prosecuting street crimes and developing various policy interventions, street crimes are defined in the criminal justice system separately. The Russian Federation (RF) defined it as an act committed in places with unlimited access during any season and time of day. The street sphere is the unique spatial description of street crimes (Truntsevsky et al., 2018). In Punjab, there is no official definition of street crimes nor are they treated as a separate head of crime for monitoring purposes. Rather the preventive strategies designed for certain crimes denotes that they are for street crimes and two important features include crime committed for monetary benefit and place of occurrence in public space.

As street crime is distinguished from other conventional crime based on crime-centered typologies as against offender-centered typologies, these crimes have certain characteristics as well. The only motive behind street crimes remain the quick financial gains and for that purpose, the victim is targeted in order to take maximum benefits from it. Another peculiar characteristic of street crime is that it takes place in a short duration of time and the offender is always in a hurry to snatch property and disappear. The prime reason for this haste is that offenders are in public places and they commit crime in the presence of other individuals and likelihood of other interfering with crime compels them to offend and disappear. Street crime takes place in every conceivable location in streets of any urban center. However, the street crime are at time concentrated in some specific geographic location but its probability outside the hot spot areas is always likely. This probability induces fear in the potential victims of street crime that they may become victim of crime. The common forms, for instance, robbery and theft have been there for a long time but the way they are committed have changed dramatically and so has the response of the state. It provides a window to see how our society is formed and deviance in the society.

Street Crime in Urban Context

Another important characteristic of street crime is its spatial distribution. Crime in general and street crime in particular is mostly concentrated in urban areas than in rural environment. One of the obvious reasons for this difference is that there are far more number of people residing in urban areas and so are the increased opportunities in-terms of committing crime. As increasing number of people have moved to urban

centers in recent decades, the absorption capacity of urban centers is limited and most of them ended up in slums and in areas with poor living conditions. The lack of opportunities in finding jobs, which can assist individuals in maintaining a reasonable lifestyle in urban centers, economic disparity and absence of any modern skills, is the direct result of increase in street crimes in urban centers (Santana et al., 2020). In urban centers, being surrounded by other give opportunity to street criminals to blend with crowds after offending and decreased chances of segregation from public also explains high rates of street crimes in urban areas. The socio-cultural condition in urban environment contribute to the depersonalization. Targets of violent street crimes are usually unfamiliar people. Anonymity gives a false sense of impunity and motivate criminals to act in an unlawful manner (Truntsevsky et al., 2018).

In Punjab as well-reported street crimes are higher in urban centers and that explains that why most of the initiatives of the government against street crimes are concentrated in large cities like Lahore, Faisalabad, and Gujranwala. As per the data available, if compared the crime per 100000 population for only one head of street crime of snatching, the crime rate of Faisalabad is 17 per 100000 population, which is much higher than three (3) per 100000 population for district Muzaffargarh (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, n.d.). There are many factors, which can explain this difference but major are that Faisalabad is predominantly urban district and Muzaffargarh is a predominantly rural district. The distance a street criminal needs to travel after offending also is an important determinant before his/her decision for committing crime. Street criminals plan for quick and easy targets for crime and their prime motive is to reach their hiding place in the shortest possible time before being noticed also explains the street crimes taking place in urban environment where residential localities are close as compared to rural environment.

Section 2: Crime Trends in Punjab

The Punjab is the largest province in-terms of population and its population was estimated at 110 million in Census-2017. In this total population the percentage of male gender is 51% whereas female percentage is 49%. Out of this population, 37% reside in urban areas and 63% are in the rural dwellers. In-terms of population density it is 536 per square kilometers and there is a great disparity amongst various districts.

Population densities of Lahore and Faisalabad are 6275 and 1345 respectively, while population densities of predominantly rural districts are near provincial average of 536. Literacy rate in the province is 64.01% and all those employed in paid or non-paid family businesses are only 30% of the potential workforce. The unemployment rate in Punjab is 5.7% in which poverty stands at 16.3% as compared to national figure of 21.3%. Crime statistics of the province showed a gradual increase in all heads of crime (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, n.d.). With total police strength of 179921 the police to population ratio is 612 and with a total annual budget of rupees 119 billion the per capita spending on law and order is rupees 1072 (USD 6) per person per annum (n.d.).

All statistics given above are extremely significant and have a direct impact on the crime rate of the province. Crime cannot be seen as a phenomenon of police control in isolation, rather it involves an entire socio-economic environment influence decisions taken by individuals for their delinquent behaviors. Previous research on crime and its socio-economic dimension has proved that population density is one of the major determinant of crime in the Punjab. There is a negative correlation between the property crime and unemployment, which confirms many studies conducted at the international level. It signifies that property crime is not only related to unemployed but also employed and underemployed can also engage in crimes. Thirdly, there is a negative correlation between literacy and crime and between crime and police to population ratio (Jabbar & Mohsin, 2013).

Figure 1

Registered Crime Punjab 2014-2021
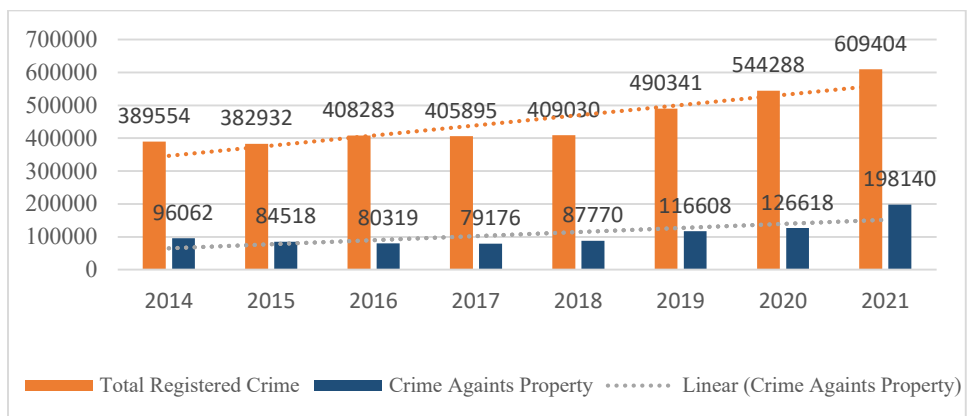
There is a gradual increase in crime in the Punjab in last few years, for comparison, crime figures of last eight years are discussed here. As crime against property creates a perception of lawlessness and fear in the society, so registered crime in crime against property head is shown separately in the graph above.

The graphical representation shows that total registered crime is increasing in the Punjab and crime against property is also increasing. The higher crime rates in Punjab's large city districts are primarily driven by the much higher incidence of property crime in these districts (Cheema et al., 2017). The increase in crime is 368 per 100000 populations in 2017 to 503 per 100000 populations in 2021 (population data used from Census 2017 onwards). The percentage of crime against property, which was 22% of the total crime in 2014, has jumped up to 33% in 2021[1]. However, these figures have given an idea about the crime trends in the province but there is huge concern in the public about the non-registration of crime and especially crime against property. A rational analysis can be carried out by comparing the calls received at police emergency number 15 about incidence of crime against property and the total First Information Reports (FIRs) registered against these calls. This would give us a fair idea about the percentage of crime not registered by the police. For the comparison purposes, due to limitation of data, only for the year 2020 and 2021 crime against property figures are projected for reported and registered crime in the province.

The above two graph depict that a huge number of crime against property is not registered in the province. As for the categorization purposes, crime reported and registered under 356 PPC is street crime in Punjab police, the crime data under heads of dacoit, robbery, street crime (356 PPC), and motor vehicle theft are compared. The graph 2 and 3 above show that a huge percentage of crime reported by the victims is not registered by the police and it does not account for the crime, which is not reported in first place due to lack of trust in police and criminal justice system, communication barriers and avoiding cumbersome procedures of reporting and later prosecution. Crime figures from the year 2020 signify that all four crime heads combined, only 32% of the crime was registered in police stations, while the figure for 2021 has shown improvement

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[1] Data provided by the Monitoring Branch, CPO Lahore.

whereby 43% of the crime was registered. In terms of street crime, the registration is not more than 30%, even though it is not true depiction of crime taking place in public places.
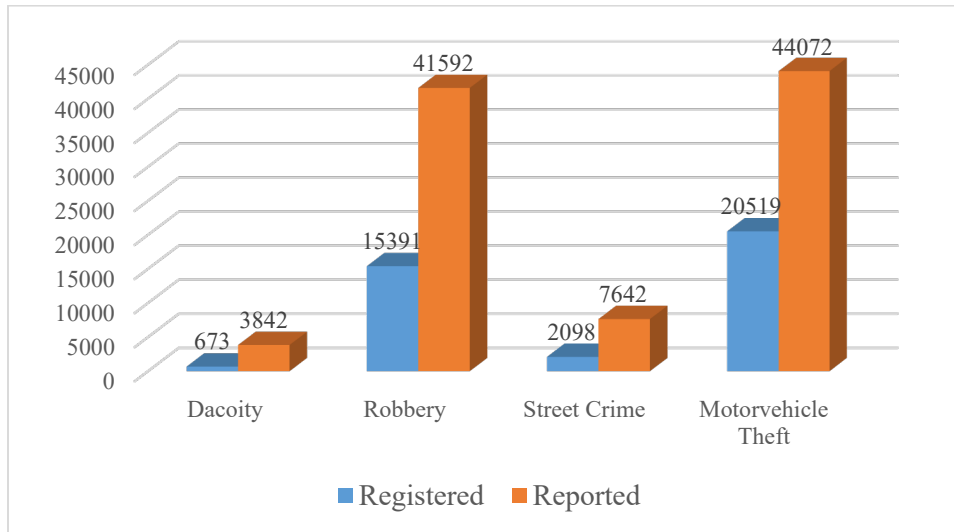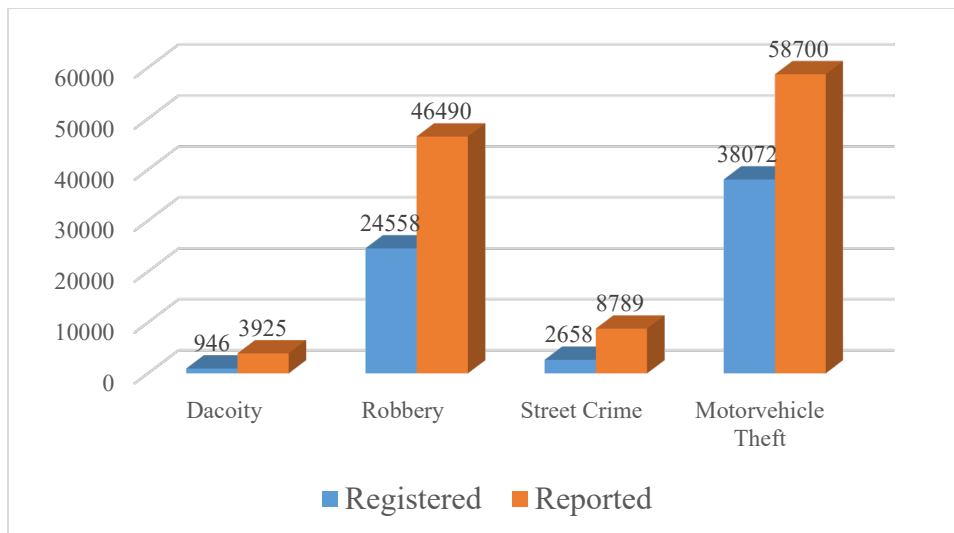
Figure 2

Crime Against Property 2020

Figure 3

Crime Against Property 2021

The above figures depict that in cases of crime against property almost more than 50% remains unregistered (the cases of crime against person has much higher percentage of registration) and the crime which remains unregistered and not investigated encourages offenders to commit further crimes. As already stated, that percentage of crime against property against total crime in the province is also increasing, which clearly portrays crime situation in the province and safety and security of the citizens. The reasons for this increase can be attributed to many factors like increasing population, rising poverty, increasing inflation and weak criminal justice system. Another significant statistic is the number of investigating officers investigating crime. With increasing number of crime every year the number of police officers, investigating crime against property is not increasing proportionally and as per data available for Lahore at one point of time there are 82 cases of crime against property pending investigation with an investigating officer (IO) in Lahore[2]. To investigate these cases by an IO is humanly not possible and results in prioritizing investigation of a few cases and leaving others without any effort.

The spatial analysis of crime in the Punjab also reveals that crime against property is more in urban districts as compared to rural districts. Data reveals that almost 40% of the total reported crime against property in 2021 was in Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Gujranwala, and Rawalpindi. While other 31 districts of the Punjab accounted for the 60% of the crime against property. In terms of crime population ratio, Lahore has 333 reported crime against property as compared to Muzaffargarh which has 81 per 100000 population[3]. It signifies that crime against property is predominantly an urban phenomenon, though its significance in-terms of impact on law and order in rural areas cannot be ignored.

Street Crimes in Punjab

There is no separate head of crime for street crime in the Punjab police. As compared to international practice of aggregating all crimes taking place in public places, the Monitoring Branch of Punjab police recorded crimes of robbery, dacoity, burglary, motor vehicle, and cattle theft under crime against property irrespective of the place of occurrence,

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[2] Data provided by the Investigation Branch CCP Lahore.
[3] Data provided by the PSCA.

in public or private spaces. Only one head of snatching (registered under section 356 PPC) was maintained for monitoring purposes under street crimes. These monitoring practices made it very difficult to ascertain the real magnitude of the problem and then address it accordingly. If only one head of crime is considered in street crime, the trend is shown in the graph below.

Figure 4

Street Crime in Punjab (356 PPC)
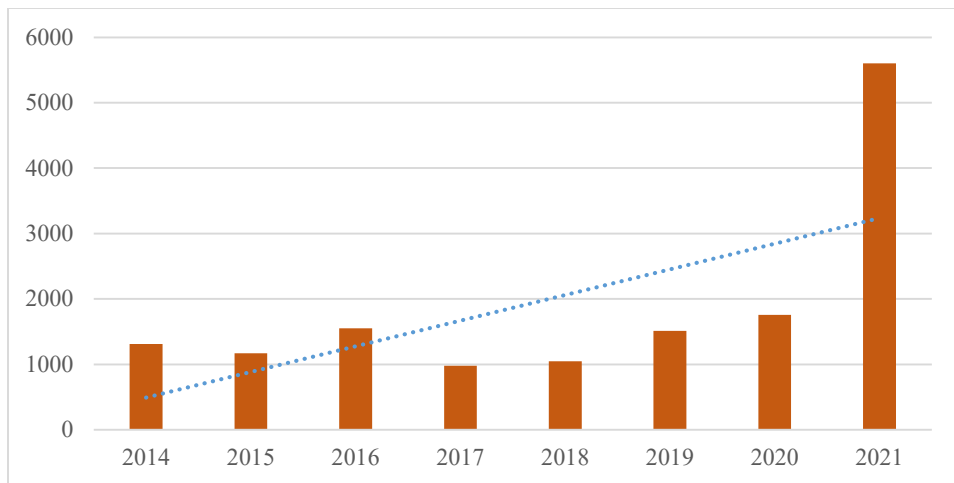
With the above given graph, only one head in street crime shows that it has increased very sharply in the past few years. The figure of 2021 is three times higher than 2020, the reason can be attributed to free crime registration regime in 2021 and in this scenario, it can be concluded that 2020 figure is under-reported. This limitation of data on street crimes has been addressed through analysis of data of calls reporting crime against property in the district of Lahore. They are segregated based on the place of occurrence and the result can be extrapolated over the total crime against property. This is the only possible way to look at the real incidence of street crime in district Lahore.

For the purpose of analysis heads of crime under robbery, snatching, dacoit, motor vehicle snatching, and unarmed robbery were calculated. These heads of crime may be taken as representative sample for street crime, while ignoring motor vehicle theft and narcotics crime at the public place. The years for comparison are 2020 and 202, whereas the selected

area is only district Lahore. The data was obtained from the PUCAR 15 rescue record of calls received for reporting of crime in Lahore[4]. The analysis showed that under above-mentioned heads of crime there were total of 17825 calls in 2020 and 20643 in 2021. It showed that real incidence of street crimes in Lahore has increased by 16% year-on-year basis. If this data is compared with the data on registered crime from the Central Police Office (CPO), the increase is three times in 2021 as compared to 2020 due to free registration regime in 2021. However, the comparison between preceding years revealed that street crime in 2020 was 16% higher than 2019 registered crime. It signifies a very important fact that though there are many cases, which are not registered by police in street crimes but even then, the increase in number of cases registered corresponds to the real increase in the incidence of crime, as seen above from the PUCAR 15 data.

The above analysis brings out some important dimensions of policing in Punjab. The world over police strength is calculated on the basis of population and incidence of crime. Though there are multiple factors contributing to the increase in street crime but it is the ultimate responsibility of the police officers to investigate all of them after registration. In criminology, it is believed that detection is best prevention but when we are not dealing with the actual number of crime committed by criminals and increasing the strength of police to deal with actual number, the incidence would not come down. In the absence of actual registration, police have no case for increase in the number of IOs to investigate crime. As discussed above there is a high economic and social cost of street crimes and it builds up the perception of safety and security in the country, so by not registering street crime and leaving a huge complaint unattended makes the task of police extremely difficult in curbing street crimes in Punjab.

Street Crime Prevention

As street crime constitutes almost 70 % of the total crime against property so its prevention offers largest reserve for lowering the crime rate in the province. Keeping in view its huge potential in building public perception about safety and security in the province, government has taken quite a few steps for law and order in general and street crimes in

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[4] PUCAR 15 maintains head wise crime only for district Lahore.

particular. In the first phase most of these initiatives focused on the provincial capital Lahore and projects for other major cities are in different stages for the implementation purpose.

Punjab Safe City Authority (PSCA). PSCA was established under Punjab Safe Cities Ordinance 2015 with prime objective to establish integrated command, control, and communication system (PPIC3) in major cities of the Punjab for public safety. Commonly known as Safe City project (PSC), it has prioritized the use of advance technology, infrastructure, personnel, and processes for integrated emergency response, intelligent traffic management system, monitoring of law and order, electronic evidence collection, and secure police communications, which would ultimately lead to crime reduction in the province. The project PPCI3 is delivering on many fronts for the police including integrated emergency response, intelligent traffic management, evidence-based law enforcement (more than 11000 video evidences provided to law enforcement officials), and coordinating efforts for lost and found. The project has also brought a cultural shift in the working performance of police in Lahore and at the same time it enhanced the accountability of policing actions in service delivery.

In the first phase PPIC3 center has been established in Lahore and projects in six other cities are introduced, which are in different phases of implementation. PCSA identified 2000 locations in the city to install 10000 cameras for surveillance purposes and one of the criteria for selecting these locations was covering crime hotspots for street crimes in the city. Digital recordings from these cameras and monitoring on video walls was extensively used for crime detection and prevention[5].

PUCAR 15 Project. Historically there were separate emergency call centers for every district in the Punjab and they were not integrated at any level, so monitoring its performance remained a very weak point. Now under PSCA the entire emergency call service is integrated and it is received at Punjab Unified Command and Response (PUCAR) center in Lahore. A computer assisted dispatch (CAD) system was designed, which records all details of the incident and then transfer it to the concerned district through automatic call distribution system. Use of GIS services enabled the operator to locate the incidence coordinates and further follow

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[5] PSCA.

up with the caller assists in determining the response time of the local police[6]. This integrated arrangement is developing with the passage of time and has provided police leadership an important tool for monitoring police response and to analyze the crime situation. The real time data from the CAD is also used for populating heat maps for crimes against property and sharing it with field formations for redesigning their preventive strategies against street crimes. One such map is given below:

Figure 5

Sample Heat Map of Robbery in Lahore
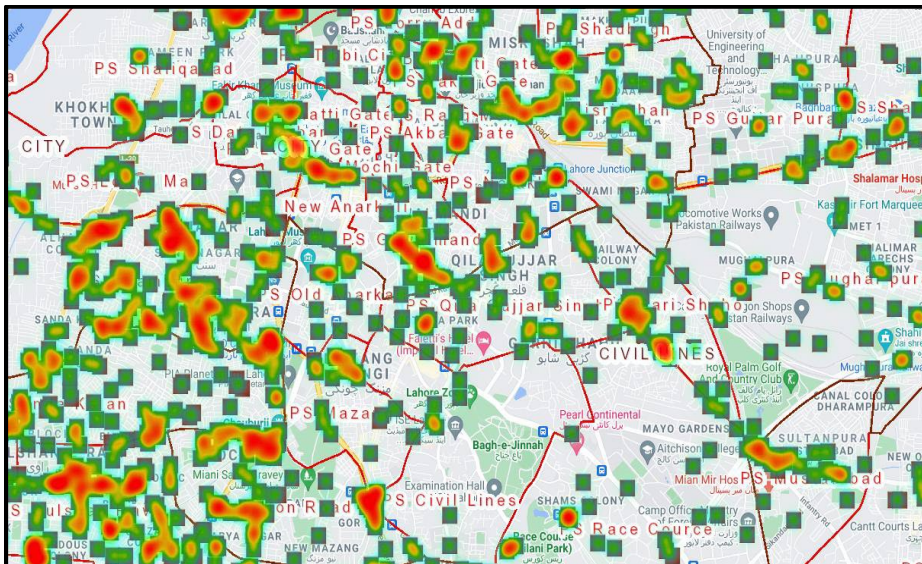
Quick Response Units. To improve police emergency response and to distress crime incidence calls, two separate initiatives have been implemented in Lahore. Police Emergency Response Units (PERU) are the car mounted units meant for preventive patrolling in 105 beats in Lahore. They not only perform duties of first responders but also patrol crime hotspots for prevention against property crimes. Dolphin Squads are motorbike mounted units with 600 motorbikes in Lahore. They perform duties in shifts and patrol as a unit in 150 patrolling beats in the city. Through modern communication equipment they are connected with the PPIC3 and PUCAR CAD. They are the first responders for any

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[6] PSCA.

distress and crime related calls. In recent times, Dolphin squad has emerged as an operational arm of Capital City Police Lahore (CCPL) to curb street crimes. This model has also been replicated in cities of Faisalabad, Gujranwala, and Rawalpindi.

As discussed above, most of the interventions for preventing crime are concentrated in Lahore and work is being done for its expansion in other major cities of the Punjab province. Though CCPL has received most of the resources from government initiatives but street crime has also increased at the same time. In 2020 the increased rate was at 16% as compared to 2019 and in 2021 the crime increased three-fold in comparison to 2020. This signifies that despite government intervention for improving the capability of police for preventing street crime, there are other factors, which are contributing to increase in the street crime rate. The real impact of Safe City Project (SCP) can be measured in 5-7 years of time but the immediate outcome signifies that project has not been able to curb rising trend of street crimes. This impression emanates from the fact that street crime in relation to police action is seen in isolation and other socio-economic factors are kept out of analysis. Policing is one of state intervention, which can prevent street crimes and make it difficult for would-be criminals to commit crime and increases their cost for indulgence in criminal activities. To prevent them from making a wrong choice, like street crimes, a holistic approach and response is required, which depends on policing measures.

Practitioners' View Point

The solution of any problem starts with its identification but the prime problem with street crime is that it is not treated as a separate head of crime in Punjab and its registration under 356 PPC extremely limits its scope. PSCA is termed as a giant leap in prevention and detection of crime by the field officers, which were interviewed to analyze the street crime. The fact that it is operational only in Lahore, other cities are forced to adopt traditional rural policing model of crime prevention and detection. With the introduction of centralized crime reporting system at PUCAR-15, the accountability and monitoring mechanism has drastically improved. This has resulted in increased scrutiny from the top management and in 2021, 43% of crime against property is registered as compared to 32% in 2020. The increased registration has also resulted in

increase in number of cases under investigation, while the number of IOs remained the same.

Lahore is the largest city in the province and almost 40% of the total crime against property is registered in Lahore. A consistent increase in crime in Lahore in previous few years have been noticed due to several major reasons. In addition to the poor detection rate, is the increase in population/ However, poor detection rate and increased population is another major reason for the increased street crime rate. Lahore population is above 13 million and it is increasing 3.5% in every year but the number of IOs to investigate cases is almost static for last 5-7 years, presently, which   are 722 (Khan, 2022). With every IO investigating 82 cases at one point of time, it has negatively impacted the quality of investigations. The conviction rate in crime against property in year 2020 was only 2% and heinous cases it is even less than 2%. PCSA is offering great support in the detection of crime in Lahore and with the help of digital evidence the quality of investigation has also improved. The crime trends in the city limit showed that crime pockets and hot spots have shifted away from the locations where PSCA has coverage through video surveillance. Hence, it signified the need to cover the remaining locations of Lahore with safe city surveillance system.

Faisalabad is the second largest city of the province both in-terms of population and incidence of crime. In recent years, to curb street crimes the city police have operationalized Dolphin patrolling squads and government has also approved and started construction for safe city project for Faisalabad. The city is also facing huge shortage of police officers due to increase in incidence of crime and increasing population of the city. The conviction rate in crimes against property in 2020 that remained 3%, which is much less as compared to crime committed against person. In the absence of modern surveillance and detection equipment, the city police are reliant upon traditional techniques of policing. There is a little capacity for crime mapping and crime analysis but the system is not standardized and synched with the rest of the province. Street crime remains one of the major priorities for the city police but factors of police capacity, unemployment, and increasing population has severely impacted the police efforts to control it (Mahmood, 2021). Though there is no documented analysis of demographic characteristics of accused persons but most of the offenders are young and unemployed, which

signifies that unemployment is another contributing factor in this increased criminal rate.

International Best Practices

Street crimes exist in all parts of the world, however, no strategy up till now has proved to be an effective and efficient strategy to eliminate street crimes permanently. Practitioners and policymakers all over the world select their tactics and strategies based upon the nature of problem they confront in urban centers. To curb the uprising trend of street crimes, though much of the interventions relate to socio economic measures, there are quite a few examples from some countries, which have adopted a comprehensive strategy to successfully reduce the crime rate.

Street Crime Initiative

In 2002 to stem sustained and accelerating increase in street crimes in England and Wales, the British Government launched a program Street Crime Initiative (SCI) in ten police forces areas, which accounted 83% of the recorded robbery crime rate. A special crime reduction group was formed under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. The program involved a whole range of agencies including the home office, the police, prosecution services, education, health, culture, media and sports, and office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Tilley et al., 2004).

The first and foremost objective of the SCI was to bring robbery under control within six months. The monitoring of the program was through a Street Crime Action Group (SCAG) in which the officers met every two weeks to discuss the progress. The resounding message concluded after the discussion stated that tackling issue of street crime is not just the problem of police department, nor even just criminal justice system, but it is everyone's responsibility. An action plan was devised which comprised of 30 different initiatives aimed either at reduction in crime or improving effectiveness in handling victims and offenders of street crime. SCI provided resources for tackling problem across the cycle of street crime offending, from school-based crime diversion schemes, to targeted police operations, investing in new police initiatives of analysis, and intelligence and coordinated rehabilitation and correction schemes. In-terms of criminal justice process, the police investigation of street crimes received prime focus through rapid response, crime scene management, evidence recording, and handling of witnesses. Police improved its

intelligence-led strategy by focusing on previous offenders and sharing analysis with the field formations in the shape of crime hot spots (Criminal Justice Inspectorate the UK, 2003).

SCI specially focused on breaking the cycle of offending and promoting crime by adopting preventive and diversionary initiatives and targeting vulnerable young people. Initiatives like *Summer Plus* and *Splash* promoted activities for students during summer breaks. One of the major initiatives to break the offending cycle was to restrict the availability of one of the main targets of street crimes, which involves the cell phone snatching. All network service providers joined up with the government to block stolen/snatched phones immediately. SCI also identified drugs as the major driver among the street crimes in policing areas. An analysis of drug testing on all arrested offenders in the first year of the project found that at the time of arrest between 36% and 66% of all offenders tested positive on drug use. The government focused on this issue and incorporated SCI as a key part of their strategy. Drugs Arrest Referral (DAR) was adopted as a standard practice in policing areas and similarly for judicial custody referral for detoxification and further assessment was carried out (Criminal Justice Inspectorate the UK, 2003).

SCI focused on the business cycle of criminal justice system and introduced various initiatives for all seven key stages like crime prevention and reduction, detection and arrest, bail and remand, case preparation, court process, carrying out sentence, and resettlement and rehabilitation. All these initiatives required increased funding and government provided 67 million pounds out of which 36 million pounds were for police operations and community support offices (Criminal Justice Inspectorate the UK, 2003). Independent studies have found that SCI as a policy intervention increased resources of police and it helped the police to reduce the crime rate. Ultimately, the policy was proved to be cost effective, with the annual net social benefits estimated in the range of 107 and 130 million pounds as compared to the cost of 24 million pounds annual allocation (Machin & Marie, 2011).

Through clear and shared objectives amongst all stakeholders SCI became a success story. This program focused on clarity, urgency, and irreversibility. With joining efforts, the government was able to announce a reduction in the overall street crime rate by 16% in six months and 25% in street robbery alone. In the first year, the reduction in robbery rate was

17% and in terms of the number of victims, they were 17000 fewer victims of robbery than pre-SCI period (Criminal Justice Inspectorate the UK, 2003).

Safe City Projects

Urbanization is increasing in the world at a fast pace and it is estimated that over the next decade from 56.2% today the urbanization would increase to 60.4% by 2030 (UN Habitat, 2020). The high population rate, infrastructure, and advanced technology in the cities would not only boost the economic growth but it would also bring along tremendous challenges of safety and security of its citizens. These challenges of crime and safety in urban centers cannot be addressed through conventional policing practices. The developed/developing world has found a key strategy with the advance use of technology to assist law enforcement agencies in preventing and detecting crime especially street crimes. The safe city concept was developed to help governments and stakeholders to mitigate the challenges of crime, law, and order. This concept was leveraging on internet and connectivity with utilizing core security and safety technologies and providing predictive analysis and big data, real-time response and emergency response protocols.

a. Singapore Safe City. Singapore safe city project is one of the most advanced system in Singapore. It is among the most economically developed countries, which deploys safe city solution in line with its position globally. In 2014 the government invested USD 142 million in ICT equipment, crime control system, police cameras, and surveillance equipment. The hardware was supported by innovative software solutions in the shape of predictive analysis, social media intelligence software, crowd size analytics and face recognition capabilities, and mobile phone sensors. Video analytics solutions were also deployed, which were capable of detecting abnormal scenarios like traffic congestion, abandoned objects, and rubbish build ups. All these initiatives increased Singapore safety score by 2%. The greatest improvement was in social benefits, which increased by 35%, government appreciation score by 54%, police appreciation score by 49%, and citizen happiness score by 47% (IHS Markit, n.d.). The project positioned Singapore at forefront of public safety technology, taking data from IT infrastructure, and applying algorithms to make smarter decisions in real time.

b. London Safe City. London is one the original safe cities and its video surveillance system is the oldest system in the world. Under the safe city project an integrated system was deployed with three command and control centers. Police patrol cars were fitted with mobile data terminals and police officers were issued 22000 body-worn cameras. New radio communication protocol was deployed and for emergency response CAD was deployed taking benefit of the GIS technology. As there has been a historic huge investment in police surveillance systems, the new interventions brought operational efficiencies in the police performance. As a result, now London is the third stage of the safe city project lifecycle, where there are small increases in the safety scores but increase in social benefit scores are quite large, which has significantly increased for London by 15% (IHS Markit, n.d.). Continued investment of the government helped the citizens to achieve 21% happiness and economic scores, which benefited the city by 4%.

From Singapore and London model the key elements of safe city technology can be concluded for security and communication technologies, which would be supported by the new emerging technologies. These include video surveillance and video analytics, control room consolidation and resource sharing, and predictive crime centers and big data analytics. There are three stages of government investments in safe cities, firstly, it requires largest capital investments in equipment, command centers, and infrastructures, secondly, and continuous spending by the government to achieve social and economic benefits and efforts for achieving operational efficiencies, and lastly, integration of existing systems, data sharing platforms, and building advanced analytic solutions.

Analysis of the Current Situation

While comparing the components of models discussed above with the PPIC3, it can be concluded that PPIC3 is in the first stage of government investment. The project still requires to implement some of its components and a few critical elements needs to be deployed like predictive analytics. PSCA has operationalized a landmark project of integrating police emergency response all over the Punjab and various teething problems are being addressed. The non-availability of standardized crime data is a major obstacle towards measuring the crime trends in the city and the role of PPIC3 in its reduction.

The above-mentioned views of the field officers painted a very bleak picture of street crimes in the province of Punjab. The common noticed thing among street crimes, is that they are not registered as a separate crime and there is no distinction between crime committed at public places and private places. Secondly, the conviction rate for crime against property is below than 5% in the province for registered crime. Though the workload is a significant factor in detection of crime, but if we consider the percentage of cases challenged to courts which is 40%, the conviction rate is abysmally low. This hints on the quality of investigations conducted in the property cases. Another significant reason, is the poor technological support granted to police departments in different provinces. Therefore, the absence of video surveillance and detection software makes it difficult for the officers to headway towards any criminal in terms of street crimes. In Lahore the acquittal rate is higher than the conviction rate in crime against property, thereby, the absence of resources and technological tools encourages the criminals to repeatedly act a crime, which in turn encourages repeat offending.

The figures discussed in section-2 paints a clear picture for the policymakers and the only solution is treating the phenomenon of street crime in a holistic manner. In Lahore, more than 70% of the accused are challenged in the crime against property, which were less than 30 years in age and denoted that crime control is not a function of policing only. /Currently, crime prevention in any province is considered as a prime domain of police department, which does not include any other department, program, s or initiatives. Experts are of the opinion that out of four crime prevention strategies, only one is adopted by the police department, however, others hinge on social crime reduction methods. It has also been proved that unemployment, population density, poverty, and income inequality have a positive correlation with aggregate crime, crime against person, and crimes committed against property, while social sector spending, education and GDP growth have a negative impact (Anwar et al., 2021). This multi-department approach to control crime in the province is neither planned nor discussed in this paper.

As seen in the SCI, prevention from crime is not possible by putting whole responsibility on police department alone. It requires a holistic approach, which can reduce the street crime rate. Excluding the four main crime prevention strategies, namely, developmental prevention,

community prevention, situational prevention, and criminal justice prevention, the focus of the Punjab province in only on one component of criminal justice prevention, which is prosecution of crime (Welsh & Farrington, 2012). Unless all stakeholders of criminal justice system address these socio-economic issues, which joined up together as a major social determinant in which no considerable progress can be achieved. The socio-economic indicators in case of Pakistan and especially in Punjab are on decline for the last few years, however, efforts made to address these issues have not produced the desired results. In this situation, it becomes difficult to control the up-rising street crime rate, which is also evident from the figures discussed above.

Conclusion

Incidence of crime and efforts to control and prevent crime are as old as humanity itself. In Pakistan especially in Punjab the crime against property is increasing and the street crime constitute its major portion. Street crime is a significant topic in public policy, as it formulates public opinion about safety and security of a society, which has a huge impact on psychological, social, and economic realms. In recent years, the government has undertaken quite a few policy measures for controlling the incidents of up-rising street crimes but most of these interventions are based on the premise that street crime can be controlled through policing actions. The government's investment in technology and infrastructure are steps towards the right direction and through the appropriate use of technology and integrated command center, policing practices are transforming from traditional to urban policing. Nevertheless, efforts of police department have not been able to control or prevent street crime in the province of Punjab, as they lack relevant reforms in other components of criminal justice, such as, correction and courts. There still exists gaps and loopholes in police department as the department has lack of focused approach and capacity to control street crimes, which is quite evident from the conviction rates. The issue of non-registration of crime against property and poor investigations has negatively impacted the deterrence against the committed crimes. There is also a serious neglect to adopt a holistic policy framework for citizen safety that gives primacy to addressing other social determinants of crime, such as unemployment, education, and population. The fact that street crime prevention and street crime diversion does not find any place in any school education program,

population welfare strategy or development action plan manifest that crime prevention is seen in isolation by the policymakers. The huge investment and technological support given to police has not been able to create deterrence against crime and the whole framework requires a re-examination. Despite the fact, there are examples from the developed countries, which signify the importance of treating crime as a social phenomenon and employing various sociological crime prevention strategies to prevail justice. The SCI in the UK planned and implemented a whole system response on the issue of increasing street crime rate. However, policing interventions received most of the resources and major focus but they were well augmented by developmental, community, and situational prevention initiatives. To sum up, it can be concluded that prevention and control of street crime is the prime responsibility of the police department but police alone cannot solve this problem, unless other social determinants of crime are addressed in an integrated manner.

Recommendations

The increasing street crimes have severely hampered citizens' safety and security, which has potentially disrupt the law and order in society. The rising incidents of street crimes in Punjab has not only affected the psychological health of citizens but have also severe bearing on business investments. Based on the discussion on various public policy initiatives of the provincial government and studying international practices, a few recommendations are as following:

1. Government should prioritize citizen's safety as a core public policy objective and adopt a focused approach to prevent these street crimes. Under the leadership of the chief executive, a Special Advisory Group (SAG) should be established. This forum covers major sections presenting police, education, health, prosecution, prisons, social welfare, and civil society as a whole. A comprehensive plan for street crime prevention should be developed with clear roles and measurable targets.

2. The police department should treat it as a separate head of crime and develop capacities within the department for controlling and investigating the up-rising trend of street crimes. The policy of registration of all crimes against property should be implemented in letter and spirit and the monitoring mechanism for the investigation and prosecution of these crimes should be designed and implemented.

3. Government should introduce a comprehensive project in one of the city districts in Punjab to control the increasing crime rate. This project should give primacy to crime control initiatives by police department along with addressing issues like unemployment, school education, and rehabilitation programs.

4. To address the issue of deterrence resulting from low conviction rates in cases of street crimes, as a special initiative, separate courts must be designated for street crimes with special prosecutors for a period of two years. This program should also focus on the rehabilitation of arrested and accused within the prisons with its prime focus on reformation rather than incarceration.

5. The safe city project in Lahore requires further investment in soft interventions, like video analytics, data sharing platforms, and building advanced analytic solutions. As the city population is continuously growing, so PSCA must identify new locations for surveillance and monitoring through the cameras.

6. There is also an urgent need to operationalize safe city projects in other districts in the Punjab, as they constitute 40% of the total crime against property. Policy initiatives should focus on investing and transforming rural policy models in city districts and replace it with an effective model of metropolitan policing.

7. No program can be successful without active participation of the community. Community prevention strategies should be focused in all public policy initiatives for street crimes prevention.

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