

THE cost of ruling Pakistan has gone up to 90 per cent. It means that out of every 100 rupees we earn, only 10 are spent on development which includes all social sector services like education, health, family planning, etc. In some years, even this 10 per cent is not available and we borrow money to meet the deficit.

If you spend about 30 per cent on defence, 45 per cent on debt servicing, 15 per cent on bureaucracy, intelligence services and subsidies, can the position be better than this? Compare it with any good private concern where operational cost does not exceed 15 per cent, or any welfare-oriented country where 30 to 40 per cent is spent on social securities, health and education.

But what is happening here? Social sectors are starved of funds. There is very little money for physical infrastructure but non-development expenditure keeps on increasing. More and more is being spent to combat crime and terrorism, and to provide protection to a host of people: VVIPs, VIPs, IPs, foreign missions, trade delegations and even visiting sports teams. But the most unfortunate part is that in spite of unprecedented levels of expenditure on law and order, crime is on the increase and so is lawlessness.

What can be the starting point for a study of lawlessness in the country or more specifically in Sindh is difficult to decide. But July 1, 1970, can be a good baseline, as it was the date when "One Unit" was disbanded, and Sindh came into being as a separate province.

At that time, Sindh's population was about 19 million. It had 11 districts, three divisions and three police ranges. The total strength of the police force was 24,033, and the expenditure on law and order was Rs. 46.30 million per annum. As a whole, the situation was reasonably good and crime control was not a major issue. So far so good.

Perhaps it was during Ziaul Haq's despotic rule when in rural Sindh the ARD movement was brutally crushed, which alienated the people and sowed the seeds of disorder. Soon we saw its manifestation in the rising crime rate. (There was a quantum jump: from 27,659 reported crimes in 1980 to over 43,000 in 1999). The menace of dacoities and kidnappings, specially in upper Sindh, is also the legacy of

around university campuses, but what about the lost time of hundreds of thousands of students, and the psychological trauma they had to undergo? What about the loss of academic freedom?

In the mid-eighties, riots started in Karachi as a result of lack of civic services, but soon they assumed an ethnic colour. The loss of human life, damage to transport and property and the loss of businesses as a result of long spells of curfews are hard to calculate.

Insecurity and lawlessness in the late eighties and early nineties started taking their toll. Boundary walls of residential units started going up. Private security companies came into existence, and barriers were erected in insecure neighbourhoods. What about the social costs? Life patterns started changing. People were afraid of going out after sunset. Cultural activities almost came to a halt.

Slowly we saw Karachi turning into a besieged city. Not only armed police but also the Rangers became a permanent part of the city's security appara-

fect the life and property of affluent Karachiites.

When the number of law enforcers increases, can intelligence agencies be left behind? Previously there used to be only a couple of them, now there are half a dozen.

The latest mode of terrorism is direct attacks on law enforcers themselves. A few weeks back a mobile van carrying Rangers was attacked on a thoroughfare in broad daylight. Then we saw an attack on the Gulistan-e-Jauhar Police Station killing several police officers. How many police personnel have been killed all over the country during the last 15 years or so is difficult to count.

Add to it the cost of productive years lost as a result of these killings. Most of the people killed in inter- and intra-party disputes, bomb blasts and target shootings are young, and some of them are highly trained professionals. Then there are people who are seriously injured and crippled for life. Some of the costs may be borne by their families, but there is cost to society also — both in terms of hospitalization and loss of productivity.

Because of the prevailing sense of insecurity, a new industry has cropped up which provides modern gadgetry to its clients. It includes tracking systems in cars, modern locking systems, alarm bells, intercoms connected with security systems etc. This is in addition to insurance against theft for which people pay through their nose. How can one calculate the cost of all such anti-theft measures?

Then there are costs connected with heightened security measures at all public buildings — airports, banks, radio/TV stations, secretariats, etc. Important business houses and embassies have had to do likewise. They have had to instal new systems to ensure safety of their buildings and staff. In the process, some libraries and cultural centres have been

permanently closed down.

New arrangements for ensuring the safety of VVIPs are another story. It is difficult to calculate the cost of traffic jams resulting from VVIP movement, but when a large number of bullet-proof cars are purchased, modern tracking systems are imported, and new police divisions are put in place, it is not easy to calculate the cost of lawlessness and terrorist threat. It may be necessary to provide additional security to VVIPs in view of recent attacks on their lives, but what can you say when IGS, DIGs and even DPOs need security and cannot move about without two mobile vans, one in front and one behind, and the

Today Sindh is spending about nine billion rupees per annum on the police alone who now number about 93,000. In addition, expenditure on 25,000 Rangers and 8,000 Frontier Constabulary is also being met by the Sindh government. As a whole, 16 to 18 per cent of Sindh's revenue budget is spent on law and order. Then, about 20,000 private security guards are also there to protect the life and property of the affluent Karachiites.

tus. In addition, umpteen private security companies emerged and started multiplying by the day.

Towards the mid-nineties, things stabilized in Karachi to some extent, but soon after we saw the rise of sectarian violence in a city which had never known it before. It was the spillover effect of infighting between Shia and Sunni splinter groups based in Punjab. Soon target killings started. Mostly medical practitioners rendering yeoman service to their communities were killed in cold blood. According to rough estimates, over 80 doctors lost their lives in target shootings. Hundreds of professionals left the country for good.

manifestation in the rising crime rate. (There was a quantum jump: from 27,659 reported crimes in 1980 to over 43,000 in 1999). The menace of dacoities and kidnappings, specially in upper Sindh, is also the legacy of this period. The situation deteriorated so much that travel by road in these areas became unsafe. Even the goods carriers and public transport had to travel in caravans with security provided by the army/Rangers. There was a sense of deprivation, specially amongst the educated youth, which was the natural result of a long period of non-representative government. Instead of creating more job opportunities and reducing poverty, our rulers decided to create special forces to combat the rising trend of crime. Handpicked ministers found it a golden opportunity to recruit thousands of policemen on a political basis or through bribery. This was the beginning of the rising cost of policing the province.

The second round of huge increase in expenditure for maintaining peace came with the beginning of ethnic tensions in the province which in a way were also the result of unemployment and perceived injustices. Firstly, student bodies belonging to different political ideologies converted universities and colleges into battlegrounds. As a result, most of these educational institutions remained closed for long periods of time, their hostels were sealed, and finally the Rangers were posted there to maintain law and order.

What was the cost of this lawlessness in the educational institutions? At best we can calculate the expenditure on Rangers' salaries, cost of boundary walls

tioners rendering yeoman service to their communities were killed in cold blood. According to rough estimates, over 80 doctors lost their lives in target shootings. Hundreds of professionals left the country for good.

When sectarianism subsided, 9/11 happened and again Karachi bore the brunt of its aftermath. But now it was a different type of violence. Foreign embassies and missions, specially those belonging to the US and its coalition partners in Afghanistan and Iraq, became the target of terrorist attacks. For the first time Karachi saw the emergence of suicide attacks against foreign nationals and specific targets. Naturally additional measures had to be taken to meet this challenge and it involved costs. It is again difficult to collect data and translate it in money terms.

Meanwhile, a process of police reform was initiated by the government under the devolution plan. Investigation and prosecution branches were separated. New institutions like the Police Safety Commissions, Police Complaint Authority and District Ombudsman were envisaged. Huge amounts were released by the federal government for implementing these reforms. The cost of law enforcement increased tremendously.

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vide additional security to VVIPs in view of recent attacks on their lives, but what can you say when IGs, DIGs and even DPOs need security and cannot move about without two mobile vans, one in front and the other at the rear.

The whole point is how long we will continue bearing this increasing cost of crime control and lawlessness. Our resources are limited. We hardly find money for universal primary education, basic health cover, adequate water supply and sanitation. Our productive base is not expanding. We are caught in a vicious cycle. Because of increasing lawlessness, investment is not coming either from foreign or local sources, and when investment is not taking place, unemployment is bound to increase, giving rise to further lawlessness.

Our ruling elite like all other elite are myopic. They do not have the capacity to see the whole picture, nor the courage to take bold decisions. Increasing lawlessness and a high crime rate is the result of disempowerment of the people, rising poverty and rampant unemployment. Our dilemma is that we treat it as a law and order problem and try to solve it as such.

If our planners, economic managers and policy makers were wise enough to keep non-productive expenditure under control, if a small fraction of money which we have so far spent and continue to spend on maintenance of law and order, could be invested in the country's greatest asset — its people — if our social and physical infrastructure could be improved, perhaps we would not have faced the calamitous situation we face today.