**Criminal behaviour needs more attention than the crime**

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December 31, 2020

Pakistan has deep-rooted systematic issues with respect to implementation of laws. The issues are even crucial in the criminal administration of justice as this is the area of law where justice and human rights are compromised the most. Crime is a complex phenomenon that exists in multiple layers. Mitigating crime does not simply require passing a new legislation or an amendment and distributing it among law enforcement agencies of the country. Especially with the current legislative approach in Pakistan that is reactive rather than proactive or preventive in nature, it has become almost impossible to address criminal behaviours effectively.Crime has social roots that need particular attention and care. We need to undergo necessary intellectual exercise before formulating strategies to nip a criminal behaviour in the bud rather than ‘reacting’ to ‘a particular offence’ by taking punitive measures and passing a new legislation that never serve any practical purposes.

Criminal behaviour is a result of many factors including economic conditions, family environment, educational opportunities, community life and psychological tendencies. People commit crime not simply by choice, but due to several deep-seated social problems that require careful attention. Consequently, in order for governments and enforcement agencies to be able to permanently address the perpetrator’s behaviour, due attention and consideration must be paid to its underlying causes rather than the apparent offence. For instance, to curb child pornography it is important to delve deep into the reasons of why this offence is happening at all, why is this behaviour prevalent and what factors are mainly contributing to children being vulnerable and mafias operating in the manner they are operating.   If the requisite attention and consideration is provided under the system, this might not only control crime as a social and legal problem but would also lead to curing perpetrators as a long-term solution that might not even require persistent ‘enforcement’ in the longer run. Thus, it is high time to shift the focus from enforcement of laws to preventive approach aiming to target the real causes of breach.

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The objective of government should be reformative, rather than passing new pieces of legislations after an offence has been committed and then getting into a perpetual and superficial race of trying to implement those laws without any strong footings. It is evident that a purely enforcement-led approach may be a temporary solution to tackle crime but not a long-lasting remedy as the enforcement or policing strategies clash with inherent structural issues within the legal and social framework of Pakistan. Long-lasting solutions to criminal behaviour involve a complex interaction between social, economic and political realities as well as policing priorities.

This could be achieved by increasing opportunities for education, recreation and building community cohesion. Such opportunities can be generated by looking at crime from multiple approaches instead of a punitive approach towards offenders.With a purely punitive and enforcement-based approach we tend to only increase the criminal population and push wrongdoers to social marginalization or, according to O’Malley, ‘social ostracisation’. On the contrary, if the same population, if rehabilitated, can be utilised to productive social activity.

In addition to a multi-disciplinary lens to study the concept of crime, another important move to combat criminal behaviour could be devolving the responsibility of crime control from state alone to various other agencies including private sector organisations. This is also identified as ‘responsibilisation strategy’ by various criminal law experts and scholars. The responsibilisation strategy could be used as a helpful tool to involve various state departments, actors from private sector and private community to for crime management and crime prevention.

The very nature of crime is multi-layered and hence requires multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary approach to tackle it. There is a serious need to sensitise legal as well as policing system of Pakistan in favour of preventive approach rather than a punitive approach. Crime regulation involves a diverse range of work that requires a comprehensive knowledge and skill set. Such comprehensive knowledge and skillset cannot be attained by merely making new laws and seeking their enforcement through punitive measures. Therefore, in addition to enforcement procedures , multi-layered strategies involving responsibilisation and processes of restorative justice can mutually form a better blend to actually attain a declining graph of criminal activity.

The aim of the whole process should not primarily be to just identify and punish the perpetrators because this will keep on bringing more perpetrators to the system as long as the root causes of the criminal offences are not addressed. The process should, therefore, aim to reform and rehabilitate those who behave in criminal manner and take into consideration a holistic picture of crime connecting it with social, political and economic factors rather than mere enforcement of laws that hardly seems to happen in any case.