

PATTERN OF COGNIZABLE OFFENCES IN KARACHI – PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To study the pattern of cognizable offences in Karachi. This descriptive study was conducted in Karachi in 2007 to study the pattern of cognizable offences. Data of 16 years revealed opposing pattern in the committance of Homicide and Suicide. Rate of Homicide increased by 1.14 times while that of Suicide decreased by 2.03 times. Shop dacoity increased by 5.2 times whereas shop robbery by 47 times. Car theft decreased by two times, M/cycle by 3.4 times and other vehicles by 2.21 times. The rate has increased for snatching; car 2.05, M/cycle 4.11 times and other vehicles by 1.03 times. Fatal RTA decreased by 1.18 times and non-fatal RTA by 2.04 times. Due concentration has to be paid by all concerned to address these issues.

Key Words: Accidents, Homicide, Suicide, Car snatching, Cognizable offences.

INTRODUCTION

Karachi is the most densely populated and the largest city in Pakistan. Its population at present is nearly 21 million.¹ In 1947 its population was about 450,000 inhabitants.² Today the city has grown nearly 60 times its population in 1947. It is the economic and commercial capital of Pakistan and an important regional port.³ Main ethnic groups of the city are Muhajir, Sindhi, Punjabi, Pukhtoon, Saraiki, Balochi and Kashmiri.

Linguistic distribution constitutes Urdu 48.32%, Punjabi 13.94%, Pashto 11.42%, Sindhi 7.22%, Balochi 4.34% and others 12.44%.⁴ As far as religion is concerned Muslims constitute 94.45%, Christians 2.42%, Hindu 0.86% and others 0.27%.⁵ Karachi Division has 18 towns and 178 Union Councils. Defence Housing Authority is neither a town nor a part of any town. It is managed by Pakistan army.⁶

Cognizable Offence is one in which the police may arrest a person without warrant. They are authorised to start investigation into a cognizable case on their own and do not require any order from the court. It includes homicide, suicide, vehicle snatching and road traffic accidents.⁷ Rate of cognizable offences in Karachi is 1.23 / 1000 / year.⁸

Robbery means felonious taking from the person of another or in his presence against his will forcefully by violence or putting him in fear; it changes to dacoity when it is committed by five or more persons conjointly.⁹

“Homicide is the act of a human, killing another human”.¹⁰ Murder is an example of criminal homicide. Definitions of the crime and the defendant’s mind status determine the execution of criminal homicide. Usually capital punishment is given.¹¹ In-

sane persons along with defensive killers are usually spared. Assisting a suicide may be considered criminal homicide and punishable under Pakistan Penal Code.¹² Rate of homicide in Karachi is 0.4 / 10,000 / year.⁸ State sanctioned homicide or non-criminal homicide is where capital punishment is not given. The same is true during war and is not usually subject to criminal prosecution. Law enforcement agencies within certain parameters can do so and are usually not subject to prosecution.

“Suicide is applied to all causes of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself which he knows will produce this result.”¹³ The number of people committing suicide worldwide exceeds one million. Being the 13th leading cause of death in the world Sri Lanka, China, Japan and India rank on top. In Sri Lanka suicide rate has increased to 118 / 100,000 / year; highest in the world.¹⁴ Rate of suicide in Pakistan is 0.05 / 10,000 / year.¹⁵ Suicide is prohibited in Islam. Allah says in the Holy Quraan, “And do not kill yourselves. Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you”.¹⁶ This is why overall suicide rate is very low in Muslims; however an increase of suicide has been noted in Muslims living in America in recent years.¹⁷

The rationale was to study the pattern of cognizable crimes in Karachi so that preventive and corrective measures could effectively be taken at various levels.

METHODOLOGY

It was a descriptive cross sectional study conducted in 2007. The study comprised 16 years data of cognizable offences in Karachi obtained from CCP office, Sample technique was purposive non-probability.

Table 1: Cognizable offences in Karachi from 1990 to 2005.

Crime	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Homicide	625	521	425	371	911	1577	527	766	968	492	449	518	520	499	744	711
Suicide	215	231	258	272	264	203	258	210	225	371	342	195	190	230	186	106
Shop dacoity	5	6	4	7	12	21	20	21	29	9	7	15	11	18	20	26
Shop robbery	6	4	5	56	67	87	177	143	223	127	119	181	271	305	348	283
Car theft	1934	1717	1994	1082	1116	1204	1229	1373	1600	844	628	825	813	570	747	957
Car snatching	325	466	639	470	599	820	813	694	1052	405	347	690	541	591	633	667
M/cycle theft	3670	3491	3065	2730	2938	3641	3048	3346	3000	1666	1749	2040	1689	1335	1384	1076
M/cycle snatching	295	155	248	162	323	648	919	991	1084	640	634	921	1474	1270	1699	1214
Other vehicle theft	614	399	393	731	831	606	463	376	408	238	208	275	211	209	246	278
Other vehicle snatch	158	213	172	528	582	575	469	392	455	279	198	283	233	177	220	163
Fatal RTA	762	774	770	733	644	586	661	597	580	563	555	511	565	576	633	645
Non-fatal RTA	1141	892	978	977	663	480	508	527	545	482	569	600	542	581	668	601

Source: Capital City Police Karachi

Verbal permission was granted by the concerned officials.

Frequencies of different crimes were calculated and exhibited in chart. Time trends of different cognizable crimes were exhibited through figures. SPSS version 16 was used for statistical analysis.

RESULTS

As can be depicted from the table and figure 1 that cases of homicide have increased from 625 to 711 in 16 years period. It means there has been an increase by 1.14 times in committing the offence of homicide. Reverse is true for suicide where there is decrease by 2.03 times. The table and figure 2 shows 5.2 times increase in shop dacoity in 16 years period whereas shop robbery has increased by 47 times.

In the same table and figures 3, 4 and 5 the pattern is shown for vehicles. Car theft has decreased by two times where as car snatching, increased by 2.05 times. M/cycle theft has decreased 3.41 times and its snatching increased by 4.11 times. Other vehicles cases show the same pattern; their theft decreased by 2.21 times where as snatching increased by 1.03 times.

Fatal road traffic accidents decreased by 1.18 times and non-fatal RTA by 2.04 times.

DISCUSSION

As can be seen in the figure 1, rate of homicide is increasing while that of suicide is decreasing during the same period. It is an observation and it is very difficult to find a study on this aspect when rate of homicide in any country increases, that of suicide decreases proportionately and vice versa. The subject needs further exploration.

Shop dacoity in 16 years period, from 1990 to 2005 has increased by 5.2 times while shop robbery has increased by 47 times during the same period. The enormous difference in this cognizable crime could be due to the fact that by the definition, dacoity occurs when five or more criminals do the act conjointly. Making a large gang is difficult than committing a crime by a smaller group. In addition punishment of dacoity is more severe than that of robbery so criminals are more inclined to robbery to avoid extra botheration in case of dacoity.

Over all tendencies to car theft is decreasing whereas that for snatching is

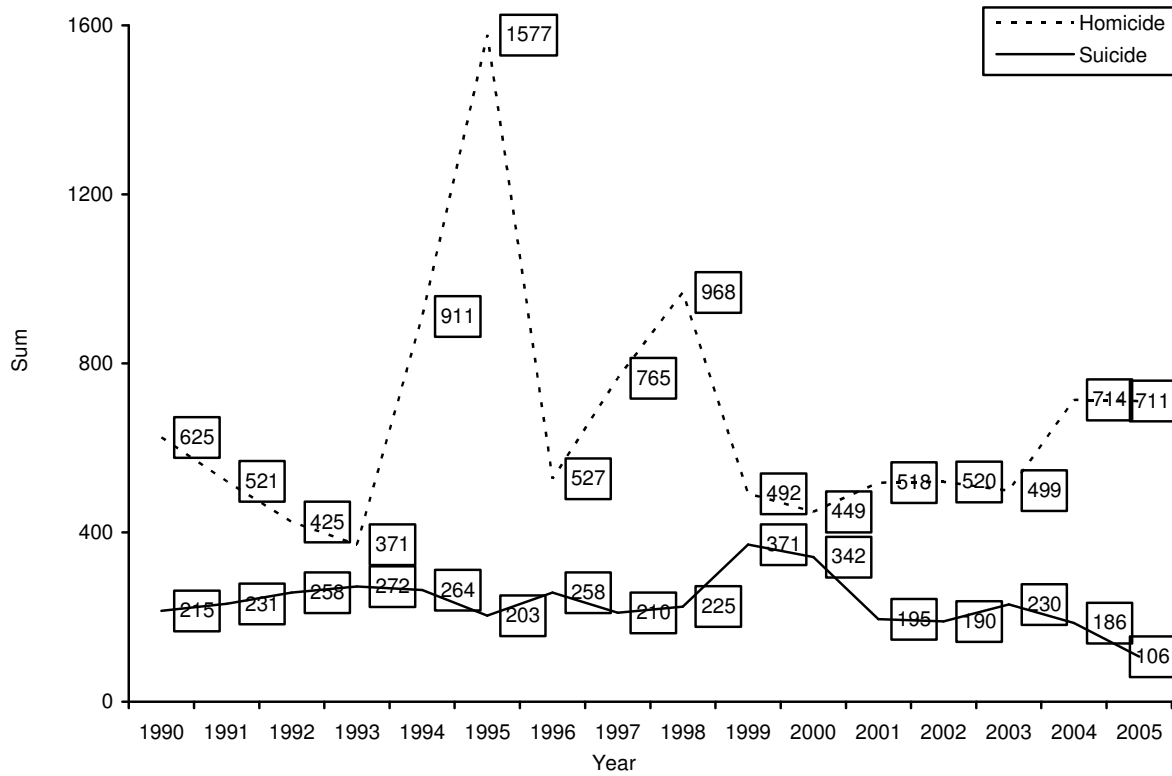


Fig. 1: Homicide suicide pattern.

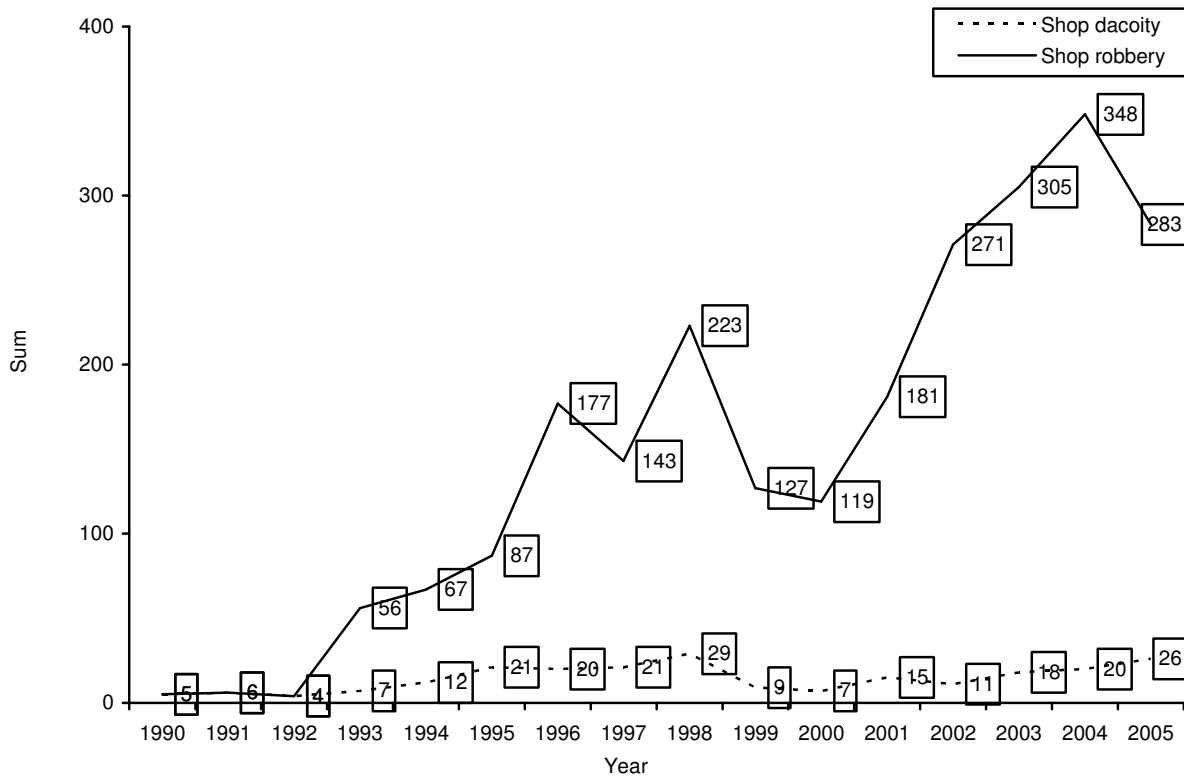


Fig. 2: Shop dacoity shop robbery.

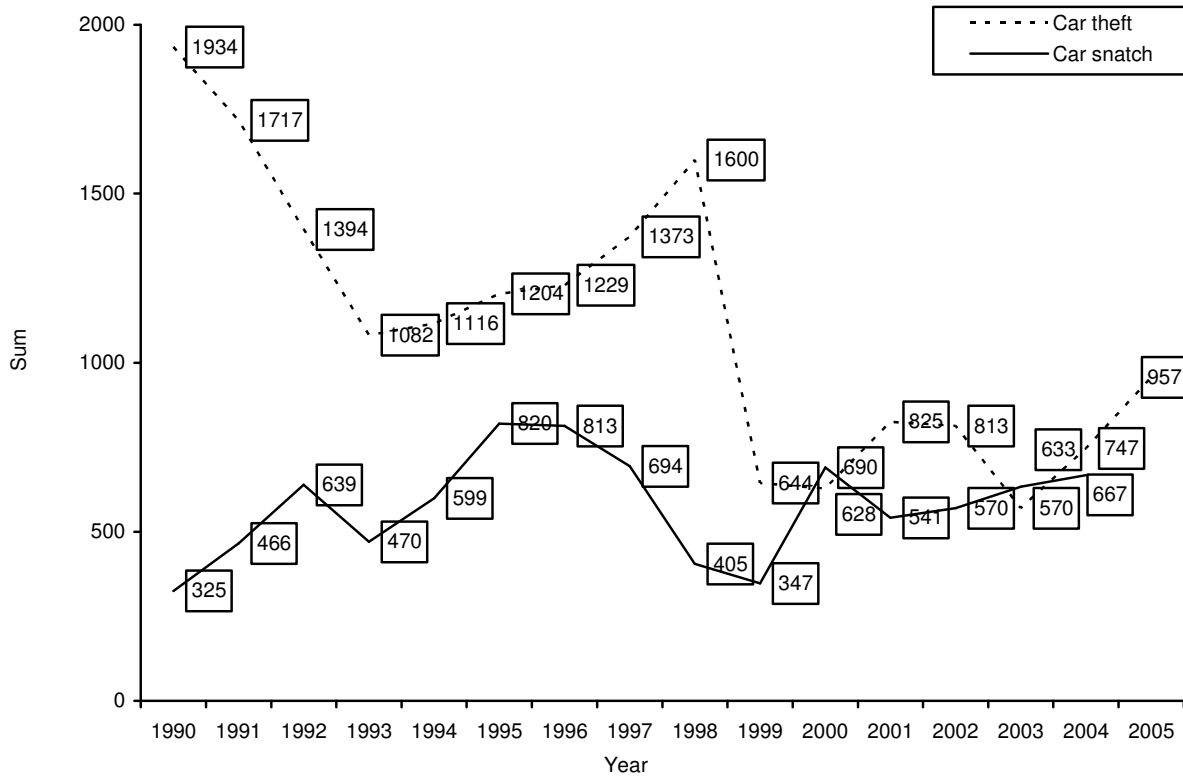


Fig. 3: Car theft car snatching.

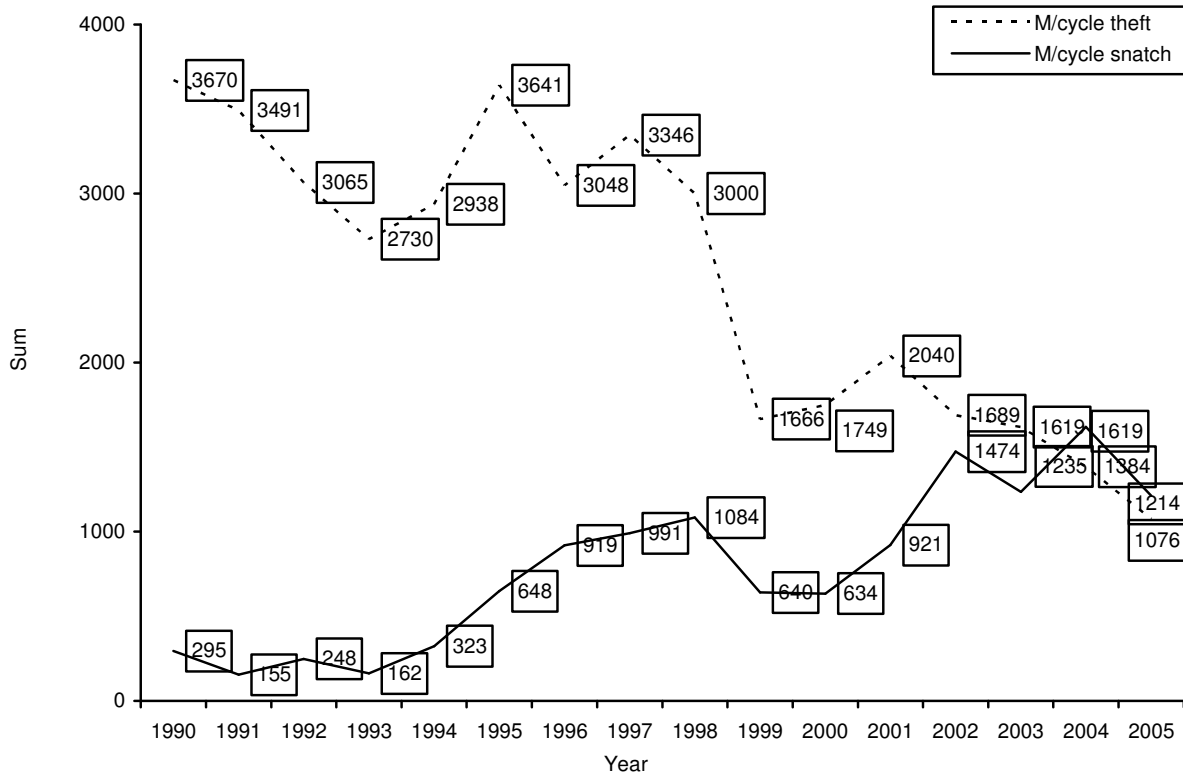


Fig. 4: M/cycle theft M/cycle snatched.

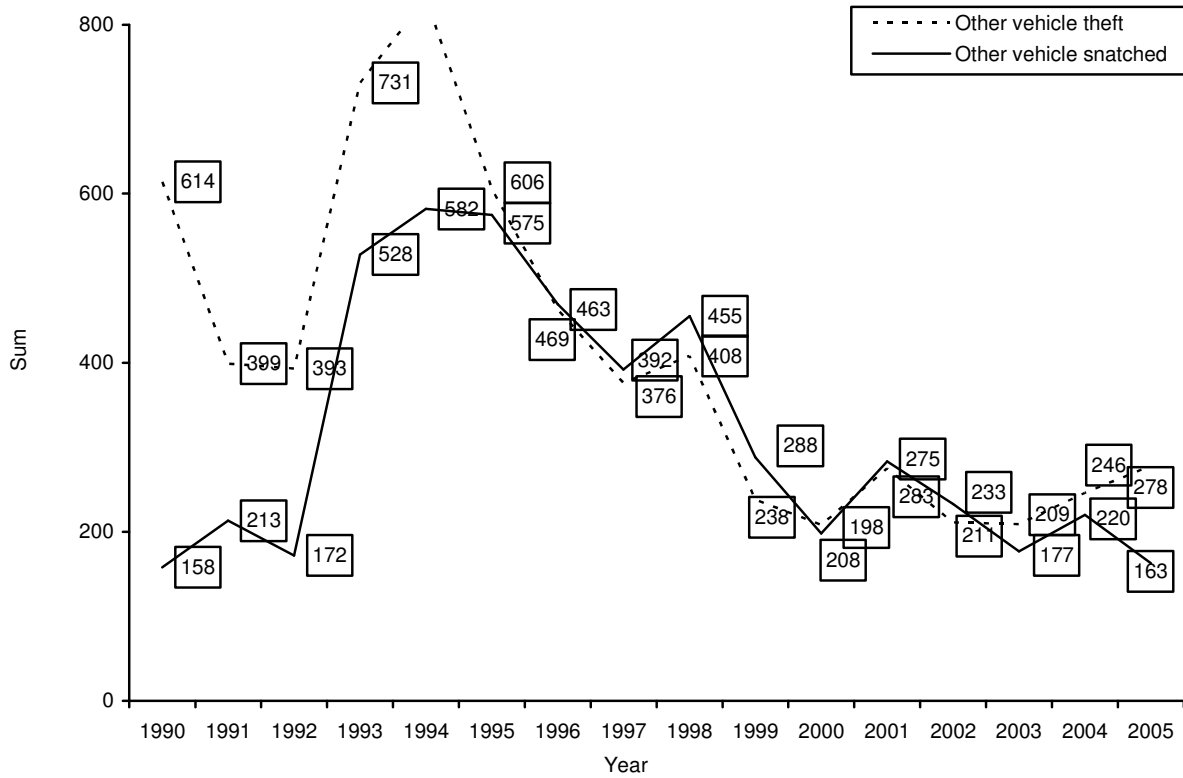


Fig. 5: Other vehicle theft and snatching.

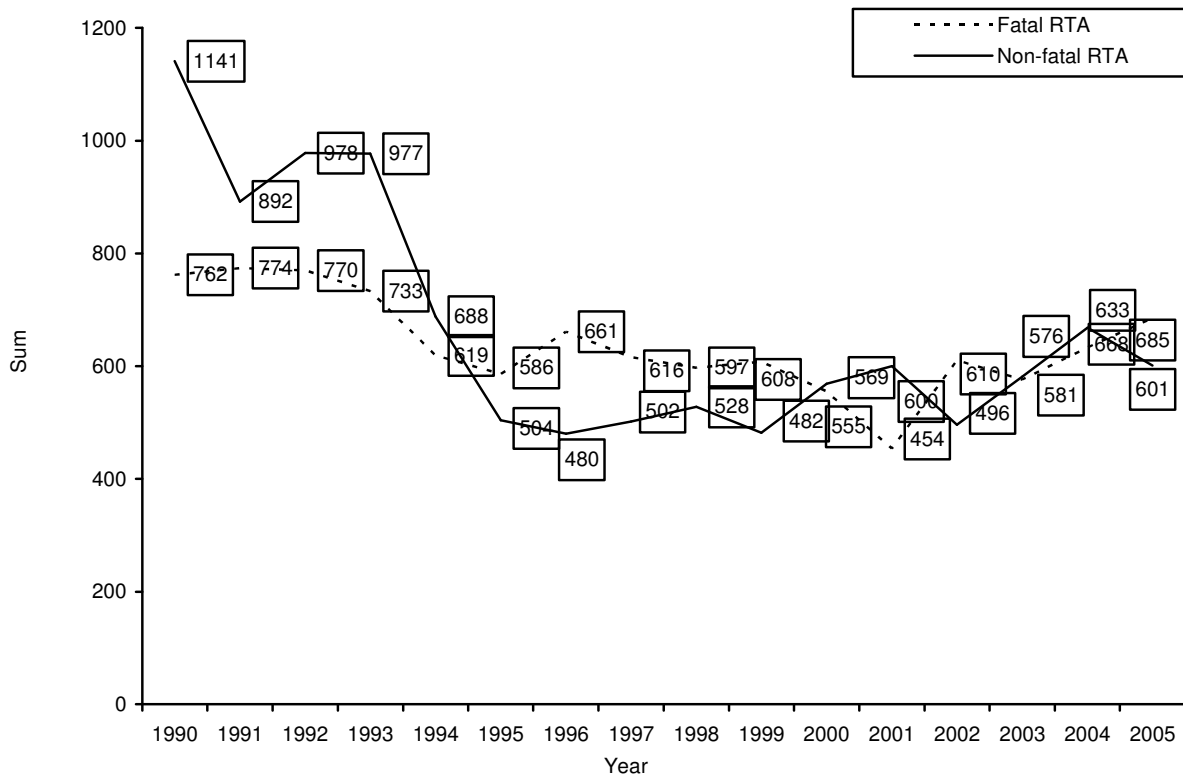


Fig. 6: Fatal and non-fatal RTA.

increasing. This phenomenon could be due to the fact that we have young population nearly half of the total and most of them are jobless. This fact of joblessness is complex with increasing time spent in leisure. This has also been noted that there is decreasing tendency of young males in Karachi toward education or skill learning which has resulted in the creation of criminal gangs. They just snatch vehicle and move it to some other place. The trend also shows the development of aggressive behavior in committing the crime; by hook or by crook.

As far as accidents are concerned both fatal and non-fatal accidents have decreased. This could be due to the developmental activities in major cities of Pakistan during the same period. Karachi is one of the most densely populated and haphazardly growing city in the world. Its problems are multiplying day by day and so is the occurrence of cognizable crimes. According to a report, Pakistan is on top in South Asia in urbanization. Its urban population will be nearly equal to its rural population by 2030.¹⁸ At present more than 40% of the population of this country lives in cities. - In Pakistan, Sind is the most urbanised province.²⁰ Karachi produces 25% of the GDP of the country.²¹

Enormous population growth rate in Karachi is the reflection of the overall growth rate of the country. Population growth rate of Pakistan is one of the highest in the region; its growth rate is 1.8%, India having 1.41% and Bangladesh has 1.12%.²² Recession in the world, especially in the middle east and in Pakistan has caused population migration toward major cities like Karachi. This factor of population movement toward Karachi is complex with inter religious extremists and other groups fighting, leading to the multiplication of the problems in the city.

Rural to urban migration is a push and pull phenomenon. Population migration toward cities could be due to reduction in poverty, empowerment of women and increase access to health care and education in cities. The deteriorating effects could be the creation of large urban slums putting enormous pressure on city services already beyond limits. Pollution, crimes, corruption and political polarisation are the serious issues of Karachi; they add fuel to the fire.

Increase in crime rate could be due to inflation at high rate, foreign elements involvement, deteriorating law and order situation, spread of Kalashnikov culture, intolerance among different ethnic and religious groups, weak political will, bad governance, decrease job opportunities, more leisure activities and the most important being, falling faith in God. Recession is a global phenomenon; however in Pakistan it is completed with corruption.

Salman Shah, former Finance minister of Pakis-

tan said in an interview with Wall Street Journal "Pakistan has to be a part of globalisation or you end up with Talibanisation. Until we put this young population into industrialization and services they will drift into this negative extremism; there is nothing worse than not having a job".

In Pakistan there is widening in the income gap between rich and poor. Most of the population work from dawn to dusk, however, finds it difficult to make both ends meet. In turn they put their anger into violence and join extremist groups. There are nearly 1.5 million new entrants looking for job every year.²³ Due to inflation parents cannot admit their children to modern schools as they can not incur out of pocket expenses. Therefore, they send their children to either public schools or Madras's. Children having passed out from public school usually have no standard and update knowledge and cannot compete with their counter parts who have passed from modern private schools. This creates frustration and they could be easily taken-up by criminals. In case of Madras's the situation is not much difficult. Here no or very nominal fee is charged. In addition to that boarding and lodging is free. Children after completing their study in Madras find it difficult to enter formal sector of economy as they do not have required skills. Some of them become breeding grounds for terrorism. Average conviction rate in Pakistan is 12%. In India it is 37%, in America 85% and in Japan 99%.²⁴ This factor is also responsible for increasing crimes in Pakistan.

Frequent power supply shortage cause decrease production in industries leading to joblessness. This in turn leads to increase in crime rate. There is a serious concern of security of property and life. Foreign and local investors hesitate to invest here leading to decrease job opportunities.

Fortunately a number of Non-governmental Organizations are helping people by providing services in different sectors. They provide food and medical services to the needy free of cost. Amongst them are the EDHI, CHEEPA, AMAN NGOs.

SUGGESTIONS

- Job opportunities should be increased.
- Revolutionary steps to be taken to correct and homogenise education system.
- Increase opportunities for young to take part in sports.
- Religious and political leaders should play their due role in this regard.
- Electronic and print media should emphasise the importance of the problems in their programs.

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