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The Role of Police Strategies in Controlling Street Crimes: A Case Study of Sargodha, Pakistan

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License:

Abstract: *The problem of street crime has also become an important matter of threat to civic safety in the Pakistani urban centers, and the middle-sized city like Sargodha is becoming progressively impacted. Street snatching, robbery, motorcycle theft and violence in the streets have increased the anxiety of the people and undermined the trust in the law enforcing agencies. The research paper is an investigation of the usefulness of different police measures in the control of street crime in Sargodha city. The research design used was quantitative, where data were obtained on 150 respondents by use of a structured questionnaire, which was based on the Likert scale. The study involved some of the important policing dimensions, such as routine patrolling, CCTV surveillance, intelligence sharing, and operational efficiency. The results suggest that police patrolling and the use of technological aspects especially the CCTV cameras are viewed by the citizens as effective forms of curbing crime at the street level. In addition, the intelligence sharing and the boosted police response times were also found to be the reasons behind better crime prevention. Irrespective of these good results, a number of operational problems, including inadequate financial and logistical capabilities, lack of proper trainings, and institutional capacities, were identified to limit the overall performance of policing strategies. The research arrives at the conclusion that even though police actions are important to reduce street crime, the action can be enhanced substantially by the means of strategic resource allocation, inter-agencies coordination, and involvement of the community. These lessons give logical suggestions to policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and local governments in a bid to reinforce street crime prevention systems in Sargodha and similar urban settings in the Pakistani context.*

Introduction

One of the most widespread and intrusive types of crime in the city is street crime, which directly affects the citizens in terms of their model of safety and quality of life. Crimes, including robbery in the streets, snatching of mobile phones, stealing motorcycles, harassment, and violent attacks, are types of crimes that interrupt the day to day activities and increase fear among groups (Gondal, 2022). The steep

increase in population, unemployment, and the expanding social inequality in Pakistan (especially in urban and semi-urban areas) have helped to make the incidents of street crime more frequent (Haider et al., 2023). The increasing feeling of insecurity among citizens in the urban areas has eroded the level of trust people have on law enforcement bodies as people continue to fear being victimized as they commute shop or participate in other aspects of the public life.

An example of such concern is Sargodha, a middle-size city in the province of Punjab. The cases of snatching, theft, and armed robbery have risen over the past years, which can be attributed to the increasing sophistication of crimes in cities and the apparent inefficiencies of the policing system (Saeed, 2014). Not only street offenses lead to economic and psychological damage, but also undermine the credibility of the police and undermine citizenship in the institutions (Cheema, Farooqui, Hasanain, and Shapiro, 2019).

The current policing system in Pakistan has gone beyond the reactive reaction to the problem and has now also included the preventive, intelligence-based, and community-based policing. The patrol, camera work, coordination of intelligence and quick reaction mechanism strategies have now become some of the most important in policing (Rana, 2024). Such projects as Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) have attempted to combine surveillance systems and real-time crime reporting, which can aid in growing the level of situational cognition and prevention power (Rana, 2024). On the same note, community policing practices also focus on local interaction and trust-building to bridge the disconnect between police and people (Khatoon, Naz, and Tulmuntaha, 2025).

The continued occurrence of street crime, in spite of those developments, highlights some essential issues related to the implementation, such as the shortages of resources, the problems with maintenance of technologies, and the lack of the training, among others (Sager, Arshad, Ahmed, and Abbas, 2025). Moreover, empirical studies of policing effectiveness are few, particularly in medium-town areas like Sargodha, where the infrastructure of the Safe City is not as developed as the one in Lahore or Islamabad (Aqil, 2020).

The objective of this study is therefore to empirically compare the effectiveness of police policies in curbing street crime in Sargodha. Based on the perception of the population, the study targets the connection between patrolling, CCTV surveillance, sharing of intelligence, response time and resource limitation. The research is supported with criminological views where situational prevention and routine activity theory influence the police intervention of the incident (Arif, 2024). The results will be useful in academic discussions of the issue of the prevention of crime in urban areas as well as in the formation of policies to improve the effectiveness of the police in the changing UAE urban environment.

Literature Review

The problem of street crime has been one of the most vexed urban security problems in Pakistan. Researchers emphasize that population growth, social, and economic disparities, as well as the presence of ineffective surveillance systems, have led to the rise of street-level crimes of snatching, motor vehicle theft, and assaults (Gondal, 2022). In response to the threats, the Punjab government has developed a number of policing strategies such as technological intervention, heightened patrolling and community involvement.

1. Safe City Initiatives and Technological Policing

The phenomenon of the establishment of the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) is a paradigm shift in the form of urban policing in Pakistan. CCTV surveillance, real-time monitoring and data-driven response mechanisms have enhanced the police response time and deterrent capacity (Rana, 2024). As reported by Chishti (2025), the project of a Safe City in Lahore played a beneficial role in crime hotspots reduction

since it combined AI-facilitated video analytics with geo-mapping of criminal events. Nevertheless, Hong (2022) cautions that these efforts also propagate the image of the security state, which focused on the ability to dominate the collaboration within the community.

2. Operational Policing and Patrolling

The last technique is patrol, which is a basic deterrent strategy. This is because of units like Dolphin Force and PRU (Police Response Units) in Punjab that have enhanced the visibility of the police in urban neighborhoods. Gondal (2022) asserts that regular motorbike patrols have suppressed cases of street robberies in various districts, although issues of sustainability such as fuel expenses and manpower shortages are also a major obstacle. Empirically, Tariq et al. (2024) proved that patrolling under CCTV monitoring resulted in the reduction of the incidence of crime in the streets by 1520 percent in the central areas of Lahore.

3. Community-Oriented Policing

An increasing research has supported community policing as a sustainable, trust model of crime prevention. According to Saeed (2014) and Abbas (2024), long-term security depends on community engagement and public liaison committees as well as trust-building mechanisms. Cheema et al. (2019) discovered that community policing projects in Punjab helped to raise the level of trust of citizens and enhanced intelligence sharing. Nevertheless, absence of coordination between the local police and civil society tend to reduce the effectiveness of such programs.

4. Intelligence Sharing/Inter-Agency Coordination

The other important strategy is intelligence-led policing (ILP). Investigations also highlight that a better level of coordination among the Punjab Police, Intelligence Bureau, and Safe Cities Authority contributes to better real-time threat detection (Wassan et al., 2023). However, the problem with bureaucratic silos and the confidentiality of the data interferes with the perfect functionality of the system. Gondal et al. (2023) suggest a common digital command framework so that the intelligence flow among agencies becomes easy.

5. Difficulties in Urban Conditions such as Sargodha

The medium cities such as Sargodha have their own challenges: lack of infrastructures of the Safe City, shortage of resources, and less effective local intelligence systems. According to Aqil (2020), it is better to use hybrid forms, which include informal neighborhood watch and official police presence in such areas. Furthermore, the success of crime control measures is burdened by the unwillingness of the population to cooperate with the police in many situations because of the lack of trust and the impact of political factors.

Methodology

The research design used in this study was quantitative in the analysis of the effectiveness of police strategies in the control of street crimes in Sargodha. A total of 150 respondents (considering the local residents and the most important stakeholders in the community) were used to obtain primary data using a structured questionnaire created on the five-point Likert scale. The scale quantified perceptual attitudes to police performance, police operational strategy and existing trends in crime. The systematic processing and statistical analysis of the collected data allowed determining the emergent patterns, frequencies distributions, and variations expressed in the percentage concerning the efficiency of the police and the street crime dynamics in the study area.

Data Analysis and Findings

The following tables summarize the responses regarding street crime patterns and police effectiveness.

Table 1: Perception of Street Crime Patterns

SR	Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
1	Street crime is increasing in Sargodha	68%	20%	8%	4%	0%
2	Snatching & Robbery are common	74%	18%	5%	3%	0%
3	Drug abuse contributes significantly to crime	54%	20%	10%	12%	4%

Table 2: Effectiveness of Policing Strategies

SR	Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
1	Patrolling is regularly conducted	62%	32%	4%	2%	0%
2	Patrolling effectively reduces street crimes	70%	26%	2%	2%	0%
3	CCTV and Safe City monitoring support prevention	48%	30%	12%	8%	2%

Table 3: Operational and Resource Challenges

SR	Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
1	Police response time is satisfactory	40%	35%	15%	8%	2%
2	Police manpower is sufficient	10%	15%	15%	40%	20%
3	Vehicles and fuel are adequately available	12%	18%	20%	35%	15%

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results show that police patrolling and technological surveillance systems especially use of CCTV systems are viewed as very effective measures to control street crime in Sargodha. Nevertheless, their overall effects are limited due to lack of enough manpower, inadequate logistical support in terms of fuel, working vehicles and enough institutional support, which all limit the sustainability of the implementation of these strategies.

Recommendations

Targeted Patrolling

The law enforcing agencies need to consider strategic and data-driven patrolling by focusing on crime hotspots identified based on crime mapping and spatial analysis. Focusing the policing activities in the risky places may enhance deterrence and maximize the available resources.

Resource Enhancement:

The provincial and local governments should have proper distribution of logistical and operational facilities such as fuel, vehicles and advanced surveillance gadgets. Increasing resource capacity will allow patrolling units to be visible and operationally effective all the time.

Public–Police Liaison:

The creation of better collaborative systems between the citizens and the police is the key to gathering intelligence and preventing crime in the early stages. Neighborhood watch programs, use of community reporting mechanisms and trust based communication can go a long way in enhancing proactive results of policing and control of crime..

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