

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Government Policies in Controlling Crime: A Data-Driven Analysis of Pakistan (2010-2020)

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Abstract

This study analyzes the effectiveness of government policies in controlling crimes in Pakistan. The study uses official data from the Ministry of Interior and the National Police Bureau to establish trends from the past eleven years, from 2010 to 2020, concerning crimes such as murder, robbery, car theft, kidnapping, or other crime categories. During these years, around 7.58 million crimes have been recorded, out of which robbery comprises the largest number, followed by motor vehicle theft and other crimes. Other significant types of crime that were reported included attempted murder, kidnapping or abduction, burglary, and cattle theft. However, murder and dacoity are less reported in comparison with other crimes. While the gradual decrease in the number of murders, attempted murders, and burglaries shows that enforcement policies worked, at the same time, the increase in the total number of crimes reported, especially kidnapping and some other serious crimes, shows the weaknesses of public policies. The authors of this article stress the necessity and significance of using evidence-based deterrent measures in conjunction with social reforms to devise and apply effective and all-inclusive state policies. They also suggest several recommendations developed in response to the changes in crime.

Keywords: Crime Control Policies, Crime Statistics, Community Policing, Crime Trends

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1. INTRODUCTION

Any criminal behavior is a serious violation of the principle. Crime prevention involves several approaches aimed at minimizing the rate of crime and reducing its negative impacts on persons and society, especially concerning violent acts and insecurity issues. Fighting against crime demands a close look at the socio-economic and psychological bases of criminality. In this connection, the criminal justice system (CJS) is the main body that intervenes in the process of solving the social problems caused by illegal behavior. The task of the CJS is to protect human rights and ensure the safety of the whole society. To achieve this, the CJS must observe the activities of law enforcement, prosecution, and the court during criminal proceedings. The scope of the CJS covers the problems of access to justice, legal representation, and prison reform.

The function of the Criminal Justice System consists of a network of government institutions that deal with the investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of criminal acts. The simplest structure of the CJS consists of law

enforcement, the judiciary, forensic science, and penal institutions (Siegel, 2017). Nonetheless, the rule of law still poses a significant challenge in Pakistan. According to the World Justice Project, Pakistan ranks 130 out of 139 states worldwide, where Afghanistan is ranked last in the region. It ranks fourth out of the six South Asian countries in terms of the criminal and civil justice systems (Abbasi, 2021; Ahmad, 2021). Internationally, community policing has emerged as a powerful strategy for improving the safety of different communities, enhancing police-community relations, and preventing crime. In Sindh province, Pakistan, this approach is especially relevant because of the complexity of social issues in Sindh and urban issues (Wassan et al., 2023). Despite the above-mentioned aspirations, agencies of law enforcement in the Sindh region continue to experience severe problems with their operation. The efficacy of such agencies is always dependent on the institutional capacity, the community outreach, and the level of resources, which are allocated for the above purposes.

Among the biggest issues of governance in Pakistan, one can mention corruption, lack of accountability, bureaucratic conflict, a constitutional crisis, and people suffering from law and order problems; all these issues concern the police as well. Therefore, the state of stability in politics, mostly driven by self-serving goals, has a strong negative impact on both economic and institutional development. The law enforcement system of Pakistan, which is a continuation of the famous Police Act of 1861, is considered outdated (Rashid et al., 2021).

The increase in the level of crime in Pakistan shows that the police are not able to fulfill their functions of enforcing laws, preventing violence, and fighting against extremism. The government allocated massive funding for law enforcement authorities in response to the crisis. Community-oriented policing has significant potential as a solution and a modern way to accomplish goals related to increasing public safety and creating new workplaces (Mangi et al., 2024). Crime trends in Pakistan over the last decade raise serious questions regarding the efficiency of law enforcement approaches. The Pakistan government adopted several landmark reforms designed to cope with crime and increase safety between 2000 and 2020.

Notable initiatives include the implementation of Police Order 2002, which superseded the Police Act of 1861 and gave birth to new oversight mechanisms aiming at improving the accountability of the police system. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Reforms set up a modern policing model with a new police force that is independent of politicians and based on technological and scientific advancements. Likewise, the Punjab Safe Cities Authority project implemented in the period from 2017 to 2020 has employed surveillance and e-ticketing practices to increase law enforcement effectiveness and prevent urban crimes. In addition, Islamabad Police Model proposed reforms intended to improve the police system in respect to efficiency and public service delivery (Government of Pakistan, 2002; International Crisis Group, 2010; Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2017; Punjab Safe Cities Authority, 2020). The Ministry of Interior of the

Government of Pakistan states that crime rates changed from 642,762 in 2010 to 876,430 in 2020, which indicates that criminal policies had some effects, but they were not effective enough, as the crime rates did not fall and some offences even increased. This conclusion corresponds to the idea that effective crime control requires a combination of forceful law enforcement measures with social and economic initiatives. The present research investigates the effectiveness of crime control policy in Pakistan using nationwide crime statistics from 2010 to 2020. Although statistics on crimes are available for anyone, only a small number of studies check whether the particular policies have led to any changes in crime rates over time.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several police professionals and researchers have offered insights into various dimensions of reform. A former Inspector General of Police provides a historical overview of police reform initiatives in the Indian subcontinent, identifying persistent institutional and structural challenges that hinder progress. Other scholars offer comparative and legal perspectives on provincial police structures (Suddle, 2010).

In addition to local perspectives, international theories and models offer valuable conceptual tools for understanding crime and reform. Becker (1968) applies economic theory to criminal behavior, introducing a rational choice framework in which individuals assess the benefits and costs of illegal activity before acting. This marked a paradigm shift from traditional sociological and psychological explanations of crime toward a more calculative, utility-based model.

Expanding on sociological frameworks, Sampson et al. (1997) introduce the concept of collective efficacy, defined as the shared belief in a community's capacity to maintain order and achieve collective goals. Their empirical research highlights its critical role in mitigating violent crime, particularly in urban neighborhoods characterized by socioeconomic disadvantage.

From a policing strategy perspective, Braga et al. (2014) evaluate the effectiveness of hot spots policing, which concentrates law enforcement resources in high-crime areas. Their systematic review and meta-analysis demonstrate that such targeted interventions significantly reduce crime without merely displacing it to nearby areas.

Lastly, Cullen and Gendreau (2000) revisit the effectiveness of correctional rehabilitation programs. Challenging the pessimism of the "nothing works" era of the 1970s, they argue that well-designed, evidence-based rehabilitation initiatives can substantially lower recidivism rates and contribute to sustainable public safety outcomes.

In a comprehensive examination of the history, challenges, and reform attempts in Pakistan's policy system, Suddle (2010) argues that the Pakistan police force is in urgent need of structural and functional reform to meet modern-day law enforcement needs and uphold the rule of law. Without

comprehensive, depoliticised reform, the police will continue to fail to deliver justice and security to the people.

Through this study, the authors aim to provide a complete overview of the policies the Government of Pakistan has adopted to incorporate sustainability into crime control. To reach this goal, the researchers formulated the following questions and hypotheses:

- Q1. Have crime rates in Pakistan increased or decreased over the study period from 2010 to 2020?
- Q2. How effective have government crime control policies been at reducing crime rates in Pakistan?

3. METHODOLOGY

To assess the success of crime control strategies of the Pakistan government, this research uses a quantitative longitudinal design spanning a period of eleven years (2010-2020). It looks at the different major crime types, such as homicide, robbery, hijacking/abduction, armed robbery, burglary, car theft, and other types of crime.

3.1 Data Source

The crime statistics were determined from government records published by the Ministry of Interior and the National Police Bureau (Islamabad). The data includes yearly figures on occurrences of crimes across the country, allowing for consistency and reliability in a longitudinal analysis. The study is based on an overview of the whole country and its aggregate data for every year from 2010 to 2020 (Ministry of Interior & National Police Bureau, 2020).

3.2 Data Analysis

In this study, ten distinct crime categories were selected according to their significance, frequency in society, and data availability on those crime categories. The crime categories selected for study in this research include murder, robbery, kidnapping/abduction, decoity, burglary, vehicular theft, and miscellaneous theft-related offenses. In terms of methodology and research design, descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to analyze crime trends. Based on the data collected, trend lines and regression graphs were created for each crime category to determine any impacts of the introduced crime-control measures on the number of crimes from selected categories during the research period.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Table 1: Yearly Reported Crime Statistics in Pakistan (2010–2020)**

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Σ
All reported crimes	642762	673750	645647	634404	627116	633600	677554	683925	703481	786339	876430	7585008
Murder	13190	13860	13846	13937	13276	9486	8516	8235	8241	8153	8490	119230
Attempted Murder	15533	15496	15338	14648	14499	11336	10279	9499	10067	10438	11797	138930
Kidnapping	18181	19523	20194	19472	18700	17922	18057	18363	20060	20256	19658	210386
Dacoity	4586	5015	4257	4053	3516	2329	1636	1280	1414	1382	1320	30788
Robbery	18098	20521	17081	17363	18107	15164	13088	12458	14914	18239	19904	184937
Burglary	16784	18073	17638	17053	17153	15878	14572	13833	14646	16124	16474	178228
Cattle theft	8846	9345	9046	7743	7459	6502	6068	5342	6233	7793	8649	83026
Motor Vehicle Theft	35259	40103	34663	-	-	-	23813	22778	29163	37105	46372	269256
Other theft	40397	42223	40102	37751	35288	32400	34320	37304	39418	55836	57988	453027
Miscellaneous	471888	489591	473482	502384	499118	522583	547205	554833	559325	611013	685778	5917200

Source: - Ministry of Interior, National Police Bureau, Islamabad

The information listed in Table 1 refers to the data from the Ministry of Interior and the National Police Bureau, which covered the records of crime for eleven years from 2010 to 2020. The data provided covered many types of crimes such as murder, robbery, kidnapping, theft, and so on. It has been shown that there has been an increase in the number of crimes over the past ten years. Thus, the number of reported crimes has increased from 642,762 in 2010 to 876,430 in 2020 (36% increase). It can be observed that there was a gradual increase until 2015, followed by an annual increase peaking in 2020. There was a slight decrease in the number of murders reported from 13,190 in 2010 to 8,490 murders reported in 2020 (35.6% decrease). The number of attempted murders also decreased from 15,533 reported in 2010 to 11,797 in 2020 (24.05% decrease). The number of reported robberies has increased. It was 18,098 in 2010 and increased to 19,904 in 2020 (9.98% increase). Dacoity has decreased from 4586 in 2010 to 1320 stolen properties in 2020 (71.22% decrease). In general, the crimes related to theft and property have been one of the most crucial aspects. In the case of burglary, an actual decrease in the number of burglaries from 16,784 in 2010 to 16,474 in 2020 can be seen (1.85% decrease). Incidents of cattle theft, other theft, and vehicle theft were also reported as being significant and stable, with only slight fluctuations. However, the number of kidnapped/abducted people rose from 18,181 in 2010 to 19,658 in 2020 (8.12% increase), indicating certain fluctuations noted along the mentioned period. Also, it is worth noting that the peak was reached in 2019 with 20,256 cases of abducted victims reported. It can be noticed that in the case of minor crimes that fall into the category of miscellaneous, an increase can be observed from 471,788 crimes reported in 2010 to 685,778 in 2020 (45.33% increase), indicating that there are emerging types of crimes registered.

It can be stated that the years 2019-2020 can be described as years with the greatest number of crimes being reported, which is likely due to better reporting, digital tracking, or the social impact of certain occurrences. The crimes (robbery, theft, vehicle theft) have been among the most reported, so they should be included in the prevention policy and strategies.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of 10 Different Crimes from 2010 to 2020 in Pakistan

Crime Type	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std._dev.	C.V (%)
Overall crimes	249314	627116	876430	7585008	689546.18	76874.95	11.15
Murder	5784	8153	13937	119230	10839.09	2696.70	24.88
Attempted Murder	6034	9499	15533	138930	12630.00	2461.96	19.49
Kidnapping/Abduction	2334	17922	20256	210386	19126.00	899.96	4.71
Dacoity	3735	1280	5015	30788	2798.91	1493.68	53.37
Robbery	8063	12458	20521	184937	16812.45	2611.59	15.53
Burglary	4240	13833	18073	178228	16202.55	1356.66	8.37
Cattle Theft	4003	5342	9345	83026	7547.82	1354.86	17.95
Motorvehicle Theft	23594	22778	46372	269256	33657.00	8054.65	23.93
Other Theft	25588	32400	57988	453027	41184.27	8300.12	20.15
Miscellaneous Crimes	213890	471888	685778	5917200	537927.27	64720.02	12.03

From Table 2, we can note that the mean is the average count for cases in each type of crime. Standard deviation measures how spread out values are around the mean, and the larger the value, the more variability we will have. Coefficient of Variation gives a measure of variability in relative terms, where a lower % means less variability. Minimum and Maximum are included. Range refers to the difference between the maximum and the minimum, and it serves to measure variability. According to key observations for each type of crime, murder cases are characterized by moderate fluctuations; attempted murder is less variable than murder. Kidnap/abduction has the least variability among types of crime, showing consistency over time. Dacoity has a range of 3,735, which indicates high variability. Robbery is characterized by moderate variability and some stability. Burglary appears to be stable and shows less variability as well. Cattle theft shows noticeable fluctuations, and its level of variability is average. Car theft has an extremely high range of 23,594, indicating a great variability in this type of crime. Miscellaneous crimes account for a lot of crimes as well; however, they are relatively stable rather than car or murder. The most stable crime type is kidnap/abduction (C.V. = 4.71%). The most unstable crimes are murder (C.V. = 24.88%) and car theft (C.V. = 23.93%). Miscellaneous crimes were the most common. Kidnapping and dacoity were the least common.

Table 3: Model Summary and Parameter Estimates

Crime Type	R-Squared	F-statistic	Parameter Estimates	
			β_0	β_1
All Reported Crimes	0.58	12.43	-34878464.46	17651.62**
Murder	0.79	33.11	1463599.14	-720.97***
Attempted Murder	0.72	23.04	1281035.86	-629.48**
Kidnapping/ Abduction	0.06	0.53	-110090.45	64.13
Dacoity	0.90	75.20	860401.23	-425.61***
Robbery	0.06	0.59	409334.46	-194.8
Burglary	0.37	5.27	517076.59	-248.57*
Cattle theft	0.24	2.78	407342.14	-198.41
Motor Vehicle Theft	0.00	0.003	121528.32	-43.6
Other theft	0.25	3.05	-2495755.68	1259.03
Miscellaneous crimes	0.84	46.75	-35469243.50	17869.56***
The independent variable is Year.				

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The simple linear regression for each crime type is discussed in Table 3 based on the form:

$$\text{Crime count} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \text{Year}$$

Where β_0 is the intercept, β_1 is the slope, and year is the calendar year.

Increasing trends:

1. *Miscellaneous* = $-35469243.5 + 17869.56 \times \text{Year}$
2. *Other theft* = $-2495755.68 + 1259.03 \times \text{Year}$
3. *Kidnapping/abduction* = $-110090.45 + 64.13 \times \text{Year}$

Decreasing trends:

4. *Murder* = $1463599.14 - 720.973 \times \text{Year}$
5. *Attempted murder* = $1281035.864 - 629.482 \times \text{Year}$
6. *Dacoity* = $860401.23 - 425.609 \times \text{Year}$
7. *Burglary* = $517076.59 - 248.57 \times \text{Year}$
8. *Cattle theft* = $407342.14 - 198.41 \times \text{Year}$
9. *Robbery* = $409334.45 - 194.80 \times \text{Year}$

Unclear/no trend

10. *Motor vehicle theft* = $121528.32 - 43.6 \times \text{Year}$

Miscellaneous crimes show an increase of $\sim 17,870$ cases annually. Other kinds of thefts witness an increase of 1,259 cases per year. An insignificant growth is observed in kidnapping with ~ 64 cases/year. Murder cases are declining at a rate of ~ 721 cases/year, which is statistically significant. Attempted murder significantly increased by ~ 629 cases per year. Dacoity is down by ~ 426 cases/year, a steady decrease. Burglary shows a decrease of ~ 249 cases each year. About 198 cases of cattle rustling are reduced every year. A slight dip in robbery is recorded at ~ 195 cases per year. Motor vehicle theft shows a dip in the rate with a positive trend after 2016, while the real graph indicates growth after 2016. Among the crimes listed in Table 3, murder, dacoity, and miscellaneous crimes are most significant ($p < 0.001$ for each), attempted murder has a significant change over time ($p < 0.01$), while all the crimes increased with significance ($p < 0.01$).

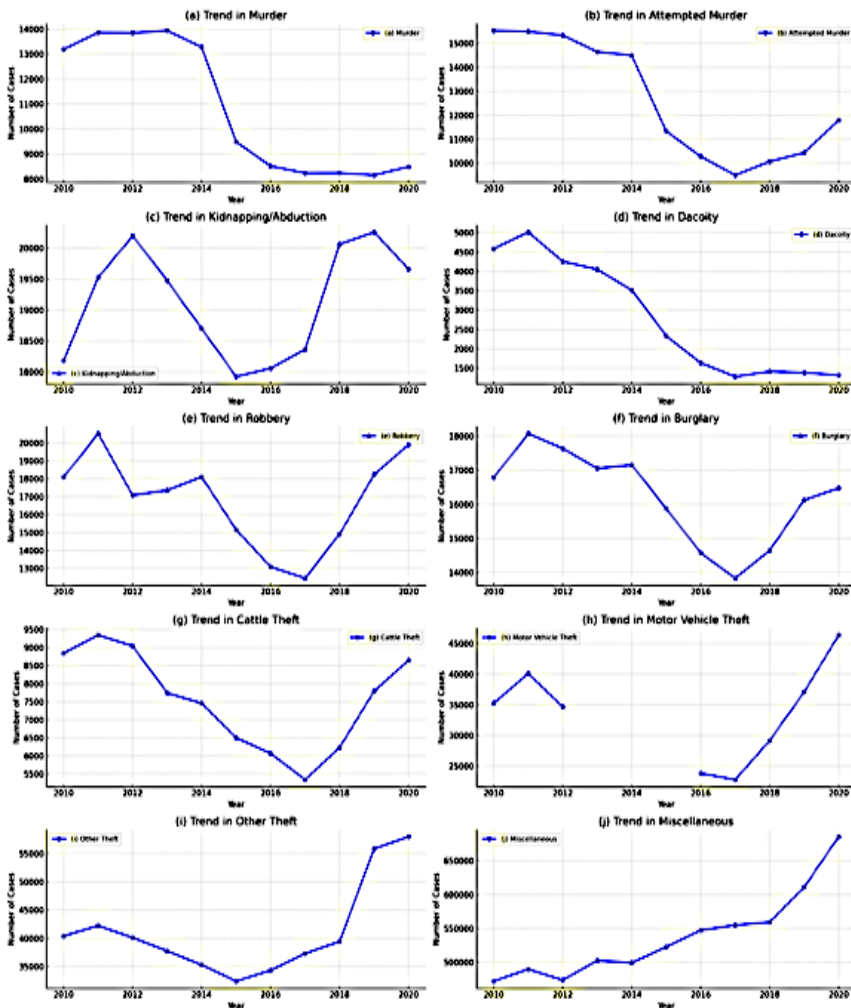


Figure 1: Trend in Reported Cases of all 10 crimes (2010–2020), labeled from (a)-(j)

Figure 1 presents individual line graphs for 10 different crime types, labeled from (a) to (j). A significant decrease is observed in murder and robbery, whereas motor vehicle theft shows a notable increase.

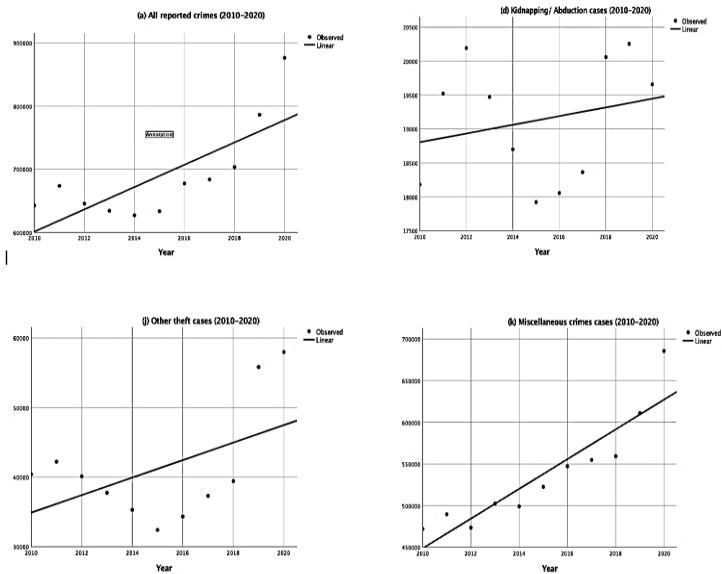


Figure 2: Regression lines trend in Reported Cases of all increasing crimes (2010–2020), labeled from (a), (d), (j), and (k).

Figure 2 presents individual trend line graphs (with regression lines) for each increasing crime category from 2010 to 2020, labeled (a), (d), (j), and (k). These show overall upward patterns in reported cases over time

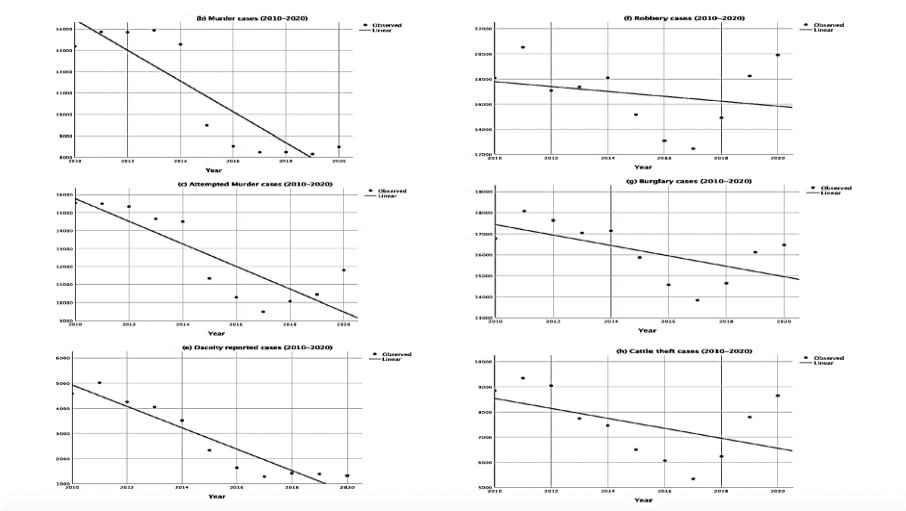


Figure 3: Regression lines trend in Reported Cases of all decreasing crimes (2010–2020), labeled (b), (c), (e), (f), (g), and (h).

Figure 3 presents individual trend line graphs (with regression lines) for each decreasing crime category from 2010 to 2020, labeled (b), (c), (e), (f), (g), and (h). These show overall downward patterns in reported cases over time.

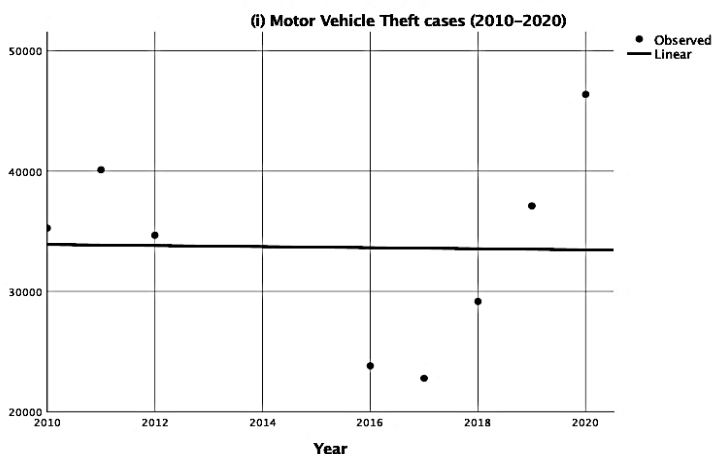


Figure 4: Regression line trend in Reported Cases of all Motor Vehicle theft cases reported from (2010–2020), labeled (i).

The graph depicted in Figure 4 illustrates how many motor vehicles were stolen. In general, the information presented in the graph shows no trend in terms of reported incidents over time. The lack of trend may be attributed to missing information included within the data. The crime statistics covering eleven years show that crime in Pakistan involves a complicated reality that is continuously changing. Despite the known fact that certain crime types, such as robberies or murders that decreased due to the improvement of forensic science and the effective application of community policing as well as counter-terrorism measures, the overall results of criminal activity show a substantial growth. In 2020, there were 876,430 crimes registered in Pakistan compared to 642,762 in 2010. High robbery rates, motor vehicle theft, the remarkably rapid growth of kidnappings (18,181 to 19,658), and other types of crimes highlight the failure of preventive systems and public safety measures. Although there have been attempts to update laws and alter the system of justice, the problem of crime out of opportunities and socio-economic causes continues to exist. Such a situation suggests that the application of punitive measures alone will not be enough to address the crime issue. It is necessary to take a look at urbanization processes, discrepancies in incomes, the absence of youth job opportunities, gaps in police work, and similar issues to understand the reasons for unregulated crime. Certainly, the failure to provide timely judicial solutions to crimes and the lack of rehabilitation programs may lead to high levels of recidivism. Finally, the analysis shows that the police started to provide more accurate reporting about crime statistics, which could explain some increase in crime over the decade. However, unless efforts to reform the system are

implemented to bring about changes within the country, the efficiency of such reforms will be low. Crime trends observed during the research correspond with Becker (1968) and Sampson et al. (1997) findings, highlighting the importance of having appropriate situations for criminals to commit crimes. Thus, for instance, the increase of car thefts (from 35,259 to 46,372) even with the police activities shows that policing either was unsuccessful or that criminals are becoming more advanced.

Research shows that education and economic growth are major factors in crime reduction in Pakistan. Studies demonstrate a link between high levels of education and low crime rates, thus suggesting integrating educational policies, law enforcement, and economic growth plans. Apart from that, researchers stress the need to reform criminal justice to establish institutional integrity, enable access to justice, and ensure that counter-crime policies comply with human rights (Ahmed et al., 2019; Anwar et al., 2017).

Criminal justice reforms should be initiated in Pakistan, which encompass various important measures such as the efficacy of the police force, forensic investigation, judicial process, independence of prosecution, accountability of institutions, and modernization of the process using technology. Collectively undertaken measures must be supported by the principles of good governance and the rule of law to achieve the goal of crime prevention and public safety (Chan and Adjorlolo, 2021; Rehman et al., 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

Over the past years, the government of Pakistan has had a mixed record with its policies aimed at combating crime in its territory. There has been a decline in violent crimes such as murder and burglary, but other types of crime such as kidnapping and vehicle theft have significantly increased. The decline in certain crimes while other types continue to rise shows that the country is facing structural and systemic issues. The growing number of total reported crimes despite government interventions suggests that more comprehensive methods need to be utilized. Such methods should involve both implementing laws and using preventive measures that address the root causes, such as poverty, education gaps, and urban insecurity.

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research makes use of the country-wide gathered data on crimes, but the research does not consider certain policies or programs in different areas affecting the results of the analysis.

The study is based on the crime data reported to the Ministry of Interior and the National Police Bureau. Nevertheless, possible underreporting, especially considering rural areas and other crimes like domestic violence, can affect the results of the study considerably.

The factors such as unemployment, education level, urbanization level, or income inequalities are not introduced in the research, although such factors

could play an important part in revealing the relationship between these variables and changes in crime rate.

The study is only quantitative and does not have any qualitative data at all that would deepen its understanding of how people perceive and experience government policies.

In addition to that, although the study tries to analyze serious crimes such as murder, robbery, or kidnapping, cyber-crimes, drug crime, and gender-related crime are not included, which are very relevant issues in Pakistan today.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In this paper, it is suggested that intelligence-based policing can be made more effective by investing in predictive policing technology, crime pattern analysis, and integrated crime information systems. In addition to this, it is recommended that community policing be enhanced by improving public confidence and encouraging crime reports, as well as carrying out judicial reforms aimed at reducing the backlog of cases and making the prosecution process more efficient. Additionally, programs targeting unemployment, involving young people, and aiming at improving education have been recommended, as well as increased legal and physical protection of victims and witnesses.

7. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future investigations must explore the implementation timelines of specific crime control strategies and their effect on crime statistics at the state or district level. Utilize GIS and socio-economic parameters to study crime distribution and factors. Massive surveys must be conducted for the acquisition of information on other crimes that occur unnoticed and people's attitudes toward the instruments of law enforcement. Investigate crime tendencies and the impact of law enforcement measures in Pakistan and other countries (India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan) for generating feasible solutions.

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