

TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF CRIMES IN DHAKA CITY: AN ANALYSIS OF RECENT CASES

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ABSTRACT

Crime statistics has always become an important source for knowing the trends and fluctuations of criminal tendencies. Performances of law enforcement agencies are measured to some extent by such statistics. The sources of such information are subsequently very important in this apprehension process as validity and reliability of such data largely depend upon these sources. Recorded crime data by law enforcement agencies thereby are considered as a great source of such information as these data include formal complaints of victims in most of the cases and count the total number of offences. Though all reported data are not recorded and all recorded data do not necessarily display the real crime situation of a particular area, police records always are considered as good indicators for understanding the crime situation of specific regions. This study therefore, intends to analyze such police data for understanding the recent trends and causes of crime under the area covered by Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP). This study also seeks to understand crime trends and patterns with respect to other extraneous factors. This study was conducted based on the data which have been collected by DMP from January to July, 2015.

KEYWORDS: Police, Offence, Narcotics, Arms and Ammunition, Peacemaking Criminology

INTRODUCTION

Crime is generally regarded as the violation of criminal law where intention, motive, mens rea, knowledge, innocence, mistake of fact, mistake of law are some of the mental components (Ratanlal and Dhirajlal, 2012). Radical criminologists argue that crime is not only the violation of criminal law but also the violation of social relationships. Breakdown of such relationship destroy the harmonic nature of the society and creates more crimes. Since, Bangladesh is one of the third world countries, like other similar countries it is striving for reducing its crime rate for bringing it to a satisfactory level. All the regions of this country definitely are not equally crime prone; likelihood of crime varies with geographic variation, seasonal changes and socio-economic factors (Cohn, 1990). Among the regions of Bangladesh Dhaka, the capital city of the country is considered as one of the most crime prone regions for fostering a large number of residents and commuters in the city area. Keeping the law enforcement process up to the standard is therefore, not easy in this place. After the independence, the state authority felt the necessity of establishing a metropolitan police in Dhaka. An ordinance was thereby declared to initiate the activities of Dhaka Metropolitan Police for maintaining complex law enforcement procedure in the city area.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police was established during the year of 1976 to work in the city area under the control of Police Headquarters and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA). It started its journey with only 12 police stations where the total population of the city was 4 million. After about 40 years this population has lifted up to 15 million. For

enhancing the police service for this large population of the city, DMP has updated its facilities over the time. Now, the total number of police stations under DMP is 49. A number of 26,661 (including all ranked personnel and ministerial staff) members including one Commissioner, five Deputy Commissioners and other police officers are now working as active members of DMP (<http://www.dmp.gov.bd>). Due to the centralized state control system and many other facilities for the different classes of people this city (Dhaka) has to foster a significant number of inhabitants and commuters in the main area and the suburbs. The condition of crime situation is therefore, very complex here which encompasses a great number of law violators, victims and also the law enforcement professionals. It is to be mentioned here that not the metropolitan police alone works for the enforcement of law in this city area, an elite force named Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) also works along with them to protect the inhabitants from all criminal activities. However, the responsibility is vested with DMP to control the crime of this city area either by preventive/ proactive measures or reactive (punitive in many cases) means like arresting people, applying water-cannon or charging with baton.

Ever-increasing population of Dhaka city and the lower workforce of police always make people feel vulnerable. The reason is people's dissatisfaction with police in case of response rate. The reason behind this is not always the failure of police or high expectation of city inhabitants but the limitation of police force in case of its manpower, vehicles and other logistics. Being in a very fragile condition, police is striving for keeping the people under the security net with their limited resource. DMP has taken a number of time-demanding initiatives to keep pace with modernization and changing crime patterns. It has made a very dynamic website with regular information update, crime maps for different parts of the city area and a short description (by pop up notification) for each hot spot about the most recent crime incidents. The data which are displayed on the website are invaluable to the researchers for understanding the recent trends of crime and analyze them properly. However, the present study has analyzed the data which are available on the website of DMP and assessed those with reference to different factors for determining the associated issues behind such offences. Adler et al. (2001) described such sources as the most important ones for getting crime data stating-

“Data (related to criminal activities) can be found in a wide variety of sources, but the most frequently used sources are statistics compiled by government agencies, private foundations and business. Familiarity with the sources of data and the methods used to gather data will help in understanding the studies.”

Before analyzing the crime statistics of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, it is essential to understand different issues regarding this statistics. First of all, these crimes are not defined universally as the definitions of crime may vary from country to country and time to time. The features of defining an incident as criminal offence therefore, differ significantly with the change of territorial boundary. The issue is when anybody reports any crime incidence to the police, one offence gets more importance than the others though all of these offences are committed in the same incident. Thus, the recorded data do not necessarily display the real scenario of crimes in all the cases (Terrill, 2009). Another problem in such crime data is the number of crimes which actually happens in any locality and the number of crimes that is recorded by police is not the same because there are many cases where the victims do not go to police for seeking their help. Thus, a gap between the actual crime data and recorded crime data always prevails. This gap is termed as the ‘dark figure of crime’ (Bohm and Haley, 2002). Moreover, some crimes are inadequately reported to the police specially in case of so called ‘victimless crimes’ like drug related offences. This also put an impact on the validity of police data. Some crimes related to financial fraud are known to people but always not reported to the police. Moreover, many crimes are being committed with the advancement of technology and are inappropriately included in the list of different crimes. Therefore, police data

always suffer from the validity problem specially in case of not recording crime (Home Department, USA, 2006). There are some acts which pretend like crimes but in the real sense of the term those crimes are not proved as true. All such complaints frequently mislead the statistics (Office for National Statistics, 2014). Considering all of these limitations and constraints, police data still is one of the most reliable sources of crime data, specially in the countries like Bangladesh where the government-controlled statistical departments collect less data on criminal matters.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study the perception students have in their mind about science and scientist at work with respect to physical attributes and attributes of science.

METHODS

This study is a secondary one where all data have been collected from the official source of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP). All these data have been analyzed by using statistical operations and displayed with graphical presentation. The associated factors for changing crime patterns and all other causes have been tried to incorporate here for apprehending multi-level factors in this regard. Only the data of different months (January to July) of the year of 2015 have been used in this study so that the most recent crime trends can be analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

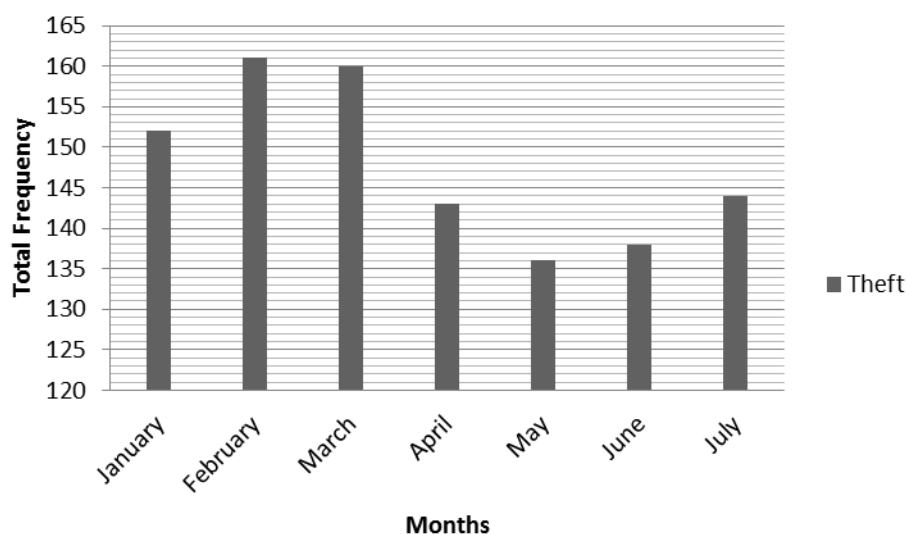
For the analysis of criminal activities and all their associated factors with regard to crime data this study intends to go through the same way of data presentation through which DMP keeps the records of criminal matters. This is because these crimes, if are defined in other ways could yield erroneous outcomes and overlap mutually. However, all the relevant data have been analyzed here for an appropriate understanding of the associated factors. The major findings of the study are discussed hereinafter.

RECORDED CRIMES OF DHAKA METROPOLITAN POLICE (DMP)

The crime data which have been recorded by DMP from the month of January to July in the year of 2015 indicate that crimes related to abuse of narcotics and the illegal trades of such substances are most frequently faced crimes by the police in the city area. If the crimes are considered in terms of their frequency then Narcotics or drug-related crimes would be on the apex. These crimes were recorded most in frequency during the month of June and the least during the month of February. The next most recorded crimes in Dhaka city in the studied time period was Theft (Figure 1) and women repression. A total of 1034 thefts and 747 cases of women repression were recorded by police during these months. The next frequent crimes after these are murder, robbery, miscellaneous acts (under speedy trial), children repression, kidnapping and dacoity. One excellent finding is found from this study that most of the crimes (Narcotics related, women repression, murder, robbery) have been committed in the studied area during the month of June. It is also evident that most of the violent crimes including murder, robbery and women repression were less frequent during the month of January (Table 1).

Table 1: Crime Data of Dhaka Metropolitan Police: January-July, 2015

Month	Dacoity	Robbery	Murder	Kidnapping	Vehicle Theft	Petty Crimes (Speedy Trial)	Drugs and Narcotics	Women Repression	Children Repression
January	3	11	17	7	67	12	562	86	16
February	2	13	21	10	80	10	375	86	13
March	2	18	21	13	76	15	484	111	11
April	6	10	21	8	68	17	538	102	13
May	4	21	23	8	52	21	664	117	13
June	6	34	25	9	51	18	784	125	13
July	6	13	17	19	64	19	569	120	9
Total	29	120	145	67	458	112	3976	747	88

**Figure 1: Theft Recorded by Dhaka Metropolitan Police during January to July, 2015**

CAUSES OF CRIMES

Drugs and Substance Abuse

There are many causes behind such frequency of the above-mentioned crimes. The young adults and teenagers are now-a-days more prone to abuse alcohol and other narcotic substances. They generally abuse drugs because of their delinquent peers, frustration, depression, curiosity and sub-culture (Shazzad et al., 2013). They are also trapped by the drug dealers who find them as the easy targets for selling their illegal substances. Though in many western countries drug is considered as a type of victimless public order crime, the criminal activities of users and the distributors make the term 'victimless' nonsensical (Siegel, 1998). In Bangladesh abuse of drugs and narcotic substances is declared as the violation of criminal law and thereby 'illegal'. It not only creates individual problem but also yields the development of many illegal activities like weapon smuggling, prostitution, violent activities and other crimes.

Theft, Vehicle Theft, Dacoity and Robbery

Theft and vehicle theft are differentiated in the police records of Bangladesh. Theft is very much frequent in Dhaka city because of the availability of chances. It is evident that when three elements namely the motivated offender, absence of capable guardian and a suitable target make a triangle in a given period of time, it is likely that a crime will

happen. In case of petty theft and household theft these three elements stay together and thereby according to the routine activity theory incidents of theft take place (Cohen and Felson, 1979). Vehicle theft on the other hand is increasing because of the availability of private transports and their less security. In case of such crimes it is the fact that the offenders are highly knowledgeable about unlocking the cars and using such vehicles without any substantive restraint. The three preconditions of crime, i.e., motivated offender, suitable target and absence of capable guardian are also present there. In case of dacoity and robbery the complex nature of city life, joblessness and abuse of drugs are acting as the key factors.

Women and Child Repression

Rehman (2003) referred Vienna declaration as “the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. But the real scenario in the studied area is a little bit different. It is frequently found that the women are being victimized by their male counterparts. The causes of such women repression are manifold. Due to the breakdown of extended and joint families the number of nuclear families is increasing and the relationship between husband and wife is becoming influenced by the complexity of their minds; this happens due to the organic solidarity of the society. Here, the parents or other senior members of the family could work as the ‘shock absorber’. As there is nobody like these superiors to minimize the problems, the women frequently become victimized due to the familial disputes (Khan et al., 2014). Due to such reasons, birth as a woman is treated as a great problem by the females of Bangladesh. Like other sub-continental countries Bangladeshi males are also very prone to see their female counterparts as obeying them without any betrayal. While women do anything contrary to the sentiment of the male members of the family, they (the females) become the victims of aggression or violence (Khan and Kamruzzaman, 2010). Therefore, irrespective of more job enrolment, with the advancement of time, women repression is retaining to its previous condition. Child abuse on the other hand is frequently found in case of working children who come from the poorer families. Only the arousal of affection and love for the children can be the best solution for the prevention of such hatred offences.

Murder and Kidnapping

Murders can be connected to the disputes that are caused due to personal, group or political interest. Murders were more frequent in the month of June and less in the month of January and July. This crime has great social impact. A variety of research projects from numerous disciplines have shown that the consequences and costs of murder can be devastating not only for the victims and their families, but also for neighborhoods and communities in which the murders occurred (DeLisi, 2010).

On the other hand, kidnapping and abduction are more frequent among different locations of the city area for making people hostage due to some political or economic reasons. In most of the cases a youth gang is found to be involved in such crimes. Though, the total number of such crimes is seemingly less here, the real picture of such crimes might be different. As, all such crimes are not reported to the police because of distrust, the recorded crime showed such crimes less in frequency.

Illegal Arms and Ammunition

Illegal arms and ammunition have become another great problem in Dhaka city now-a-days. Some militant groups and other people are involved in different violent activities. Besides this, for influencing the partisan politics, some ill-motivated politicians are involved in such arms dealing. There was a considerable headway in the past years in limiting

illegal arms and ammunition but at present many cases have been found about the possession of such weapons. Police have recovered a lot of arms and ammunitions in the last seven months of this year. The number of arrested persons is also satisfactory. It is found from the statistics that a number of 251 cases have been lodged against the persons who are involved in the handling of such illegal arms and ammunition. In addition to that 544 persons have been arrested in such cases (Table 2).

Table 2: Illegal Arms and Ammunition in Police Records

Month	Total Case	Total No. of Arrests Made
January	50	98
February	79	153
March	36	75
April	18	37
May	15	64
June	35	78
July	18	39
Total	251	544

Among the arms and ammunition which have been recovered by the police are local made pistol, revolver, pipe-gun, shutter gun, bullet, magazine, cartridge, gun powder, patrol bomb, hand bomb etc. (Table 3) This statistics indicates that this country is still vulnerable to illegal arms and ammunition both in cases of usage and trafficking. Dhaka Metropolitan Police has got a great success in the recovery of such illegal weapons. This effort has given the people a feeling of relief and a sense of vulnerability at a time. In this context, this is the responsibility of police to make the people feel that they (police) will be with the commoners in case of any danger or unexpected situation.

Table 3: Description of the Types of Arms, Ammunition and Explosives Recovered by Police during January to July, 2015

Month	Name and Number of Arms and Ammunitions Recovered		
	Arms	Ammunition	Explosives
January	Local made Pistol-01	Other Arms- 14	Patrol Bomb-07
	Local made Revolver-01	Bullet-1080 rds	Gun powder-01gm
	Foreign made Pistol-07	Magazine-02	Smoke Grenade-198
	Foreign made Revolver-03	Cartridge-01	
	Pipe gun-01		
February	Foreign made Pistol-08	Magazine-07	Mixed chemical – 700gms
	Foreign made Revolver-01		Patrol Bomb-37
	Shuttergun-01		Hand Bomb-06
	Bullet-48 rds		Gun powder-02 kgs
			Smoke Grenade-83
March	Foreign made Pistol- 07	Bullet- 60rds	Smoke Grenade-200
	Foreign made Revolver- 03	Magazine- 05	Patrol Bomb- 07
	Other Arms- 07	Cartridge- 03	
April	Local made Pistol-01	Bullet-40rds	Patrol Bomb-09
	Foreign made Pistol-05	Magazine- 07	Gun powder- 500gm
	Other Arms-09		Mixed chemical -800gm
			Smoke Grenade- 35
May	Foreign made Pistol-08		Smoke Grenade- 17
	Foreign made Revolver-04	Magazine- 02	Gun powder- 250gm
	Sutter Gun-01	Other Arms-13	
	Gun-01	Bullet-32rds	

Table 3: Contd.,

June	Local made Pistol-3	Bullet-54rds	Gun powder- 1kg 900 gms
	Local made Revolver-3	Magazine- 9	
	Foreign made Pistol-7	Cartridge-4	Sulfur-600 gms
	Foreign made Revolver-6		Explosives-2 kgs
	Other Arms-23		Explosives squib-145 pcs
			Patrol bomb- 17
July			Smoke Grenade- 23
	Foreign made Pistol-11	Bullet- 71rds	chocolate bomb- 70 pcs
	Foreign made Revolver-3	Magazine- 9	Sulfur- 1202 Kg
	Other Arms- 4		Smoke Grenade- 13

(Source: Dhaka Metropolitan Police)

Trend Line of DMP Recorded Crime Data in Different Months

Trend analysis helps to understand monthly variation or fluctuation of crime frequency in any particular study area. This is also helpful for getting a quick visual apprehension. Trend line for the above mentioned crimes during the last seven months can be drawn by using statistical tools as the following (Figure 2).

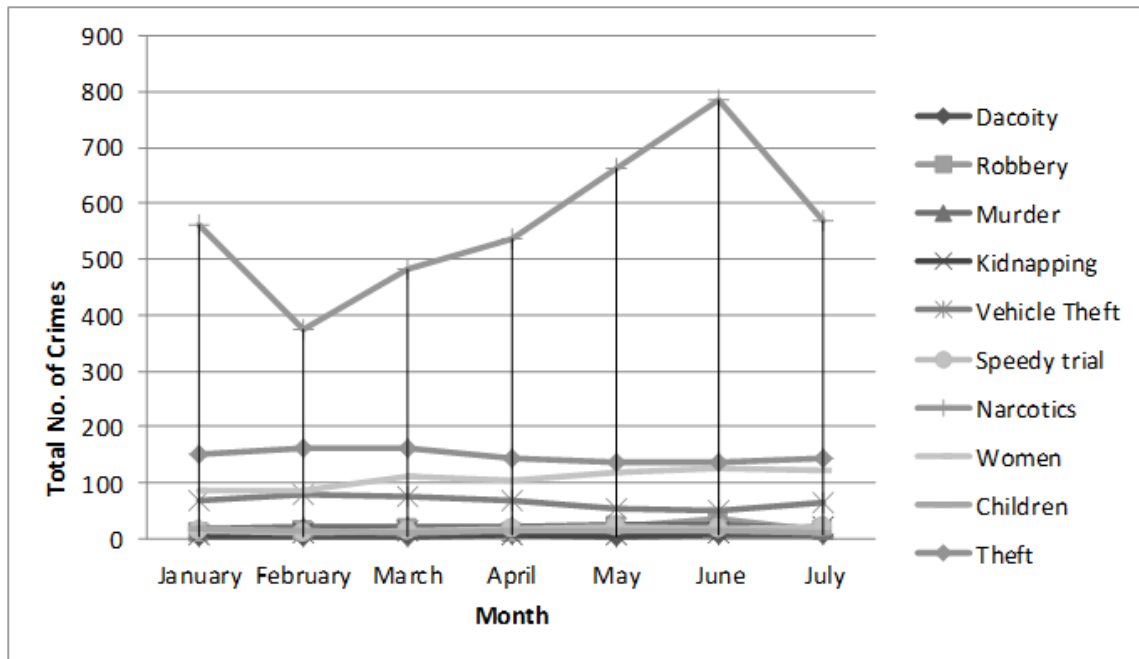


Figure 3: Trend line of Recorded Crimes

Evaluation of the Recorded Crimes of Dhaka Metropolitan Police

Dhaka Metropolitan police has started to publish its crime data more recently which is a great effort for such an organisation. The data are presented in some pre-designed structures where the categories of crimes have been defined according to the definition of Penal Code, 1860 of Bangladesh. These data can generate well and organised crime patterns for apprehending the frequencies of offences over the time. However, the statistics that are presented by DMP need to be more specific and detailed. There are many crimes which are not distinctly mentioned here like fraud, embezzlement, financial crimes, rapes, riots etc. Various other spatial distributions should also be made by using location specific crime data. The fluctuation of crimes in different years and the corresponding incidents in the specific time period should be kept together to understand the analogous relationship between different phenomena and criminal outbreaks. In parallel to

police records, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) can conduct household victimizations survey throughout the country. By the triangulation of crime data from the police records, newspapers, private organisations and statistical department a comprehensive crime database is possible to make. Only in that way the crime prevention strategies for the city people will be more accurate.

CONCLUSIONS

Police as a civilian force is entitled to do law enforcement duties. It is the good management that can help them find better outcomes. Dhaka city is one of the most dynamic and complex cities of Bangladesh where millions of people live. It is not possible for police to understand the problem and the achievement in their field beyond the application of scientific management. They have to maintain large databases so that they can use those data successfully for understanding the problem, taking necessary actions, deploying forces and managing any situation successfully. Data mining from a large data set is the demand of time for DMP in the present days. The reported data of Dhaka Metropolitan Police is a great indicator of their advancement in the process of good management. As quality management can yield quality services, the development process should be updated over the time to ensure quality management. However, the data which have been analyzed in this study indicate the recent trends of crimes in Dhaka metropolitan area. The trend line shows that the criminal tendency among the city people is not any constant issue. This trend shows a fluctuating curve and directs police for becoming more alert in specific time period when the criminal tendency increases and more crimes are recorded and the vice-versa. Police should accept newer interventions for curbing present criminal incidents. One of the newer movements of radical theorists in this case is the application of peacemaking criminology. The main objective of peacemaking criminology is to promote a peaceful and just society by mediating the disputed parties (Siegel, 1998). The way through which police can perform better is the way of community partnership. This is the means accepting which police can perform better and probably this is the most effective way of reducing community falloff and disorder by making a collaborative interrelationship between the police and community (Walker and Katz, 2005). Such a comprehensive approach accepting different philosophies can develop the law enforcement practice in the city area and crime may be reduced afterwards as the consequence.

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