

Editorial: A Brief Reflection on Policing in South Asia after the George Flyod's Incident

George Flyod's incident led to immense outpouring of shock, grief, and sympathy for the victim across the world. In the US it resulted in uprisings of multiracial masses that ended up in riots, vandalism, and violence. Elsewhere in the world it appealed to mass rallies, protests and expression of anger. Leftist analysts called the uprisings in the US a revolution, while the rights an insurrection. Some called for a fresh series of police reforms, while others demanded defunding and disbanding the police. Some highlighted the growing economic inequality, others political racial discrimination, and yet others socio-cultural problems of the multicultural American society. In short, the Floyd incident has pointed to a number of problems in the American polity.

On the other hand, in South Asia the Floyd incident received wide coverage and media discussion. However, this incident has not been taken as an example to revisit police violence in our own countries. Rather the typical response has been to ignore it as peculiar to the US where racism is a harsh everyday reality. Hence in our countries the administrative and law enforcement dimensions of the Floyd incident and the larger debate on the role of police in a multicultural democratic society have been overlooked. Therefore, instead of learning lessons for reforms our institutional approach has been to singularize, exceptionalize, and deny the problem with our own police and law enforcement system.

What we need to acknowledge, to begin with, is the fact of matter that our police and other law enforcement agencies in South Asia also regularly perpetrate violence. Secondly, that our societies are also divided—they are divided on the lines of ethnicity, language, religion/sect, economic status, regionalism, gender and so forth. Thirdly, we also have vulnerable communities and groups who face an imminent violence every day(See our previous editorial Raza 2018).Let me give a couple of most recent examples. An incident of police violence occurred in Peshawar that became viral on social media. This incident involved a local resident having Afghan identity. He made a video clip after getting high of drugs in which he is swearing at police officers and their family women. The police responded by an overwhelming use of force—a contingent of policemen goes to his house, arrests him, and brings him to a nearby police station where he is stripped off his clothes and tortured to beg apology in front of camera. Later the police share his torture video clip on social media and it also becomes viral. The people are shocked to see the video clip and some come out to protest despite the corona virus lockdown. It also attracts Pushtun Tahafaz Movement activists to

seize the moment for agitating against the government. On the other hand in India two Christian men were tortured to death in police custody. The incident happened in the Tamil Nadu state. Just like Floyd's case the administration in Tamil Nadu also tried to suppress the incident. However, the state High Court took a *suomoto* action to order a judicial probe in the incident. The local administration is reported to have remained uncooperative to the judicial inquiry.

Elsewhere I have given examples of violence committed by other law enforcement agencies in scenarios of coping with terrorism. There I have engaged Johan Galtung's concept of structural violence. According to Galtung, violence can assume different forms, which could be boiled down to two broader forms: direct violence and indirect or structural violence. To quote Galtung:

Whereas in the first case [direct violence] these consequences can be traced to concrete persons or actors, in the second case [structural violence] this is no longer meaningful. There may not be any person who directly harms another person in the structure. The violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently unequal life chances.(Galtung 1969:170–71)

Building on Galtung's idea I have argued that these two forms of violence are not independent of each other. They rather reinforce each other. Let me quote:

In our context, which is a reading of events of violence in securitized spaces, we also notice the transformations between direct and structural violence. We notice that structural violence not only provides structural support for direct violence (or at times translates into direct violence), but it also helps the latter to elide responsibility. The support is afforded through a structure created by provisions of burden of proof, indemnity in the use of force, administrative discretion to warrant detention, the defense of necessity, general administrative rules and training manuals, and the unwritten security discourse. (Raza 2019:358).

Police and law enforcement violence that we see in our societies is both direct and structural. Given the imminent and deep-rooted nature of this violence, there is need for continuous, rigorous reforms in the legal, administrative, and law enforcement systems. But we don't see much effort going on in that direction. Most of the laws giving foundation to our legal, administrative and law enforcement systems are colonial. Any efforts to reforming them face immense resistance at political, and bureaucratic levels. And even when some reforms get through the process their implementation becomes a challenge. As an example we can see the slow process of reforms in the police system in Pakistan. Musharraf's government introduced reforms in 2002, but by now three provinces have

gradually reverted back to the colonial instrument of 1860, while KPK faces implementation issues to its new Police Act (2017) (Raza 2016, 2017).

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Let me introduce the papers included in this issue:

Muhammad Bilal's essay focuses on family's role in susceptibility of an individual to crime. He questions whether in local society of Mardan certain family values matter to curb individual's susceptibility to crime. Using social learning theory he finds out positive relationship between these family values and crime prevention.

Ehsan Bhutta's paper explores the performance of Child Protection Welfare Bureau (CPWB), Punjab, Pakistan. CPWB is responsible to provide care, rehabilitation and education to the destitute children of the society in order to protect these children from the criminals. He finds out that the role played by the CPWB is quite positive and it should be continuously observed and appreciated.

Furad Ali's paper explores the dismal conditions of our prison system. He argues that prisoners are not treated well or rehabilitated. Prisons suffer from problems like unhygienic living conditions including poor quality food, water, unventilated barracks, poor sanitation, unclean toilets, bathrooms. Moreover, there is no educational and training program done on regular basis.

Imran Sajid's paper discusses the various issues with the juvenile justice system in Pakistan. He finds out that the major issues with the system are the suppression of facts by the police, difficulty in age determination, and prosecution's poor scrutiny of the facts relating to individual cases. Moreover, he points out that the legal procedural aspects of court system do not make much difference between a juvenile and an adult.

Sarfaraz Khan's article investigates the abuse that child labor at automobile workshop in Barakao, Islamabad, has to face. The paper uses semi-structured interviews and finds out that sexual abuse is deeply rooted and hardly any child worker gets away with it. The paper also exposes that fact that even parents of these children know that their children get abused, but even then they don't take them out.

Masrur Alam Khan's article discusses the kind of psychological problems faced by young generation due to exposure to violence in media. Carrying out a survey of students at different universities and colleges, they find out that there the young generation is faced with psychological issues of aggressive behavior, sleeplessness, and anxiety.

Jan Alam's paper explores the nature of violence and discrimination face by religious minorities of Kohat district. His paper uses grounded theory and explains and investigates the factors that can help restore minorities of Kohat to

their earlier pro-active social role and harmonize their relations and communication with the majority Muslim population.

Ayaz Ahmed's paper discusses how English language plays role in access and dispensation of justice in Pakistan. Since court proceedings take place in English and all the laws are also in English therefore the understanding of English language is the key. On the other hand given the low literacy rate we know that most people can't understand English, let alone the technical language used in laws and court procedures.

Asim Cheema's paper investigates the big corruption scandals in Pakistan. He takes Panama leaks as the starting ground and discusses why the current government failed despite all the promises and efforts to bring back money taken away from the country by the previous governments.

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