

The killer brats

The rich and powerful Pakistani elite believe in being a special gift of the Lord. To pass on this evolutionary mishap, they further breed a bunch of utterly spoilt, arrogant, and conceited species - best described as the 'killer brats'. Some of the well reported incidents may be recalled to put their activities in perspective.

On 3rd December 2017, in Karachi, after an 18-year-old student Zafir, driving a Mercedes hit a motorcyclist and failed to stop, he was chased and ruthlessly shot to death by the armed supporters of the person on the motorbike. The rich and the powerful killers were driving a jeep whose tax had not been paid since June 2004. The police failed to add the anti-terror clause in the FIR. In an identical incident in 2015, Mustafa Kanjoo, son of a former foreign minister had gunned down a 15 year old boy following a minor road accident.

In May 2017 Asif Sikandar son of a former Sindh Local Government Secretary, while driving an unregistered car AFR 2017, crushed to death a motorcyclist in Clifton. In October 2014 guards escorting Abdul Qadir, son of an ex Prime Minister, shot dead a motor cyclist who could not get aside in time. Also in 2014, a young student Suleman Lashari was killed by the son of a police SSP who raided Lashari's DHA residence along with five policemen using official weapons. Shahrukh Jatoi's infamous incident of killing Shahzeb, son of a police DSP over a minor personal dispute is a household tale. Sadly, a recent Sindh High Court judgment revoked the death penalty awarded to Shahrukh and removed the anti terrorist clauses. The Qisas law could now come handy to negotiate an early release.

There is a clear pattern in all these unfortunate incidents. Invariably they are committed by the spoilt brats of the rich, powerful and irresponsible parents. Invariably they are the result of petty disputes and personal egos. Invariably they involve fake, illegal or non-tax paid vehicles. Often the weapons used are unregistered while the killers are assured protection by a well entrenched EPS (Elite Protection System) that functions to bail out or buy out justice for these criminals. The police obliges by omitting the anti terror clauses, the hospitals provides erroneous autopsy reports, the medical boards make it look like an under-age possibility and the courts take the kindest options. Finally the Qisas law working in tandem with money and pressure helps these parasites to walk scot-free.

It is a well known fact that any one in Pakistan can acquire a prohibited bore weapon and purchase a gun license if he is willing to pay the price. Fake gun licenses, including computerised (NADRA look-alikes) are fabricated with the help of delinquent government officials and openly sold in market. One can also safely say that the government itself operates a fake gun licensing system as it issues gun licenses without a single mandatory verification or test - no requirement for a training session, attending a shooting range, passing a written test, undergoing mental evaluation, drug tests or background checks. In fact the only criteria to obtain a gun license is status, power, influence or bribe.

Despite the infamous National Action Plan, the much advocated 'Radd-ul-Fasaad' and the scores of ad nauseam promises, the government has not taken a single step to curb the prevailing militancy. The state has failed to act against the uncontrolled proliferation of guns, against a completely fake gun licensing system, against the thousands of unconstitutional private militias and against the misuse of 'Qisas' law. This has resulted in creation of a system where the ordinary citizens live in an environment of fear, insecurity and constant vulnerability to the anger and the ego of the militant elite. On the contrary, the rich and the powerful are protected by the safety net of the 'Elite Protection System', that literally allows them to get away with murder.

All this is not likely to change unless the ordinary citizens come together and think of creative ways to dismantle the entrenched 'Elite Protection System'. At an institutional level, instead of reactively calling the army to control armed mobs, it may be wiser to proactively task them to take charge of a comprehensive nation-wide deweaponisation program.