CHAPTER VI

REFLECTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT AND YOUTH CRIME

As stated earlier, the purpose of the presented case studies in previous chapter was to peep into the life of those youth who have entered into the hard core crime. In recent years, the City of Mumbai has experienced disturbing trends: the killing of over 300 criminals in police-encounters over last five years or so, and a majority of them being between 20 to 30 years of age. Then, there are hundreds of other such youth who face criminal charges more related to 'extortion' cases and are languishing in jails or, if lucky, are on bail or so far remain undetected. What are the factors for such a state of affairs has been the main focus of present study.

In Chapter III, enough evidence was produced which brought out certain trends and happenings on the scene. The city has a long history of criminal gangs operating in various anti-social activities. Small time pick-pockets and muscle-men gradually entered into settling the property related cases. In the late sixties, they joined the 'smuggling' of imported goods which brought them lot of clout and money. Kareem Lata, Yusuf Azad, Hazi Mastan, Vardharajan, Dawood Ibrahim, Abu Salem, Chhota Rajan, Chhota Shakil, Arun Gawli and several other gang leaders established their crime syndicates over the years. Since the mid-seventies, the creation of wealth in the city by 'fair or foul' means resulted in enormous black money. This was also the period when political and moral values started declining all around, more so in the city of Mumbai - which lead to criminalisation of polities and criminals turning to politics. The law and order institutions in the city started crumbling down and the mafia found no difficulty in influencing a section of police personnel, criminal lawyers and even judiciary to protect themselves and their criminal empires. The seventies also witnessed fierce gang-wars resulting in killings of rival gang members by the underworld. The under-world went out of control of the system and became a way of life of crime culture in the city.
In last two decades, the business groups have expanded by leaps and bounds. Certain trades like housing construction, hoteliering, gambling ("matka" betting), real estate, smuggling of drugs and weapons, "hawala" transactions, prostitution, film industry, dance clubs and ladies (served) bars 85 restaurants have produced unaccounted wealth which should run into thousands of crores of rupees. Though the collection of "hafta" (the protection money) by criminal gangs has been a long tradition in the city, the above unaccounted wealth lead to more lucrative business - the 'extortions' by the criminals. This has expanded the empire of criminals to new heights. It involves close scrutiny of the rich businessmen (about their fortunes) and systematic collection of money by criminal gangs from them. This needs employing large number of people in the trade, and crude estimations by police and knowledgeable persons are that anywhere between 5,000 to 20,000 persons are involved in the 'extortion' business. This has attracted a large number of youth into the world of crime. The extortion activity leads to killings by the criminals if the target is unwilling to yield to the pressure of the former. In its earlier phase, the activity used to be performed by the professional and well experienced members of criminal gangs. However, with the expanding scope of extortion and threats by police to eliminate in 'encounters' the key members of gangs, has lead to change of strategy by the organised criminal gangs. They now employ 'vulnerable' youth, train them and put them to perform the task of collection and even killing if unsuccessful in getting the money. Even for Rs. 5,000 to 15,000, several youth stated (by police) to be the migrants and new entrants into the crime world have killed their targets. This organised trade of 'extortions' has virtually shaken the social fabric of city rife and created enough pressure on the government and the police, to deal with the evil. It is therefore not surprising that alternate week, news emerge of more and more criminal youth being killed by police in the city.

The above discussion and reportings in the preceding chapters of present study provide enough credence to the linkage of 'development' to 'crime'. The development under focus mainly refers to the creation of unaccounted wealth by all unethical means by businessmen, politicians, bureaucrats, professionals,
criminals, and even the trade union leaders. In fact, today in Mumbai, some trade union leaders are well known for their criminal records. Such a situation is in dark contrast to the other side story that over a half of the population of Mumbai lives in slums and struggles for survival. The city therefore manifests a development which has created an opportunistic culture, conducive to the creation of wealth for a few, and for which a large majority of city population presents a support base. A section of the latter are those youth which have entered into the hardcore crime, or are rather 'carriers' of the crime for the underworld and the privileged.

Profiles of Criminal Youth

A logical question emerges here. Who are these youth entered into the hard-core crime - even at the cost of their lives? Are these poor-migrants from 'notorious' states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (as popularly stated by Mumbai-police), which carry a crime culture due to the aggressive attitude of some of their 'rising castes'? Or, is it the unemployed and 'pro-Pakistan' Muslim youth (another popular notion among the city police) who mostly join the criminal gangs dominated by Muslims? The fact remains that thousands of migrants - youth or otherwise - enter the city every year, they all do not become deviants. Over a half of the population in the city belongs to ordinary class and above 20% of them live below poverty line but they all do not become criminals. The question, which repeatedly emerges is: who then become criminals? Are they persons with aggressive personalities and with lust for power and money? Such people are also spread everywhere and in all societies. So, one comes back to the crucial question why the youth under focus turned into hardcore criminals?

The previous two chapters presented case studies of a few of such deviant youths who not only opted for crime as a career but committed heinous crimes. Case studies are popularly used to bring out 'uniqueness' of social actors in their personalities or actions. Does it mean that no trends or clues can emerge from these case studies which reflect on the possible causes of youths' mis-deeds? Here, the researcher's contention is that the case studies provide ample clues
towards the possible causes for the criminal behaviour among the deviant youth under focus.

Through them, one can also catch a glimpse of the criminal world. To reiterate, the following discussion in no way is aimed towards generalisations for causes of one's committing crime but for arriving at certain propositions which could be relevant for their validation in future studies.

**Quotable Quotes**

A few interesting and relevant statements are reproduced below from the narrations of the respondent - youth, which are quite illustrative of the happenings in their criminal lives:

- **Desire to live a normal life would be dangerous as it would be against the rules of the company** *(interestingly, most of the respondents addressed their gangs as 'company' which rightly reflect on their running the gangs like organised sector productive units)*

- **Jail and bail - both are costly affair - pushing the person more into financial crunch and therefore dependence on the company**

- **There is so much black money in Mumbai that the extortion would remain most lucrative business**

- **One gets sucked deeper and deeper into it**

- **Life is all about money, without money nobody cares for you**

- **Everything is cheap in Mumbai, except the money**

- **"Hafta" collection is for the junior members of the company, while the big money (the extortion) belongs to the "bhais".**
When thousands are with companies, even if a few are killed by police - so what?

I am reconciled to my fate - out of jail means death in a police encounter

"Chhinlo" (snatch away), as they (the businessmen) have a lot

The kind of education that we get in ordinary schools has no meaning for a good career

Promotion to a "bhai" in the company is possible only through lot of collection of "hafta", extortions and even killings

I earned and spent like water as there is no "tomorrow" in our world

If you want to collect "hafta", you have to belong to a company.

I got addicted to the extortions as there is plenty of money in it.

I love my children and wife and want to live a peaceful life which is now a dream for me.

Staying in a chawl, taking to gambling, drinking, fun and doing "dadagiri" - One is likely to enter the world of crime.

I have been to Azamgarh (a town in uttar Pradesh) and seen that violence is a common feature there. Keeping a "katta" (handmade pistol) and "khoon kharabi" (blood shedding) is not uncommon there....Why it should be different for people coming to Mumbai from such areas? Children are exposed to violence and crime of all sorts from an early age....We are also a part of that culture.
We do not choose our (gang) leader, rather the leader establishes himself and gathers his men around him.

Jail is a college for training new entrants into the crime.

Gang culture of the seventies among the youth led to entry of many into the world of crime.

There were Hindus and Christians in our gang. What mattered was not religion but money, only money.

Plausible Causes for the Youth Taking to Hard Core Crime

To restate, in the present chapter, an effort is made to search for some clues and trends from the case studies of the criminal youth under focus. These may be treated as plausible causes for validation through rigorous empirical studies, which though may be difficult to be carried out.

Criminologists have been debating the possible causes for deviance and crime among people. Taylor (1973; Clinard & Abbot, 1973; Jackson, 1962; Lunden, 1962) holds following social changes responsible for the increase in both crime rates and the fear of victimisation: (i) job crisis, (ii) crisis of material poverty and social inequality, (iii) fear of falling and fear of the other, (iv) crisis of the nation state, (v) crisis of exclusion and inclusion, (vi) crisis in “the culture”, (vii) crisis of masculinity and the gender order, (viii) crisis of the family and parenting and (ix) the rise of the market society. Srivastava s.p. (in Bajpai, op.cit:57) identifies causes in urban society of a developing country, like India, as: Chaotic urban growth, massive rural to urban migration, growing unemployment and under employment, impersonality and anonymity of city life, tensions of urban living, sprawling slums and squatter settlements, absence of informal social control mechanisms, lack of community cohesion and possibilities of material prosperity through illegal and fraudulent means.
Creation of Wealth by Fraudulent Means: Basic Cause

Interestingly, some of these researchers identify 'the rise of the market society' or 'material prosperity through illegal and fraudulent means', as one of the causes of rising crime, more in the urban context. They are the off-shoots of the materialistic world based mainly on capitalistic formations. Our contention is that the creation of wealth under such opportunistic values is the basic cause of social pathology in the societies adopting such a path of development. Growth of Mumbai as a leading business centre has created such an economic system, leading to property (and individual) crimes at an alarming rate. In fact, conditioning of the social order for creating a 'market oriented economy' has lead to sharp decline of moral values where community based mechanisms and institutions of controlling individual behaviour have sharply eroded. The new business 'mantra' is "kharido aur becho" (buy and sale), and it is not confined to physical commodities but extended to 'purchasing' political power or votes, purchasing MLAs or MPs, purchasing bureaucrats' decisions, purchasing one's "imaan" (ethical values), and what not. In fact, almost 30 years back, in a seminar on 'Social Responsibility of Business' (India International Centre, 1966), the late leader, Jay Prakash (1966) Narain had commented on the ethics of Indian businessmen: "Everything is good in business provided you remain out of jail". Such an attitude of Indian businessmen has in fact grown all these years. One is reminded of Harshad Mehta whose fraudulent practices in the share market resulted in virtually shaking the Indian economy. Politicians made hundreds of crores of rupees from projects like Bofors, Enron Power Projects, slum rehabilitation through the private builders (in Mumbai), and so on. Very recently, the 'fake revenue stamp' scandal deprived the Government of Maharashtra of more than thousand crores of rupees. And only this month (Times of India, November 15th, 2000), it is reported in the press that over Rs. 2000 crs. worth fake share certificates are floated by the share-brokers in Mumbai stock market. These are only a few cases of deep rooted unethical and fraudulent business and acts of government which have created a parallel black market economy in the country and has attracted the organised underworld to 'snatch away a share of it'. This has created a 'money oriented' opportunistic culture in large Indian cities - more
so in Mumbai - which has attracted a section of the disillusioned youth into the world of crime.

While stating that the crime culture created in city of Mumbai is broadly related to 'capitalist formations', we are conscious of the fact that in classical Marxian doctrine, capitalism essentially refers to creation of surplus (for private profits) through reinvestment of the capital in 'productive activities'. The creation of wealth through illegal business transactions may not fall within the 'productive capital process'. However, in today's business world - not only in a peripheral industrial society like Indian but all across the world, the finance - capital plays key role both in business growth and enlargening productive capital base through private enterprises. In such a situation the distinction gets blurred as to what is a commercial capital and what is the productive capital. The role of many multi-national industrial enterprises has been under scrutiny for their 'money laundering transactions and unethical business'. Thilagraj (in Bajpai, 2002), for instance, describes the role of industrial units in committing ecological crimes.

**Proximate Factors for Youth-Entry into Crime**

The presented case studies, once decoded, bring out some salient features of entry of the youth in hard-core crime. Broken homes, poor education, insecure and inhuman living conditions in slums with ample vices practised by all age groups, adventurous and ambitious adolescent youth, glamour of consumer culture, joblessness and uncertainty of future, contact persons of the underworld in slums, over-crowded city with anonymity of life, vulnerable law and order agencies and corrupt political leaders, appear to be a few conducive factors for such a process. These are highlighted in following pages of the study.

**Disorganised and Broken Homes**

In majority of the cases under focus, it emerges strongly that the youth belong to ordinary families, with unhappy environment. Single parent - mainly the mother - deserted by irresponsible and alcoholic husband, negligent parents not
attaching much importance to education of child or large family with limited means and not in a position to provide a healthy living environment, are a few important factors which lead to negligence of the child. Recently, closure of industrial units resulting in retrenchment of the bread-winner in the family has led to disorganised family life which may force the redundant person or his son in desperation of some source of livelihood for continuity of feeding the family. Though there are thousands and thousands of families which may face such odds, as stated above, these are not adequate by themselves in pushing the youth into crime. The fact, however, remains that disorganised families may lead to undisciplined children, prone to anomie behaviour. Several studies within India or outside have repeatedly brought out such a fact (see, for instance, Agnew & Hugley, 1989; Hirschi, 1969; Hirschi & Hindelang, 1977, Anderson & Henry, 1994).

**Poor Education and Deviant Peer Group**

One factor that emerges in each and every case-study under focus, is the poor schooling and adverse influence on personality of the peer group who were daring, deviant and full of vices at younger age. Almost all the respondents showed no interest in availing better education. The school/college environment, where they studies, was not conducive for any serious schooling for a earners in skilled jobs. Those with such common indifference to education, used the school campus more for fun and even deviant acts. Watching cinema, consuming alcohol and developing feuds with others became their main passion. Peer group thus played a very strong role among the youth to prepare them for unlawful activities. By the time parent(s) came to know about undisciplined and irresponsible activities of their sons, it was too late for any reforms in their behaviour. Several studies have brought out strong influence of the peer group at college or neighbourhood as one of the important factors about forming a law-breaking personality (see, for instance, Callahan et al. 1992; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Agnew, 1985; Brown, 1999).


**Anomic Living Conditions in Mumbai Slums**

Decades back, the Chicago School on human ecology confronted situations in cities like Chicago, New York and Mexico where over-crowding and inhuman living conditions in industrial workers’ settlements, popularly identified as "ghattos", lead to breeding of crimes in such areas. The status of migrant families which lived in these areas was considered to be crime-prone due to several factors, like anonymous life, over-congestion, unemployment - and above all - 'the culture of poverty', the concept which gained popularity among the researchers while trying to establish linkages between industrialisation/urbanisation and growing rates of crime. The above thinking came under serious attack from Marxian thinkers, for whom, the above factors were only the facilitating ones and the real cause lied in deprivation and inequalities created by unequal systems of ownership of means of production and labour exploitation by the capitalist class. The debate is still live and has become more ambiguous due to the complexity of 'development' and 'urbanisation' in the third-world countries.

Such a complexity is more ambiguous in a city like Mumbai which is considered to be the hub of economic activity in the country. Today, over a half (54%) of the population of Mumbai lives in slum settlements which are hardly occupied by industrial workers who hold a regular job in industrial units. In fact, over two-thirds of them are engaged in the informal sector (the survival sector) and they represent millions of those in-migrants to the city who enter the city in search of some source of livelihood. They more reflect the unequal process of urbanisation and industrialisation, resulting in over-growth of cities like Mumbai, Delhi and several others. Unequal distribution of resources in rural areas and staggering population growth are more responsible for such a state of affairs. No sensible policy decisions are visible for achieving any balance for sustainable growth of urban areas.

In such a situation, the slum life in city of Mumbai is full of dangerous living conditions, in addition to deprivation and poor quality of life. The survival struggle of the migrant - settlers is not only confined to getting a "kholi" (dwelling
structure) - mostly through the slum lords, but also to finding a job for survival and, above all, protecting one's family (family joins sooner or later) from all kinds of anti-social elements. Eve teasing, quarrels in neighbourhood, gambling, liquor consumption are day to day affair. The influence of "bhais" and slum lords is immense, both for collecting "hafta" from commercial shops/small businessmen and for secured living. Physical proximity due to dense population often results in feuds, turning violent occasionally.

Whether such a dehumanised living of the urban poor is conducive to criminal activity, or such living situations are the by-product of a more unequal system in terms of distribution of resources, entitlements and comforts of life? This could be seen from different perspectives. As Harvey (1978) puts it: 'the forms of inequalities seen in urban areas, which are referred to more in terms of collective consumption of social services and goods (like the space), are more an extension of capitalist processes which are essentially guided by the spread and diverse use of capital'. In that sense, living in slums per se is not conducive to dehumanised living and crime culture, rather it only facilitates the creation of reserve army of workers, to be used as cheap labour for capital gains. Criminal youth in that sense are more 'careers of the crime'.

However, the above perception undermines the unequal process of urbanisation, population explosion and resource crunch which results in widespread inequalities, not always under influence of capitalist formations. In fact, the role of organised criminal syndicates, many times, goes against the interests of owners of capital and productive resources. In that sense, structural inequalities in urban areas are too complex to be understood only within the 'capitalist' paradigm.

In any case, the influence of criminal elements in slum area is devastating and all pervasive in pushing the youth to crime. In fact, several hierarchies of members of organised criminal syndicates (the 'company' as stated by the youth under focus) live in dense slum localities of Mumbai, like Agripara, Nagpada
(within the central city), Jogeshwari-Andheri belt, Kurla, Mankhurd-Shivaji Nagar slums and several other such locations. Sometimes, the distinction between a "bhai" (senior member of a gang) and the slumlord is blurred. Their members even perform the role of 'political volunteers', making the identification of deviants and criminals more difficult. These slumlords and members of gangs keep an eye on the 'daring' and crime-prone youth and lure them to enter into the world of crime. Narration of their experiences by the youth, under case-studies, singularly brings out the role of slum environment as conducive to 'creating' criminal personalities. (For similar observations, see: Rogers, 1988; McDonald, 1982; Dürkheim, 1933:401)

**Joblessness, Uncertainty of Life and Lure of Easy Money**

Population explosion is the biggest curse of India. Its loose democratic system has made it 'soft state' where neither harsh decisions are possible to attack uneven distribution of resources (particularly the land), nor any firm methods to control its staggering population growth. Indiscriminate use of natural resources has worsened the situation, and the country is in deep crisis of checking unemployment by creating more productive resources.

This has, however, not stopped the country from the zeal of bringing modern technology for enhancing its industrial growth. It has created a 'consumer culture' in main urban centres where a few privileged taste the fruits of development at the cost of a majority of the population. Such an uneven growth is bound to create dual culture in a city like Mumbai where 15 to 20% of its population has consumer power compared to even developed countries, while millions of its citizens struggle for survival. The display of such unequal quality of life, more added to by its 'film industry' which has been projecting the city as an 'open culture' full of gold and glitter, has attracted lakhs of youth migrants to 'try their luck in this city of opportunities'. With limited resources and skills, their dreams are shattered when they are compelled to live in slum structures. Deprivation, unemployment and raised aspirations create a frustrated and defiant youth, a section of whom is lured into the world of crime. Such a situation is
succinctly described by the following newspaper reporting (the Times of India, 13th Dec, 96), where the youth from Bihar and Maharashtra States wrote to a leading gang leader of Mumbai seeking jobs (with good money) for 'killings'.

**Impressed by gangsters' functioning**

When deputy commissioner of police Deepak Jog raided Dagdi chawl, gangster Arun Gawli’s fortress in South Bombay during the March assembly elections, he discovered three application letters written by young men seeking employment with the latter.

One of the letters had arrived from Bihar and the other two from rural Maharashtra. The letter writers, who were in their early twenties, stated that they were very impressed with Gawli’s style of functioning and that they were keen on carving out a career in crime 'under his guidance'.

"This is definitely shocking", says Mr. Jog who now heads the city’s zone I. "The truth is that crime in Bombay is increasingly acquiring a corporate structure. This is a phenomenon peculiar to Bombay where a person’s status is measured by the amount of money he has".

A recent incident corroborates Mr. Jog’s claim that gangsters are getting organised along the lines of corporate bodies. Last week, the Bombay police arrested 11 extortionists (age group 20 to 25) who owed allegiance to big time criminals Chhota Rajan, Abu Salem Chhota Shakil and Arun Gawli. A search of goon Ramesh Padamsee Bhagat revealed visiting cards, which described him as an employee of A.G. (Arun Gawli) Company.

Times of India, 13th Dec, 1996

**Migrants with Deviant Background**

Surprisingly, the case studies include a majority of the 'Mumbai-born' youth who entered the hardcore crime. It could possibly be due to their advantage of being the second-generation migrants who, so far, have escaped from being killed in police-encounters. In fact, several killed youth in such encounters are
reported (by police) to be the youth from certain 'notorious' areas of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh states where culture of violence prevails. The traditional unequal caste system in India has been going rapid changes where the high caste landowners have been vacating rural areas by selling off their lands to the backward castes, which are popularly by called as the 'rising castes'. Deprived for ages, such castes through their hard work have purchased lands and are now tasting the political and land power. Yadavs' of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are now famous for their defiant posture of 'grabbing' power in rural areas. A section of their youth indulge in muscle power and dubious activities. These are also the states which are prone to migration - more so to cities like Mumbai, Calcutta and Delhi. Then, there are Muslim youth who are prone to migration to Mumbai. Deprived of their due, they also face backlash from ethnic - communalism. A section of them are mislead by the underworld and taken to criminal life. Interestingly, the "yadavs" and the Muslims in the northern states are popularly famous for their non-compliance to family planning. However, in no way, it implies that the crime world of Mumbai consists only of these two ethnic groups or migrants belonging to the above mentioned two states (only).

**Role of Law and Order Agencies**

In traditional Indian society, like any other country, normative social structure controlled behaviour of its members. Deviance and crime though a part of life remained manageable and unnoticed. Industrialisation and urbanisation lead to migration of people to places where traditional value system hardly controlled their behaviour. Community bonds got shattered and anonymous life took over. With the growth of new urban centres, no effective formal institutions emerged to control behaviour of their citizens. The evolved law & order maintaining agencies, particular the police, were plagued with several inadequacies, poor and untrained staff, unequipped police personnel, poor salaries and living conditions, and above all, under pressure and misused by politicians and senior staff. Decline of political and moral values further eroded the system and a large section of Indian police force proved to be incompetent and corrupt. Its credibility eroded all around.
In this background, the Mumble-police carries a dubious distribution: it is considered to be the most efficient police force within the country, and also, perhaps, the most corrupt. It has created an environment in the city where the middle class families can live a secured life — except occasional problems due to pick pocketing or robberies. Their ladies can return from outdoor jobs secure even during late evening hours. It is a popular belief in Mumbai that if the police is ‘wishing’, it can solve the crime and book the criminal within 24 hours.

The dark side of the role of Mumbai police is equally revealing: it collects “hafta” (the protection money) not only from petty businessmen like hawkers, but also from the criminal world, prostitution dens, dubious dance and bar restaurants, slum lords and even notorious criminals. There is a popular belief that a share of such a money goes to the politicians whose lust for power and money has no bounds. It is therefore not surprising that due to its hob-nobbing with criminal gangs and even with pick-pockets (for collection of "hafta"), if it wishes, it can apprehend and book the criminal in no time. Such is the 'close' relationship between the two.

The corrupt politicians have virtually forced the police force in such a dark situation. While writing the present section (November, 2000), the news is ripe in media (see, for instance, Times of India, November 20th, 2002) that for selecting the Chief Police Commissioner for City of Mumbai — due to the nearing retirement of its present Police Commissioner, Mr. M. N. Singh, the search on is for a new incumbent for this 'valuable' post who would pay the highest to the politician(s). It is a well-known fact that the posts to significant cadres and areas of city are sold to police officers who bring 'expected' money to the politicians. When such are corrupt values of the fate makers of the nation (the political leaders), what one can expect from the institutions under their command and influence?

The famous Vohra Committee' set up by the Parliament to probe possible nexus between politicians and criminals gave its report which well express the dark side of political institutions (Times of India, 2nd Aug., 1995) (see the reporting
reproduced on the next page). The decline of police reputation is so much that a few cases were detected where policemen themselves indulged into 'extortion racket' in guise as a gang (see, Times of India, 28th December, 1990).

Police also faces several odds in dealing with the well organised criminal world. Many hardcore organised gangs in Mumbai were/are in fact patronised by corrupt politicians. This dares the policemen and the criminals to have a field day. The enormous size of criminal activities (like extortions, liquor bars/dance clubs, prostitutions and gambling dens, and white collar crimes) make the role of police difficult and unmanageable. Gone are the days when the men who became Mumbai’s smuggling kings in the 70’s used to furtively land goods at night and flee at a single shot from the customs or police. Gone are the days when a policeman carrying only a stick could control armed criminals. Today, even ordinary henchmen are well armed and exchange bullets with the police and the target (for extortions, etc). The country-made revolvers are kept even by ordinary criminals, so is the use of choppers, knives and rods. The widespread extortion rackets by criminal gangs and their killing the target-victims have created lot of public pressure on Mumbai-police. It has started killing the involved criminals in encounters. The public is so disgusted with the growing activities of under-world that it hardly questions the modus-operandi of such police-encounters.

The Jail System

The prison as an institution should provide valuable support to prevent crime and a mechanism to restrict freedom of those who have committed crimes. It should be a deterrent to the professional criminals and a shield to protect law-abiding citizens outside its boundary walls.

However, what is emerging from the jail premises is truly disturbing. Mafia almost uses the jails as training ground for new entrants into the crime. Hardcore criminal gangs even use the jail premises for continuing their criminal activities by releasing orders through cello-phones and contact persons. Jails have become even safe shelters for those gang-leaders who fear death by rival gangs or even by
police, if came out of the jail. Though several committees have given their valuable suggestions on jail reforms, these are hardly relevant in preventing the city from turning into the 'sin city'.

Role of Judiciary and Professional Lawyers

Within a democratic set up in India, the judiciary by and large has been playing a very constructive role in safeguarding human values. Judiciary is also well aware of growing evil of the organised crime, available resources with the gangs and sophisticated weapons in their hands. Over the years, the judiciary has given some freedom to police in dealing with the killer-criminals. In fact, the counter-killings by policemen are hardly matters of probe by judiciary. However, the organised criminals with mind-boggling resources and influence at their hands have tried to exploit weaknesses in the system. Loopholes in the Indian Penal Code system are manipulated by criminals in their favour through a section of greedy lawyers, police officers and politicians. Certain defence lawyers with high profile in the profession have attained the fame of associating with the underworld and protect the dreadful criminal gangs from being penalised for their heinous crimes. In contrast, there are only a very few public prosecutors who have high skills and experience to deal with such serious cases. Over-burdened judiciary with thousands of cases piling in the courts over years is not able to deliver justice in time. Moreover, sometimes a liberal judge (for protecting human values) propagates more democratic values like 'bail than jail'. However, such noble ideas are more exploited by vested interests than their achieving different objectives.

Concluding Remarks

The present study was in response to a very disturbing trend, over a last few years, in City of Mumbai, where a section of the youth entered into hardcore crime with their links to the organised criminal world. The City of Mumbai has been a leading centre for economic activity with its linkages within and outside the country. It has created unprecedented wealth, with a privileged section of its
population tasting the gains of development — more manifested through its consumer culture. Historically, the city attracted criminal elements and particularly in last three decades, several gangs entered into organised crime and their fortunes ran into hundreds of crores of rupees. This was made possible by a parallel black money culture in the city, created by businessmen by multiplying their fortunes through fair and foul means. They not only included those engaged in trade, commerce and production activity, but also those in building & construction activity, hoteliers, "hawala" racketeers, brothel keepers, liquor dons, "mutka" (betting) operators, slum lords, contractors, film makers, and so on. Organised criminals shared a part of these fortunes by charging "protection" and "hafta" money, which ran into hundreds of crores of rupees. Smuggling of goods, weapons, drugs, etc was another important activity which brought huge money and clout to these criminal gangs.

With the erosion of political and moral values all over — more so in Mumbai - the city politics got criminalised and criminals even entered the political world. The law and order agencies became vulnerable to criminal forces. The opening up of economy added to the business activity manifolds, and criminal gangs found a new way: 'extorting' money from the rich. This became a well organised and most profitable business for the underworld, and their large operations attracted thousands of the youth who were unemployed, disillusioned, daring and lured by the easy money. The extortion operations took such an alarming trend that they threatened the very fabric of social life in the city. The police had no option but to start killing the extortionists in 'encounters'. In last a few years, more than 300 criminals were shot dead by the police and a majority of them were the youth.

The present study focussed on such an unprecedented situation of the entry of youth in hardcore crime. It was achieved through a detailed probing into the culture of organised crime in the city and case studies of the criminal youth. The outcome of the study opens up a new and very relevant area of research — the 'political economy of crime'.
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