Fast, furious and foolish

DEATH WISH: They race for fun, to get attention or for the adrenaline rush, but for many illegal racers and Mat Rempit who turn highways and roads into illegal racing tracks, life in the fast lane does not pay, writes Shanti Gunaratnam.

A recent study showed that 95 percent of Mat Rempit are drug dependents and will not think twice about resorting to crimes, such as snatch theft and robbery, for money.

"Some of the stories they have told me about the crimes they have committed are scary," said Rossi, who is vice-president of the Malaysian Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

"We can safely say that 95 percent of Mat Rempit are drug dependents and will not think twice about resorting to crimes, such as snatch theft and robbery, for money," said Rossi.

They are also the realists whose whole lives are based on a survival of crime despite undergoing counselling at the centres and vocational training at the National Skills Training Institute.

The Mat Rempit who undergo counselling and training at the camp are usually referred by the police, social welfare department, youth and sports department.

Training under a self-awareness programme, followed by a self-development programme. After this, they are sent for technical skills and vocational training at the institutes.

"Part of the rehabilitation requires the Mat Rempit to spend between 50 and 100 hours doing community service. All in all, they spend about 200 hours. But during the four years that we have been dealing with Mat Rempit at the camp, we know that almost all of them come from broken homes," said Rossi.

"And though many are from the cities, there are many from the smaller towns and villages, as well," said Rossi.

The writer and publisher of the book Mat Rempit in Malaysia said that side consulting and training, the Mat Rempit also undertake various building programmes.

We have one who is 12 for us because when you look at the statistics, there are about 500,000 Mat Rempit out there who need to be rehabilitated and trained to do something useful with their lives. It is a problem that needs to be tackled before it gets bigger.

As Mat Rempit doing a "Superman" stunt in Patu Height.

"If the Mat Rempit numbers are allowed to grow, our crime rate will soar. There are about 500,000 Mat Rempit out there who need to be rehabilitated and trained to do something useful with their lives. It is a problem that needs to be tackled before it gets bigger."

Federal Traffic Police chief Inspector Abdul Malik Abdul Latif said the

Traffic police conducting a check on motorcyclists during An Op Raja in Damai Beach, Klang, Selangor, recently. By Mohd Hamez Haussan.

Although some Mat Rempit have been referred to the special police unit because of their drug problems, others say they are imprisoned because of their addiction. In recent years, the number of drug users who are imprisoned because of their addiction has increased.

Mohd Rasyid Shariff, who has been in prison for four years, said that he was given a second chance to mend his ways after being referred to the special police unit.

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