

POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND CRIME IN INDIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

India has been increasingly perceived as one of the most unsafe and dangerous country and a hub for all kinds of crimes. Overall total cognizable crimes in India accounted for 51, 56,172 (32,25,701- IPC Crimes; 19, 30,471- Special and Local Law Crimes, SLL). There has been a growth of 1.6% in case of crime rate in India (385.5 in 2019). The metropolitan area saw a total of 8, 60, 960 crimes with a percentage shoot up at 7.3% in case of crime rate in the metropolitan areas (IPC Crimes- 6, 04, 960; SLL- 2, 56, 063). The major crimes reported under IPC were theft (51.0%), rash driving (9.5%) and hurt (8.1%). And SLL crimes included Prohibition Act (27.7%), City/Town Police Acts (19.5%) and NDPS (7.9%). The offences affecting human body turned up at 15.4% which included hurt (52.3%), kidnapping (16.0%) and modesty (9.9%). Total number of murder cases reported were 2, 022. Crimes against women shared a percentage of 45, 485 wherein four sections contributed in crimes, husband (30.9%), assault (20.2%), kidnapping (19.3%), rape (7.3%). The crime rate against children and elderly were recorded to be 21, 425 (kidnapping- 57.6%; POCSO- 29.2%) and 4, 897 respectively. The time saw increasing in the rate of cyber-crimes at 81.9% (18,372 cases). **(Crimes in India, 2019-2020)** A government study has indicated that the biggest factor responsible for increasing rate of crime in India is poverty. The study titled Children in India 2012 stated that around 57% of 33, 887 children involved in crime last year belonged to families with an annual income lower than 25,000. The data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme, shows that majority of crimes committed is due to lack of money. **(Chauhan, 2012)**

Poverty remains a worldwide issue in the 21st century. It's not restricted to money however, human capitals such as education, skills and experiences are also part of it. India, world's largest democracy accounts for nearly sixth of world's population, 450 million individuals' square measure poor and three-fourth of total population resides in rural areas whereby 40% are illiterate. Scarceness has been ascertained as an important supply resulting in increase in criminal behavior in India. The inequality virus has created over 2 million deaths and are being forced into poorness while many of the richest individuals and corporate are flourishing. According to UN study, India ranks 10th in terms of poverty, inequality and crime. As per researches, there has been numerous attributes to crime such as frustration, despair, alienation, lack of social support etc which will create a malefactor of any man. Crime and economy have had a complex relationship in the society. The intent of the current study is to understand the concept of poverty that has been chiefly answerable for crime in India and other developing countries. **(Rosenfeld & Messner, 2013)**

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i) How are socio-economic factors responsible for crime in India?
- ii) What are the various types of crimes associated particularly with the poor?
- iii) Why should poor to be seen as victims of crime in India?

3. OBJECTIVES

- i) To study the relation between crime and socio-economic factors.
- ii) To examine the assorted forms of crimes that are been related to the poor.
- iii) To know the political economy of poor as victims of crime.

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4. SIGNIFICANCE

The given study can facilitate in generating a comprehensive criminology literature by recognizing poorness as a significant explanation for crime in India and other developing countries. Results, implications and suggestions for future study will be presented and discussed, in order to draw conclusions about the standing of poverty as a culture within crime in criminological research. Also, the study will aid in providing evidences for government developing sound policies in reducing the permanent state of poorness in India.

5. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION POVERTY

Poverty refers to lacking enough resources to provide the necessities of life—food, clean water, shelter and clothing. But in today's world, that can be extended to include access to health care, education and even transportation.

5.1 Crime

An action or omission which constitutes an offence and is punishable by law.

5.2 Criminology

Criminology is the study of crime from a social perspective, including examining who commits crimes, why they commit them, their impact, and how to prevent them.

5.3 Victimology

Victimology is the study of victimization, including the psychological effects on victims, relationships between victims and offenders, the interactions between victims and the criminal justice system that is, the police and courts, and corrections officials and the connections between victims and other social groups and institutions, such as the media, businesses, and social movements.

5.4 Indian Penal Code

The objective of this Act is to provide a general penal code for India. Though this code consolidates the whole of the law on the subject and is exhaustive on the matters in respect of which it declares the law; many more penal statutes governing various offences have been created in addition to the code. The Indian Penal Code of 1860, sub-divided into 23 chapters, comprises 511 sections.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & REVIEW OF LITERATURE

6.1 Theoretical Framework

In the 1970s and 1980s, sociological thinking on poverty has revolved around the relative significance of social structures and individual agency in explaining the prevalence and perpetuation of poverty over time. More recently, it has been argued that the welfare system is responsible for encouraging and supporting poor into welfare dependency. Further, the factors that is responsible for poorness has been described as culture of wordlessness and troubled families or families that have never worked. The close association between poverty and individual behaviors makes it hard to disentangle poverty from related issues such as unemployment. This tendency to conflate poverty with other social issues such as unemployment, substance abuse, uncritically cite these conditions as explanations of poverty, is tied up with the tendency to portray poverty as a problem created by those experiencing it. Thus, it can downplay the seriousness of poverty altogether. Sociologists use the concept of social class and most agree that social class has an economic base. In recent years, it has been argued that the concept of social class has become far more complex and fuzzier with rapid social changes and development. It is argued that individual now has greater control over their own destinies. Consumption pattern plays a key role in demonstrating their individual identities. It has become a valuable source for distinction and stratification. So, while access to consumption might seem to open up opportunities for people to

construct their lifestyles, it can also reinforce and support social class divisions and distinctions. Furthermore, social class positioning continues to be an important influence on people's lives in terms of educational attainment, jobs, leisure etc. Poverty and material deprivation are salient drivers of stigma and shame. These processes take place at different levels and sections of the society. For example- Those working in welfare sectors might mistakenly point to individual character traits and behavior when explaining the reasons for unemployment. This is a process of negatively stereotyping and labeling those who are disadvantaged especially by the ones that are not poor. Therefore, makes it very difficult for the poor to dissociate themselves from the stigma and shame associated with poverty. For a long time, government has lauded work as the best route out of poverty. Yet the changing face of the labor market and work itself means that employment is no longer a guaranteed way to overcome poverty. In current context, the working conditions has worsened for both poor and non-poor, underemployment and unemployment is on rise, low paid and part time work have proliferated. Low paid work or poor work is now an integral and growing aspect of the contemporary labor market. It is a particular problem for those countries which have followed an economy based on aggressive free-market principles. As a result, work-poverty is an important explanation for contemporary poverty.

6.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The available literature focuses on the aspect of poverty within crime. Some of the studies covering the subsequent side are mentioned below.

Richard Rosenfeld and Steven Messner (2013) in their book 'Crime and the Economy' have tried to clarify the advanced relationship between crime and economy. They have made this possible by providing theoretical perspectives so as to elucidate the intricacy of that relation. The authors capture modern market economy as a powerful institution and direct consequences for criminal activity. It covers all sorts of crimes such as violent, property, white collar and street crimes. There has been socio-economic structure laid by the authors so as to set forth bringing institutions such as market, morality and crime together. Lastly, there has been discussion concerning the implications for policy and social change which might change the rhythm of economy and demand for crime.

Ashish Bharadwaj (2014) has done the economic analysis of crime. He has also empirically inspected the role economic growth, unemployment; urbanization and quality of legal system play in inducing property related crimes. The results indicate a positive and statistically significant impact of poverty, inequitable financial gain growth and inferiority of the legal system on incidence of total property-related crimes. Moreover, the elasticity figures suggest that poverty has the highest impact on robberies. Most convincing result comes from the figures of elasticity of education with crime where a 10% increase in per capita expenditure on education in India leads to a decline between 9.2-11.2% of overall property crime rates.

Ideas is a non-profit behavioral design firm that uses behavioral science to help solve difficult social problems and have impact at scale. The analysis was performed by Daminger, Hayes; Barrows & Wright (2015) who have applied behavioral science to the context of chronic scarcity. The field of behavioral science has combined insights from economics, psychology and other disciplines to build a clear idea about the ways by which humans form intentions and take actions. They have also put forward the three design principles i.e., cut the costs, create slack, reframe and power, that form the benchmark in fulfilling the needs of communities, organization, policies and programs.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher will collect data from the secondary sources.

7.1 UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

India

8. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

India is considered one of the fastest growing economies in the world, yet it is plagued with problems of poverty, inequality and crime. As Aristotle put it, "Poverty as a source of insecurity and crime." Poverty is more than income. It includes other factors such as land, health, education, child mortality, literacy, life expectancy, debt, wealth, irrigation, drinking water, sanitation, and jobs. Additionally, the types of crime vary by population density and region. Example: The nature of crime in technologically advanced capitalist countries is different than in poor countries. Crime therefore undermines the development goals and strategies of developing countries. Sutton's Law describes the relationship between crime and business as a complex phenomenon. He sees the modern market economy as a powerful institution that directly influences criminal behavior such as violence, property, white-collar and street crime. He also found that the poor were overrepresented as victims of crime. Bad neighborhoods are even considered one of the factors that produce crime victims. Sutton illustrates this by presenting his five causal scenarios of crime and economics: direct effects, effects of two variables, conditional effects, and levels of analysis for high and low economic outcomes. The economy exerts a dominant influence on various social institutions. It impedes the performance of non-economic social institutions and leads to crimes being committed by relatively weak individuals in society. Therefore, we need a market for self-realization that values labor as well as commodities. In his argument, Durkheim in his argument have stated- "This state of normlessness continues to foster crime and deviance until the cultural system adapts to the new social order, thereby re-establishing social equilibrium."

Sutton has described crime as a function of both supply and demand factors. He believes that more focus has been on supply side over demand side. And if the supply side of the offenders is reduced then the crime rate will automatically have negative impact in the society. For example- Increasing the price of illegal goods and services will lead to reduction in the demand of that particular type of crime. In addition to this, a traditional and behavioral approach has derived for the functioning of crime in the society. Given below are the strategies that are used by both traditional and behavioral approach in comprehending the development of crime in India.

Table 1: Crime and the Economy by Richard Rosenfeld & Steven Messner (2013)

-Traditional Approach	Behavioral Approach
What drives human behavior? (Preferences, values, monetary incentives)	People's preferences may vary over time and context. Behavior is affected by interactions based on cost, value, context, benefits, monetary and non-monetary values system.
How do you motivate behavior change? (Raising awareness, providing new information/incentives will derive behavior change.)	Awareness, information, and incentives may help individual form intentions. This will aid in creating new channels for social interactions.
What does inaction tell us about a person? (People don't need value or resources.)	May not reflect preferences or needs.
How do we investigate poverty? (Structural barriers that are holding people from coming out of poverty.)	The features or factors that are distorting their choices and actions.

Up until recently, economics was the only prism through which to view poverty. However, behavioral science approaches can now be used to improve knowledge of India's poverty, inequality, and crime. In order to lower the rate of crime in India, the society may use several behavioral science strategies, such as lowering costs, fostering flexibility, reorienting, and enabling people to escape poverty. Future behavioral interventions among the underprivileged may not always be guaranteed by incentives, thus it is crucial to understand the precise idea of what the poor want to achieve. The study of behavioral science can assist in determining why people act the way they do. It is essential to consider the

socioeconomic challenges that people encounter, such as inadequate nutrition, illiteracy, etc. According to certain scholars who study poverty, those who are impoverished pay a mental and moral tax that is bad for investments. Furthermore, poverty has an adverse effect on memory and concentration because it causes higher levels of stress and lower psychological well-being. Therefore, it is essential that government-led initiatives create policies based on the aforementioned understandings and take appropriate action.

9. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

- i) The economy plays a complex role in the occurrence of crime in India.
- ii) Nature of crime varies with the density of population and area or region.
- iii) Crime has been compared to a market that has its share of demand and supply side.
- iv) Differences between traditional and behavioral approaches to understanding crime.
- v) The study of behavioral science can assist in determining why people act the way they do.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) Restoration of a common economic space.
- ii) Development of infrastructure that is capital driven for reducing the rate of poverty.
- iii) Cooperation and coordination between nations for solving demographic related problems.
- iv) Working towards the mental health of the individuals as poverty is not just limited to economics.

11. CONCLUSION

Crime, inequality, and poverty are all interconnected and not just economic issues. The study of behavioral science will be essential in coming up with a comprehensive analysis and remedy for the issue of poverty in India and other developing nations. It can help in figuring out why people behave in certain ways. As a result, poverty and crime are intricate phenomena with numerous interconnections that require further research in order to acquire an understanding of the criminal market in society.

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