

Historical Perspective of Socio-Economic Elements of Crimes in Punjab Districts

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ABSTRACT

This study examines some socio-economic determinants of crimes in all districts of Punjab. The selected socio-economic explanatory variables are population density, education, unemployment, industrialization and remittances and dependent variable is reported crimes. The study shows that population density and unemployment have positive and significant impact on crimes. Level of education and amount of remittances are inversely related to crimes in all districts of Punjab. The results indicate that the most dense and populated areas provide more chances for criminals to commit crimes. So for reducing crimes in Punjab province the government should improve the socio-economic structure in Punjab. The whole human history shows that crimes are known for paralyzing a peaceful and healthy society; it leaves the impressions of insecurity, agitation and mental torture. Crimes cannot be defined without encompassing different time periods and regions. Generally, it is treated as the unexpected behavior of an individual, which goes against the law. While psychological pleasure and monetary gains were considered to be the benefits of committing crime. Due to increase in criminal activities in majority of western and eastern countries, new doors have been opened in the economics of crime to investigate the causes, consequences and socio-economic determinants of crimes.

1. Introduction

Crimes in India are increasing over the past few years. The overall crime rate during last ten years has increased from 247888 in 2002 to 395006 in 2012 (Punjab Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The economics of crime is related to multiple fields such as; sociology, criminology, psychology, geography and demography. There may also be various socio-economic determinants of crimes like unemployment, inflation, poverty, urbanization, population density, industrialization, social infrastructure, level of income, literacy and health, cultural, psychological and family background. This study is an effort to analyze and explore some socio-economic determinants of crimes in all thirty five districts of Punjab province in India. The present study may be useful for the government of Punjab for eliminating crimes at district level. This type of exercise is hardly done in case of Punjab province India, so it would be a healthy contribution in the existing literature. Unemployment and its widespread presence in an economy is the major cause of increase in crime rate. If unemployment rate increases, the opportunities for legal earnings fall and crimes will increase because the real cost associated with crimes for unemployed person goes down (Gillaniet al. 2011). Unemployment destroys the human well-being in great pace and it has long standing impact on society (Ali, 2015). Population density has also deep rooted impact in creating criminal activities. There is high rate of crimes in those areas where more people are residing. Because more commercial activities attract criminals to commit crimes as they have more hiding places. Industrialization may also serve as a factor to increase the crime rate and its concentration in the urban environment. Education is potentially an important element to prevent individuals from engaging in criminal activities. Schooling helps in educating youth and increases the returns from legitimate work as compared to crimes. With the increase in schooling, certain

types of street crimes decrease but other types of white collar crimes like embezzlement, fraud and bankruptcy may increase. The remittances raise the income of recipients, enabling them to increase consumption and investment, improve standard of living. The remittances act as a fuel in order to start business, buy up or expansion, invest more in education. As a result of remittances, the families have better access to fulfill their needs. So in that case there is less chances to commit crimes when people have access to more resources.

2. Literature Review

Becker (2010) presents a model that is based on cost and benefits of committing crimes. He analyzes that persons commit crimes when financial rewards from a crime are greater as compared to financial reward from legal work. He describes benefits of crimes as psychological pleasure and monetary gains, while cost of a crime includes punishment and imprisonment. Two major factors of total cost include probability of being caught and the punishment faced. The work of Becker focuses on determination of policies related to the costs of illegal behavior.

Paolo, (2013) analyzes the socio-economic and demographic determinants of crimes in provinces of Spain. The data set consists of 46 provinces of Spain during the year 1993-1999. In this study crime is divided among different categories such as; property crimes and violent crimes, serious crimes and minor crimes. GMM-system estimator is used for exploring the relationship between crimes and socio-economic factors. The estimated results show that immigration and urbanization have significant impact on crime rate in case of Spanish cities. Educational attainments and GDP growth rate are responsible for promoting property crimes in selected cities. The rate of minor crimes shows less inertia than the serious

crimes. The results show that unemployed juvenile and immigrants are engaged in criminal activities.

Coomer, (2013) focuses on the rise and fall of criminal activities throughout America, which indicates a rise in crime rate until 1990's. Besides negative effects of criminal activities; there is some social benefits too, like job opportunities in preventing crimes. It is also discussed that such costs and benefits an individual might have to face, when planning to participate in crimes. The independent variables are unemployment, inflation, per capita income, population, GDP, high school, income disparity, poverty rate, discount rate, prison population and dependent variable is crime. A simple regression is used to see the results. It is observed that crime rate is increased as a result of increase in unemployment, inflation and poverty rate.

Nolan et al. (2014) have demonstrated a relationship between crime rate and population size and elaborated its implications. The study is based on 1294 cities of United States with population size over 25,000 during the year 2000. It calculated the area crime rate and average crime rate in order to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between two variables. There is significant and positive relationship is existed between population size and crimes rate in US selected cities. But when the cities are split into population strata and crime rate into property and violent crimes, the results became more complicated. The results show that in a certain group of cities the relationship between population size and crime rate is positive, while in the other group of cities, this link is negative. It depends on the overall size of population.

Lochner, (2014) focuses on examining the impact of education on crimes. The education acts as a human capital investment that helps to increase the opportunities of doing legal work, as well as discourages participation in crimes. An improvement by one-year level of average education minimized arrest rates by 11 percent or more. Education has direct impact on the psychic and financial rewards gained from crimes it. Schooling helps in increasing and modifying the preferences of a person that generates choices for job selection. Various reasons for effects of education on crimes had been discussed. Firstly, education raised the returns to legitimate tasks; increasing the opportunity costs of unlawful behavior. Secondly, increased wage rate and schooling made the spare time more valuable.

Mahmood and Cheema (2016) investigate the determinants of juvenile crimes in two districts of Punjab Province, Faisalabad and Bahawalpur along with Juvenile Jails and two Borstal Institutions. It is a primary research based on a sample of 221 juvenile convicts. The results declare that honor killing, extended family size, land dispute, inferiority complex, income disparity and friend's motivation are main determinants of Juvenile crimes. The results explain that 71 percent of youth crimes are the most heinous crimes.

Dutta and Husain (2015) investigate the determinants of crimes in India, by using state level data set from 1999 to 2005. Urbanization, poverty, education, loads on police force, economic growth, conviction, quick disposal of cases are taken as explanatory variables whereas crimes are taken as dependent variable. The results show that all the explanatory variables have significant impact on crimes.

Gillani et al. (2009) investigate the relationship between crimes and unemployment, poverty and inflation in India for the period 1975-2007. For this purpose they examine the long run and causal relationship among the selected variables. The empirical results show the existence of long-run relationship among explanatory variables and crimes in India. The results also show there is causal relationship among explanatory variables and crimes in India over the selected time period.

Machin et al. (2011) focus on potential of education and crimes reduction in case of England and Wales. A causal relationship between crimes and school leaving age is also observed for this purpose. The data consists of men aged 18-40 and women aged 18-40 from 1972 to 1996. Both property and violent crimes are taken into consideration. A Regression Discontinuity Approach is used to examine those effects of education that help in reducing crimes. The empirical findings show that education helps in reducing property crimes. The results confirm that additional schooling and improving education among the offenders could be helpful in order to eliminate crimes.

Gillani et al. (2011) analyze the relationship between unemployment and crimes in India over the period of 1975 to 2008. Johansen co-integration methodology is applied for examining the long-run relationship and Granger causality through VEC is applied to check causality between unemployment and different property crimes. The empirical results show a long-run relationship between unemployment and property crimes. A unidirectional causality is running from unemployment to robbery, theft, dacoits and cattle theft.

Aurangzeb, (2012) examines the determinants of crime in India for the period of 1980 to 2010. The results show a strong, positive and significant relationship between crimes and household consumption, population growth, wage rate and GDP in case of India. A positive and significant relationship is found between crimes and migrants, between crimes and electricity crisis. The results of the study suggest that rise in wage rate and improvement employment opportunities are necessary for controlling crimes in India.

Rout, (2013) explores the impact of industrialization on crimes. As a result of urbanization and expansion in industries in developing countries, it is observed that juvenile delinquency is rising as a major issue. A remarkable enhancement is witnessed in superfluous offenses, gang activities, and vandalism among urban areas. There are unnatural and perverted systems which misled the young generation. Over crowded cities, rapid growth in urbanization, poor housing circumstances, and unsteady progress of families, poverty, death, shanty towns, filth, divorce and desertion are also responsible for unhealthy and poor development of young ones. This study suggests that all the national and international rules as well as their effectiveness are necessary for controlling crimes.

Fella, (2014) studies those factors that help in crimes reduction. A comprehensive framework is provided to examine the alternative policies and their equilibrium to determine a correlation among education enrolments, property crimes and income distribution. Life cycle model with optimum consumption has been used for this purpose. This study also examines that crimes can be reduced due to increase in punishments. It focuses on the useful, efficient and cost viable policies to combat crimes. The findings of the study show that

improvement in education in high school is more helpful and cost effective as compared to severity in punishment. Results show that targeting subsidies at poorer students helped in crimes reduction.

Brito, (2014) analyses the impact of remittances on crime rate in case of Mexico. Mexico stands third among those countries that receive foreign remittances. In 2010, Mexicans transferred about \$22 billion to their family members from United States. That amount of remittances was accounted 2.1% of Mexican GDP. For the rural areas of Mexico, 19.5% of their income constituted of foreign remittances. The municipal-level data is used for remittance-receiving household and murders. The results show that remittances are reducing murder rates in Mexico. Furthermore, it helps in reducing poverty while deterring individuals to commit crime.

3. Crimes In Punjab Districts

The most densely and populated province of India is Punjab that comprises 56% of total population of the country. Punjab is the second largest province of India with land area 205,344 square km, total population of Punjab is 7,25,85,000(Economic Survey of India, 2012). Table-1 shows that there is 191318 numbers of crimes in 2010 and in 2011 the number of crimes reached to 209961. Crimes in districts of Punjab have reached to terrifying level, due to many social and economic reasons. There may be institutional defectiveness, underdevelopment and administrative disorders in the society. However, some people in less developed areas suffer from basic amenities of life, unemployment, illiteracy, inflation, increasing population and poverty that forces the persons to commit crimes (Aurangzeb, 2012). There are also some non-economic factors that may responsible for increase in crimes. Not only poor and uneducated people are involved in criminal activities but also some literate, rich and well-off persons are engaged in criminal activities. As accumulation of wealth through unfair and illegal means is the habit of some elite families. Crimes hinder the economic activities, so the development process is affected by these criminal activities (Ahmed et al. 2012).

Table-1. All Reported Crimes of Punjab

	2011(upto June)	2010(upto June)	Difference
Cases Registered	209961	191318	18643
Challaned	145575	135324	10251
Under Investigation	39709	33117	6592
Untraced	8593	6702	2001
Cancelled	16084	16175	-91
Prosecution			
Convicted	37398	51291	-13893
Acquitted	30066	47758	

The crimes statistics of Punjab districts reveal that there is less improvement in cultural, social, moral, psychological and environmental fields. Rich and powerful elite class has resources for exploiting the legal system in Punjab. Such people find loopholes in the system in order to overcome the punishment of crimes. Lack of justice, weak implementation of policies, corruption, terrorist attacks, manipulation of judiciary and political instability are encouraging criminal activities in Punjab province. Although, many actions and measures are taken by government in the affected areas to control crimes but there is sluggish improvement (Ahmed et al. 2012). The crime rate situation reveals that crimes pattern varies in various parts

of Punjab. Different trends can be seen in crimes against persons and property. For instance, Some cities in Southern Punjab like Multan, Muzaffargarh, RahimYar Khan have great number of robbery and dacoity cases. The highest number of reported crimes is 14363. The table 1 presents the overall picture of crimes in Province of Punjab in India. The crimes statistics of Punjab show that the registered cases were 191318 in 2010 that increased to 209961 cases in 2011. The challaned cases in 2010 were 135324 that increased to 145575 in 2011. The reported crimes include murder, attempted murder, hurt, rioting, rape, kidnapping or abduction, dacoity, robbery and burglary. Some challaned under investigation and untraced cases were less in 2010 but their number increased in 2011.

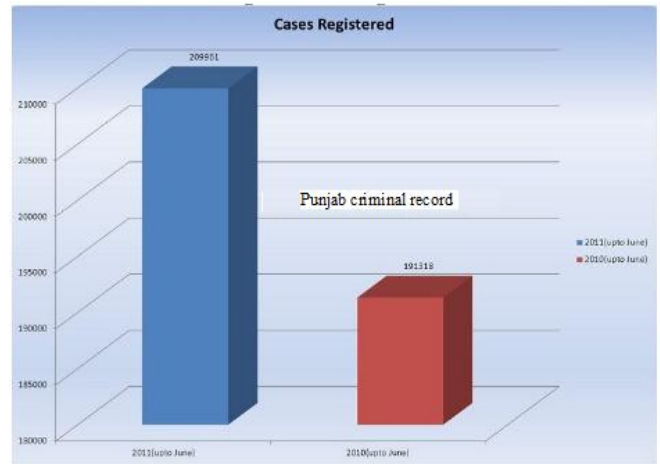


Figure-1. Cases Registered

All such figures are related to only reported crimes. About 30-50% crimes are generally considered as unreported crimes in Punjab (Gillani, 2009). There is no authentic source to provide unreported crimes. The correlation matrix shows weak correlation between dependent variables. Hence the conclusions can be drawn that the explanatory variables have no issue of multicollinearity. Hence the assumptions of OLS are fully satisfied and so simple OLS results are reliable in this case.

4. 2016–17 Targeted Killings In Punjab

During the year 2016–17, multiple attacks on political activists and religious leaders were reported from the northern Indian state of Punjab. The banned militant group Khalistan Liberation Force was held responsible for the attacks and people associated with the group were arrested. The Pakistani agency ISI was allegedly held responsible by India for financing, training and aiding the militant acts to foment religious disturbances in the state. However, all these attacks failed to create any major disturbances in Punjab.

Attacks

- 18 January 2016 - Two motorcycle-borne persons wearing monkey caps fired gun shots at new Kidwai Nagar Park in Ludhiana city. The place was to host a RashtriyaSwayamsevakSanghshakha (assembly) later in the day. No one was injured in the firing as the venue was vacant at the time of attack.
- 18 January 2016 - RashtriyaSwayamsevakSangh (RSS) leader Naresh Kumar shot at and injured by

masked motorcycle-borne men at Kidwai Nagar's Shaheedi Park in Ludhiana city.

- 3 February 2016 - Amit Arora, Shiv Sena leader, was attacked by two motorcycle-borne persons while he was sitting in his car in Ludhiana.
- 16 February 2016 - Shiv Sena leader Deepak Jalandhari shot at and injured by motorcycle-borne attackers in Jalandhar city.
- 24 April 2016 - Durga Prasad Gupta shot dead by two motorcycle-borne assassins in Khanna city. He was the President of Mazdoor Sena, labour wing of Shiv Sena Punjab. Dashmesh Regiment claims responsibility for the killing.
- 6 August 2016 - RSS leader Brigadier (retd) Jagdish Gagneja was shot at by motorcycle-borne persons in Chandigarh. He was admitted to hospital and died on Sep 22. Dashmesh Regiment, sent emails to media claiming responsibility for the killings.
- 14 January 2017 - Amit Sharma, religious preacher at Hindu Takht and political activist of Indian National Congress killed in Ludhiana city by two motorcycle-borne assassins.
- 25 February 2017 - Dera Sacha Sauda followers Satpal Kumar and his son Ramesh Kumar killed at a naamcharchaghar (prayer hall) in Jagera village near Malaudh by two shooters on a motorcycle.
- 15 July 2017 - Sultan Masih, a pastor at Temple of God church, in Ludhiana city was shot dead by motorcycle-borne assassins who fired multiple shots killing him on the spot.
- 17 October 2017 - RSS and Bharatiya Janata Party leader Ravinder Gosai shot dead in Ludhiana by two motorcycle-borne assassins.
- 30 October 2017 - Vipin Sharma, leader of Hindu Sangharsh Sena, was shot dead in Amritsar city by two masked men. One of the shooter, Saraj Singh Sandhu, was arrested by police on 6 March 2018.

Investigations

- On 4 November 2017, Punjab Police arrested Jagtar Singh Johal alias Jaggi, from Rama Mandi town of Jalandhar and accused him of the attacks. Jaggi is a non-resident Indian residing in Dumbarton and ran a website named 'Never Forget 1984'. He is accused of radicalising people and providing weapons to carry out the attacks.
- On 12 November 2017, Hardeep Singh alias Harman alias Shera accused of being one of the shooter's in the assassinations was arrested by police after a massive manhunt.
- Gursharanbir Singh, a British national, described as the mastermind of the attacks has been declared a proclaimed offender. He is one of the accused in the murder of Rulda Singh, president of the Rashtriya Sikh Sangat, in 2009.
- In lieu of the activities by SFJ, a red corner notice has also been issued by INTERPOL in October 2019, against Gurpatwant Singh Pannu, and other Khalistani terrorists.

5. 2015 Gurdaspur Attack

On 27 July 2015, three gunmen dressed in army uniforms opened fire on a bus and then attacked the Dina Nagar police station in Gurdaspur district of Punjab, India. The attack resulted in the death of three civilians and four policemen, including a superintendent of police; fifteen others were injured. In addition, five bombs were found planted on the Amritsar–Pathankot line on a rail-bridge near Parmanand railway station, five kilometers from the site of the attack. All three attackers were killed in the operation, which lasted almost 12 hours.

Such terrorist attacks are rare in Punjab after the Punjab insurgency, which sought to form an independent Sikh nation of Khalistan, ended in the 1990s. However, such attacks are common in the Disputed Territory of Jammu and Kashmir that borders Gurdaspur, where Islamist insurgents are seeking independence or accession to Pakistan and from where the gunmen were at first suspected to have entered. On the basis of the GPS system found in the terrorists' possession, it was found that they entered India through Pakistan.

6. Conclusion

The main objective of this study is to analyze some selected socio-economic determinants of crimes in all districts of Punjab, India. The empirical outcomes of the study reveal that the selected socio-economic factors have strong impact on crimes in province of Punjab. The results show that industrialization has positive and significant impact on crimes across 35 districts of Punjab. The results also suggest that education index has negative and significant impact on crimes volume. The crimes go down with the increase in level of education. Measures should be taken to promote education in Punjab, so crimes volume can be decreased. Population density has positive and highly significant impact on crimes in Punjab. With the increase in population density in big cities, opportunity of committing crimes increases and overcrowded areas give more opportunities to criminals for pick pockets, theft, snatching etc. The results indicate that remittances have negative and insignificant impact on crimes. Unemployment is another determinant that shows positive and insignificant relationship with crimes in Punjab. On the basis of empirical results, this study concludes that socio-economic factors have significant impact on crimes in province of Punjab, India. Some recommendations are advocating in order to combat crimes in all districts of Punjab, India. Such recommendations may assist the government to frame policies for reducing crimes. The Government should make appropriate reporting system of crimes. There should be no governmental intervention in law enforcement department like police. There is a dire need for improving the entire police structure: plugging up the trust gap between police and public, pro-active approach, control on corruption, enhancement of operational capabilities and improvement in administrative infrastructure are few worth mentioning aspects. Role of extraneous factors however cannot be under estimated. The population explosion with increasing rate needs to be halted immediately. A number of measures have been suggested by community medicine experts that include public awareness about birth control methods, increasing education level, legislative measures and increasing public private partnership. Unemployment, with a large chunk of population, living below poverty line is again another impediment in crimes control. Some adverse circumstances like load shedding, depleting resources of

natural gas, soaring prices of fuel, failures to develop alternative energy resources, coupled with security paradigm are increasing unemployment. These factors need to be neutralized on war footings, so as to provide employment to the populace and decrease crimes ratio. Crimes have direct

linkages with school dropout ratio. Education helps in preventing individuals from committing crimes. Government should formulate those policies that check the flow of remittances in the homeland.

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