

Urbanization and Crime: A Relational Analysis

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Abstract: *Urbanization, as considered from the economic aspect is good as it facilitates achievement of economies and thus promotes growth of industries and development in the economy. However, taking the social point of view urbanization encourage crimes as is evident from the fact that the rate of crime is higher in large cities and in urbanized areas as has been proved by many empirical studies. Urbanization per se is not the only cause for rising trend of crime, but, there are many other determinants alongside urbanization and closely related to it, that have a direct say in the rising trend of crimes in urbanized areas. These are unemployment, inflation and income inequality. However, these related determinants often are associated with urbanization or its consequence, so the root cause remains the process of urbanization. Very often, the question as to why there are more crimes in cities comes to mind which is promptly being answered by the fact that one can count many crime reports in cities as compared to rural area. It could be due to the fact that rural crimes are not properly reported or hyped through media due to which a common perception perpetuates that the crime rate is more in cities. In the recent past, however, many empirical studies were carried out to find out the “urbanization - crime nexus” and it was found that the two are associated terms, although, the universality of that nexus is yet to be established as there are many urbanized areas where the reports of crime are too meager. In this paper, I would delineate various aspects of urbanization which in some way have contributed to the rise of crime rates in cities. In Indian context, during past few years the crime rate has increased within the sphere of urbanized areas which shall also be peeped into during the course of this paper.*

Keywords: *Capital accumulation, crime, disproportionate economy, unemployment, Urbanization.*

I. Introduction

Marshall and Clark (1952) wrote: “A crime is any act or omission prohibited by public law for the protection of the public and punishable by state in a judicial proceeding in its own name”. Similarly Tappan (1960) defined that “A crime is an instrumental act or omission in violation of criminal law, committed without justification and sanctioned by the state as felony or misdemeanour”. Crime is an activity which is against the law. The relationship between crime and evolution of mankind may also be considered a historical one as Cain (first son of Adam and Eve) committed first crime when he murdered his brother Able because of jealousy. The linkage between criminal activities and the socio-economic development of the society is undeniable. Due to the complex nature of the subject of crime, its varied causes and consequences, various academic disciplines such as criminology, sociology, geography, psychology and demography study it from their own perspective. A relatively new emerging field, however, is the economics of crime which tries to identify the socio-economic causes and consequences of criminal activities in a society. Since, urbanization is the process of growth in urban areas; industrialization, specialization, and economic development are considered as related to the theories of urbanization. A basic feature of urbanization is the shifting in employment from rural to urban or industrial sector. In other words, urbanization is an indicator of industrial development in the economy. Labour market pooling, trade of goods and services, knowledge spill over, high level of income and economic relations are the basic pillars of urbanization. This type of development is helpful for employment creation, poverty reduction and planned local business development in the urban regions. In agreement to most of the theories, it can be propounded that urbanization is good for promoting growth of industries and development in the economy, however, other face of this urbanization may be the encouragement of crimes as well, since, crimes normally occur in large cities and in urbanized areas. In rural areas, due to lower population density, criminal persons have less chance of hiding themselves because people know each other. The opposite is true for urban areas. The main facts of crimes in urban areas are the less possibility of arrest and the less probability of recognition and families are less intact in urban areas. Therefore, it is argued that as urbanization increases so does crime. Hence, one may argue that urbanization is an indicator of higher crimes. This is a common observation for many countries in the world but not universal.

1.1. Objective of the study

The objective of this paper will be to analyze socio-economically the relation / proportionality between urbanization and crime within the Indian context. The paper will analyze various dimensions of crime in urbanized area and the association of such crimes with the process of urbanization.

1.2. Methodology

The present study has been conducted through secondary sources like books, research papers, articles etc. Some empirical studies of researchers were also approached to decipher the relation of urbanization with crime and vice versa.

1.3. Review of the Literature

The connection between crime and city size is not a new fact. Social observers have long argued that there exists a connection between cities and immoral behaviour. Criminologists have discussed the urban tendency toward crime for decades. Wirth (1938) discusses the observed connection between crime and urbanization and argues that this connection is evidence for his theory of “urbanism as a way of life.”. According to Wirth (1964), special urban characteristics such as size, density, heterogeneity, and impersonality are responsible for a mode of living that generates more crime. He viewed, “The close living together and working together of individuals who have no sentimental and emotional ties foster a spirit of competition, aggrandizement, and mutual exploitation. Formal controls are instituted to counteract irresponsibility and potential disorder” (1964, p. 74). Urbanism can be studied in his view as a physical or ecological structure, as a system of social organization, and as a set of attitudes and beliefs that lead to collective behaviour

Clinard (1942, p. 203) elaborated that view by arguing that there is more crime in densely populated areas than in scarcely populated rural areas because of urban characteristics such as mobility, impersonal relations, differential association, limited participation in community organizations, organized crime cultures, and a criminal type in the life experience of offenders.

The relationship between urbanization and crime rates has long been recognized by criminologists. The descriptive studies of the cartographic or statistical school in the nineteenth century documented the empirical regularity of crime (Tonry and Bijlreid, 2007, p.457). Another perspective in criminology emphasized the opportunity structure cities offer to potential offenders (Glaeser and Sacerdote, 1999). Urban environments have more suitable targets, and people are more tempted in cities than in rural areas to commit crimes. These factors combined with a lack of informal guardianship in urban environments explain higher crime rates. Others, however, challenged these theoretical models. Johnson (1992) offered socio-historical arguments that cities are not necessarily dangerous or highly criminal-prone environments. After investigating rural-urban differences in crime during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Germany, he concluded that, the influence of factors, such as, the size of the urban population, population density, and population growth was low (sometimes even negative), whereas the percentage of ethnic minorities and death and poverty rates correlated strongly with the level of crime.

Myers (1983) took random sample of offenders released by federal prisons in 1972. He studied that punishment is not more effective tool for preventing crime. It is better to create opportunities for employment and this will work for reduction in crime. Further the empirical investigation between crimes and its determinants in urban areas is done by Gumus (2004). He used two types of crime in large US cities. First he took total numbers of property crimes and second he used serious crimes like murder, forcible rape and robbery as a dependent variable. Using cross sectional data of large US cities he found that urbanization and income inequality are important factors of urban crime.

Crime rates are not evenly distributed over geographical areas in urban settings. Some neighbourhoods are more troubled by crime, and even within neighbourhoods there are considerable differences between areas as a result of subtle interplays between physical characteristics and people’s behaviours. The early Chicago school of sociology stimulated the study of concentrations of crimes in cities all over the world (Park and Burgess 1967). Burgess (1967) introduced the idea that a city can be ecologically divided into concentric zones with varying crime rates. The highest crime rates were in the transitional zones surrounding business centres.

Shaw and McKay (1942) emphasized the process of social disorganization that leads to concentrations of crime. Poverty, residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, bad housing, and weak social relations indicating disorganization do not allow stable communities in neighbourhoods. After several years of decline, they suggested, a greater number of offenders will settle in such neighbourhoods, and this in turn explains the neighbourhood’s higher crime rates. The concept of social disorganization has been further elaborated in recent decades.

Sampson and Groves (1989) concentrated on the behavioural mechanisms caused by social disorganization. They argued that social disorganization is related to the capacity of a community to carry out

informal social control on criminal behaviour (for instance, the capacity to supervise adolescents in peer groups and to exercise better guardianship, such as by recognizing strangers in the neighbourhood).

Shelly (1981) put forth the examination of the causes of both adult and juvenile crime and presents a historical perspective, showing that the relationship between urbanization and crime was established long before the advent of modernization. The general rise in the crime rate and its concentration in the urban environment are explained by the greater availability of goods, the increased feasibility of crime commission, and increased feelings of relative deprivation because of a greater gap between rich and poor or a greater awareness of deprivation due to advertising through the media. Further, the growth in female and juvenile participation in crime is accounted for by the increased participation of women in activities outside the home and by the decline of an established role for juveniles in society.

Gerban J.N. (2007), propounded that the residents in the rural areas are less confronted with crime because of higher levels of social cohesion and informal social control and lower offender rates in a well-ordered physical surrounding. Criminals live more frequently in cities in which their crimes are concentrated in city centers and their surroundings. The greater the distance to the city centre, the less crime occurs.

Humphries and Wallace (1980), took the Marxist stand and held capital accumulation as the basis of crime in cities. They believed capitalism is a system of accumulation that organizes production and social reproduction to extract surplus. As it does so, accumulation generates those behaviours registered as crime by the state.

II. Urbanization And Crime- A Nexus

Several writers have recognized that there are quantitative differences in the incidence of crime in areas of varying degrees of urbanization. Scientific explanations for this variation, however, have been largely of a priori nature, as there has been little empiric research on the factors operating in the violation of legal norms in different types of societies. Durkheim was one of the first writers to state clearly that urbanization inevitably results in a greater amount of crime; and such a position has, in part, been validated by later research which, however, has usually been restricted to one extreme of the continuum of urbanization, namely, the great metropolitan areas.

Crime was an important topic of both governmental and popular concern in 19th century Europe. Increases in crime during this period were believed by many to stem directly from the social changes brought about by the complex processes of urban-industrial development. Among the determinants of crime were thought to be the conditions of poverty, low levels of education, population density and crowding, urbanism, and migration. Several pioneering efforts with mixed results were made to assess the empirical validity of these notions. Following the empirical studies in Europe, it was argued that urban and non-urban areas differ fundamentally in their structural and organizational features, especially in terms of social homogeneity and the degree of interdependence. The criminogenic effects of urban life are seen not only as the result of greater social friction brought on by congested living conditions, poor housing, and material shortages, but the increasing scale and complexity of such environments make it easier for the criminal to escape detection, and thus provide a strong temptation for deprived sectors of the population to engage in criminal and other types of anti-social behaviour. According to this perspective, the level of crime would tend to vary positively with the level of urban-industrial development across society.

Both urbanization and industrialization are dynamic societal processes which over the time lead to greater physical mobility for the individual. As individuals are displaced by change and are plunged into new social environments where new rules of behaviour prevail, traditional regulatory institutions and social sanctions tend to become ineffective making it simple and easy for individuals to adopt deviant patterns of behaviour. This high rate of migration among societies can be viewed as a source of social strain which can be associated with an increase in crime and other forms of social disorganization. Change can also result in new sets of norms and values along with new patterns of consumption that may actually provoke an increase in criminal activity.

In Indian context, India's still strong growth reflects the fact that it remains a principally rural nation. According to the 2011 census, only 31% of the population of India lives in urban areas. Urban migration, of course, is continuing but at a considerably slower rate than in China. According to the United Nations, the urban population of India will be less than 35% in 2020 and approximately 40% in 2030. Yet despite this, the number of new urban residents will be substantial. By 2030, another 225 million people will be added to the Indian urban areas, more than the population of Japan and Germany combined.

According to the National crime records Bureau, Ministry of Home affairs, GOI's compendium "Crime in India", 2011, a total of 4,75,369 cognizable crimes under the IPC were reported in 53 mega cities during the year 2011 as compared to 3,68,883 crimes in 35 mega cities during the year 2010. The cities of Delhi, Kanpur, Mumbai and Bengaluru have accounted for 9.9%, 7.3%, 6.7% and 6.3% respectively of the total crimes reported from 53 mega cities. Asansol (West Bengal) has reported significant increase of 83.7% of IPC crimes as compared to previous year (2010) while in 13 cities, declined of IPC crime has reported. The average rate of

crime in urban agglomeration centres at 295.1 was much higher than the national crime rate of 192.2. Kochi reported the highest crime rate of 1636.4 among the mega cities in the country followed by Gwalior (709.3) and Durg Bhilainagar (683.0). The crime rate for each city is compared with the corresponding crime rate of the Domain State in Crime rate (IPC) in cities was generally higher than the corresponding crime rate of Domain State. The crime rate was lower than that of the respective Domain State in case of Chandigarh, Chennai, Coimbatore, Delhi (city), Hyderabad, Kannur, Kolkata, Kozhikode, Madurai, Malappuram, Mumbai, Surat, Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur and Vasai Virar. The crime rate at national level increased by 2.5% (from 187.6 in the year 2010 to 192.2 in the year 2011), however, the crime rate in cities has decreased by 13.7% (from 341.9 in the year 2010 to 295.1 in the year 2011). According to the census of India, 2011, Maharashtra is the most populated urban state in India followed by Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Table-1
Incidence and Rate of Violent Crimes During 2011

Sl. No.	State/UT	Murder (Sec. 302 IPC)	Attempt To Commit Murder (Sec. 307 IPC)	C.H. Not Amounting To Murder (Sec. 304,308 IPC)	Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)	Kidnapping & Abduction (Sec. 363-310%,371-373 IPC)	Dacoity (Sec. 395-398IPC)	Preparation And Assembly ForDacoity (Sec. 399-402 IPC)
STATES:								
1	Andhra Pradesh	2808	2229	171	1442	2154	126	7
2	Arunachal Pradesh	65	29	2	42	93	13	0
3	Assam	1303	504	48	110%	3764	305	4
4	Bihar	3198	3327	348	934	4268	556	105
5	Chhattisgarh	1110	747	28	1053	472	68	7
6	Goa	48	22	6	29	28	2	0
7	Gujarat	1126	478	43	439	1614	221	24
8	Haryana	1062	851	60	733	959	167	176
9	Himachal Pradesh	130	50	6	168	212	1	0
10	Jammu & Kashmir	110%	494	29	277	1077	14	0
11	Jharkhand	1747	718	83	784	941	309	40
12	Karnataka	1820	1837	85	636	1395	214	399
13	Kerala	365	521	105	1132	299	71	245
14	Madhya Pradesh	2511	2340	139	3406	1288	118	117
15	Maharashtra	2818	2105	144	110%	110%	773	291
16	Manipur	78	245	4	53	110%	1	154
17	Meghalaya	110%	51	3	130	87	49	0
18	Mizoram	26	24	8	77	6	1	0
19	Nagaland	46	43	11	23	34	7	0
20	Odisha	1477	1621	51	1112	1139	417	84
21	Punjab	842	997	112	479	681	28	143
22	Rajasthan	1461	1566	100	1800	3204	28	72
23	Sikkim	14	7	8	16	10	0	0
24	Tamil Nadu	1877	2962	28	677	1984	101	11
25	Tripura	163	75	0	205	154	11	0
26	Uttar Pradesh	4951	4653	1454	2042	8500	379	39
27	Uttarakhand	178	189	54	129	314	13	1
28	West Bengal	2109	2242	486	2363	4285	236	939
29	A & n islands	14	6	2	13	15	1	0
30	Chandigarh	24	40	6	27	58	6	2
31	D & n haveli	14	2	0	4	9	7	0
32	Daman & diu	6	1	0	1	3	4	0
33	Delhi	543	386	71	572	3767	33	25
34	Lakshadweep	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
35	Puducherry	32	22	12	7	12	5	10
TOTAL (UTs)		633	458	91	624	3864	56	37
TOTAL (ALL-INDIA)		34305	31385	310%7	24206	44664	4285	2895

(Source: www.ncrb.nic.in)

India primarily was an agrarian society and agriculture still continues to be the main industry of India. With the liberation of economy and the beginning of the process of urbanization and Globalization, the Indian society encountered a brand new challenge to cope up with the changing world scenario. The people of India having a great tradition of values and customs were compelled to adopt new means of profit which started a type of ideological tussle, the tussle whether to stick to the customs and values of the Indian tradition or to go for globalized ways of profit making. This in a way polarized the Indian Society and the gap between the poor and the rich got widened. As such the common perception of Indian Society maintained that the urbanization is often associated with disruption of social & religious values, poverty, unemployment, overcrowding etc. In India, urbanization, no doubt, brought industrial development and employment opportunities but at the same time brings the capitalist order in renewed form, which widens the gap between the rich and the poor. It is known that most of the largest slums are found within the most urbanized centres which in itself generalize how this gap has amplified. If one goes by the socio-psychological basis of the crime, one can justify the higher crime rate in urban areas on the pretext of the revolt of the lower class which live in substandard conditions which is described by the state as crime. It is the anger of the poor and their subservient condition that make them to commit crime in one way or the other. Alcohol consumption by the poor is often associated with their committing of some sort of crime. However, this is not the only factor contributing to the rising crimes in urban areas as it would be un-justice on the part of poor people and a sort of stereotyping to associate them with all the crimes occurring within an urban area. In fact, the higher class also commit some type of crime but the socio-psychological conditions underlying that crime are different. They commit crimes in different ways and for different purpose, may it be to increase their capital or to commit some illegal trade to earn more. One cannot associate cyber crimes with the poor dwellers of the slums. Likewise, there are many other crimes that are being committed in the urban areas for which poverty and unemployment are not the basis but the capital accumulation is. It can be concluded that it is the disproportionate economy between the rich and the poor in urbanized cities is the chief factor for instances of crime, being committed both by the rich and the poor.

Another issue that I would like to add in this paper for increasing rate of crime in Urban areas is the extensive use of ICT's. Television is a powerful weapon which attracts children and youth very easily. It creates an attractive impression on children and youth. Many of researches have proven that, people who watch violence stories on television exhibit aggressive behaviour. This is even reflected on their future behaviour as they exhibit aggressive behaviour, when they grow in to their adolescence. It has been observed that acts like flirting, occasional misbehaviour, alcohol indulgence, and occasional rowdy-ism was widespread in children of urban cities than rural areas, overall increasing the crime rate. Abuse of internet is much talked about and the cyber crimes associated with it cannot be ruled out. All such avenues and fortunes in the urbanized areas have been a source to pave way for the rising rate of crimes.

Other factors like the unemployment, inflation, and income inequality are also important determinants of crimes. Unemployment can be considered as an indicator of income opportunities from legal sector. So if there is an increase in unemployment rate then the involvement of persons in legal sector also decreases which paves way for unemployed person to indulge in illegal means of earning and subsequent commission of crime. In Cities there are usually the rich and the bourgeoisie settlements and thus criminals may have greater access to the wealthy and face a greater density of victims in urban areas which increases the probability of more unemployed persons engaging themselves in the alleyway of crime.

III. Conclusion

The whole theoretical discussion has lead to the conclusion that increasing urbanization causes less integration among people and as a consequence generates less informal social control. Less integration and less informal control explain higher levels of crime, disorder, victimization, and fear of crime. The impact of the process of industrialization and urbanization on the reasons of crime is more evident as it promotes changes in social structure, promotes culture conflict and a change in the space environment thereby it induces an increasing number of criminal elements. Much of the empirical studies have been conducted to establish a relation between urbanization and crime and many a times the process of urbanization has been maintained to be the cause of rural crimes also. This way the urbanization has been considered as the tipping point for creation of new crimes and amplification of existing crimes too.

The disruption of cultural value and morality is other feature of urbanized way of life which also accounts to the crime augmentation. The rising reports of crime incidents by youth of urban areas is other controversial issue which is due to the loss of moral values as a result of new urban life, they are part of. It has also been maintained that the lower probabilities of arrest and a lower probability of recognition being the features of urban life are responsible for higher frequency of crime in cities.

Taking the Marxist stand, capital accumulation has been held as the basis of crime in cities. The capital accumulation and the greed of the bourgeoisie in the capitalist setup to have surplus, generates a state among other which compel them to commit crime. If one goes by this stand, it can be said with authenticity that growth

of capitalism in urban areas is crime per se and is responsible for other forms of crime. However, the states are yet to evolve or devise a proper enforcement agency to counter the crime of capitalism and as such the crime rate is of the increasing trend in urban areas. The gap between the rich and the poor is ever increasing and so is the crime rate. Even if, many empirical studies have verified time and again that the urban crime rate is increasing, the exact cause for the urbanization-crime nexus is still debatable.

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