

Situational Crime Prevention: A Study in Indian Context

Dr. Nirpat Patel¹

Abstract: *Situational Crime Prevention [also known as SCP] is a new crime prevention technique used in the field of Criminology and Criminal justice System in this paper author tried to explain the various applications of SCP. Situational crime prevention is a crime prevention strategy that addresses specific crimes by managing, designing and manipulating the environment in a manner that seeks to increase the risk to the offender, while reducing the offender's potential reward for committing the crime. 'Situational Crime Prevention' (SCP) is the name given by criminologists to crime prevention strategies that are aimed at reducing the criminal opportunities which arise from the routines of everyday life. Such strategies include 'hardening' of potential targets, improving surveillance of areas that might attract crime (e.g. closed circuit television surveillance), and deflecting potential offenders from settings in which crimes might occur (e.g., by limiting access of such persons to shopping malls and other locales). While there has been much research and criminological discussion of SCP, it has focused on issues of effectiveness and other technical aspects e.g., does closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance 'work', in the sense of deterring offenders or aiding in the detection of offences? The larger issues especially the ethical ones were little addressed. Situational crime prevention is a primary prevention measure. This means that it is directed at stopping crime problems before they occur. Like other primary crime prevention measures, situational prevention tends to focus on reducing crime opportunities rather than on the characteristics of criminals or potential criminals.*

Keywords: *Situational Crime Prevention, Environmental Criminology, Rational Choice Theory, Routine Activity Theory, CJS and Scene of Crime.*

I. Introduction of Situational Crime Prevention [SCP]

'Situational Crime Prevention' (SCP) is the name given by criminologists to crime prevention strategies that are aimed at reducing the criminal opportunities which arise from the routines of everyday life. Such strategies include 'hardening' of potential targets, improving surveillance of areas that might attract crime (e.g. closed circuit television surveillance), and deflecting potential offenders from settings in which crimes might occur (e.g., by limiting access of such persons to shopping malls and other locales). While there has been much research and criminological discussion of SCP, it has focused on issues of effectiveness and other technical aspects e.g., does closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance 'work', in the sense of deterring offenders or aiding in the detection of offences? The larger issues especially the ethical ones were little addressed. Situational crime prevention is a primary prevention measure. This means that it is directed at stopping crime problems before they occur. Like other primary crime prevention measures, situational prevention tends to focus on reducing crime opportunities rather than on the characteristics of criminals or potential criminals.

Situational prevention seeks to reduce opportunities for specific categories of crime by increasing the associated risks and difficulties and reducing the rewards. It comprises three main elements:

1. an articulated theoretical framework;
2. a standard methodology for tackling specific crime problems; and
3. a set of opportunity-reducing techniques.

Situational crime prevention is an approach that encompasses a wide range of practical and common sense thinking about crime and its prevention. It reflects the everyday strategies that individuals and organizations use to protect themselves and their property.

II. Concept of SCP

Situational crime prevention is a crime prevention strategy that addresses specific crimes by managing, designing and manipulating the environment in a manner that seeks to increase the risk to the offender, while reducing the offender's potential reward for committing the crime.

Origin of the Approach

The Approach of Situational Crime Prevention [SCP] came in the existence in India due to the virtual failures of existing Criminal Justice Agencies [CJAs] in bringing the crime rate down to the optimum level of public satisfaction.

¹Guest Lecturer at Department of Criminology & Forensic Science, Dr. Harisingh Gour Central University, Sagar [M. P.]

What is SCP?

1. SCP is a new approach that encompasses a wide range of practical thinking about the crime and its prevention.
2. SCP is a crime prevention strategy that addresses specific crimes by managing, designing and manipulating the environment in a manner that seeks to increase the risk to the offender, while reducing the offender's potential reward for committing the crime.

III. Statement of Problem

The present study intends to examine the notion of situational crime prevention. The idea is to analyze the opportunity theory and various measures of crime reduction. The exercise mainly aims of identifying the presence of situational element in certain crimes against property thereby exploring the possibility of framing SCP measure in Indian context. With the help of a sample survey, the present study highlights the factors and combinations making the targets situationally vulnerable for crime. A critical review of concept and theoretical structure pertaining to SCP is also proposed to be undertaken.

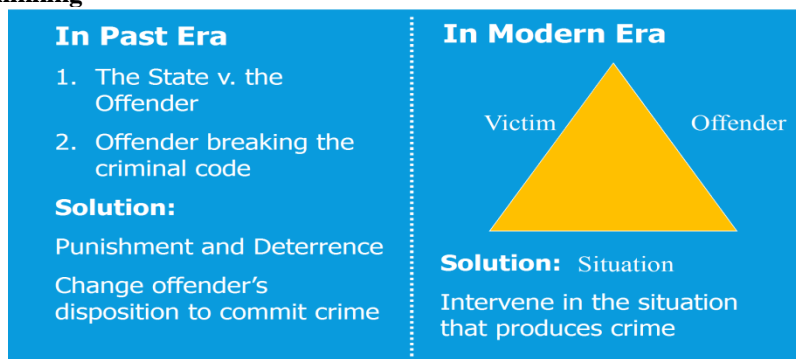
Objectives

1. To assess the extent and type of crimes that could be attributed to the ten principles of opportunity developed by R V Clarke.
2. To explore the situational dimensions attributable to the occurrence of crime in the selected sites.
3. To consider the opportunity theory model in case of selected types of crimes.
4. To assess the situational attributes in crime occurrence with the help of the perceptions of crime victims
5. To assess the efficacy of situational crime prevention tools in crime reduction and local security needs.
6. To develop a situational crime prevention training module for law enforcement agencies and security personnel.

Importance of SCP

1. Reduces the opportunities for criminals to commit crime
2. Changes criminals' ideas about whether they can get away with a particular crime
3. Makes it seem harder, riskier, and less rewarding to commit crime

The Change in Thinking



IV. Theories that Assists SCP Approach

1. Environmental Criminology
2. Rational Choice
3. Routine Activity

1. Environmental Criminology

Crime happens when four things come together: a law, an offender, a victim or target, and a place. Environmental criminologists examine the fourth element -- place (and the time when the crime happened).

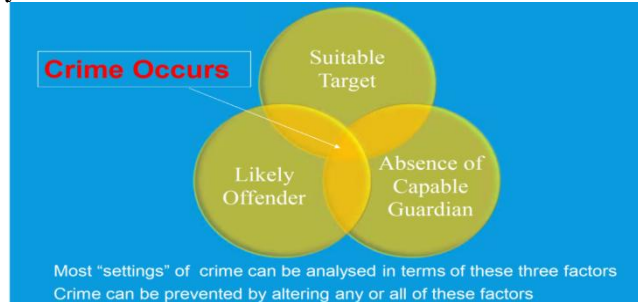
2. Rational Choice

Rational Choice theory says that criminals think about their decisions before they commit crime. In other words, people don't commit crimes because of forces beyond their control. Criminals commit crime because they benefit from it. The benefits of committing crime are greater than the benefits of not committing crime.

3. Routine Activity

The routine activity approach says that in order for a crime to happen there must be three things -- an offender likely to commit a crime, a suitable target, and no one watching this target. If one of the three things is removed, there will be no crime.

Routine Activities Theory



Situational Approach to Theft Cases-

Table 1.1: Frequency distribution of Scene of crime

Scene of crime	Study Area		Total
	Indore	Jabalpur	
Theft from shop	8 2.0%	12 3.0%	20 5.0%
Theft from business place	2 .5%	2 .5%	4 1.0%
Theft from home	57 14.3%	65 16.3%	122 30.5%
Theft from vehicle	1 .3%	2 .5%	3 .8%
Vehicle's theft	118 29.5%	88 22.0%	206 51.5%
Others	14 3.5%	31 7.8%	45 11.3%
Total	200 50.0%	200 50.0%	400 100.0%

Table 1.1 presents the nature of scene of crime. It has been observed in the study that the highest percent of cases were of vehicle theft i.e. 51.5 percent, 29.5 percent is in Indore and 22 percent in Jabalpur. The lowest percent of cases were of theft from business places (0.5 percent) in both the cities.

Graph – 1.1

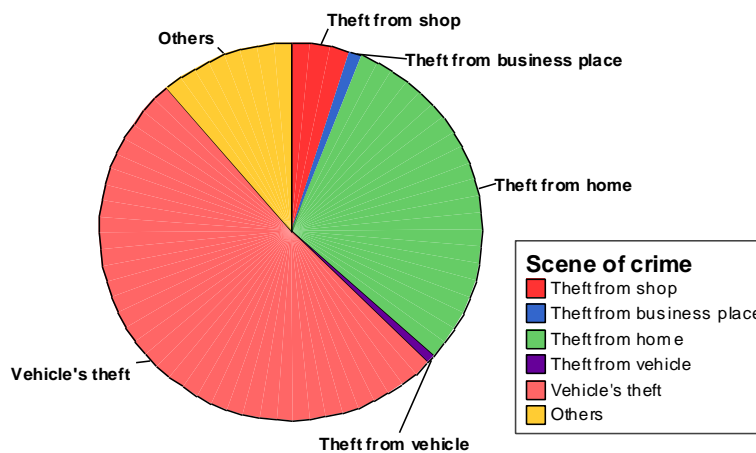


Table 1.2: Time of incidence

Time of incidence	Study Area		Total
	Indore	Jabalpur	
6 to 11:59 AM	14	3	17
	3.5%	.8%	4.3%
12 to 5:59 PM	48	35	83
	12.0%	8.8%	20.8%
6 to 11:59 PM	73	93	166
	18.3%	23.3%	41.5%
12 to 5:59 AM	65	69	134
	16.3%	17.3%	33.5%
Total	200	200	400
	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Table 1.2 denotes the time of occurrence in Indore and Jabalpur cities. It has been observed from the study that most of the incidences of theft occurred between 6 to 11.59 pm in both the cities (41.5 percent; Indore 18.3 percent and Jabalpur 23.3 percent). While the lowest percent of incidences occurred between 6 to 11.59 am in these cities which was 4.3 percent i.e. Indore 3.5 percent and Jabalpur 0.8 percent respectively.

Graph – 1.2

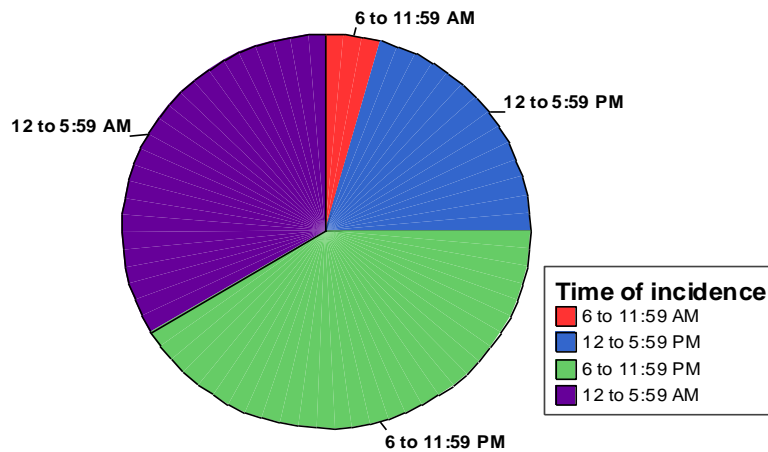


Table 1.3: Type of scene of crime

Type of scene of crime	Study Area		Total
	Indore	Jabalpur	
Open	125	122	247
	31.3%	30.5%	61.8%
Close	74	78	152
	18.5%	19.5%	38.0%
Mobile	1	0	1
	.3%	.0%	.3%
Total	200	200	400
	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Table 1.3 shows that the type of scene of crime in the two cities. It has been observed from the study that the most cases of theft occurred in open places (61.8 percent in both the cities which was 31.3 percent in Indore and 30.5 percent in Jabalpur).

Graph – 1.3

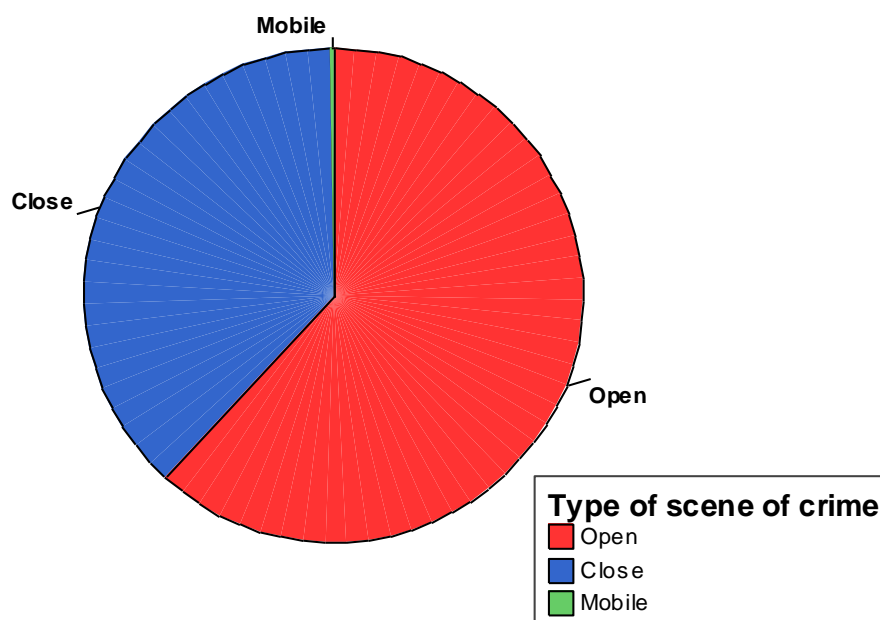


Table 1.4: Location of scene of crime

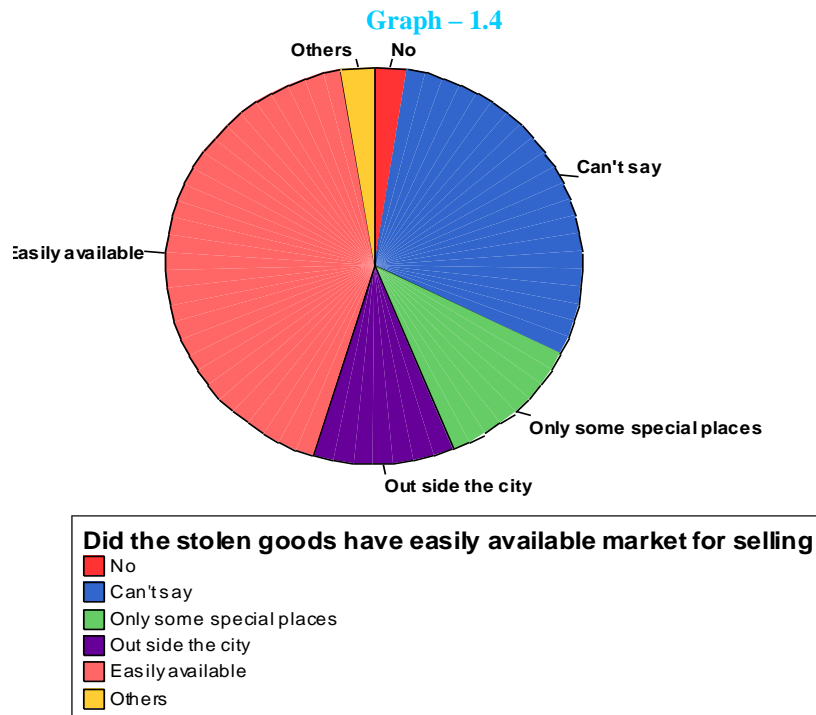
Location of Scene of crime	Study Area		Total
	Indore	Jabalpur	
Hot spot	88 22.0%	37 9.3%	125 31.3%
Semi-hotspot	72 18.0%	99 24.8%	171 42.8%
Cool spot	40 10.0%	64 16.0%	104 26.0%
Total	200 50.0%	200 50.0%	400 100.0%

Table 1.4 shows that location of scene of crime in Indore and Jabalpur cities. It has been found from the study that the most of the incidences of theft occurred in semi-hotspot that (42.8 percent in which was 18 percent in Indore and 24.8 percent in Jabalpur. While 26 percent incidences of theft occurred in cool spots in both cities.

Table 1.5: Do the stolen goods have easy available market for selling

Do the stolen goods have easily available market for selling	Study Area		Total
	Indore	Jabalpur	
No	10 2.5%	0 .0%	10 2.5%
Can't say	73 18.3%	46 11.5%	119 29.8%
Only some special places	26 6.5%	20 5.0%	46 11.5%
Outside the city	14 3.5%	29 7.3%	43 10.8%
Easily available	77 19.3%	94 23.6%	171 42.9%
Others	0 .0%	10 2.5%	10 2.5%
Total	200 50.1%	199 49.9%	399 100.0%

The data shown in Table 3.24 confirms that in 42.9 percent victims felt it that the stolen goods have easily available market in both the cities (in Indore 19.3 percent and in Jabalpur 23.6 percent). While 2.5 percent victims in Indore city they found there was no market to sell the stolen goods.



SCP in Home Safety

1. Get involved in your community i.e. crime watch.
2. Get to know your neighbors.
3. Use deadbolt locks.
4. Don't hide your keys near homes.
5. Report any type suspicious activities to law enforcement agencies.
6. Supervise your Children.
7. Install high wattage bulbs on porch lights.
8. Check fire extinguishers and smoke alarms twice in a year.
9. Post emergency numbers by the phone.
10. Have a neighbor or friend look after your house.
11. Put your lights on times.
12. Stop all deliveries.

SCP In Case of Vehicle Safety

1. Install an alarm system with an ignition cut off switch and a hood locking device.
2. Roll windows up and lock your doors even if you are just running in for a minute.
3. Don't leave valuable things in the vehicle.

V. Conclusive Remarks

Some broad suggestions emerging out of the study can be summarized as below:

- ✓ The situational crime prevention ought to be viewed as a dynamic application. The need to widen its approach and applications in the newer setting and crimes is therefore imperative.
- ✓ SCP needs to be clearly located in the theoretical boundaries of criminological research. An attempt in this study has been made to this effect.
- ✓ SCP needs to be tailored to respond other variety of crime. It can have applicability in cases of certain economic, violent crimes and terrorist crimes.
- ✓ Almost no research exists as to whether SCP would work in the changing context or not. The most SCP practices were carried out and evaluated in case UK, USA or Australia. The applicability of SCP in developing countries, diversified regions, and relatively lesser techno-oriented societies etc. is yet to be explored.
- ✓ SCP has many success stories in the UK and USA where the crimes rates have shown visible reduction due these measures.
- ✓ The issue of sustainability of SCP in long term is also crucial.
- ✓ The personnel applying and evaluating SCP needs to have adequate training orientation.

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