

# Understanding Indian Crimes and Criminals – A Case Study of Central Jail Bhopal

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**Abstract:** With a highly packed population (Over 1.21 billion people) and other Related Factors such as Low police personnel-to-population ratio, low conviction rate, etc., Indians are more prone to commit crimes as well as being victims. This Research paper tries to understand and analyse the various facets of crime and criminal behavior. For this purpose, we interviewed 10 prisoners of Bhopal central jail. We used a mixed research methodology. Conversational interviewing and survey methods were used as tools of data collection and the collected data is, then, used to determine the findings. The research found that the mammoth number of criminals in India is due to influx of new criminals and not repeat offenders and further highlights the noticeable role of causative factors such as Age, Area of Residence, Marital status, Number of Children, Education, Economic Condition, Employment, etc. in compounding crime in India. The paper further evaluates the efficacy of correctional services in Indian Jail and leaves readers with a variety of new findings.

**Keywords:** Crime, Indian crimes, Indian criminal research, Crime in India, Crime findings in India, Correctional measures in India, Efficacy of correctional measures in India.

## 1. Introduction

The concept of crime is a very old phenomenon. In fact, it exists since the birth of human society. The Moment human societies formed, delinquencies in the societies which is the result of non-adherence of standard codes of the society by its members, started emerging which in broad terms called as Crime. Although, it is ambiguous to define what a crime is, as it changes meaning from society to society. A crime in a society may not be a crime in other society. For Example, third gender marriages are allowed in many of the European societies whereas it is criminalized in many of the Asian and African societies. Another example is of Cow Slaughter, many countries such as India, Srilanka, etc., there is a high debate regarding banning and penalizing Cow slaughter but in many countries, there is no such debates. Therefore, Crime is a complex phenomenon which depends on social norms and cumulative thinking of the society.

In Simple words, Crime is a behavior or an activity that offends the social code of a particular community. Mowrer (1959) defined it as “An antisocial act” [1]. According to Caldwell (1956), Crime is defined as “those acts or failures to act that are considered to be so detrimental to the well-being of the society, as judged by its prevailing standards, that actions

regarding them cannot be entrusted to private initiative or to haphazard method but must be taken by an organized society in accordance with tested procedures” [2]. So in layman's words, we can say that ‘A crime is any act that violates the already existing social rules, values or norms set by its members’. Therefore, Crime is a social phenomenon which depends on the understanding of Crime by the particular society as it is the society as a whole which decides which act is a crime and which is not.

### A. Definition of Crime in Modern World

In Modern societies, Crime is understood as ‘An unlawful act punishable by a state or other authority’. It is based on rationale, ethics and modern values unlike the ancient and medieval societies where crime is related to violation of societal beliefs and norms. For Example, Slavery, in medieval time, was not considered as crime but today most of the modern societies recognizes slavery as a Crime.

### B. Crime in Indian Context

Crime in India has been recorded since the British rule, with comprehensive statistics now compiled annually by National crime records bureau(NCRB) under Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India.

Over the years, it is found that crime in India is continuous on rise and emerged as a serious issue for the government and society. In 2019, a total of 51,56,172 cognizable crimes were registered showing a 1.6% annual increase in registration of cases as compared to 2018 [3].

The following Chart presents the rising trend of Crime in India from 1953 to 2012.

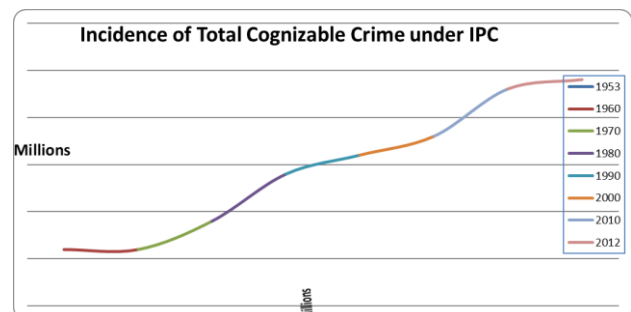


Fig. 1. Incidence of Total Cognizable Crime under IPC, (Source: Chapter 37, Crime Statistics, Crime in India Report 2012, NCRB) [4]

Being an empirical research the paper is more focused on empirical evidences rather than only subjective understanding of Crime. To achieve the purpose, we focused on groundwork to better present the ground knowledge and to enhance and contribute to empirical study of crime and criminal behavior.

## 2. Research Design

### A. Research Methodology

Quantitative Methods are best used for measuring, ranking, categorizing patterns whereas Qualitative methods are best used for describing, interpreting, contextualizing and giving in depth insights. Crime being a complex area of research needs something out from this dichotomy. Therefore, we used Mixed Method research methodology which allows for a combination of numerical measurements and in depth exploration.

"Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" [5].

### B. Research Participants

The Research participants were 10 in number. They were choosen randomly with the criteria that they have committed crime and have been convicted by the court.

### C. Sampling Techniques

To achieve the purpose of the study, random sampling was employed. We used random sampling method to get more generalized data. Among 3100 Prisoners of Central jail Bhopal, 10 were randomly choosen for the study.

### D. Data Collection

For the purpose of Data Collection, we employed Survey method and conversational interviewing(C.I.) method to get rich information. Survey method helped in gather quantitative data while Conversational Interviewing helped in getting rich qualitative data.

### E. Ethical Consideration

Before conducting the study, ethical guidance and approval were obtained from the bhopal central jail authority and from Mrs. Deepika gupta\* (See Acknowledgement). There was no partiality and discrimination as to social status of participants in conducting the study. We refrained to touch upon any irrelevant/sensitive topic which was not a part of our Study. Moreover, Names and identities of participants are concealed.

## 3. Data Analysis

We have categorized the analyzed data into various themes,

### A. Theme 1: Age

We found that 40% of the criminals belong to the age group of 20-29 years, followed by 10-19 years (30%) and 30-39 years (20%).

One of the Inmate who belonged to 20-29 years' category stated "I was very young at that time. They were beating my

father. I lost my temper and fought with them. I don't know what happened at that time but one of the opponent was killed by Us".

Another Inmate who belonged to the same category said "My peer group was very bad. They instigated me to commit crime at young age. They indulged me in illegal occupation of drug trafficking". We asked him that do they forced you? He replied "No they did not force me as such but their company made me to do this illegal work".

From Other statements by other inmates, we came to the fact that 'Temper and Peer Pressure/company are two main factors of crime at young age'.

Table 1

Age Category	Number of Criminals in that age category
0-9	-
10-19	3
20-29	4
30-39	2
40-49	1
50-59	-
60 & above	-

### B. Theme 2: Locality

Table 2

Residence of Criminals	Number of Criminals
Rural	3
Urban	7

"We conclude that Urbanites commit more crime that ruralites"

With regard to place of commission of Crime,

Table 3

Place of commission of Crime	Number
Rural	2
Urban	8

We conclude that "Most of the crimes are committed in urbans areas than rural areas".

### C. Theme 3: Marriage

For the purpose of knowing whether marriage plays a role in compounding crime, we asked inmates regarding their marital status.

6 out of 10 were married at the time of committing crime. Since 60-40 ratio is not a conclusive ratio, we cannot say that marital status has a role in compounding crime.

### D. Theme 4: Children

As out of 10 criminals who were married, we found that,

Table 4

No. of Criminals	No. of Children
2	2 & more
4	Less than 2

Most of the criminals who have committed crime, they have less than 2 childrens. This suggests that "the more the children are, the less the person is prone to commit crime"

### E. Theme 5: Type of Family

Table 5

No. of Criminals	Type of family
5	Nuclear family
5	Joint family

We found that Type (Nature) of family has no role in compounding crime.

### F. Theme 6: Economic Status

Table 6

Poverty Line	No. of Criminals
Below Poverty line	3
Above Poverty Line	7

We found that Poverty has no major role.

### G. Theme 7: Education

As per the collected data, 8 out of 10 were 10th pass or less. This indicates that Education play a vital role in compounding crime.

“The More the number of people educated, the less the crime rate is”

### H. Theme 8: Occupation

It was found that out of 10 inmates, 7 were adults, who can work.

7 out of 7 were unemployed or engaged in illegal occupation.

This suggests that occupation play a major role in compounding crime.

According to one inmate, “I was frustrated from a long time due to unemployment and delay in marriage. This lead to panic in me. I was mentally unstable from a long time. Then I encountered with this family fight for which me and my brother have been jailed”.

### I. Theme 9: Reason of Crime

It was found that 20% of crime were committed due to economic reasons whereas 70% crimes were committed due to individual/family animosity.

An Urban respondent, “I committed crime due to peer Pressure”

A Rural respondent, “I committed crime due to long family animosity”.

### J. Theme 10: Family Background

We wanted to know that do criminal family background has a say in crime for which we asked respondents about their family background that anybody from the family had been earlier committed crime and convicted?

To which we found that 90% of the respondents had no members of their family earlier convicted crime. This lead us to conclude that “Family background has no role to play in crime”.

### K. Theme 11: How Criminals are Produced?

90% of the respondents were first time criminal. This lead us to say that the mammoth number of Indian criminals is due to influx of new criminals and not repeat offenders.

### L. Theme 12: Fairness of conviction & correctional services

90% of the respondents said that they are guilty of crime and admitted that they have committed it but only 1 respondent said that he is innocent and has been falsely convicted.

This shows the fairness of Conviction in India as 9 out of 10 has admitted the crime. This lead us to say that Indian Judiciary is really following the core principle of Indian criminal justice system of Fairness of conviction.

Regarding Correctional Services in The Jail,

90% of the respondent said Jail made them fearful to commit crime while 80% said that they see the jail as correctional cell for themselves.

60% of the respondents said that they acquired some skills in the jail.

70% said that they have a future plan.

A respondent said “I have been here(Jail) from 12 years and earned a lot money by doing carpentry work in the jail factory. I am a senior inmate and earns Rs. 110 per day for my work. After my release, I planned to open a small carpentry shop for my daily living”.

## 4. Findings and Conclusion

1. More Crime Committed by people who belong to the age category of 20-29 years. Mostly adults are committing crime.
2. People who belongs to the urban area commit more crime. With respect to place of crime, more crime is committed in urban areas.
3. As per the data collected, it is found that marriage has no major role in commission of crime.
4. From the data collected, it can be said that people who have more children commit less crime. As more children bring more social and familial responsibilities.
5. Family whether joint or nuclear has no such impact on commission of crime.
6. Collected data reflects that being below poverty line is not a major factor in crime.
7. Education plays a vital role. It is evident that those who are less educated are less aware of the consequences and hence committed crime.
8. The data reflects that people who are unemployed either do some illegal work or remain unemployed, are more prone to crime.
9. More crimes are committed due to family or individual animosity. Moreover, in rural areas major reason behind crime is family animosity and in urban areas it is economic & ego issue.
10. Family background has no major role in crime.
11. Data suggest that majority of criminals are fairly convicted. This highlight our fairness in conviction process.
12. As per the study, to majority of criminals, jail made them fearful. They have acquired various skills through correctional cell and some of them have future plans as well. All this suggest that these criminals may not commit crime again and will do some work/employment after their jail period.

13. 90% of criminals are convicted in their first attempt. So, the number of criminals is increasing due to influx of new criminals or due to first time offenders and not repeat offenders.

### 5. Limitations

This study has some potential limitation.

These are broadly two:

#### A. Sample size

Our study is concerned with Crime, for that purpose we visited Bhopal central jail where we interviewed 10 prisoners randomly. This size of 10 prisoners is very small and provides for further scope of the study.

#### B. Gender Specific

This study is only conducted on male prisoners. No female prisoners are part of it. Addition of female prisoners in further studies provides for further scope and can make such studies more broader and diverse.

### Acknowledgement

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We would also like to thank Bhopal Central Jail Authority for permitting us to carry out our research study in jail.

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