

# Causes of Crime: Youths' Perspective

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**Abstract:** COVID19 has changed the lifestyle of many people. Also, there is an increase in criminal cases during lockdown. There can be many reasons which can influence an individual to opt for criminal path. In this study, 10 causes are listed and responses were collected from the youths, to know their opinion on criminal acts. On the basis of their response, top three causes were discussed, that can lead to criminal behaviour.

**Keywords:** Crime, Acts, Youth, Causes, Opinion, rehabilitation

## I. Introduction

Crime is an act which is against any legal system of a country. A person who breaks the law of the particular country, is known as criminal.

It is important to understand that, is there any difference in the type of criminal. If it is true then that there is something inherent in the criminal then Court proceedings would directly focus on the characteristics of the offender but on the contrary if it is found that offender is a victim of circumstances then the court would focus on the situations and the circumstances that lead the offender to perform that act. As a consequence, debate about the causes of crime would be done that directly influenced the policies for tackling crime and manage the offenders.

Often mental disorder is related to criminal behaviour. Even though certain acts of violence such as murder of wife and children relate to the depressive tendency of the offender. For Example, if a killer may be diagnosed with schizophrenia whether they are paranoid or not, they are far more dangerous to themselves than ever to anyone else. The prevalence of schizophrenic who commit crimes is still very low and the question also rises as so whether the crime specially violence is a reaction to how they are treated rather than being directly caused by their illness.

Sometimes, the youths got addicted to drug and other substance which can lead them to some other criminal behaviour. There is a need to find funds to purchase the addictive substances so people can be kept in such a state of dependency and they continue to offend to obtain the money to buy the drugs. Many people finance their addictions from legitimate sources. They start stealing and involved in criminal activity to generate money, to enable them the drug.

Sometimes the lack of awareness of the consequence of any actions also leads to a criminal behaviour. The low self-esteem and general unwillingness to delay gratification or inability to control their desire leads to a criminal act.

Experiences of childhood days can affect the adult personality as negative experiences leads to antisocial personality. In other words, criminality must assume that all crimes have something psychologically

fundament in it which makes more sense to recognise the different forms of Criminal action that are likely to have many different causes.

Can we call a criminal a real man who killed his wife in a rage but has otherwise led a blameless life? But what if he has previously been involved in robberies or fraud. Some of offenders get real excitement from fraud or acts of violence. Their emotional outburst is because of the excitement and thrill they are getting by doing the action.

There is a difference between those men who kill a number of people in one spree and others who kill a number of individuals at different points in different time. It is often found that those who kill number of people in spree, are isolated and often depressed but they also have a rage against whom they blame for their low self-esteem and who they believe has caused them any kind of harm they want to make a statement and get others to notice that.

There is no single cause for crime. Crime may differ from one culture to other, one country to other country. For example, alcohol consumption in the UK is legal but illegal in Muslim countries. Even some behaviour is considered as an act of crime in one culture but may not be considered as a crime in other cultures. As a result, there is no single definition to crime. And therefore, no single answer to the causes of crime. Different types of crime have their own distinct explanation.

Crime is the outcome of multiple psychological, social and environmental causes or situations. There are different social factors that can be the root cause of crime. Some of them are mentioned below:

### 1. Drug Abuse

The effect of peer group is very strong in adolescence stage. The young boys and girls follow their peer and try to indulge in those activities which their peer group is doing, to gain appraisal and affiliation from them. They always want the support of their peer group and even if their parents don't not support any specific act, they try to do this by hiding from elders. Drug abuse is one of the factors that leads to criminal behaviour. If one of the peers is having a drug, sometimes the other individual, just to gain attention and support of the peer, he/she also starts using that particular drug, which slowly turns into habit and later wards it turns into addiction.

### 2. Budget Deficit

Every year many youngsters after completing their degrees, start searching for jobs. A family with low socio-economic background faces many hardships even to meet the basic necessities. The cost of living is increasing day by day, but there is not that much increase in employment opportunities, which is affecting the budget of a family. In order to meet the requirements of the daily lives, sometimes, the youths opt for stealing, robbery etc. Also, they are lured to join illegal gangs in exchange of lump some money. find a negative relationship between total offenses per capita and income per capita. Luiz (1995) in a study found a negative relationship between the total murder rate per capita and the conviction rate and the political instability variable. The study also found a negative relationship between the total murder rate per capita and the conviction rate and the political instability variable.

### 3. Inflation

The price of every commodity is increasing day by day. As the budget of the family is getting affected, individual is facing problems even in the job or work they are doing. Sometimes, the salary increase is not up to the mark that they can face the problem of inflation.

#### 4. Pollution

An article published in Hindustan Times, states that Air pollution can lead to violent crimes. American researchers have established a possible link between air pollution and violent crime with a study showing that exposure to higher levels of particulate matter and ozone corresponded to a rise in incidents such as assaults. The hypothesis states that pollution enters your bloodstream and affects the way your brain works. Researchers found that over a 10-year period, a 10 percent increase in daily exposure to air pollution increased violent crimes by 0.14 percent.

#### 5. Homeless

According to Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory, Safety Needs is at the second level of human's motivation. Every person feels safe when he/she is inside his/her home. When somebody is trying to attack that home, the person would try his/her level best to safe that home. To make oneself feel safe, home is one the basic needs of every person. And the fear of being homeless, can lead to different types of crime.

#### 6. AIDS

In a research done by Julian Naidoo, find that those who are infected with HIV may be more likely to engage in risky behaviours such as drug use and crime because their reduced life expectancy leads them to discount the future. Also, the cost of treatment is high in case of AIDS. Sometimes, its not possible for low-income grouped or a person belonging to middle class economic group to bear the expense, which leads them to different criminal acts.

#### 7. Food Security

Food is the essential thing for survival. Everyone is working to feed his/her family and earn his/her livelihood. Generally, anyone who has not have enough food to satisfy his/her hunger, can opt for illegal ways to get that food like stealing, snatching or evening murdering any person for food. A study done by Jonathan Randel Caughron (2016) shows that a one percent increase in food insecurity can lead to an increase in the violent crime rate of approximately 12 percent holding other predictors of violent crime constant. The impact that food insecurity has on crime rates also changes based on the income level and population of the county.

#### 8. Terrorism

Terrorism always itself is a crime, which increases the rate of criminal acts. Sometimes, a youth is brain washed by the organisation based on religious sentiments and they feel that terrorism is the only way to fight with the injustice that have been done to them. Also, poverty and unemployment lead to terrorism and crime. Sometimes, due to need of money, an individual joins a terrorist group.

#### 9. Social Discrimination

Every person wants equal opportunity and equal rights. Even Article 15 of Indian Constituency focuses on Right To Equality. Article 15 secures the citizens from every sort of discrimination by the State, on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth or any of them. But when, this discrimination happens based on religion or caste, it gives rise to criminal acts. The communal riots are one of the causes which gives rise to discrimination, or discrimination leads to communal riots. On either side, violence is reinforced.

## 10. War

Nobody wants war. But war gives rise to violence, poverty and unemployment. During World War I, war crimes like poisons were used as weapons, crimes against humanity such as torture, and genocide was common. Sometimes, anger and rage of people gives rise to war against any nation.

### **Need To Rehabilitate**

Its important to provide a better and safe environment to the people who are under pressure. Rehabilitate means to restoring something back to normal. Just discussing about the problem won't solve the issues concerning criminal acts. If a person has committed a crime, and if proved in court of law, its important for the government to release the mental status of a person who will be send to prison. There is a need to understand the causes that led to crime, and help them to bring a change in themselves, to make a growth, and adjust with the surroundings. Rehabilitation helps them to understand the cause that led to the crime, and treat the causal factors. Sometimes, many crimes are committed because of lack of education and poverty. Through rehabilitation, the person could be educated, so that whenever he/she goes out in the society, he/she can earn in a legal way.

## **II. Objective of the Study**

To find out that, the top three causes that led to criminal behaviour, according to youth of India

## **III. Methods**

After going through the literature, a list was prepared of the ten, probable causes of criminal behaviour. Due to pandemic, field study was not possible, so, data was collected with the help of google form.

### **Form Description**

The form consisted of three parts. In first part, consent was received from the participants to be a part of the study. In the second part, personal information like name, age, gender, educational qualification, was collected. In the third part: the participants were asked to rate the ten causes from 1-10, as the most prevailing cause of criminal behaviour according to them, to the least affecting cause that leads to criminal behaviour. The participants were asked to rate 1, against the factor that they feel is the most common cause of criminal behaviour, and rate 2, against the second common cause which they feel; that is leading to criminal behaviour, and in this way, rate all the factors from most common cause to least common cause, according to their opinion.

### **Sample Description**

The sample consisted of 500 participants, including 257 males and 243 females. The age of all the participants ranges from 23 years to 27 years. All the participants are graduates in different streams and presently, preparing for competitive examination like West Bengal Civil Services, Union Public Service Commission, Banks, and Railways etc.

### **Statistical Analysis**

After collection of data, frequency was calculated, and based on that, ranking was done with the help of Microsoft Excel.

#### IV. Results

Table 1 shows the frequencies based on ranking, that is the number of individuals who have ranked particular factor (cause) from 1-10. Table 2 shows the total score calculated by the Microsoft Excel formula ( $=B5*10+B6*9+B7*8+B8*7+B9*6+B10*5+B11*4+B12*3+B13*2+B14*1$ ), to rank the 10 factors based on the opinion of the youths. The influencing factor for criminal behaviour is rank 1 and least influencing factor is rank 10.

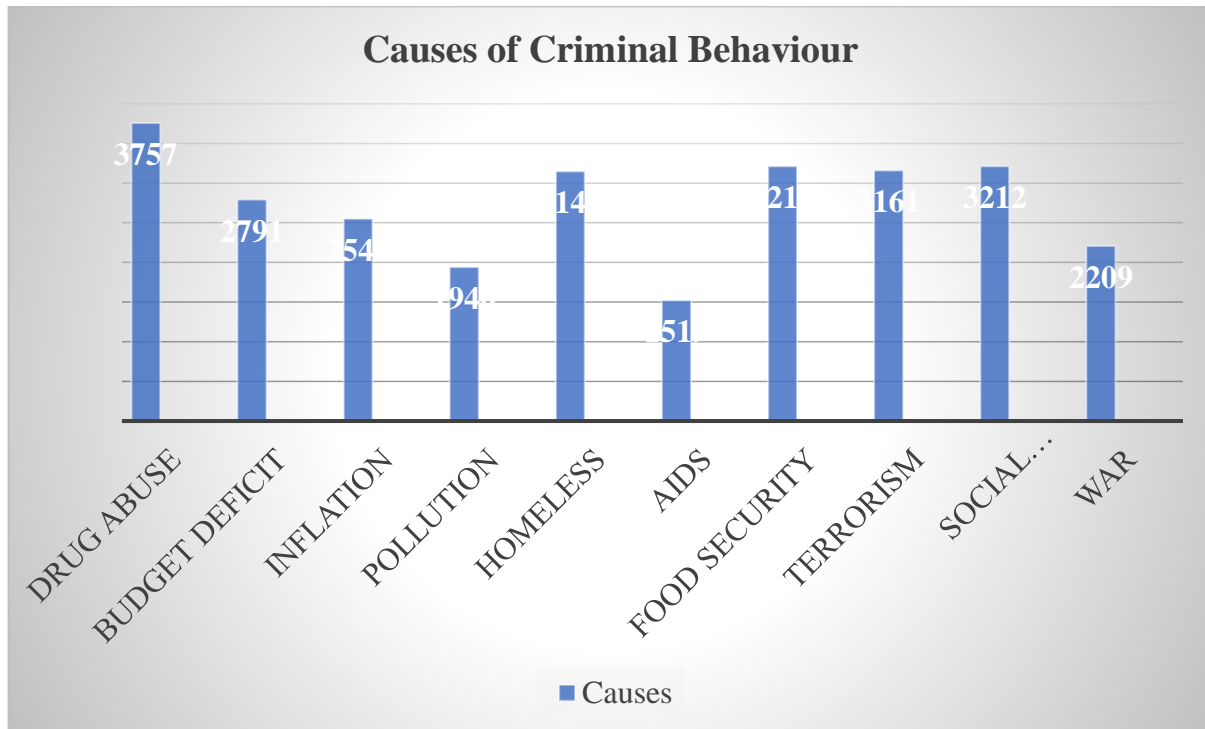
Table 1: Frequency Distribution

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cause/Factors										
<b>Drug Abuse</b>	182	12	87	62	60	12	36	37	12	0
<b>Budget Deficit</b>	25	61	73	36	61	24	84	74	50	12
<b>Inflation</b>	13	73	12	36	49	72	86	98	61	0
<b>Pollution</b>	12	38	25	37	25	36	36	84	86	121
<b>Homeless</b>	49	72	48	25	109	99	60	0	25	13
<b>AIDS</b>	0	12	25	13	36	25	37	61	157	134
<b>Food Security</b>	96	73	24	37	111	36	26	25	48	24
<b>Terrorism</b>	50	74	97	72	12	73	0	72	12	38
<b>Social Discrimination</b>	48	61	73	121	0	62	86	12	25	12
<b>War</b>	25	24	36	61	37	61	49	37	24	146

Table 2: Total Score with Rank

Cause/Factors	Total	Rank
Drug Abuse	3757	1
Budget Deficit	2791	6
Inflation	2549	7
Pollution	1940	9
Homeless	3149	5
AIDS	1519	10
Food Security	3213	2
Terrorism	3161	4
Social Discrimination	3212	3
War	2209	8

Graph 1 shows the scores of various causes that can led to criminal behaviour.



## V. Discussion

Based on the data collected from the sample of 500, the results showed the top most cause that is leading to criminal behaviour according to the youths is drug abuse and the least common cause among these ten mentioned causes is AIDS. Based on the opinion of the youths, the objective of the study was to find out the top three causes that led to criminal behaviour. The ranking is as follows: 1: Drug Abuse; 2: Food Security; 3: Social Discrimination.

Due to the present situation of COVID 19, many of the people had lost their jobs. Due to lockdown, many private companies have paid half the salaries to their employees, as they were unable to work due to lockdown. Many private companies have even sacked many employees, they cut down the number of employees. Even, when work from home has started, then also, many employees had to work more than their duty hours and are being paid less, according to their salary. This situation has given rise to crime among people.

When, there would be rise in unemployment, the youths can feel depressed, and can indulge themselves in drug abuse. There are many studies which proves the fact that maximum crimes are done, when the person is under the influence of any drug. In a study done by Risser et.al (1995) has mentioned the relationship between drug abuse and criminal behaviour.

Maslow's theory has also mentioned the importance of food, as that it the basic need for survival. One can not survive without it. But to earn the food, one has to work to get the minimum wage to satisfy his needs. When the companies are reducing the manpower, unemployment would be increasing, which will give rise to criminal acts like snatching, stealing, robbery, just to satisfy one's hunger.

The third common cause leading to criminal behaviour, according to youths is social discrimination. This discrimination can be based on religion, caste, gender. Whenever the society had to face any type of communal riots, one of the cause behind this is, the discrimination done based on religion grounds. Sometimes, the individual feels that because of his/her caste or gender, he/she is not given the opportunity

that they deserve. Because of this biasness, a feeling of revenge may arise in the individual, which gives rise to criminal acts.

This study focuses on the views of the youth about criminal acts, and the factors that are leading to crime. Based on the data collected, drug abuse is found to be the most common cause of criminal acts, according to the youths.

## **VI. Future Implications**

This study was done on youths and focussed on 10 causes of criminal behaviour. Future research could be done by adding more probable causes that can lead to criminal behaviour. Moreover, comparison could be done between youths and senior citizens' view point and their opinion about criminal acts.

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