

Crime

Crime is essentially an act that is punishable by law. It doesn't occur owing to a single cause but is an extremely complex happening that is influenced by the culture of the place in which it takes place. For the same reason, many activities that are deemed illegal in one country are legal in another. A case in point would be alcohol consumption which is illegal in many Muslim countries but legal everywhere else. With changes in culture, people's outlook towards what constitutes crime changes too. Owing to this, there can be various causes of crime that change based on the nature of the crime, the time and place of its occurrence, and the like. As a result, criminalization and decriminalization of various phenomena is an ongoing process.

Causes of crime:

- (i) *Poverty*
- (ii) *Peer Pressure*
- (iii) *Drugs*
- (iv) *Politics*
- (v) *Religion*
- (vi) *Background*
- (vii) *Society*
- (viii) *Unemployment*
- (ix) *Unequal rights*
- (x) *Unfair justice system*

Different types of crimes:

Any act that is in violation of the law is a crime. There are various types of crimes. Though not exhaustive, criminologists group crimes into a few categories mentioned below.

Personal crimes: Personal crimes or crimes against persons refer to those crimes that are perpetrated against an individual. They include murder, homicide, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, and other such violent acts.

Property crimes: Property crimes refer to crimes that include theft but do not involve bodily harm. Some examples include arson, larceny, burglary, theft, etc. Here, the victim is not physically affected but is indirectly affected by harm or loss to their property.

Hate crimes: These refer to crimes against an individual which are fuelled by prejudices against the said individual's race, gender, religion, caste, creed, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other such distinguishing factors usually associated with one's heritage.

Victimless crimes: Victimless crimes or crimes against morality refer to illegal acts which are not aimed at a specific individual. Here, there are no complainants. Victimless crimes include gambling, administering illegal drugs, prostitution, and the like which are immoral but do not harm any individual per se. Such crimes are also known as consensual crimes as the violators here willingly engage in illegal acts knowing it is against the law. The word consensual crime is preferred by most over victimless crime as the offenders are said to be victims in these cases as their acts harm themselves.

White-collar crimes: Crimes committed by people who have a respectable position in society and are economically and socially well placed in the course of their occupation are called white-collar crimes. Some examples would be embezzling, tax evasion, insider trading, violating tax laws, and the like. Such crimes, though not gruesome, are still extremely detrimental to society and have a great potential to cause economic consequences like a recession in no time.

Organized crimes: Organized crimes refer to crimes that involve the sale of goods and services which are unlawful by a structured group like a mafia. This would include drug cartels, smuggling of weapons, prostitution, and even money laundering. Needless to say, organized crime has various negative impacts on both society and the economy.

Theories of causation of crime:

The different types of crimes and the various reasons attributed to their occurrence are not exhaustive. Crime is caused due to a multiplicity of factors that are ever-changing. That said, there are certain theories that have risen which attempt to ascertain the causation of crime. They include biological, economic, psychological, political, and sociological theories.

Biological theories: The interaction of various biological factors can be attributed to the occurrence of criminal matters. These biological factors refer to neurological, psychological, hereditary, and even biochemical elements that lead to crime. Conventionally, crime is always regarded as an outcome rising from various social aspects. However, in the past decade, there has been ample proof suggesting that genetic and biological factors contribute significantly to criminal behaviour.

Economic theories: Given the assumption that all human beings engage in rational behaviour, it is mind-boggling to see the crime rates in industrialized economies go through the roof. Many social researchers were of the opinion that crime is heavily influenced by economic factors like employment, education, financial conditions, and the like. It is one of the most common side effects of social exclusion. Criminals with the background of industrial employees engaging in manual work choose that way of life due to the lack of both education and jobs in the market. Crime is heavily influenced by wages and the employment status of the people in question. Economists were of the opinion that educational programmes are the efficient way to combat the issue of rising crime in a world full of depleting jobs and wages. All economic models of crime focus on deterring effects and the interrelation between work and crime. They conclude that the main reason for a crime could be attributed to rampant unemployment.

Psychological theories: Psychological theories of crime are extremely complex in nature. They focus on the personal relations of the criminal. These theories try to demonstrate the evolution of offending from when the offender was a child to when they become an adult. Psychologists are of the opinion that offensive behaviour is akin to unfriendly behavior. A case in point would be reckless driving, administering drugs, intoxication, and the like. So, they use theories and systems evolving from observations of unfriendly behavior to analyze and study crime. To deal with criminal tendencies they resort to motivational approaches that induce thoughtfulness and good decision-making. Since psychology entails a scientific study of human behavior based on data, various factors that influence crime were said to be bad upbringing, broken families, parents indulging in crime themselves, and personality disorders.

Measures that can be taken to curb criminal activities:

Given that in today's world crime isn't restricted to something poverty-stricken people engage in but is something people of all backgrounds do, it is important to formulate techniques and curb crime altogether before it gets out of hand. The government plays a significant role here. They ought to execute effective and efficient crime prevention techniques in their capacity as a leader of the people so as to ensure there is harmony in society. Despite there being stringent legislation like the [Indian Penal Code \(1860\)](#) and other such enactments formulated to curb crime, the number of crimes reported in India is increasing every year as per the data collected by the [National Crime Records Bureau](#). Though it seems effective, by these figures one can ascertain that stringent punishments alone aren't sufficient to create fear in the minds of criminals and deter them from engaging in criminal activities. So, a reevaluation of the government's efforts to curb crime is the need of the hour. Some measures that can be taken to curb criminal activities are mentioned below.

- (i) *Speedy justice system*
- (ii) *Creation of job opportunities*
- (iii) *Overcoming economical inequalities*
- (iv) *Formulating provisions for cybercrimes*
- (v) *Raising awareness among the people*
- (vi) *Promoting harmony among religions*
- (vii) *Penalising white-collar criminals*

Crimes in India, be it property crimes, violent crimes, or even cybercrimes, are on the rise in India. They have various causes that range from biological factors to even political and sociological factors. The government plays an important role in curbing crime. Two important things that would help in crime prevention are education and instilling morals in people from their childhood.