

Present Crime Scenario and Its Relationship with Socio-economic Condition: A Case Study on Kushtia District, Bangladesh

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Abstract

Economic conditions of a country influence criminality to a considerable extent. At present, economic factors like poverty, unemployment, inequality, illiteracy are the most important causes of crime in the study area and Bangladesh. As the inhabitants of the developing country, a portion of the population in the study area lives under the line of poverty. Here, the criminals are mainly from the poor classes, and their primary motive for the crime is monetary gain. When the economic distress of the poor villagers knows no bounds, crimes like theft, robbery and dacoity increase in villages. In Bangladesh, population explosion, industrialisation, and urbanisation stimulated many rural people to migrate to the industrial urban areas for employment. Though the shifting of the population is going on, it is too little to cope with the situation, and most live in rural and slum areas. Here, the poor condition of life and the lack of income create an inability to maintain an adequate standard of living and consequently trigger crime like drug abuse, trafficking, hijacking, prostitution, and juvenile delinquency to gain income. Besides, unemployment among the young generation also leads to excess leisure and its leads to spending in socialising with others in similar circumstances or committing crimes when others are working. The employment of women and their outdoor activities have enhanced the opportunities for female criminality in Bangladesh. Now a day's money is

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the paramount consideration to assess the social status in our society. Therefore, people involvement in economic activity and their socio-economic condition is essential for social stability and harmony.

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Keywords Causes of Crime · Triggers of Crime · Criminal and Class · Crime and Unemployment

1. Introduction

The word crime is derived from the Latin word "krinoss", which mean to accuse. In a general sense, crime violates laws, rules, and regulations that harm or destroy human society and create problems in human life. It covers those acts which are against social order and deserve disapprobation and condemnation of society.

The word Crime has not been defined in the Bangladesh Penal Code in its broad sense. However, it may be explained as an act of commission or omission that is harmful to society. However, all acts tending to prejudice the community are not crimes unless they are punishable.

Crime accompanies social life from its very beginning. It occurs in every society and every stage of its development, regardless of its structure, system or historical period. Undoubtedly, crime is a consequence of many social and economic problems which constantly change.

Regardless of whether we like it or not, crime is a constant component of our life. Lots of factors namely socio-economic condition, influence the crime level.

2. Background of the study

Crime is generally regarded as the violation of criminal law where intention, motive, knowledge, innocence, mistake of fact, mistake of law are mental components (Ratanlal and Dhirajlal, 2012).

Crime is an act or default that tends to the community's prejudice and criminal law on pain of punishment inflicted at the suit of the State. In its legal sense, therefore, a crime includes such offences being acts or defaults which have been made punishable by the Bangladesh Penal code.

Radical criminologists argue that crime is a violation of criminal law and the violation of social relationships. The breakdown of such relationships destroys society's harmonic nature and creates more crimes (Khan, 2015).

It is apparent from the above that there is nothing which by itself is a crime unless the legislature has declared it as punishable. Different factors may trigger the criminal activities and the socio-economic situation of the offender.

Statistics confirm a strong connection between social and economic conditions and the level of crime (Szczepaniec et al., 2011). Maria Szczepaniec

focuses on law and economics, claiming that "the crime rate is essentially explained by studying how the changes in costs and profits from criminal activity influence the decision to commit a crime. According to the economic theory of crime, an individual will be willing to commit an offence if the expected profit from the criminal behaviour will be higher than the profit resulting from the engagement in its legal alternative".

Since Bangladesh is one of the third world countries, it has many problems like poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, overpopulation. Like other similar countries, Bangladesh is striving for reducing its crime rate for bringing it to a satisfactory level. All the regions of this country are not equally crime-prone; the likelihood of crime varies with geographic variation, seasonal changes and socio-economic factors (Cohn, 1990). So, many cases of crimes are related or created to this problem, such as theft, robbery, dacoity terrorism, juvenile delinquency, smuggling, drug addiction, land grabbing, fraud, violence against women and children, violation of human rights, toll collection, illicit trafficking in women and children, murder and kidnapping, Illegal drug manufacturing, illegal possession and use of firearms.

3. Objectives

The main objective of this study is to identify the present crime scenario of Kushtia city through understanding the crime trends and patterns and establishing the relationship with existing socio-economic factors of the area, which will be helpful for the national level policy formulation and be usable by other stakeholders.

The specific objectives of the study are

- To identify the present crime trends and patterns of the study area.
- To identify the socio-economic and demographic situation of the study area.
- To identify the socio-economic and demographic factors which influence unlawful activities.
- To identify the relationship between criminal activities and socio-economic factors to improve the present scenario.

4. Rationale and Literature

This study will investigate the present crime scenario in the study area at Kushtia and its relationship with the existing socio-economic condition. It is essential to understand the criminal activities, patterns, and socio-economic conditions in the study area. Moreover, the identified relationship between crime

patterns and the socio-economic condition is significant to make an important decision that will be helpful to formulate government policy and necessary implementation strategy.

By investigating studies concentrated on analysing the relationship between crime and macroeconomic variables, Diaw, Lobont, and Moldovan (2014) note the record of some contradictory results related to the relationship between economic conditions and crime.

The scale and diversity of the crime phenomenon make necessary the analysis and identification of threats developed on the background of the deterioration of living standards, family environment and educational system degradation, relevant indicators to the proposed study. Increasing the economic gap between some geographical regions regarding living standards can generate social rejection and changes in crime (Lobontet al., 2017). Some statistics and studies are currently trying to provide a solution about personal connections between socio-economic and demographic variables and crime, indicating that the current crisis has much weight on the social environment and, therefore, on the offence factors that increase criminal behaviour. According to social disorganisation theory, many studies reveal that social segregation in the urban environment creates fragile environments. These are directly associated with high crime rates, according to Cahil (2004), Bjerck (2009), Raphael and Sills (2006).

Gümüş (2004) uses data from 75 large US cities from 1989–1991 to empirically examine the determinants of crime in urban areas. Using an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression technique, the obtained results indicate that the unemployment rate, police expenditure, income level, population, and primarily black communities are significant determinants of crime in urban areas.

There are different mechanisms through which unemployment can affect crime: alcohol consumption, substance abuse, drug dependence, income inequality, the availability of theft-worthy goods (Buonanno&Montolio, 2008; Gümüş, 2004; Omotor, 2009).

However, we find that the study of crime and its determinants are closely related to other variables, such as social exclusion, educational level, cultural dimension, family background, religion (Lobontet al., 2017).

A recent study (Traxler&Burhop, 2010) confirms the strong positive effect of poverty on property crime and a substantial negative impact on violent crime by using panel data methodology for Prussia from 1882 to 1910 and the rye price as a proxy for poverty. Moreover, by using binary choice models, Anderson (2002) finds a negative effect of poverty on crime, using as crime indicators assault, robbery, rape, murder and abduction in South Africa. The models use nine

independent variables as the determinants of crime. These variables are respectively: income, inflation rate, Gini coefficient, unemployment rate, economic growth level, the total population in Romania, the total population in Romania rural areas, the total population in Romania urban areas and the enrolment rate in Romanian universities (Lobont et al., 2017).

5. Overview of Crime in Bangladesh

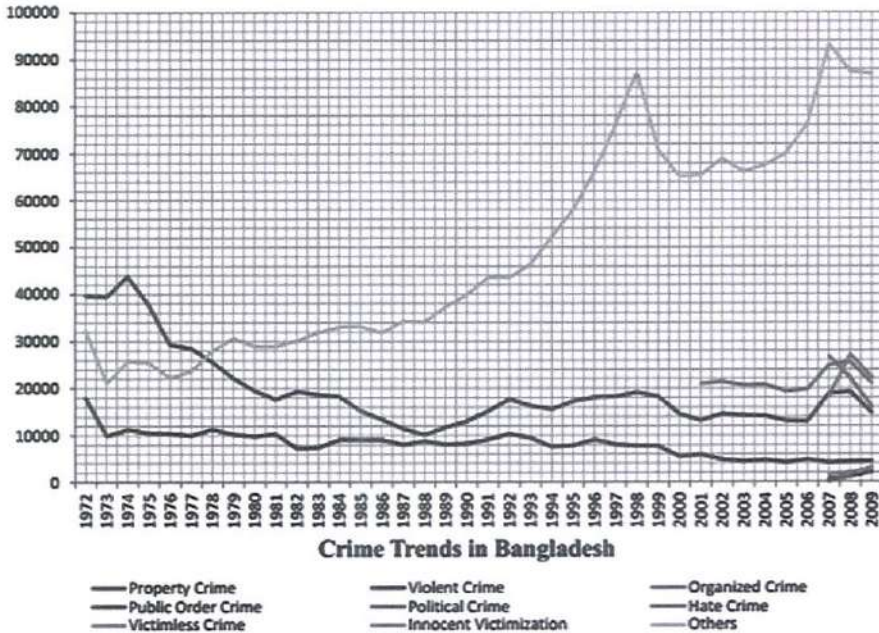
Bangladesh has been facing the problems of crime, criminality and corruption with its diversified forms from the very beginning of the country's independence. Khatun M. N. and Islam M J (2018) conducted research to depict the comprehensive and holistic historical crime analysis in contemporary Bangladesh with particular references to crime trends and their associated causations. The study was mainly descriptive, and the data of the study has been collected from various secondary sources like police statistics, books, journals, periodicals and related literature. The crime data from 1972-2009 were analysed. The significant findings showed that the crime rate increased steadily from 2003-2008, and the highest number of crimes were committed in 2008 (1.58 lakh), though; it decreased a little in 2009. It also indicates the committed crime of the years (2003- 2007) where 1.27 lakh crime was committed in 2003, 1.20 lakh in 2004, 1.26 in 2005, 1.30 in 2006, and 1.57 in 2007. It is a matter of concern that the statistics represented only the crimes reported to the police.

The other significant findings of the study stated that most of the common crimes were economic crimes; however, the trends of non-economic crimes, especially political crimes, are alarming. Besides, the authors also proposed various effective measures, including public awareness, effective laws and policy, police reform, proper justice system to reduce the criminal activities of Bangladesh.

The trend in reported crime in Bangladesh since the liberation war has been increased with slight fluctuation. According to police statistics, the number of total offences for both violent and property crimes has decreased slowly. In 1972, there were approximately 18000 violent offences. In 2009 the violent offences were only 4331- a massive decrease.

Property crimes have decreased at a similarly effective rate. In 1972, the total number of property offences was 39633. By 2009 the number of offences had fallen to 14689 property crimes. We know that the rate of crime in Bangladesh is increasing day by day. However, in police statistics, we see the number of crimes is decreasing due to the non-reporting tendency of crime. This fact demonstrates the failure and shortcomings of the criminal justice system of Bangladesh in

Figure 1: Patterns and Trends of Crime in Bangladesh



Source: Khatun and Islam, 2018

reporting crimes by the victims. In effect of this deficiency, the police organisation cannot record the exact number of crimes and construct appropriate crime typologies (Khatun and Islam, 2018).

There are many reasons for the non-reporting of crimes: (i). Victims may consider the crimes insignificant and hope to avoid the offender's embarrassing situation (ii). Wish to avoid the publicity and inconvenience of calling the police, (iii) have agreed to the crime, as in gambling and some sexual offences, (iv) may be intimidated by the offender (Bohm & Haley, 2002: 39). Due to unscientific classification methods used by the police, other categories of crime was highest in Bangladesh after the liberation period. According to police statistics, in 1972, the number of total other crimes was 32306. On the other hand, the number of reported other offences was 87022 in 2009- a massive increase.

Khan MBU (2015) studied the present trend and patterns of crimes in Dhaka city. The study was conducted based on the data which DMP has collected from January to July 2015. The data were presented in some pre-designed structures where the categories of crimes have been defined according to the Penal Code, 1860 of Bangladesh.

The trend line shows that the criminal tendency among the city people is not any constant issue. This trend shows a fluctuating curve and directs police for becoming more alert in a specific period when the criminal tendency increases and more crimes are recorded and vice-versa (Figure 1).

6. Approach and Methodology

The study was conducted in Kushtia Sadar and Mirpur Upazila of Kushtia District under Khulna Division.

Two types of data, namely (i) primary and (ii) secondary data, were collected to conduct the research. Primary data was collected from different sources like legal authorities, law enforcing authorities, local government and discussion with legal practitioners, local elites, relevant researchers and immoral individuals. Secondary data was collected from various journals, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Government, published reports, books, university library and websites.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were being used to collect data from the areas. Questionnaires and FGD were conducted to collect the primary data for this study. Mixtures of semi-structured and open-ended questionnaires were used schedule interviews, and Key Informants Interview (KII) were conducted with law enforcing officials.

A questionnaire was developed considering the following information:

1. Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the study area;
2. Current living conditions, financial situation and livelihood activities of the immoral persons of the study area;
3. Perception and practical experiences regarding the relationship between crime and socio-economic profile.

This study was based on basically secondary data where all data was collected from the official source of Kushtia and Mirpur Police Station and other relevant stakeholder's offices. However, few interview sessions were performed with local government officials, representatives from law enforcement agencies and local elites.

All the collected data and information from secondary sources and questionnaires were checked for any wrong and incompleteness, and additional work will be done if needed. Data entry was done following standard procedure. Processed data has been analysed by using statistical operations and displayed with graphical aided computer software.

7. Socio-Economic Description of the Study Area

Socio-Economic characteristics, including basic demography, settlement and

housing, public utilities, economy and employment status in the study area, are shown in this section. This information helps to conceptualise the Socio-Economic condition of the study area. The findings of this chapter are prepared based on secondary and primary data and information. The secondary information was collected from the Population and Housing Census 2011, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 2012 and the primary information from the field visit.

Kushtia district consists of six (06) Upazila. Among these, KushtiaSadar and MirpurUpazila are considered as areas for the proposed study. Some major demographic and socio-economic features are presented below.

The study area comprises 202870 households with a total population of 832370 including an average household size of 4.06. 419028 males and 413342 females in the study area with an average density of 1330 people per kilometre (Table2).

Analysis of age structure shows that about 49% of the total population are in depending age group (age ranges up to 14 years and 65+ years old), 51% of the total population are (age ranges from 15 to 64 years) regarded as potential earning

Table 1: Location and Area of the Study Area, Kushtia district

Upazila	Total area (sq. km)
Kushtia Sadar	318.22
Bheramara	153.71
Daulatpur	468.76
Khoksa	104.85
Kumarkhali	258.18
Mirpur	305.06

people or economically contribute to the family. The following Figure 0.2 shows that the highest 21% of people are from the age group 30-49 years old considered

Table2: Demographic Scenario of the Study Area

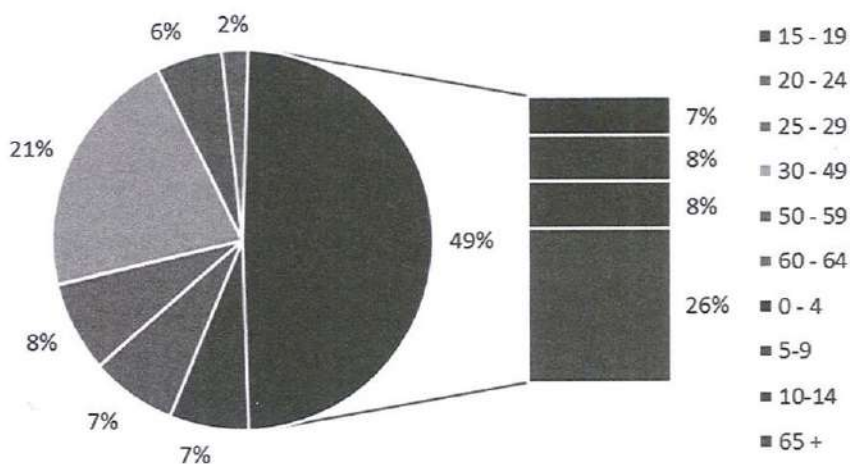
Upazilas	Total HHs	Total Population	Male	Female	Sex Ratio	Population Density (sq.km)
Kushtia Sadar	1,20,087	502255	253499	248756	102	1578
Mirpur	82,783	330115	165529	164586	101	1082
Total/Average	202870	832370	419028	413342	101.5	1330

Source: Population and Housing Census 2011

the most potential workforce.

The BBS, 2012 shows that a maximum of 59% of households resided in Kucha houses made of mud, straw, corrugated iron sheet (tin). Followed by 32% belongs to Semi Pucca houses made by the Brick wall, concrete floor and concrete/tin shed roof. Only 8% of the houses are recorded as Pucca. The type of housing condition is presented in the following Figure 3

Figure 2: Age Structure of the Studied Population



Source: Population and Housing Census 2011,

According to the BBS 2012, the majority of the households (94%) resided in their own houses. It ensured that a significant percentage of people reside within the study area (Figure4).

The literacy rate is reported for the population aged seven years and above with a definition of "ability to write a letter in any language". In this context, the overall literacy rate of the study area showed much lower than the national level both for males and females. It indicates that people of the study area are not well aware of ensuring a better future for their family and social involvement.

People aged over seven years old and having scope of employment are considered for figuring out the status of occupation and livelihood. About 37.77% of the total population are economically active, of which about 37.8% are employed, and the remaining 62.2% are household workers and looking for work as well. Traditionally, females are found to be highly engaged in household work

Figure 3: Type of Housing Structure in Study Area

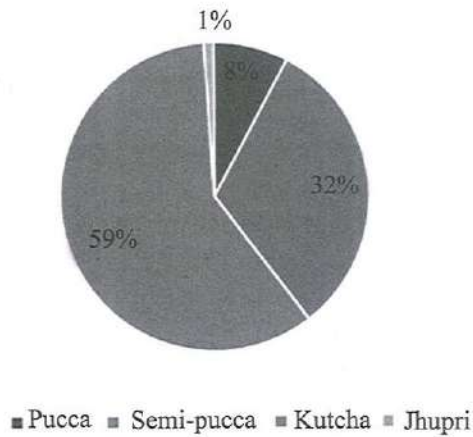
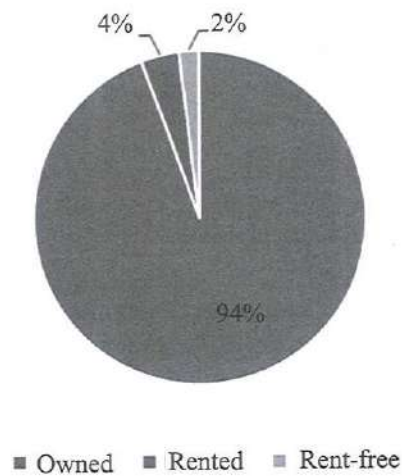


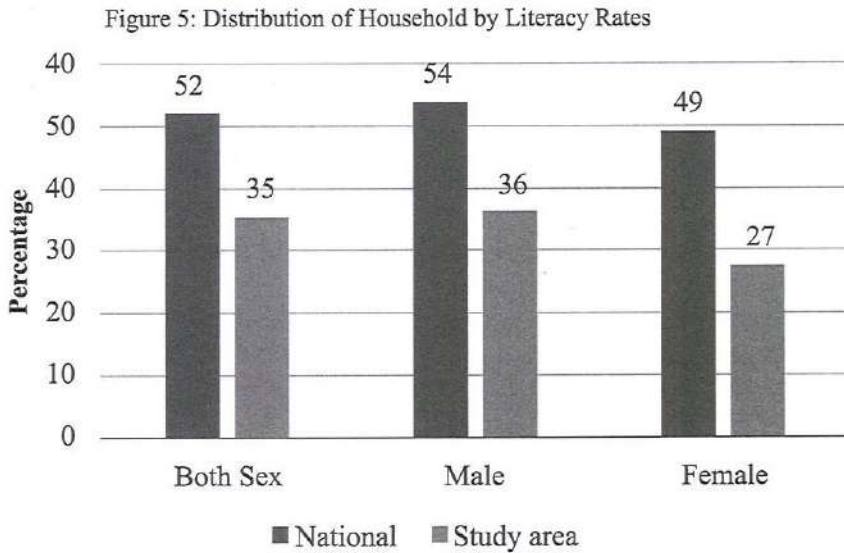
Figure 4: Housing Tenancy in the Study Area



Source: Population and Housing Census 2011, BBS 2012

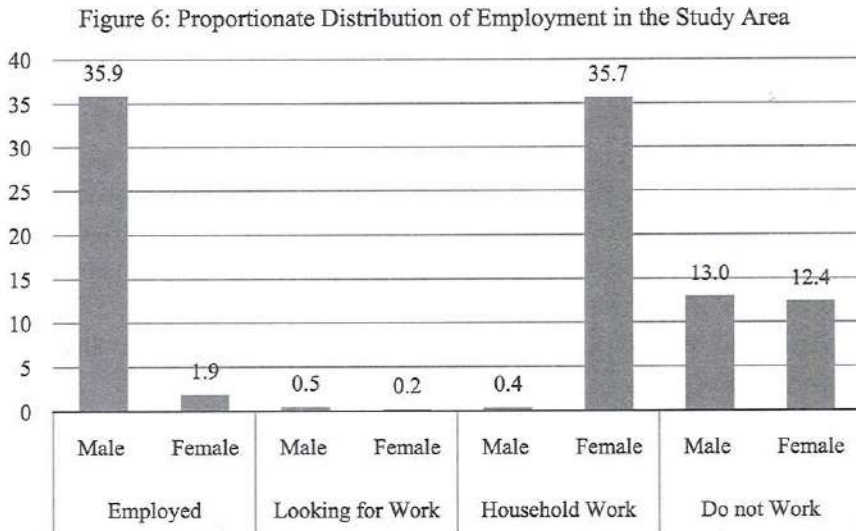
in the study area. The employment status of the study area is detailed in the following figure by sexes.

As per the reference of Population and Housing Census, 2011, distribution of occupation shows that highest 40.9% of the employed people are engaged in



Source: Population and Housing Census 2011, BBS 2012

agricultural activity, followed by 32.6% in services and only 10.1% in industrial activities(Figure 7).Therefore, it has been found that industrial activities dominate the study area.

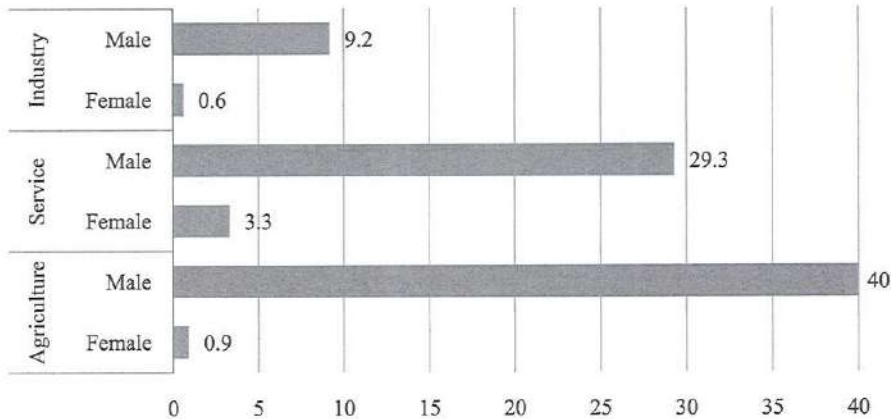


Source: Population and Housing Census 2011, BBS 2012

8. Results and Discussion

The analysis of the present crime scenario and all their associated factors concerning crime has been analysed. All the relevant data have been analysed here for a proper understanding of the associated factors, including the socio-economic condition of the criminal. The significant findings of the study have been presented and discussed below.

Figure 7: Proportionate Distribution of Population by Field of Activity



Source: Population and Housing Census 2011, BBS 2012

8.1 Existing crime scenario

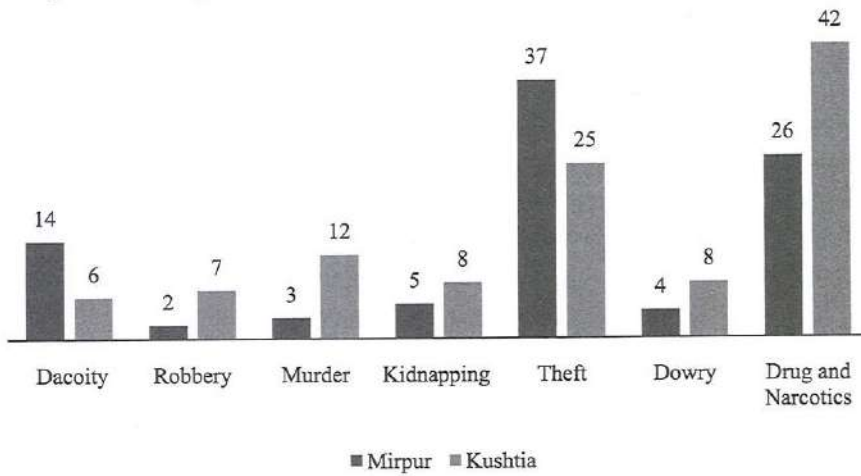
The crime data recorded by the Mirpur and Kushtia police station from January to July 2019 has been presented. Analysis indicates that the police most frequently face crimes related to narcotics abuse and the illegal trades of such substances in the study area. Findings also show that crimes conducted in the Kushtia Sadar area are relatively higher than the Mirpur area, which is comparatively less developed than the city. The following most recorded crime in the study area during the studied period was theft. The subsequent frequent crimes after these are dacoity, murder, robbery, kidnapping and dowry.

Considering the crime pattern in the study area, women and children repression receive the maximum percentage in both study areas.

8.2 Causes of Crime in the Study Area

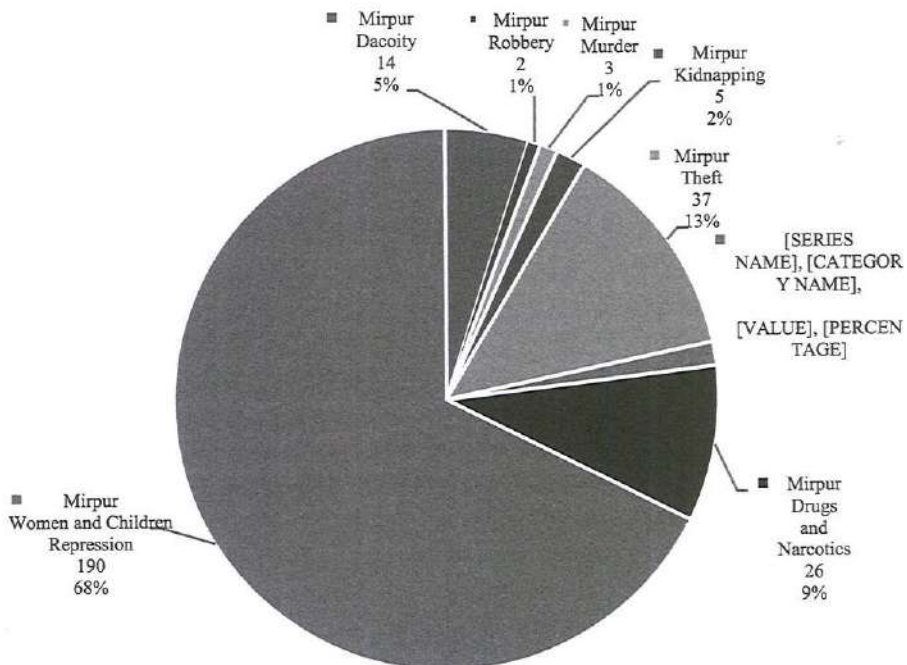
Crime can be defined in many different ways. Different societies may also choose to define crimes differently. However, in general, crime can simply be defined as the breach of laws laid down by the ruling authority of the land. It is a constant endeavour of governments and policing organisations worldwide to bring down

Figure 8: Existing crime scenario in the Study Area (January to September 2019)



crime rates so that the world becomes a safer place to live in. The fight against crime is not a new one in humanity, and it has, since the establishment of society, tried to bring crimes down. Let us now attempt to look at some of the causes of crimes identified through observations and evidence.

Figure 9: Existing crime pattern in Mirpur Upazila (January to September 2019)



Victim of unfair rulings and the correction system (prison system)

Victims of unfair or incorrect rulings from court often cause people to enter a life of crime. It often happens that a person is a victim of chance and happens to fall into crimes. Besides that, people are also often falsely accused of committing crimes resulting in a court conviction. Jails or prisons often make worse criminals out of people because of the conditions that exist there. Corrections anywhere do not involve significant rehabilitation for criminals, and more often than not, they end up being thrown in overpopulated jails full of people who are either victims or perpetrators of crimes more severe than their own. The declassification of people in prisons is also a leading cause of crime creation.

Depression and other social and mental disorders

Depression is also a significant cause of crime. Other than depression, people with severe mental disorders also end up committing crimes. Such people should be treated before their tendencies, and ailments get out of hand. A person under depression or some other severe mental disorder can also easily cause harm to themselves.

Family conditions

Many things go on in families that often cause people to get into a life of crime. Here again, there are a lot of different conditions that lead a person into crime. Abuse during formative years from family members and other such acts also instigate a person into a life of crime. People who are neglected by their families and do not get the love and attention they desire also get into criminal activities. Family violence and other issues are also related to crime in many ways.

Regionalism

Regionalism is a major cause of crime and unrest among people. People and the administrative bodies often ignore this fact as they are caught up in classifications of people by region. Such people that harbour such regionalist feelings often go to great lengths to commit crimes against other communities. It is often that a victim of such regionalism gets influenced and enters the world of Crimes.

Racism

Discrimination based on race is a serious issue all around the world. All humans are in a way racist towards some people in some part of the world or another.

Racism has contributed much unrest to many places worldwide, and it is primarily because of one or two idiots that such crimes are given birth to. It is a sad fact of the world that we live in that we end up discriminating against

something that is the same flesh and blood underneath even though the external appearance and the origins may be different.

Politics

Politics is often a cause of crime. It is seen that many political associations all around the world have their own mafias running, which they use to manipulate and subjugate people. Political power is often misused to take advantage of weaker groups, and people and the dissidence that rises out of such situations often forces the victims to commit crimes. Politics is more related to crime on a much significant and much heinous level than anything else.

Poverty

Economic deprivation or simply poverty is a significant cause of crime all around the world. People are often driven to great lengths of desperation by poverty, which is a major cause of crime worldwide. Such frustration is problematic for society as global inflation has risen significantly over the last few years. However, it does seem that in our world today, the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.

Overpopulation

An increase in population is the most significant cause of crime and much of the world's worries. Although population increase is related to each cause mentioned here, it still needs to be looked at as a cause of crime. The increase of population triggers a dynamo effect in society, leading to the creation of more people with some form of frustration or resentment towards society as such.

Parental Relations

Children who are neglected or abused are more likely to commit crimes later in life than others. Similarly, sexual abuse in childhood often leads these victims to become sexual predators as adults. Many inmates on death row have histories of some kind of severe abuse. The neglect and abuse of children often progress through several generations. The cycle of abuse, crime, and sociopath keeps repeating itself. Children who are neglected or abused commit substantially more crimes later in life than others

Heredity and Brain Activity

Searching for the origins of antisocial personality disorders and their influence over crime led to studies of twins and adopted children in the 1980s. Identical twins have the same genetic makeup. Researchers found that identical twins were twice more likely to have similar criminal behaviour than fraternal twins with

similar but not identical genes, just like any two siblings. Other research indicated that adopted children had more remarkable crime rates to their biological parents than to their adoptive parents. These studies suggested a genetic basis for some criminal behaviour.

Education

Conforming to Merton's earlier sociological theories, a survey of inmates in state prisons in the late 1990s showed low levels of education. Many could not read or write above elementary school levels, if at all. The most common crimes committed by these inmates were robbery, burglary, automobile theft, drug trafficking, and shoplifting. Because of their poor educational backgrounds, their employment histories consisted of primarily low wage jobs with frequent periods of unemployment. Employment at minimum wage or below living wage does not help deter criminal activity. Even with government social services, such as public housing, food stamps, and medical care, the income of a minimum wage household still falls short of providing basic needs. People must choose between continued long-term low income and the prospect of profitable crime. Gaining further education, of course, is another option, but classes can be expensive and time-consuming. While education can provide the chance to get a better job, it does not always overcome the effects of abuse, poverty, or other limiting factors.

Peer Influence

A person's peer group strongly influences a decision to commit a crime. For example, young boys and girls who do not fit into expected academic achievement standards or participate in sports or social programs can sometimes become Crack cocaine pipes displayed by police. Drugs and alcohol impair judgment a reduce inhibitions, giving a person more incredible courage to commit a crime. Children of families who cannot afford adequate clothing or school supplies can also fall into the same trap. Researchers believe these youths may abandon schoolmates favouring criminal gangs since membership in a gang earns respect and status differently. In gangs, antisocial behaviour and criminal activity earn respect and street credibility.

Drugs and Alcohol

Some social factors pose a powerful influence over a person's ability to make choices. Drug and alcohol abuse is one such factor. The urge to commit a crime to support a drug habit influences the decision process. Both drugs and alcohol impair judgment and reduce inhibitions (socially defined rules of behaviour), giving a person more incredible courage to commit a crime. Deterrents such as

lengthy prison sentences have little meaning when a person is high or drunk. Criminologists estimate that alcohol or drug use by the attacker is behind 30 to 50 percent of violent crimes, such as murder, sexual assault, and robbery. In addition, drugs or alcohol may make the victim a more vulnerable target for a criminal by being less attentive to activities around and perhaps visiting a poorly lighted or secluded area not customarily frequented perhaps to purchase drugs.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Conclusions

Kushtia is a small district of Bangladesh. Due to its geographical location, Kushtia is essential for the regional development and national economic development of Bangladesh. However, economic development and criminal activity have vice versa relation between them. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the relationship between crime and socio-economic conditions in the Kushtia district. Despite legal, social, psychological and penal measures for combating crime, the problem remains in alarming dimensions. With the change of time, new crimes are coming up, and traditional crimes are vanishing fast. Different types of criminal's activities deteriorated the economic growth of this Kushtia region. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the present scenario and implement necessary and applicable measures to control criminal activities. From the analysed data in this study, it has been indicated that the most common factors of crime like unemployment, lack of economic growth, corruption, natural calamity, poverty, and famine are triggered by the individuals' socio-economic condition. It has been observed that all these socio-economic factors have substantial control over the criminal activities in this area. However, the virtues of tolerance, mutual respect, and coexistence through social institutions such as religion, family, parental control help us live in social harmony.

9.2 Recommendations

The socio-economic environment can play an important role to combat a social problem like crime. It plays an influential role to combat the social problem differently. Some of them have been mentioned below.

Create awareness among the people

A social worker works at the root level of the community. So they have good communication with the community people if they can build awareness about a crime that will help to minimise crime.

Help to formulate crime-related policy

Local government can work to the root level people and know what types of policy can be needed for crime. So they can provide enough knowledge to the authority to formulate crime-related policy.

Building social movement

The local government can build up social movement against crime by building the social movement against crime such as rape a burglary that will minimise crime.

Counselling

Government can provide counselling programmes to the victims and offenders. If they provide it correctly, that will minimise crime.

Correctional program

Government can provide a correctional programme to the offenders that will help to reform the offenders. It helps criminals to rectify their attitudes and mentality. Thus crime will be removed from society.

Provide Education

The local government can provide enough knowledge about the crime. They will realise that crime is breaking moral rules so that people will know about crime and avoid committing a crime.

It helps to find out the causes of crime

The local government can work at the community level to observe crime and criminal activities and find out the cause of crime that will help minimise crime by removing the causes of crime.

Research on crime

It is necessary to correctly identify crime patterns and crime trends in the study area. The local government can research crime which is changing day by day. Government can identify it and take adequate measures to control crime.

Create a negative image of criminal activities

The local government can create a negative image of the criminal to the people. People can provide a negative attitude to the criminal so criminals can realise it and avoid conducting crime.

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