

Impoverished Living Conditions and Crime in Society: A Study on Prisoners at Jamalpur District Jail, Bangladesh

Israt Eshita Haque, Md. Muniruzzaman

Department of Sociology, Noakhali Science and Technology University, Noakhali, Bangladesh

Email: IsratEshitaHaque.soc@nstu.edu.bd, munir.zaman02227@gmail.com

How to cite this paper: Haque, I. E., & Muniruzzaman, M. (2020). Impoverished Living Conditions and Crime in Society: A Study on Prisoners at Jamalpur District Jail, Bangladesh. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 8, 33-51.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2020.83005>

Received: January 29, 2020

Accepted: March 6, 2020

Published: March 9, 2020

Copyright © 2020 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

Bangladesh, as a developing country, has been facing several problems with poverty, rising food prices, corruption, unequal distribution of wealth, unemployment, impoverished living condition, rising criminal activities, and so on. The purpose of the study is to explore the relationship between impoverished living conditions and crime in society by using information from prisoners at Jamalpur district jail, Bangladesh. The study was conducted employing mixed approach that taking into consideration both quantitative and qualitative methods because of its nature and subject matter. The study found that impoverished living conditions of people and lack of economic solvency are the main driving forces influencing prisoners to commit crime. Besides, crime varies in terms of education, religion, marital status and occupational variations. Moreover, society accompanied with unequal distribution of wealth, corruption, degradation of social norms and values, rising separation and divorce and political abuse is more prone to commit different types of crimes such as drug business, robbery, theft, trafficking, smuggling, crimes under arm act, prostitution, women repression, rape, etc. Poverty reduction programs, adjustment of uneven social and economic conditions, enforcement of law, counseling system could be policy recommendations in this sensitive area.

Keywords

Crime, Poverty, Economic Deficiency, Impoverished Living Condition, Prisoners

1. Introduction

Bangladesh, like other underdeveloped or developing countries, has confronted with the problem of impoverished living conditions among most of the common

people of society, crime and other unlawful behavior among people. Crime is not a new phenomenon; from the beginning of civilization, society has been facing different patterns of crime based on demographic, social, economic, geographical and political circumstances. Criminologists have long assumed that socio-economic conditions and social inequality play an important role both in why particular individuals become involved in criminal activity and in determining levels of crime within particular societies (Newburn, 2016).

There are many causes of involving criminal activities. The different dimensions of the relationship between impoverished living conditions and crime in society are dynamic, diverse and complex that they relate to demographic statuses such as gender, religion, and marital statuses, educational and occupational statuses. Different manifestations of impoverished living conditions have a strong link between pattern of crimes such as drug business, kidnapping, trafficking, theft, prostitutions, rape/women persecution, robbery, smuggling, crimes under the arms act, murder, extortion, political violence etc. A weaker economy usually quickly leads to more unemployed and underemployed people who may seek criminal opportunities as alternatives to poor or non-existent work (Webster & Kingston, 2014).

This study seeks to make a relationship between the impoverished living conditions of people and different patterns and causes of crime in Bangladesh society. This study depicts impoverished living conditions among disadvantaged groups in society associated with low household income, high expenditure compared to monthly income, taking loan at high interest rate from different sources, no food surplus, hut or tin-shed house, low household utilities such as electricity, bicycle, gas, toilet facilities, television, mobile, etc. Crime is any human conduct that violates a criminal law and is subject to punishment (Adler, Mueller, & Laufer, 2018). This study makes a significant contribution to understanding crime, main responsible factors for crime and also patterns of different crimes in Bangladesh society.

Areas of higher poverty are likely to be areas of high crime incidence as well (Owusu, 2016). The conclusion rests on the view that poor areas of cities characterized by high unemployment rates, family breakdowns, delinquencies and general social disruptions tend to produce alienation and consequently criminal behavior (Sampson, 2006). Attempts to explain the relationship between crime and economic conditions have remained the heart of crime research and criminological inquiry. Consequently, many crime theories have explored the extent to which individual and group characteristics as well as the environment influence crime (Owusu, 2016). To explain the possible association between poverty and crime, Pare and Felson (2014) provide three sets of theoretical explanations.

1) Discrimination and the lack of legitimate opportunities which limit poor people's access to legitimate societal resources and widely shared goals. This situation therefore forces poor people to access these resources and goals using illegitimate means, and thereby committing crime.

2) Lower social controls, particularly those associated with disadvantaged neighborhoods, with lower levels of collective efficacy, enhance risks of violence and aggressive behaviors and.

3) Tendency of people of low socioeconomic status to participate in crime as a result of their socialization experiences leading them to have attitudes that are conducive to crime (Pare & Felson, 2014).

Finally, this research also provides a discussion of policy recommendations to reduce crime and strategies to develop standard living conditions among the poor prisoners.

2. Causation of Crime in Society: Bangladesh Perspective

Crimes are committed for a few reasons like bad governance and state-sponsored oppressions, failure of the judiciary to ensure fair justice and increasing domination of a powerful but impatient leader over a helpless society. However, these are not the root causes of crime. Criminal offences are committed due to the habitual nature of the offenders. Criminologists opined that if such offenders are identified, the state or the society concerned could take steps to motivate them (Banglapedia, 2014). Although there are many other factors involve criminal activities such as lack of basic needs, inequalities in different levels and lack of employment opportunities in legally and socially recognized way. However, all factors should be identified properly to take steps to reduce criminal activities.

2.1. Crime and Poverty

In Bangladesh, the pace of economic growth increased since 2010 with GDP growing at a rate of 6.5 percent on average per year between 2010 and 2016. In contrast, the pace of poverty reduction slowed. The national poverty rate fell by 1.2 percentage points annually from 2010 to 2016 compared to 1.7 from 2005 to 2010 (The World Bank Web Site, 2017). A large number of people in Bangladesh are deprived of basic economic and social rights. The poor people in Bangladesh don't even meet the minimum nutritional requirement to maintain a healthy body (Shahabuddin, 2010). Poverty is considered as the cause for violations of many human rights, which include both economic and social rights and civil and political rights (Hasan, 2013). As a large number of people in Bangladesh are struggling against poverty, some of them are involving criminal activities to fulfill their basic needs. Sometimes they have to choose criminal activities as the strategy for escaping poverty.

If you struggle to pay your bills and don't know where your next meal is coming from, studies show you are more likely to be incarcerated. Once you fall into that cycle, it's difficult to break out. Therefore, people living in poverty are more likely to commit burglary, larceny or theft (McLaughlin, 2011).

2.2. Crime and Inequality

The relationship between inequality and crime has also been the subject of soci-

ological theories on crime (Fajnzylber, Lederman, & Loayza, 2002). For many years criminologists have been preoccupied with social inequality as an explanation of crime. The emphasis in this preoccupation has shifted from an early stress upon ecological inequality to inequality among individuals. Discussions of the slum as a cause of crime and individual poverty as a cause of crime have usually been intertwined, often in a confusing way (Braithwaite, 1979). So, living in such a location where the standard of living is very low and fulfilling basic needs is very difficult are considered as influential factors to commit crime.

Bangladesh has remained a country with substantial income inequality with all its manifestations even 48 years after independence. A small section of the society enjoys most of the country's wealth depriving the larger sections (Mazid, 2019). As inequality is associated with poverty, it leads people to involve criminal activities.

2.3. Crime and Unemployment

Bangladesh unemployment situation leads the youth in risky migration, drug peddling, abuse, addiction and smuggling and rise of criminal activities in the country, researchers say (Khan, 2016). Crime and unemployment have definite links with each other. That is the reason why kidnapping, murder, robbery and other criminal activities have increased in the country (Gupto, 2012). The number of unemployed youths is increasing in the country. In 2011, youth unemployment rate was 7.27 percent. The youth unemployment rate increased to 11.37 percent within five years in 2017. If the trend continues, the rate will become uncontrollable (Rezvi, 2018). The Labor Force Survey (LFS) 2016-2017 of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) reveals that, while the national unemployment rate is 4.2 percent, youth unemployment rate is as high as 10.6 percent. The share of unemployed youth in total unemployment is 79.6 percent. More strikingly, unemployment rate among youth having a tertiary level education is 13.4 percent (BBS, 2018). This increasing number of unemployment rate is a great threat of rising criminal activities throughout the country as crime and unemployment links each other.

3. Objective of the Study

In conducting this research study, it was found that there are several dimensions that are required to be explored to understand the overall scenario of the crime in relation to impoverished living conditions in Bangladesh society as a third world country. Henceforth, the main objective of the study is to explore the relationship between impoverished living conditions and crime in society. In line of the broad objective, this study will depend on the following number of specific objectives which are:

- 1) To examine the socio-demographic status of the respondents linked to impoverished living conditions and the involvement with crimes.
- 2) To find out different manifestations of impoverished conditions responsi-

ble for committing crime.

3) To explore the relationship between economic deficiency and patterns of crime in society.

4) To propose a list of recommendations based on respondents comments and findings of the research.

4. Methodology

In order to conduct this research, both quantitative and qualitative methods have been adopted because of its nature and subject matter. The issue of crime is very much sensitive and complicated. It is not easy to quantify the personal account of prisoner's living condition, their status in society, social structure, especially how and why they get involved in criminal activities. So, qualitative research method has also been used because it fosters a better understanding of the direct experiences of the criminals and their own understanding about the key factors of criminal activities. This study has been conducted between the time periods of July 2017 to January 2018. For better representation, the research site for the study was Jamalpur District Jail that was selected by implementing the purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling was applied because the researchers tried to find out specific characteristics of the respondents such as impoverished living conditions of people and their involvement with different types of crimes. Prisoners were preferred because they would be more relevant and more representative to find out the research goal.

As a quantitative tool, a questionnaire survey was used as the main data collection instrument for the study. For collecting necessary information, a structured questionnaire with a series of open-ended and close-ended questions was prepared. A total of 100 prisoners were sampled purposively by considering the impoverished living conditions and the involvement with criminal activities of the respondents. While constructing the questionnaire, due care was given so that the response categories are accurate, exclusive and uni-dimensional. In this research, the data are analyzed in terms of frequency distribution by employing descriptive statistics.

As qualitative method, the in-depth interview was conducted by using semi-structured interview schedule where the researcher got chance to make change in further questions based on respondents sharing of experiences. For qualitative part of this study, twenty case studies were taken as sample and among them five case studies are documented for cross-checking the quantitative data and prepare this research well representative one. Data have also been collected from secondary sources (journal articles, books, reports, unpublished research materials, dissertation etc.) to supplement the primary data. Description and explanation of themes and concepts are presented in a narrative way to seek the answers to the research objectives. In addition, some verbatim quotations are also presented to explain the relationship between impoverished living conditions and crime in society.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1. Socio-Demographic Status of the Respondents and Crime

The information gathered from the respondents who are the prisoners in the Jamalpur District jail, has been incorporated as the basis for this analysis. In this study, one hundred (100) respondents were interviewed who were involved in different crimes and twenty (20) case studies have been taken as sample, and among them, five case studies are documented for cross-checking the quantitative data.

At the beginning of each questionnaire survey, socio-demographic information was collected from each respondent concerning their gender, religion, relationship status, education, occupation, and so on. Such information gives an account of informative and interesting data that help the researcher to link the impoverished living conditions and the experiences of different patterns of criminal activities of the prisoners at Jamalpur district jail as well as to the contextualization of data. In this study, the information of respondents was gathered extensively to examine the in-depth condition of the socio-demographic status of respondents.

As shown by the analysis of survey data in **Table 1**, the gender distribution of respondents shows that males commit more crimes than females. More than 85% of the respondents are male prisoners and less than 15% are female prisoners. Arrest, self-report, and victimization data consistently show that men and boys commit significantly more crime, both serious and not, than women and girls (Adler, Mueller, & Laufer, 2018). Males engaged in more crime and violence than females, and they were more likely to repeat their crimes (Denno, 1994). This study finds that, females are less likely to involve criminal activities not for biological difference, for male-dominated social structure in which females are controlled by males and pampered by other family members. As a result, females get less access to involve criminal activities. Males are more likely to commit crime (more prone to involve violent crimes) because of his socialization process.

In this study, Muslims are more representative and predominant than other religions. Comparing various censuses, the Muslims are more involved with various crimes, whereas, as a minority group, other religious people (the Hindu, the Buddhist, and the Christian) are becoming victims of crime (Ahmed, 2017). Because of their dominance in the power structure and related state apparatus, Muslims are involved more crimes than minority groups (Ahmed, 2017). A descriptive survey of results sustains the widely held view that levels of offending tend to be lower among those who are married (Skardhamar, Savolainen, Aase, & Lyngstad, 2015). This study shows that 86% married respondents are prisoners who are more likely to involve with criminal activities rather than 14% unmarried respondents.

There are notable variations in education level among the prisoners selected for the study. Census and FBI data shows that schooling significantly reduces the

Table 1. Socio-demographic status of the respondents.

Gender Distribution	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
	Male	87	87.0
	Female	13	13.0
	Total	100	100
Religious Identity	Religion	Frequency	Percentage
	Islam	92	92.0
	Hindu	08	8.0
	Total	100	100.0
Marital Status	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
	Married	86	86.0
	Unmarried	14	14.0
	Total	100	100.0
Educational Attainment	Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
	Illiterate	32	32.0
	Just know to sign	25	25.0
	Primary	17	17.0
	Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C)	09	09.0
	Higher Secondary School Certificate (H.S.C)	11	11.0
	Degree/Hons's level	06	06.0
	Total	100	100.0
Occupation	Past Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
	Businessmen	39	39.0
	Farmer	16	16.0
	Housewife	02	02.2
	Service Holder	09	09.0
	Garments worker	07	07.0
	Students	04	04.0
	Total	100	100.0

Source: Authors, Field Survey, 2017-2018.

probability of incarceration and arrest. Education may also make individuals less impatient or more risk averse, further reducing the propensity to commit (Lochner & Moretti, 2004). **Table 1** shows that about 33% of the respondents are illiterate and about 25% of respondents just know to sign. About 17% have completed primary education, 9% are S.S.C, 11% are H.S.C and very few (6%) completed graduation. However, more than 70% are under primary education and they are more likely to commit crime than literate.

Remarkable diversity was also found in the occupational variations of the

respondents. As the table depicts that nearly 39% respondents were businessmen, 16% were involved in agriculture, about 9% were service holders, about 7% were Garments workers and rest of them were students. Small businessmen are more prone to involve different criminal activities like stealing, trafficking, drug business etc. Sipon Shekh, one of the respondents and was student, stated that:

“I was from a lower middle-class family and I was passing through some financial hardship. When I shared my financial problem with my friends, they gave me an idea to earn money in the easiest way to solve the economic problem of the family. We made a plan to do robbery in a rich house and in the time of robbery, one of members of that family recognized us, so we decided to murder that guy. Now we are the murderer”.

The above mentioned information indicates that criminal activities vary from occupation to occupation, because occupation has huge impact on the income and lifestyle of a person.

5.2. Different Manifestations of Impoverished Living Conditions and Crime in Society

Criminologists have long assumed that socio-economic conditions and social inequality play an important role both in why particular individuals become involved in criminal activity and in determining levels of crime within particular societies (Newburn, 2016). Poverty and socio-economic inequalities have contributed to escalating levels of crime and, subsequently, to the conflict dynamics (Balint, Lasslett, & Macdonald, 2017). In Bangladesh, as a third world country, there is a structural division between haves or have nots. There is a noticeable inequality between rich and poor in terms of piece of land, having own house, type of house, other household utilities, food surplus and so on. In this study, most of respondents were passing their miserable life with limited land, inadequate food, without other household utilities etc.

The Metropolitan police assistant commissioner in Britain, Patricia Gallan told the Guardian that “children are not born bad” and called for a wider effort to deal with inequalities that leave people feeling like “they do not have a stake in society”. She has intervened in the debate about rising crime, saying social inequality is a cause that needs tackling and that those arrested and jailed tend to be people with less money and opportunity (Dodd, 2018). **Table 2** shows that 76% respondents have a piece of land (insufficient and uncomfortable according to prisoners) and have a house; in comparison, 24% respondents have no piece of land and their own house. The amount of land and facility of house indicates one’s socio-economic condition in society that also reflects on involving different criminal activities.

Most scholars, as well as lay persons, believe that those who live in poverty more frequently engage in acts of violence as a consequence of conditions that they are subjected to. There is, however, disagreement among scholars about which conditions are important and how and why they lead to violence

(Crutchfield & Wadsworth, 2003). These conditions may include poor housing (Stark, 1987), distressed neighborhood (Krivo & Peterson, 1996), and disrupted families (Sampson & Groves, 1989). Living conditions of this sort are ordinarily defined as social structural consequences of poverty (Crutchfield & Wadsworth, 2003). **Table 2**, shows that more than 75% of respondents live in Hut and Tin-shed houses and less than 25% of respondents live in Half-building and Pucca houses indicate that people living in Hut and Tin-shed houses are more

Table 2. Impoverished living conditions and crime in society.

Having own land	Piece of Land		
	Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Have		76	76.0
Have not		24	24.0
Total		100	100.0
Having Own House	Facilities of the Own House		
	Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Have		76	76.0
Have not		24	24.0
Total		100	100.0
Type of House	Type of House		
	House type	Frequency	Percentage
Hut		25	25.0
Tin-shed		52	52.0
Half-building		19	19.0
Pucca		4	4.0
Total		100	100.0
Household's utilities	Household Utilities		
	Facilities	Frequency	Percentage
Electricity		45	45.0
Television		5	5.0
Motor/ bicycle		4	4.0
Toilet facilities		46	46.0
Total		100	100.0
Food Surplus	Food Surplus		
	Surplus	Frequency	Percentage
Have		27	27.0
Have not		73	73.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Authors, Field Survey, 2017-2018.

prone to involve in criminal activities.

One of the respondents named Rokeya begum stated that:

“What would you do taking my interview? We are not human beings, please take interview from a human being. I am from very poor family. We have no house, land, or other household utilities. My mother was a beggar. Sumon Mia married me and cheated on me. He sold me every night and I become his income source. If I rejected, he tortured me. Being reluctant, I left out from my husband's house and thought that if I can income in this way, then I don't need my husband. I went to a brothel situated at DoyamoyiMor in Jamalpur and started my new profession 'Prostitution'”.

However, social inequalities and impoverished living conditions of people in terms of land, type of house, other household utilities, and food surplus and so on tend to poor people to commit crime.

Table 2 depicts that the respondents' household facilities such as Electricity, Television, Motor/bicycle, Toilet facilities, etc. affect people to be angry and reflect on doing different types of crimes. In this study, about 45% of respondents have electricity access, 46% of respondents have toilet facilities, only 5% of respondents have television and only 4% of respondents have motor/bicycle facilities. **Table 2** also indicates that about 70% of respondents have no food surplus in comparison only 27% of respondents' having surplus food. The relationship between inequality and crime has also been demonstrated at the sub-national level. An analysis using police-recorded crime data in England and Wales found inequality (measured using the Gini coefficient for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) weighted according to each Middle Layer Super Output Area's total population in 2005) to be positively and “fairly strongly” correlated with burglary, robbery, violence, vehicle crime and, though to a lesser extent, criminal damage (Whitworth, 2011). This study shows that in a socio-economic stratified society, those people are living in impoverished conditions, they are more stimulated to involve with different crimes.

Focusing the relationship between impoverished living conditions and crime in society, it is observed that economic scarcity is the main and direct cause of crime, although, there are some other causes of different types of crimes in Bangladesh society which are also linked with poverty or impoverished living conditions.

However, low economic situation of people leads to other anxieties that tend to involve different patterns of criminal activities in society. **Table 3** shows the causes of different types of crimes that were mentioned by the prisoners. It is noted that suffering from real starvation, unemployment, dowry, divorced, deception, living in slum, poor household utilities, family stress, past experience of violence from male member of the family, poor social norms, low economic conditions, broken family, low social control, misguided by family members, relatives and friends lead people to commit crimes such as drug business, kidnapping, trafficking, theft, prostitutions, rape/women persecution, robbery,

Table 3. Causes of crimes according to respondents.

Different crimes	Causes of crime
Drug business, Kidnapping, Trafficking, Robbery	Poverty; Need more money; High ambition.
Theft	Real Starvation.
Prostitutions among women	Divorced; Deception; Unemployment; dowry; Financial stress of family; Easy way to earn money; Easy access to engage prostitution profession.
Rape/Women Persecution	Poor household facilities; living in slum; family stress for money; past experience of violence from father or other male member in family; poor socialization, poor social norms.
Smuggling, Crimes under the arms act, Murder, Extortion, Political Violence	Low economic conditions; influence of peer group; higher ambition to be rich people; broken family; not belonging family, political abuse; misguiding, low social control and so on.

Sources: Author, Field Survey, 2017-2018.

smuggling, crimes under the arms act, murder, extortion, political violence etc.

5.3. Economic Deficiency and Crime in Society

Bangladesh has been facing the problems of crime, criminality and corruption with its diversified forms from the very beginning of the country's independence. Crimes as social phenomena are changed by a number of factors that create the fabric of society. In broad sense, changes in the demographic, economic, social, political, criminal justice structures, etc. can be seen to mirror, at least in part, changes in the crime pattern (Khatun & Islam, 2018). However, there are several causes of crime and this study focuses on the relationship between economic deficiency and crime in Bangladesh society.

Fifty years ago, Gary Becker, a Nobel prize-winning economist, advanced an argument that all crime is economic and all criminals are rational. Becker's seminal paper, "Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach" places that have larger gaps between the poor (the would-be criminals) and the rich (the victims) will, all other things being equal, have higher crime (The Economist, 2018). In this study, economic deficiency has been measured in terms of monthly income, monthly expenditure, income type, yearly savings of a family, loan status, and so on.

Socio-economic condition determines what type of crimes would take place in the society (Rahman, 2008). Poverty and income inequality are associated with higher crime rates (Levitt, 1999). Remarkable differences have been found in the monthly income level and expenditure of the respondents. Table 4 represents that about 80% of the respondents' income is less than 10,000, 15% of respondents earn about 10,000 - 15,000 and only 5% of respondents earn more than 15,000 to 20,000. In contrast, about 80% of respondents' monthly expenditure are more than about 10,000 to 20,000, 14% of respondents spend about 5000 to 10,000 and only 6% of respondents spend less

Table 4. Economic deficiency and crime in society.

Monthly Income of Respondents	Income level		
	Level of Income	Frequency	Percentage
	0 - 5,000	30	30.0
	5000 - 10,000	50	50.0
	10,000 - 15,000	15	15.0
	15,000 - 20,000	05	5.0
	Total	100	100.0

Monthly Expenditure	Monthly Expenditure		
	Level of Expenditure	Frequency	Percentage
	0 - 5,000	06	6.0
	5000 - 10,000	14	14.0
	10,000 - 15,000	60	60.0
	15,000 - 20,000	20	20.0
	Total	100	100.0

Income Type	Income Type		
	Types	Frequency	Percentage
	Regular	78	78.0
	Irregular	22	22.0
	Total	100	100.0

Family Savings	Savings of Family		
	Savings in a year	Frequency	Percentage
	Have	9	9.0
	Have not	91	91.0
	Total	100	100.0

Loan Status	Loan Status		
	Taking Loan	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	89	89.0
	No	11	11.0
	Total	100	100.0

Sources of Loan	Sources of Taking Loan		
	Sources	Frequency	Percentage
	Bank	3	3.0
	N.G.Os	14	14.0
	Samity/Cooperative Society	59	59.0
	Relatives and Friends	24	24.0
	Total	100	100.0

Continued

Patterns of Crime	Patterns of Crime		
	Patterns of Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Drug Business		21	21.0
Robbery		14	14.0
Theft		13	13.0
Kidnapping/Trafficking		10	10.0
Smuggling		04	04.0
Crimes under the Arms Act		16	16.0
Prostitution		02	02.0
Rape/Women Persecution		17	17.0
Other Crimes		03	03.0
Total		100	100.0

Sources: Authors, Field Survey, 2017-2018.

than 5000. About 90% of respondents have no savings and comparatively about 10% of respondents have some sort of savings but those are insufficient. This study observes that low income earning people are more prone to commit crime to fulfill their basic necessities. Among the respondents, more than 75% of respondents' income was irregular (not fixed earning, occasional income) in compare, only 22% of respondents had regular income (Fixed earning). In these economic conditions, people are bound to find out the other sources of income. Respondents were used to take loan from bank, NGOs, cooperative society, friends, and relatives and so on. More than 50% respondents took loan from cooperative society, 24% from relatives and friends, 14% from NGOs, and only 3% respondents took loan from bank. According to respondents, it is easier to get more money involving in criminal activities instead of taking loan and as well as searching for regular job. Nobijol, one of the respondents has claimed that:

I am Nobijol. I was a part time day laborer. My monthly income was less than 5000, which was also irregular type. My expenditure was more than 8000. I borrowed money every month from friends, relatives or other sources to fulfill the gap between income and expenditure. After some days, all of the sources of borrowing money became unavailable to me. In these conditions, I involved a gang of human trafficking. They gave me 5000 in exchange of giving one customer (both male and female). Poverty is responsible for involving that gang.

Economic conditions of a country influence criminality to a considerable extent. At present, economic factors like poverty, unemployment, inequality etc. are the most important causes of crime in Bangladesh. As the inhabitants of developing country, a portion of the population in Bangladesh lives under the line of poverty. Here, the criminals are mainly from the poor class and their primary motive of crime is monetary gain (Khatun & Islam, 2018). The nature

may vary from time to time and country to country. Broadly crimes are classified into two categories: those related to human body (such as rape, murder etc.) and those related to property (such as theft, robbery etc.). These two types of crimes are common in almost all the countries and societies (Rahman, 2008).

Table 4 represents that 21% of respondents are convicted for drug business, 17% of respondents are arrested for rape or women repression, 16% of respondents are prisoners for convicting crimes under the arms act in Bangladesh. Among the prisoners those are respondents in this study, 14% are arrested for robbery, 13% for theft, 10% for kidnapping or trafficking business, 4% for smuggling, 2% for prostitution and 3% are arrested for other crimes like murder, extortion, and political violence and so on. According to respondents, they involved different crimes like drug business, trafficking, robbery; crimes under the arms act etc. because of poverty.

Most of the respondents were from low economic conditions and they tried to earn more money to send his/her offspring in school, provide better inhabitants, and healthy food for family members. About 13% of respondents said that they were used to theft caused by real starvation. Respondents had no food surplus and they didn't enough money to provide food in every day, they had an irregular type of income source and no one helped him/her in the time of economic scarcity. However, people without basic needs such as food, cloth, house, education, treatment; are more prone to commit crime than people with enough facilities to fulfill their basic needs. About 2% of respondents those are female prisoners were engaged in prostitution because of divorce, deception from relatives, dowry, unemployment, financial stress etc. Female respondents also said that involving prostitution was easy for them and also easy to earn money without any investment. Respondents stated that poor household environment, violence history of family, lack of proper social norms and values, always struggling for scare resource etc. are responsible to commit rape, sexual assaults and women's violence in society. Respondents strongly claimed that people who are more attached to low economic conditions, belonging from broken family, low social control, misguided by family members, relatives and friends are more tend to commit crimes like smuggling, crimes under the arms act, murder, extortion, political violence etc.

In 2019, total incidents of crimes are 68 robbery, 351 murder, 1139 women and child repression, 46 kidnapping, 494 thefts, 174 crimes under arms act and so on (Crime Statistics, 2019). Regarding the cause of these different crimes, Rabeya Khatun shared her experience like this:

I got married ten years back. My husband is rickshaw puller. I have three daughters and one son. I was physically abused by my mother-in-law within one month of my marriage. After some days, my husband started to abuse verbally and physically. The initial harassment started for not fulfilling the demand of money. My father promised in-laws to give 40,000 in the time of marriage, but he gave them 25,000 and assured them to fulfill their demand after some days.

Since my father could not keep his promise, my husband and in-laws started misbehaving with me. When I shared my situation with my mother, she made me understand that, "Husband's family has to lead like this way, tolerate now, happiness will come tomorrow". I was fed up to lead my family. Lack of money pushed me to earn money in any way. I started a business influenced by neighbor's sister-in-law. She said me that my work is very simple, only delivering drug from one place to another. But by delivering drug, I involved with trafficking business. Police arrested me being accused of drug dealer.

From the above explanations, it is observed that, struggling with economic scarcity of the people is the main responsible which leads people to other anxiety that tends to involve criminal activities. However, High ambitions of the people to get more money also cause for committing crimes. Respondents opined that unequal distribution of wealth, corruption, family crisis, lack of social control, poor socialization, and political abuse also play vital role to commit different types of crimes in Bangladesh.

6. Recommendations and Further Implications

While conducting this study, the researchers gathered some experiences from the field study to reduce the problem regarding crime. From the discussion with the prisoners some recommendations and further implications of this study have been come out. The researchers observed that poverty is the main responsible factor to lead the people involving with different types of crimes. Therefore, alleviating poverty and removing socio-economic disparity is the first and foremost recommendation to reduce criminal activities.

Overall, society, family, educational institutions and work place could contribute to reduce crime rate in Bangladesh. The study participants mentioned that family can play pivotal role as a primary educator for the proper socialization of the children. Both family and society should take the responsibilities to teach a child about some necessary morals, values, and norms to develop a child into a good human being for future. Furthermore, some respondents mentioned that educational institutions could be an important tool to prevent criminal behavior and unlawful attitudes spatially among children and youth. Work place is an important place whereas people spend one-third time in a day. According to respondents, the influences of fellow workers sometimes lead to commit criminal behavior.

The authors put a further voice of systematic, coordinated, and integrated approach for identifying the prime cause of crime in Bangladesh society. In Bangladesh, combining state and non-state sectors' responsibilities can play a momentous role for policy interventions in crime and poverty reduction. Enforcement of law as well as following the law enforcing agencies of developed countries will reduce crime in Bangladesh society. Proper steps should be taken by concerned individuals and institutions in this regard.

The respondents comprehended that counseling facilities in prison among the

prisoners could be adopted in order to convert the prisoners into leading controlled life. There are thousands of prisoners who have committed very minor crimes or even no crimes at all. But after experiencing the terrible environment and getting in touch with the imprisoned criminals, many of them get involved with the underground world. Psychological disorders and severe frustration are also very common among prisoners after suffering from a prolonged period of incarceration. Many of them become addicted too. There is no counseling facility in the prison (Chandan, 2015). Among the respondents, about 97% respondents opined that, counseling system could be more influencing among the prisoners to lead a right path after getting free from jail.

Table 5 shows that only 3% respondents said that there is no need of establishing counseling system because first need to ensure poverty alleviation. According to respondents, those people are living under impoverished conditions, they will repeat criminal activities to fulfill their basic need. Hence, ensuring basic needs of the poor by government and other non-govt. organizations is very much effective to control criminal behavior.

Considering this issue, Khatun and Islam opined in their study that, in Bangladesh, to reduce crime the prime motivators like poverty, unemployment, political patronage, broken home, instigation by friends, and ignorance have to be addressed. Besides, various effective measures including public awareness, effective laws and policy, police reform, proper justice system have to be ensured (Khatun & Islam, 2018).

This study tried to explore some strategies that could be helpful to prevent criminal behavior among individuals. To prevent crime, it is important to know what types of crimes have been occurred in the recent time. This study shows the variations of crimes committed by prisoners. Furthermore, this study addressed the causes of crime for which prisoners were bound to commit crime. This research result suggested some strategies those can be applied for further implication of preventing crime in society:

- 1) Enhancing the existing crime prevention strategy of Bangladesh.
- 2) Solving the unemployment problem and ensuring job opportunities for the unemployed people by engaging them in productive work.
- 3) Developing quality of living standard of the people.
- 4) Making equilibrium in the context of social, economic, and political

Table 5. Necessity of counseling system in prison.

Opinion about counseling system	Necessity of counseling system in prison		
	Counseling	Frequency	Percent
Need		97	97.0
No need		3	3.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Authors, Field Survey, 2017-2018.

opportunities for all the people in society.

5) Ensuring administrative, social, and religious education for all.

After taking consideration the research result of this study and all these above mentioned recommendations and strategies further research can also be conducted to find out the implementation policy of these recommendations and strategies.

7. Summary and Conclusion

After a brief overview on the relationship between impoverished living conditions and crime in Bangladesh society, it can be concluded that impoverished living conditions of an individual are more prone to involve criminal activities. The respondents' socio-demographic status, different manifestation of impoverished conditions, economic deficiency can influence people to commit different types of crimes in society. The patterns and level of crimes are different along with the context of respondents' gender, marital status, educational and occupational backgrounds. However, it is to be noted that females are less likely to involve criminal activities not for biological difference, for male-dominated social structure and getting less access to involve criminal activities than male because of his socialization process. Male are more likely to involve violent crimes than female. There are notable variations in religious and education level among the prisoners selected for the study. Muslims involve crimes more compared to non-Muslims because of predominance nature of Muslim in Bangladesh society. Nevertheless, people under primary education are more likely to commit organized crimes than literate people. Remarkable diversity can also be found in the occupational variations of the respondents because occupation variations have huge impact on the income and lifestyle of a person. In this study, it can be observed that small businessmen are more prone to involve different criminal activities like stealing, trafficking, drug business etc.

The study finds that social inequalities and impoverished living conditions of people in terms of land, type of house, and other household utilities tend to poor people to commit crime. In a socio-economic stratified society, people are living in impoverished conditions: without land, living in hut and Tin-shed house, low household facilities, no food surplus etc. are more stimulated to involve different crimes like theft, robbery, women and child repression etc.

In this study, economic deficiency has been measured in terms of monthly income, monthly expenditure, income type, yearly savings of a family, loan status, and so on. This study observes that low earning people, irregular income, people those are bound to take loan to fulfill their basic needs, no savings, etc. are more prone to commit crime compared to people who have high and regular income and have savings in a year. Henceforth, people with economic scarcity involve different types of crimes.

Hence, in Bangladesh, the first and foremost policy recommendations could be poverty alleviation by government and non-government affiliations. Fur-

thermore, society, family, educational institutions and work place could contribute to reduce crime rate in Bangladesh. Special consideration should be emphasized on counseling system among prisoners to lead a right path for future getting out from jail.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- Adler, F., Mueller, O. W. G., & Laufer, S. W. (2018). *Criminology* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Ahmed, R. (2017). *Theory and Practice of Criminology* (2nd ed.). Dhaka: Tit Publication.
- Balint, J., Lasslett, K., & Macdonald, K. (2017). Post-Conflict Reconstruction, the Crimes of the Powerful and Transitional Justice. *State Crime*, 6, 4-12.
<https://doi.org/10.13169/statecrime.6.1.0004>
- Banglapedia (2014). <http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Crime>
- BBS (2018). *Labour Force Survey Bangladesh 2016-2017*. Dhaka: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).
- Braithwaite, J. (1979). *Inequality, Crime and Public Policy*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Chandan, M. S. (2015). *The Daily Star*. The Daily Star.com.
<https://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/spotlight/rotting-behind-bars-137293>
- Crime Statistics (2019). <http://www.police.gov.bd.com>
https://www.police.gov.bd/en/crime_statistic/year/2019
- Crutchfield, R. D., & Wadsworth, T. (2003). Poverty and Violence. In *International Handbook of Violence Research* (pp. 67-82). Boston, MA: Kluwer.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-306-48039-3_4
- Denno, D. W. (1994). Gender, Crime, and the Criminal Law Defenses. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 85, 80-180. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1144115>
- Dodd, V. (2018). *The Gaurdian.com*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jun/14/rising-is-symptom-of-inequality-says-senior-met-chief>
- Fajnzylber, P., Lederman, D., & Loayza, N. (2002). Inequality and Violent Crime. *Journal of Law and Economics*, 45, 1-40. <https://doi.org/10.1086/338347>
- Gupto, M. K. (2012). *The Daily Star*. <https://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-249616>
- Hasan, M. G. (2013). Legal Framework of Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh: An Analysis from the International Human Rights Law. *The Northern University Journal of Law*, 4, 1-16.
- Khan, T. I. (2016). *CPD Web Site*.
<https://cpd.org.bd/high-rate-of-unemployment-results-risky-migration-drug-and-crimes-towfiqul-islam-khan>
- Khatun, M. N., & Islam, M. J. (2018). Crime in Bangladesh: A Historical Overview. *Social Science Review*, 35, 1-33.
- Krivo, L. J., & Peterson., R. (1996). Extremely Disadvantaged Neighborhoods and Urban

- Crime. *Social Forces*, 75, 619-648. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2580416>
- Levitt, S. D. (1999). The Changing Relationship between Income and Crime Victimization. *Federal Reserve Bank of New York Economic Policy Review*, 5, 87-98.
- Lochner, L., & Moretti, E. (2004). The Effect of Education on Crime: Evidence from Prison Inmates, Arrests, and Self-Reports. *The American Economic Review*, 94, 155-189. <https://doi.org/10.1257/000282804322970751>
- Mazid, M. A. (2019). *The Financial Express*. <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/bangladesh-the-state-of-income-inequality-1571497852>
- McLaughlin, L. (2011). *Jackson Free Press*. <https://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2011/oct/19/the-poverty-crime-connection>
- Newburn, T. (2016). Social Disadvantage, Crime and Punishment. In *Social Advantage and Disadvantage* (pp. 322-340). Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198737070.003.0016>
- Owusu, G. (2016). Introduction: Crime and Poverty Nexus. *Ghana Journal of Geography*, 8, 1-10.
- Pare, R. R., & Felson, R. (2014). Income Inequality, Poverty and Crime across Nations. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 65, 434-458. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12083>
- Rahman, S. H. (2008). *Theoretical and Applied Criminology*. Dhaka: Palal Prokashoni and Empowerment through Law of the Common People.
- Rezvi, M. R. (2018). *The Financial Express*. <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/youth-unemployment-a-challenge-for-economic-growth-1533741150>
- Sampson, R. J. (2006). Collective Efficacy Theory: Lessons Learned and Directions for Future. In *Taking Stock: The Status of Criminological Theory* (pp. 149-168). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publ. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315130620-6>
- Sampson, R. J., & Groves, B. W. (1989). Community Structure and Crime: Testing Social-Disorganization Theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 774-802. <https://doi.org/10.1086/229068>
- Shahabuddin, Q. (2010). The Right to Food: Bangladesh Perspectives. *The Bangladesh Development Studies*, 33, 91-138.
- Skardhamar, T., Savolainen, J., Aase, K. N., & Lyngstad, T. H. (2015). Does Marriage Reduce Crime? *Crime and Justice*, 44, 385-436. <https://doi.org/10.1086/681557>
- Stark, R. (1987). Deviant Places: A Theory of the Ecology of Crime. *Criminology*, 25, 893-899. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1987.tb00824.x>
- The Economist (2018). <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2018/06/07/the-stark-relationship-between-income-inequality-and-crime>
- The World Bank Web Site (2017). <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/10/24/bangladesh-continues-to-reduce-poverty-but-at-slower-pace>
- Webster, C., & Kingston, S. (2014). *Poverty and Crime*. Centre for Applied Social Research (CeASR).
- Whitworth, A. (2011). Inequality and Crime across England: A Multilevel Modelling Approach. *Social Policy and Society*, 11, 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746411000388>