



# Psychology and Sociology can reduce Crime

Prabhakar Deshpande

Date of Submission: 01-12-2022

Date of Acceptance: 10-12-2022

**Abstract:** One of the most important functions of a Government of a Nation is to control Crime. Governments usually rely on Judiciary and Police to control crime. But there is more to crime than meets the eye. Why, for instance crime rates in one nation far greater than other nations? What motivates an individual to crime, when it is clearly a high risk and low reward profession? Can we learn lessons from nations where crime rate is low and use that education to reduce crime in other nations. Can Psychology and Sociology reduce crime drastically?

## I. Introduction

Crime is unlawful act punishable by state. Crime can be defined as something that law prohibits. For instance in a nation where prohibition is in force, consuming alcohol, which is acceptable in most nations is a crime. However most nations agree on what constitutes crime. Some of common crimes in most nations would be murder, rape, theft, burglary, forgery, extortion, etcetc etc.

However crime rates in nations vary significantly. For instance United States has an incarceration rate that is almost 20 times that of India whereas Japan has a homicide rate that is one tenth of India and Venezuela has a homicide rate that is 10 times that of India. Here comes the role of Sociology.

And crime just does not make sense. When they say crime does not pay, they mean it literally and not just metaphorically. Because most criminals earn slightly above minimum wage and the image of rich criminal is an exception that masks the norm that most criminals are extremely poor. Then why do an immoral thing that is illegal and might invite incarceration? Here comes the role of Psychology.

## Psychology and Sociology

One must understand at a broad level what Psychology and Sociology are before we examine if these can indeed contribute to reducing crime.

Psychology is scientific study of mind and behaviour. Psychologists aim to understand the behaviour of individuals and groups. Psychologists

are involved in research on perception, cognition, attention, emotion, intelligence, motivation and personality.

Sociology is a social science that focuses on human social behaviour, patterns of social relationships, social interaction and aspects of culture associated with everyday life. Traditional focuses on sociology include social stratification, social class, social mobility, religion, secularization, law, sexuality, gender and deviance.

Psychologist also study interpersonal relationships and resilience within field of social psychology. Sociologists also study social psychology to understand micro scale social actions. Social Psychology involves studying entire society through study of individual thoughts and behaviour of groups.

It would seem, prima facie that crime in society can be studied and remedied by sociologist and psychologist acting in tandem with mutually complimentary skills that cumulatively have a greater effect than exists within each individual discipline.

## Crime Rates in Various Nations

If humans in all nations are same, at least similar, in how good they are and how evil they are, then one would expect crime rates in most nations of the world to be similar if not same. However crime rates in various nations of the world vary with a wide margin. We will compare three crime statistics – homicide(murder) rate, rape rate and incarceration rates(confined to jail).

### Incarceration Rates in various Countries

Nation	Incarceration Rate per 100,000
Bangladesh	48
Canada	104
China	121
India	35
Japan	38
Pakistan	38
Russia	325



United States	639
Uruguay	339
Thailand	449
Germany	69
France	93
Pakistan	38
Central African Republic	16

Source: Wikipedia

Incarceration means confined to jail. Clearly incarceration rates in various countries vary a great deal from as less as 16 in Central Africa to as much as 639 in United States or 40 times as much. Interestingly India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have similar incarceration rates.

#### Rape Rates

Nation	Rape Rate per 100,000 in a year in 2010
Botswana	92
India	0.45
United States	27
Russia	3.4
Sweden	63.5
Belgium	27.4
South Africa	95.9
Australia	28.6
Japan	1.0
Hong Kong	1.6
Canada	1.7
Norway	19.2
Mexico	13.3

Source: Wikipedia

Interestingly despite the brouhaha about rapes in India, the rape rate in India is low compared to other nations of world. While Canada and United States are neighbours with similar economies and similar culture the rape rates vary considerably. Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Belgium and Norway that boast of gender equality and higher social sector expenditures seem to have high rape rates.

#### Homicide (Murder) Rates

Nation	Murder rate per 100,000
Brazil	22.4
Botswana	15.2
Canada	2.0
China	0.5
England	1.2

France	1.2
Germany	0.8
India	3.0
Japan	0.3
Mexico	28.4
Nigeria	34.2
Singapore	0.2
United States	6.3
Venezuela	36.7

Source: Wikipedia

Interestingly United States with high incarceration rates and proliferation of guns does not have a very high homicide rates. China, Japan seem to have low homicide rates. Some African countries and Latin American countries such as Nigeria, Venezuela, Mexico and Brazil have high homicide rates. India, the nation of Mahatma Gandhi, does not have very low homicide rate.

#### No Answers, Only Questions

The author does not have any answers to why crime rates in some nations are so high and in some nations so low. All that the researcher wants to point out is that there must be psychological reason and sociological cause why crime rates in some nations are low and high in other nations.

The author wants to raise questions to psychologists and sociologists, if they can identify reasons and causes for vast variation in crime rates between nations and if that could be used to reduce crime rates in all nations of the world.

Crime represents an aberration in an individual and a corruption of society. Is it culture, religion, government, politics, economy or what that causes crimes to vary drastically? Can these variations in root causes that cause variations in crime be changed so as to reduce crime rates?

Only Sociologists and Psychologists of the world need to work on this paradoxically neglected area of academic intervention. Crime has been relegated to activities of law enforcing authorities presuming that society has a little responsibility to correct the mind of those with criminal propensities.

## II. Conclusion

Sociologists and Psychologists must research and find out causes of crime. This is clearly an interdisciplinary study of social psychology. If academicians can find out reasons and suggest remedies for these reasons a great deal of crime can be reduced.



### **References**

- [1]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_and\\_some\\_dependent\\_territories\\_and\\_subnational\\_areas\\_by\\_incarceration\\_rate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_and_some_dependent_territories_and_subnational_areas_by_incarceration_rate)
- [2]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rape\\_statistics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rape_statistics)
- [3]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_intentional\\_homicide\\_rate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_intentional_homicide_rate)