

Poverty, Economic Underdevelopment and Crime - An interlinked Analysis

Panchali Rajkhowa

Alliance University, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1307000385>

Received: 03 August 2026; Accepted: 08 August 2026; Published: 20 August 2026

ABSTRACT

One of the most principal issues facing the world today is poverty, which directly hinders economic growth and creates environments that lead to an increase in crime. This essay examines the relationship between poverty and underdevelopment, highlighting the ways in which economic stagnation impedes sustainable growth and maintains social inequality. Limited access to jobs, healthcare, and education hinders the development of human capital in countries where poverty is pervasive, which lowers productivity and creativity. Such fundamental flaws impede the development of resilient and inclusive economic systems.

The study also looks at how poverty affects crime, pointing out that those who are struggling financially frequently turn to illegal activity as a way to survive or advance in society. Lack of social protection, high unemployment, and income inequality all contribute to conditions where crime is both a symptom and an effect of systemic underdevelopment. Economic backwardness is reinforced by the cyclical relationship between poverty and crime, which destabilises communities, deters investment, and erodes public confidence in government. Goal 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which talks about ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, this study emphasises the urgent need for integrated policy interventions. In addition to bolstering economic underpinnings, addressing poverty promotes social cohesiveness, lowers crime, and opens the door to sustainable growth.

Keywords- Poverty, Underdevelopment, Crime, Economic stagnation, Social inequality

INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a chronic problem almost common to each and every country of the world. It is a serious problem. Poverty indicates a situation where people are unable to seek assistance even to the minimum needs i.e. food, clothing, and shelter. It is a situation where individuals fail to earn sufficient income for themselves to buy their minimum needs. It is also regarded as social evil. Poverty is an economic problem and is regarded as an important cause for underdevelopment of an economy. Poverty makes a country poor, leading to its underdevelopment. An under-developed country is one whose per-capita income is very low and is extremely poor in comparison to the developed countries. But, if we study the concept of poverty in a broad manner, its perspective is very wide. It is that kind of social evil which leads to disorder in society leading to crime. This can be understood by studying poverty in terms of behaviour and values. All crimes and criminal behaviour are based on psychological concept of conditioning. If we study poverty within the context of social problems, then we can know the impact of poverty on the field of criminology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bharadwaj examines the intricate connection between criminal activity and financial distress, concentrating on property-related offences in the Indian setting.¹ He relied on several foundational theories to explain how poverty triggers criminal activity such as – (a) *Rational Economic Agency*: It views potential offenders as

¹ Bharadwaj, A., 2014. Is poverty the mother of crime? Empirical evidence of the impact of socioeconomic factors on crime in India. *Atlantic Review of Economics*, 1.

rational agents who balance the advantages of breaking the law against the dangers and rewards of doing good work.² When the 'expected gains' from stealing or robbery become economically sensible due to the poor returns from legal labour, poverty serves as a catalyst for crime.³ (b) *Consumption Smoothing Strategy*: People who are "vulnerable poor"-those who are at risk of sliding below the poverty line but are not necessarily in chronic poverty-use crime as a risk-reduction strategy.⁴ Property crime acts as a "poor person's method of borrowing against future human capital" in this situation, helping to lessen economic shocks and stop a further drop in living standards.⁵ (c) *Relative Deprivation Theory*: According to this theory, when people believe that the socioeconomic system is fundamentally skewed against them, poverty serves as a catalyst.⁶ Crime serves as a "signal to the State" about their marginalised status, especially when they witness widespread inequity in spite of their own attempts to earn a living.⁷ (d) *Strain and Opportunity Theories*: According to these sociological viewpoints, criminal tendencies result from a society's inability to provide sufficient socioeconomic safety nets, which causes people to "learn" or be compelled to engage in illegal activity as a reaction to their surroundings.⁸

The idea that widespread poverty could reduce crime by reducing the "wealth" available for theft has been challenged by Bharadwaj.⁹ Rather, the data from India shows that poverty is a continuous catalyst for increased crime rates.¹⁰ Poverty-driven criminal activity further reduces employment prospects and keeps the impoverished from amassing assets, ensnaring them in a state of perpetual suffering.¹¹ High crime rates can "drive out" both local and foreign investment and raise corporate expenses.¹² Developing countries like India are especially harmed by this.¹³ The lack of safety nets makes it impossible for the impoverished to lessen the productivity loss brought on by crime, which further harms their prospects for future employment.¹⁴

Concept of Poverty- The term "poverty" has been used in its strictest sense in India.¹⁵ Put differently, it has to do with how money is distributed or how much is spent on consumption.¹⁶ In a relative sense, it is a concept. In a relative sense, wealthy nations with little to no absolute poverty are thought to benefit from it.¹⁷

Absolute Poverty- However, in less developed nations where absolute poverty is widespread, the idea of absolute poverty is pertinent.¹⁸ Absolute standards for life are first established to quantify it. These have to do with a certain minimal level of living.¹⁹ These can be quantified or expressed in terms of income, consumption, and expenditure.²⁰ In light of this, anyone who does not meet these criteria is considered poor.²¹ Poverty is measured by the number (and percentage) of such people in the nation's population.²²

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Allen, R.C., 1996. Socioeconomic conditions and property crime: A comprehensive review and test of the professional literature. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 55(3), pp.293-308 & Bharadwaj, A., 2014. Is poverty the mother of crime? Empirical evidence of the impact of socioeconomic factors on crime in India. *Atlantic Review of Economics*, 1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Bharadwaj, A., 2014. Is poverty the mother of crime? Empirical evidence of the impact of socioeconomic factors on crime in India, *supra* note 1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ A.N. Agrawal, 1985. *Indian Economy*, New Delhi, Vani Educational Books.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

In terms of measuring poverty, consumption-expenditure is thought to be more pertinent and suitable than income.²³ The reason is that current income is not always sufficient to cover the actual consumption-expenditure that determines a consumer unit's (i.e., household's) standard of living.²⁴ In India consumption-expenditure has been made the basis for the measurement of the minimum standard.²⁵ This kind of expense can also be covered by loans, assets, and savings. In India, the minimum standard is measured using consumption and spending. Fixing a poverty level is the typical approach. An overall per capita consumption-expenditure is used to express this level. This consumption expenditure, which is based on the information of food items, is what is required to guarantee a specific minimum calorie intake.²⁶ The poverty line is therefore reached by everyone who is unable to make the consumption expenditures necessary for the minimal calorie intake.²⁷ The number and percentage of people whose total per capita consumption expenditure is below the poverty line are estimated to determine the level of poverty.²⁸

Large Rural Poverty- It is clear that rural areas are home to the vast bulk of the impoverished.²⁹ They are primarily classified as backward classes, backward tribes, small and marginal farmers, landless workers, and rural artisans, including fishermen.³⁰ These individuals either have no assets at all, or if they do, their low productivity keeps their income modest.³¹ Additionally, they lack the abilities needed to earn more money. These individuals do not work full-time jobs on a regular basis; their employment is either seasonal and highly erratic or nonexistent for a portion of the year. Even those who do find employment earn pitiful wages.³² The impoverished in metropolitan areas are primarily employed in the unorganised economy on a sporadic basis for extremely low pay.³³

Poverty: Leading To Under Develop Economy- As we know that the problem of poverty leads to under development of an economy therefore, all under developed or developing countries are suffering from the evil of poverty.³⁴ Some important points³⁵ which explain how poverty leads to under develop economy are as follows:

A country's population grows significantly as a result of poverty. Mass poverty is caused by outdated, conventional production techniques and societal structures rather than any kind of transient maladjustment. As a population grows, so does the issue of economic disparity and rising prices in an economy. Only 15.6% of the global economy's total revenue is enjoyed by the 76.8% of the world's population who live in developing nations.³⁶ Most of this population is living below the poverty line and makes this country poor. Thus, this shows how poverty leads to under develop economy.

Agriculture is the most important occupation of the poor people. But, although they are completely dependent on agriculture yet, this sector remains totally under develop. About 60 to 70 per cent of the total people below poverty line are depending on agriculture, and more than 40 per cent of their total income is coming from the agricultural production.³⁷ In spite of its great importance agricultural productivity remained very poor in the poor countries. Agriculturists, in these countries still follow traditional methods and thus, the applications of modernized techniques are very limited in these countries. Thus, this proves that poor countries are under developed.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ S.N. Mishra, *Indian Penal Code*, Allahabad, Central Law Publications, 2006, p. 3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

The level of income in poor countries is very low. Moreover, the per-capita income in these countries is extremely low in comparison to that of the developed countries and as such the problem of poverty leads to underdevelopment of these countries.³⁸

Poor countries have the problem of excessive population pressure. It is mainly due to prevalence of high birth rate in these countries and due to falling death rate. Due to heavy population pressure, the rate of capital formation is very low. Both the average amount of holdings and the standard of living have decreased as a result. These nations are underdeveloped as a result of key issues including a lack of agricultural land, unemployment, and other issues brought on by their population growth of two to three percent annually.³⁹

Poor countries are also suffering from the problem of lack of industrialization. Due to lack of capital formation, the supply of machinery and tools has stopped, and thus the pace of industrialization in these countries is very slow. Thus, this leads to underdevelopment of such economy.⁴⁰

. Long-term poverty is a defining feature of the poor nations. The degree of poverty in these nations began to rise as the number of vocations could not grow in a way that was satisfactory due to population growth, rising income inequality, and rising prices. For instance, based on the NSS consumer expenditure data from 1960–1961, Dandekar and Rath calculated in their paper "Poverty in India" that approximately 48% of Assamese people lived below the poverty line based on their basic nutritional needs.⁴¹ Furthermore, during 1970 and 1971, Assam's poverty rate increased.⁴² Assam's consumer pricing level is thought to be around 20% higher than the average for all of India. According to the Planning Commission's approach document, the poverty level of Rs. 40.00 may be equivalent to Rs. 48.00 at Assamese prices.⁴³ Using Rs. 48.00 as the poverty line, it was calculated that the number of people living below it in Assam would be 5.53 lakhs (40.14%) in urban areas and 107.12 lakhs (77.38%) in rural regions, for a total of 112.65 lakhs (73.67%) for the entire state.⁴⁴ Again the planning commissions Expert Group (1993), shows that the number of persons lying below the poverty line was 89.6 lakhs (39.0 per cent).⁴⁵ In 1999-2000, the percentage of population living below the poverty line in Assam was 36.09 per cent.⁴⁶ Thus, the extent of poverty in Assam is gradually increasing day by day creating sufferings for the millions of people living below the poverty line.⁴⁷ Therefore, the problem of poverty leads to under development of this economy.

Thus, these were some of the important points which explain how poverty leads to under development of an economy.

Poverty and Crime- Now, let us discuss the concept of poverty in a broad manner. Poverty is a social evil which leads to crime in society. For understanding this, we must at first know the meaning of crime.

Meaning of Crime- The public's perception of crime and criminals has always been crucial. As we already know, the law represents the prevailing views of the populace. Criminal law more than any other area of the law reflects popular opinion.⁴⁸ It is extremely challenging to define crime in a way that is applicable to every nation at all periods. "Crime is not absolute like sin, that can be and have an existence beyond the limits of what men may say and do."⁴⁹ In essence, it is a definition of behavior that is subject to ongoing change.⁵⁰

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² P.K. Dhar, 2007. *Higher Secondary Economics*, Assam, Ashomi Prakashani, at p. 207.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ "Fifth Five Year Plan, Draft", Volume III, *Planning and Development Department, Assam*, p. 1, cited in *Higher Secondary Economics*, by P.K. Dhar, Assam, Ashomi Prakashani, 2007, at p. 207.

⁴⁵ "Planning Commission's Expert Group Report, 1993", cited in *Higher Secondary Economics*, by P.K. Dhar, *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ S.N. Mishra, *Indian Penal Code*, Allahabad, Central Law Publications, 2006, p. 3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

"An act punishable by law as forbidden by statute or injurious to the public welfare" is the definition of crime.⁵¹ "Offences are whatever the legislature has prohibited for good or bad reasons," according to Bentham.⁵² Every action that we believe should be forbidden due to some evil that it does or tends to cause is referred to as an offence if the question pertains to theoretical inquiry for the finding of the best feasible laws according to the principles of utility.⁵³

Poverty: Its Influence on Crime- Sociologists who study poverty in the context of social problems, such as crime, mental illness, and family life, operate under the premise that others, such as economists or policy makers, have already completed the task of defining poverty level or the size of the impoverished population.⁵⁴ However, even when they conceptualized and explained poverty in terms of patterns of behavior and values, they adopted two very different perspectives: the situational perspective holds that the poor's behavior patterns are a reflection of the dominant social structure, which limits the opinions of the poor, while the cultural perspective views the poor as exhibiting patterns of behavior and values that are distinctively different from those of the dominant society and culture.⁵⁵ Therefore, poverty is a major topic in criminology.

One of the important reasons for criminalization in this world is poverty. Due to poverty, some people become *dadas* (law-breakers) and draw unemployed and illiterate boys and youth into activities like crime, drug-trafficking and prostitution. Criminalization has its most serious impact on the weak in society.⁵⁶ Because of their bad character they cannot get work and die as poor.⁵⁷ Thus, from this it is evident that poverty has its own prominent impact in the field of crime.

Economic conditions influence criminality to a considerable extent. People who lack self-control are vulnerable to illegal activity in these situations.⁵⁸ The prospects for sex-crime have increased due to women's jobs and other activities.⁵⁹ Once more, crimes like black marketing, hoarding, and excessive profiting are basically the result of economic shifts. These days, the most important factor in determining a person's social standing is their financial situation. Money is an easy way to eradicate crimes in higher social circles.⁶⁰ Another factor contributing to the rise in crime is youth unemployment.⁶¹ These young people can undoubtedly contribute to the development of the country's labour force if their energies are appropriately directed.⁶²

Poverty: A Cause of Crime- It is widely acknowledged that there is a substantial correlation between unemployment and crime as well as between economic or wealth disparity and criminality. However, poverty merely plays a significant role in the aetiology of crime; it is not the main cause. Criminality among the poorest is not a result of their poverty, but rather of social disarray. Unquestionably, there is a strong correlation between unemployment and criminal activity, which in particular explains the extraordinary spike in property crimes and the ensuing surge in adolescent and young arrests. Property crimes are more common among those who are unemployed or have less stable jobs, such as contract and casual workers.⁶³ Thus, this makes clear that poverty either, directly or indirectly, amounts to crime causation.

Prof. *Hermann Mannheim* noted in his analysis of the relationship between economic conditions and criminality that, aside from traffic offences, economic crimes would need three-fourths of the time and effort

⁵⁰ Terrence Morris, 'The Social Toleration of Crime', included in "Changing Concepts of Crime and Its Treatment", cited in *Indian Penal Code*, by S.N. Mishra, Allahabad, Central Law Publications, 2006, pp. 2-3.

⁵¹ 'The Oxford English Dictionary', cited in S.N. Mishra, *Indian Penal Code*, *supra* note 34.

⁵² S.N. Mishra, *Indian Penal Code*, *supra* note 34.

⁵³ S.N. Mishra, *Indian Penal Code*, *ibid.*

⁵⁴ S.N. Mishra, *Indian Penal Code*, *ibid.*

⁵⁵ S.N. Mishra, *Indian Penal Code*, *ibid.*

⁵⁶ S.N. Mishra, *Indian Penal Code*, *ibid.*

⁵⁷ S.R. Myneni, *Law and Poverty*, Faridabad, Allahabad Law Agency, 2006, p. 101.

⁵⁸ S.R. Myneni, *ibid.*

⁵⁹ S.R. Myneni, *ibid.*

⁶⁰ S.R. Myneni, *ibid.*

⁶¹ S.R. Myneni, *ibid.*

⁶² N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, Allahabad, Central Law Publications, 2008, pp. 76-77.

⁶³ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid.*

of criminal law administrators worldwide.⁶⁴ He emphasized the significance of economic issues in the cause of crime, pointing out that poverty has a direct and indirect impact on criminal activity. However, because other reasons like frustration, emotional insecurity, and unfulfilled desires sometimes play a major role in giving rise to the criminal tendency, poverty alone may not be a direct cause of crime.⁶⁵

Marxist theory emphasizes that all human behavior is influenced by economic considerations; *Fredrick Engels* supported this thesis by attributing the rise in crime in England in the middle of the eighteenth century to the appalling economic circumstances of workers as a result of class exploitation.⁶⁶ *W.A. Bonger* used a similar strategy to explain the causes of crime, claiming that the capitalism society produced selfish impulses in criminals.⁶⁷ Each individual in such a society seeks to take the most from others in exchange for the least amount from themselves. As a result, Bonger found numerous flaws in capitalistic systems that led to criminal activity.⁶⁸ Actually, this idea serves as the foundation for the theory of Radical Criminology, which goes on to explain that crime is caused by the rich taking advantage of the poor.⁶⁹

Poverty acts as a major trigger for property-related crimes, especially as a "consumption smoothing strategy" for individuals who are at risk of sliding below the poverty line, according to an empirical research of socioeconomic determinants and crime in India.⁷⁰ It implies that those who are at risk of sliding below the poverty line but are not necessarily chronically impoverished might turn to criminal activity to keep their standard of living from further deteriorating.⁷¹ This is referred to as a "consumption smoothing strategy" in which economic shocks are lessened by criminal activities like robbery or theft.⁷² Moreover, crimes like food theft might be seen as a distressed or desperate reaction to severe hunger and poverty.⁷³

According to the relative-deprivation theory, which holds that people commit crimes when they believe the system is fundamentally skewed against their socioeconomic status, poverty serves as a trigger.⁷⁴ In this situation, people who feel deprived of necessities while surrounded by widespread social injustice may resort to criminal activity even if they have a valid source of income.⁷⁵ Robberies are more significantly impacted by poverty than any other type of property crime; a 10% rise in poverty is associated with an 11.3% increase in robberies.⁷⁶

Ashish Bharadwaj⁷⁷ identified a "potential vicious cycle" where crime and poverty reinforce one another- (a) *Asset Erosion*: A high level of criminal activity hinders the acquisition of assets and reduces employment prospects, which increases poverty;⁷⁸ (b) *Loss of Productivity*: Because the impoverished frequently lack resources or safety nets, they are unable to lessen the productivity loss brought on by crime, which further harms their possibilities for a living;⁷⁹ (c) *Investment Deterrence*: High crime rates can drive out both foreign and domestic investment, further stifling economic growth and poverty alleviation efforts.⁸⁰

⁶⁴ Hermann Mannheim, "Criminal Justice and Social Reconstruction" p.82, cited in N.V. Paranjape, *ibid*.

⁶⁵ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *supra* note 62.

⁶⁶ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁶⁷ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁶⁸ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁶⁹ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁷⁰ Bharadwaj, A., 2014. Is poverty the mother of crime? Empirical evidence of the impact of socioeconomic factors on crime in India. *Atlantic Review of Economics*, 1.

⁷¹ Bharadwaj, A., 2014, *ibid*.

⁷² Bharadwaj, A., 2014, *ibid*.

⁷³ Bharadwaj, A., 2014, *ibid*.

⁷⁴ Bharadwaj, A., 2014, *ibid*.

⁷⁵ Bharadwaj, A., 2014, *ibid*.

⁷⁶ Bharadwaj, A., 2014, *ibid*.

⁷⁷ Bharadwaj, A., 2014, *ibid*.

⁷⁸ Bharadwaj, A., 2014, *ibid*.

⁷⁹ Bharadwaj, A., 2014, *ibid*.

⁸⁰ Bharadwaj, A., 2014, *ibid*.

This research study lays down a *mind-map* on the basis of the ‘potential vicious cycle’ identified by Ashish Bharadwaj⁸¹ as follows-



Mind-map developed by the author based on the Bharadwaj's⁸² ‘vicious cycle’ on poverty and crime.

Thus, from this discussion it can be understood that poverty is a cause of crime. With the widening of poverty, society gets disorganized with social and economic problems. And crime occurs when there is disorganization in society. Thus, it reflects that poverty leads to crime which interrupts harmony in society.

For understanding the influence of poverty in the field of crime in a much better way, the study discusses the relationship between economic structures and crimes.

Relationship Between Economic Structures and Crimes- Criminologists in Europe undertook extensive research on the relationship between economic conditions and criminal activity during the eighteenth century.⁸³ The two primary opposing theories that form the basis of the relationship between economic conditions and crime are as follows⁸⁴:

⁸¹ Bharadwaj, A., 2014, *ibid*.

⁸² Bharadwaj, A., 2014, *ibid*.

⁸³ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, Allahabad, Central Law Publications, 2008, pp. 76-77.

⁸⁴ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

Crime and the economy are inversely correlated; that is, during prosperous economic times, crime rates are relatively low, but during economic downturns, crime rates tend to rise. All Marxist beliefs and leftist policies are consistent with this premise.⁸⁵ The renowned Dutch social scientist *William Aldrain Bonger* was a prominent proponent of this claim.⁸⁶

Economic structure and crime have a direct or positive link; that is, since criminality is a byproduct of regular economic activity, it rises or falls in tandem with changes in the economy.⁸⁷ As a result, this proposition suggests that the crime rate rises during prosperous times and falls during recessions.⁸⁸ In addition to *Enrico Ferri's* initial research and his well-known book "*Law of Criminal Saturation*," *Fillips Polett* articulated this viewpoint the most extensively.⁸⁹ However, Thorsten Sellin came to the conclusion that unemployment, which is inevitably a byproduct of depression, did not negatively impact the crime rate, possibly as a result of government relief efforts.⁹⁰

According to author *R.H. Walsh*, a downturn and poor economic circumstances lead to an increase in crime.⁹¹ *Frederick Engels* also took a similar stance, attributing the rise in crime to people's appalling circumstances brought on by class exploitation.⁹² Summary convictions are more often during prosperous times than during economic downturns, according to *John Clay*.⁹³

However, *Miss Mary Carpenter*, a renowned social worker for women and children and a long-time superintendent of Bristol's Red Lodge Reformatory for Women, disagreed with the theory that poverty and unfavourable economic circumstances are to blame for the rise in crime.⁹⁴ She refused to overstate the impact of poverty on crime, but she did not completely rule it out. *Charles Booth*, who claimed that poverty and worsening economic conditions account for half of all crimes, has further reinforced this viewpoint.⁹⁵ *Cyril Burt* agreed with *Charles Booth's* conclusions and blamed bad economic circumstances for criminal activity.⁹⁶

The majority of Italian criminologists likewise hold the opinion that there is a clear connection between criminal activity and a weak economy. But in his research on "*Crime and Economic Change*" in Philadelphia, *Albert C. Wanger* discovered no connection between the prevalence of crime and economic slump.⁹⁷ However, *David Bogen* presented a different perspective in his study "*Juvenile Delinquency and Economic Trend*," noting that delinquency rose during prosperous times and fell during depressed ones.⁹⁸

In their theory of social disorganization, *Shah and Mckay* have reaffirmed that poverty never causes crime; rather, it simply makes crime easier by depriving people of the resources they need to deal with it.⁹⁹ They did, however, concur that "poverty areas" frequently had significant rates of racial heterogeneity and mobility, which encouraged criminal activity. Therefore, poverty is by no means the only cause of crime; rather, it is merely one of the elements that contribute to criminality.¹⁰⁰

It is important to remember that poverty is a subjective concept when considering it as a possible contributing factor to criminal activity.¹⁰¹ One guy may perceive poverty as a degree of enough comfort, if not abundance, in the eyes of another. Unemployment is also a subjective issue that depends on the worker's "willingness to

⁸⁵ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁸⁶ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁸⁷ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁸⁸ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁸⁹ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁹⁰ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁹¹ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁹² N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁹³ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁹⁴ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁹⁵ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁹⁶ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁹⁷ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁹⁸ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

⁹⁹ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁰ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹⁰¹ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

work" and how meticulous he is about the type of work he will perform.¹⁰² Even though unemployment and poverty are real aspects of human experience, they cannot be accurately or consistently quantified.¹⁰³ *Gabriel Tarde* claims that man's desire for an opulent lifestyle is what leads to criminal activity.¹⁰⁴ A person accustomed to an opulent lifestyle is prone to turn to crime to satiate his need for an easy existence if he becomes impoverished for any cause. *Goring* went on to say that 'money' is the only thing that can satisfy men's egoistic tendencies.¹⁰⁵ People are therefore more likely to turn to illegal actions, which we refer to as 'crime', if they are unable to achieve their goals through legal ways.¹⁰⁶

Case Laws Reflecting the Relevancy of Poverty in the Field of Crime- Some court rulings where the accused were forced to carry out horrific murders due to acute poverty adequately illustrate the connection between poverty and criminality.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the accused in *In re Maragatham*,¹⁰⁸ were a husband and wife who had been famished for almost ten days without any food or employment to support themselves. As a result, they made the decision to end their own life and the lives of their 1.5-month-old daughter. They leaped into a well after tying a rope around themselves.¹⁰⁹ Despite the fact that they were saved, the baby sadly drowned. In accordance with Section 307 read with Sections 34 and 309 of the erstwhile Indian Penal Code (IPC), they were found guilty of attempting to kill their infant child and committed suicide.¹¹⁰

In another instance of *Shreerangyee v. State of Madras*,¹¹¹ the accused was a diligent but unhappy woman whose husband abandoned her. Due to her lack of sufficient income, she was unable to provide for her five children. Her youngest child's serious illness and the doctor's demand for payment for the treatment made her financial situation even worse.¹¹² *Shreerangyee* made an unsuccessful attempt to raise the amount. She killed all five of her children by drowning them after running out of legal ways to make a living, and then she leaped into the well out of frustration.¹¹³ However, she was saved and found guilty of killing her children under Section 302 erstwhile IPC. In this instance, the court disregarded poverty as a justification for killing innocent children.¹¹⁴

The aforementioned incidents make it abundantly evident that the rigidity of the judicial system utterly ignored the social perspective of justice.¹¹⁵ Even though the courts have shown a greater concern for the less fortunate segments of society in some of the cases¹¹⁶ that have followed, the current legal system urgently needs to be restructured in order to make it more compassionate and to ensure that the weak and impoverished are not compelled to commit crimes out of pure rage and desperation.¹¹⁷

The case of *Bavadas Bowri v. State of Assam*,¹¹⁸ in which the appellant, an impoverished and disabled man from a backward class, was found guilty of murder under Section 302 of the erstwhile I.P.C. and given a life sentence, once again demonstrated the judiciary's greater concern for the poorer segments of society who suffer more within our legal system than others.¹¹⁹ He utilized a pen knife to defend himself against a powerful

¹⁰² N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹⁰³ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁴ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁵ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁶ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, Allahabad, Central Law Publications, 2008, p. 95.

¹⁰⁷ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁸ AIR 1961 Mad 498, cited in N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁹ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *supra* note 62.

¹¹⁰ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹¹¹ (1973)1 MLJ 205, cited in N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *supra* note 62.

¹¹² N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *supra* note 62.

¹¹³ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹¹⁴ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹¹⁵ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹¹⁶ *Hussainara v. State of Bihar*, AIR 1979 SC 1369; *Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India*, AIR 1984 SC 802; cited in *Criminology and Penology*, by N.V. Paranjape, *supra* note 62.

¹¹⁷ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *supra* note 62.

¹¹⁸ (1982) Cr. L.J. 213(Gau.), cited in N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹¹⁹ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *supra* note 62.

opponent who was attacking him with a bamboo stick as part of his right to private defense.¹²⁰ Because of this, the appellant had to battle for his life, and the assailant died as a result of the faith placed in him.¹²¹

The Gauhati High Court acknowledged the appellant's right to a private defense and noted that the entire case had been handled slowly.¹²² One prevalent aspect of the legal system is the poor quality of justice administered to the underprivileged.¹²³ Justice Lahiri, *inter alia*, observed, "a public prosecutor should have the strength not to disown the poor....he must exercise power of withdrawal under Section 321 of Cr.P.C if it finds that the charges are not genuine. The primary duty and conduct of judiciary are to do justice within the four corners of law...."¹²⁴

William A. Bonger established a co-relationship between economic conditions and crime and drew a conclusion.¹²⁵ He compiled statistical data and showed that over 79% of offenders are members of the non-profitable class.¹²⁶ He thus attempted to prove that poverty and delinquency are related. Dr. Bonger¹²⁷ conducted a thorough analysis of economic literature throughout all of Europe for his doctoral thesis, *Criminality and Economic Conditions*. He concluded that property-related crimes, such as theft, stealing, robbery, dacoity, housebreaking, etc., exhibit an unusual rise during depressive times when prices are high.¹²⁸

CONCLUSION

Thus, from all these discussions it can be understood that poverty leads to development of crime. Hunger, bad luck, illness, and rage are all consequences of poverty that ruin a person's mentality and cause him to act irresponsibly. He is compelled by the situation to support illicit activity. Therefore, some philosophers contend that economic factors have a direct impact on criminality and that during economic downturns, the rate of crime increases as poverty rises. Poverty leads to crimes like child labour, increase in sex crimes like prostitution, etc. The employment of children and women furnishes soothing ground for criminality. We are aware that using children as labourers might lead to criminal activity since a child who earns money on his own does not know how to spend it wisely. He consequently wastes his money on unhealthy pursuits like drinking, smoking, gambling, staking, womanizing, and so forth, which eventually leads him into the criminal world. According to the Indian government, child labour is a necessary evil that coexists with poverty and cannot be eliminated until poverty is completely erased from society. However, children are also negatively impacted by women's jobs. The state of working women is appalling in Indian society because they are not adequately protected from social threats when they are at work. In his work "Criminology and Penology," Professor Gillin noted that while unemployment appears to be dangerous for adult males, employment of women and children is linked to a rise in criminal activity. Moreover, as poverty is a social evil therefore it also leads to underdevelopment of an economy.

REFERENCES

1. Agrawal, AN., 1985. *Indian Economy*, New Delhi, Vani Educational Books.
2. Allen, R.C., 1996. Socioeconomic conditions and property crime: A comprehensive review and test of the professional literature. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 55(3), pp.293-308.
3. Bharadwaj, A., 2014. Is poverty the mother of crime? Empirical evidence of the impact of socioeconomic factors on crime in India. *Atlantic Review of Economics*, 1.
4. Dhar, P.K., 2007. *Higher Secondary Economics*, Assam, Ashomi Prakashani.

¹²⁰ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹²¹ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹²² N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹²³ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹²⁴ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹²⁵ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹²⁶ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹²⁷ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *ibid*.

¹²⁸ N.V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, *supra* note 62.

5. Mishra, S.N., 2006. Indian Penal Code, Allahabad, Central Law Publications.
6. Myneni, S.R., 2006. Law and Poverty, Faridabad, Allahabad Law Agency.
7. Paranjape, N.V., 2008 Criminology and Penology, Allahabad, Central Law Publications.