

The Correlation between Poverty and Crime in Pakistan

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Abstract

This scholarly article investigates the relationship between poverty and crime in Pakistan, a country facing significant poverty challenges with a substantial portion of its population living below the poverty line. The interconnection between poverty and crime is influenced by multiple factors, including feudalism, inflation, political corruption, population growth, an inadequate education system, and unsustainable utilization of natural resources, democratic deficits, and global economic variables. The rising crime rates not only jeopardize societal security but also generate an environment of fear and insecurity. To effectively address poverty-related crimes, it is crucial to establish a robust economic and social framework while implementing transparent policies for equitable resource allocation.

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Introduction

This article delves into the correlation between poverty and crime in Pakistan, acknowledging poverty as a pervasive issue that significantly impacts the nation. The escalation of poverty rates in the past decades has given rise to a host of societal challenges and criminal activities. Understanding the intricate connection between poverty and crime is crucial for formulating effective strategies to tackle these issues. By analyzing various factors that contribute to both poverty and crime, policymakers can develop policies aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of poverty on society. The relationship between poverty and crime in Pakistan has garnered substantial attention from researchers, policymakers, and the public at large. Several studies, including those conducted by Khan (2019), Bhutta (2016), and Arif and Raza (2011), provide evidence suggesting that poverty can lead to higher crime rates in Pakistan. For instance, with more than half of the population living below the national poverty line and significant unemployment, Pakistan has witnessed a concerning surge in crime rates. Additionally, research by experts in the field has shed light on the causal mechanism between crime rates and poverty incidence (Zaman, 2018). These studies indicate that higher crime rates can also exacerbate poverty in Pakistan. Research exploring the impact of factors such as unemployment, inflation, urbanization, and educational

background on crime rates in Pakistan supports this perspective. Moreover, the detrimental effects of a high crime rate on a country's economic growth have been observed (Fajnzylber et al., 2002). Mehlum et al. (2005) conducted research demonstrating that poverty leads to crime, subsequently impeding economic growth in Pakistan. The relationship between poverty and crime in Pakistan is further complicated by additional factors, including lawlessness, fundamentalism, backwardness, and prevailing double standards.

Poverty and Crime in Pakistan

Firstly, in Pakistan, poverty affects a significant portion of the population, with over 70 million people, approximately 39%, living below the poverty line. This enduring poverty presents considerable challenges to societal well-being and development. Secondly, multiple factors contribute to the prevailing poverty in Pakistan. These factors include feudalism, uncontrollable inflation, political corruption, population growth, a failing education system, inefficient resource utilization, a lack of democracy, and global economic influences. Thirdly, poverty has a direct impact on the rise of various crimes, such as robberies, suicide bombings, and other illicit activities. It fosters a sense of hopelessness, driving individuals to engage in criminal behavior as a means of acquiring resources and improving their living conditions.

Factors Linking Poverty and Crime

(i) Economic factors: Poverty generates a strong desire to obtain goods that are financially out of reach, leading individuals to engage in criminal activities. The availability of illicit means to acquire such goods, combined with a perception of low chances of getting caught, further motivates involvement in criminal behavior. (ii) Unemployment and inflation: High levels of unemployment, escalating costs of essential commodities, and widening wealth gaps create a fertile ground for criminal activities. In response to their desperate circumstances, individuals may resort to crime as a means of fulfilling their basic needs and coping with financial hardships. (iii) Population growth: Rapid population growth negatively impacts per capita income and exacerbates poverty levels. Furthermore, ineffective law enforcement and a lack of social order contribute to a deteriorating societal environment, which not only hampers investment but also intensifies poverty in Pakistan.

Implications and Recommendations

(a) Governance's Role: Weak governance and ineffective law enforcement hinder efforts to alleviate poverty and perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Enhancing governance and strengthening law and order mechanisms are vital for reducing poverty and lowering crime rates. (b) Equitable Resource Distribution: Transparent and fair distribution of resources plays a pivotal role in poverty reduction and subsequently reduces crime rates. Ensuring that individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds have access to sufficient resources to meet their basic needs fosters social stability and diminishes the inclination toward criminal behavior. (c) Economic Development: Establishing a strong economic system and implementing social reforms are crucial for combating poverty. Promoting inclusive economic growth and

addressing income disparities create an environment that discourages criminal activities and fosters socio-economic well-being. (d) Education and Skill Development: Investing in education and skill development programs provides individuals with opportunities to improve their socio-economic status. By equipping individuals with knowledge and skills, such initiatives decrease the likelihood of engaging in crime and open avenues for socio-economic progress.

Conclusion

The interplay between poverty and crime presents complex challenges in Pakistan, necessitating comprehensive approaches that address both poverty reduction and crime prevention. To effectively tackle these issues, it is crucial to address the root causes of poverty, including governance shortcomings, income disparities, and inequitable distribution of resources. By placing emphasis on economic development, education, and promoting equal opportunities, policymakers can create a society that is less vulnerable to criminal activities and more resilient in the face of poverty's negative impacts.

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