

The relationship between literacy rate and crime rate: An analysis with reference to Kerala

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ABSTRACT: *The crime rate in India has been on rise. It becomes important to study the factors that impact the crime rate. It is expected that more the literacy rate of a state, the less the crime would be. Though crime has more to do with psychological factors, a negative relationship can be expected in literacy rate and crime rate. The present paper attempted to evaluate this correlation in case of Kerala. The analysis shows that crime statistics is one important reason to rethink the famed Kerala model of development. The general understanding that literacy rate and crime rate are negatively correlated has not proved correct in case of Kerala. In this context, the government and administrators should take steps to control the special type of crimes in Kerala as against that of other states. Police authorities and others should actively interfere in each case and identify the problems of each case rather than a peripheral case analysis. The service of psychologists in each police station is essential. The availability of intoxicants in the state has to be reduced. The state has higher potential to improve the law maintenance if the educated generations are properly guided.*

Key Words : *Literacy rate, crime rate, cyber crime, violence, Kerala*

1. Introduction

Kerala the social fabric of India has achieved the highest stage of development with high rate of literacy, lower drop outs, high enrolment ratio, high level of urbanization, lowest infant mortality rate etc. All these achievements helped the state to acquire the title Kerala model of Development. However, there exists no linear relationship between development and universal welfare of people. There is also violation of human rights or low development of poor people especially scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and such disadvantaged and weaker sections of the society in association with development initiatives. In the present scenario of development, the socio-cultural life of a society can be evaluated in terms of crime rate. The literacy rate is an important variable that may help in determining the crime rate of a state. It is expected that more the literacy rate of a state, the less the crime would be. This is so because as the literacy rate of state increases, there will be less unemployed people and therefore they will not opt for illegal ways to get money. It is a fact that crime has more to do with psychological factors. Still then a negative relationship can be expected in literacy rate and crime rate. The present paper is an attempt to evaluate this correlation in case of Kerala. The study is based on secondary data collected from various official sources like NCRB, Census reports etc.

2. Review of Literature

There have been a lot of studies to establish the relationship between the rate of crime and the factors affecting it. We shall review some of the available literature in the following section. Gary Becker (1974) presented a model based on the cost of crime and explained the economics of crime in terms of cost and benefits of a particular crime. The study stated that cost of different punishments to an offender can be made comparable by converting them into their monetary equivalent or worth. Dreze and Khera (2000) analyzed the effect of gender and demography on the crimes committed and reported in India. The authors stated that education has a moderate influence on the criminal violence. Murder rate strongly correlates with sex ratio, where a higher sex ratio results into lower murder rate.

Gumus (2003) studied the effect of per capita income, income inequality, population, and presence of black population on the crime rate in the US and stated that these all are important determinants of the crime rate. Unemployment rate and police expenditures have also an impact on crime but not as much as other stated factors. Dubey and Aggarwal (2015) state that political, economic and socio-cultural factors play a vital role in crime and crime control practices in India. They stated that the financial crisis and the current political stalemate in India have contributed to increasing crime rate. An important investigation by

Dutta and Husain (2009) shows that the impact of deterrent variables like police force & arrest rate and socio-economic variables like poverty & urbanization on crime in India. They concluded that deterrence is likely to have a significant negative impact on crime rates and economic growth is an important determinant of crime rates. Thus the available literature highlights the significant factors determining crime rate in a society. However, the correlation between literacy rate and the crime rate are not properly studied particularly in Kerala context. Hence the present study attempts to bridge the gap in such a research area.

3. Crime rate and the complaints received

Kerala has achieved the highest literacy rate of 93.91 percent and the highest HDR value (0.790) the highest rate in India. The state with high socio-economic indicators is facing serious challenges and it has debilitated its social and cultural life. However, these achievements do not reflect while analysing the crime rate in the state. Though there is no universal definition of the crime, Cruzel states that "A crime as an act or omission of human conduct harmful to others which the state is bound to prevent. It renders the deviant person liable to punishment as a result of proceedings initiated by the state organs assigned to ascertain the nature, the extent and the legal consequences of that person's wrongness" (Auolak, 1999).

The crime rate can be evaluated by analyzing the data of National Crime Records Bureau statistics (NCRB) in terms of the elements such as complaints received, complaints registered, number of arrest and the strength of the police, different head crimes etc. There is general belief that the better education and awareness about the procedures to file a complaint will increase the number of complaints. Among the various methods to give complaints in the station, the number of complaints received by the police through oral is highest in India where as it is highest in other sources in Kerala. The other source of complaints is 49.32 percent out of the total complaints is a notable thing. The other sources include complaints received from Human Rights Commission, complaints received from National Commission for Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe and complaints initiated Suomoto by police. The analysis shows that there is no sharp deviation in the nature of complaints in Kerala from that of other states. Again, the correlation between the literacy rate and the complaints received in different states is nearly -.12 which indicates the absence of any strong negative relation between literacy and complaints.

Table No. 1
Categorisation of complaints received

Indicators	India	Percentage	Kerala	Percentage
Oral	7832797	46.55	207041	21.34
Written	4666983	27.73	284465	29.33
Other	4325907	25.71	478366	49.32
Total	16825687		969872	

Source: Computed from the National Crime Records Bureau Statistics, 2015

4. Complaints registered (IPC + SLL) and number of persons arrested

There is tendency in any civilized society to make complaints on any illegal happenings. Thus whether the registered complaints are genuine is a matter of fact. Out of the total complaints received 43.54% are registered in India and in Kerala 67.37 % are registered and it indicates the bogus complaints. This is a striking and a disturbing feature as far as high Kerala literate society is concerned. The registered cases are highest in UP (38.10%)(17% pop), followed by Tamil Nadu(6.03 %)(5.71% Pop) and Kerala (8.91 %)(3.18% pop). It is lowest in the districts of Sikkim, Nagaland and Mizoram. In Kerala around 3% of total population of India have a registered cases of 8.91% to total registered cases in India is re-thinkable issue

The number of persons arrested under IPC crimes in Kerala is (209344) 6.5 % of total arrests (3218052) and occupies 5th position. Among the registered cases 72.20 % arrested in India, where as in Kerala it is 75.94 %. It indicates the violation of more human rights in a social fabric state - Kerala. The number of persons arrested under SLL crimes in Kerala is 9.35 % of total arrests and occupies the 2nd position followed by UP (41.13%). Sometimes, there is a notion that the strength of police in Kerala is high as compared to other states and it will increase the arrests. The actual strength of civil police personnel including District Armed police in 2015 is highest in Maharashtra (14.03% of India) and UP (12.45%). (In Kerala it is 3.23%). The number of policemen per lakh population in Kerala is 130 as against the all India average of 133 and it is lowest in UP (89) and Bihar and highest in Mizoram (1003).

5. Crime rate

The crime is calculated by using the formula, $Crime\ Rate = \frac{Number\ of\ Cases\ Reported}{Mid-Year\ Projected\ Population\ in\ Lakhs}$. The National Crime Records Bureau statistics (2016) reveals that Kerala has the highest crime rate among Indian states and is followed by Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. The crime rate of Kerala is more than six times than the national average of 379.3. Kerala has reported the highest number of cases of SLL crimes (24.1%) followed by Gujarat and TamilNadu (15.5% each) of total SLL crimes reported in the country during 2016. Kerala reported highest SLL crime rate of 1,252.7 in the country during 2016 followed by Gujarat (457.1) against national average of 145.7.

Table No 2
Crime rate in India and Kerala (2016)

Crime head	India	Kerala	Rank
IPC	233.6	727.6	2
SLL	145.7	1252.7	1
TOTAL	379.3	1980.1	1

Source: Computed from the National Crime Records Bureau Statistics, 2016

Table No. 3
Relation between literacy and crime rate

STATE	LITERACY	Crime Rate (IPC and SLL)
Arunachal Pradesh	66.95	204.5
Assam	73.18	328.5
Bihar	63.82	181.9
Gujarat	79.31	690.3
Haryana	76.64	518.3
Jammu & Kashmir	68.74	213.7
Jharkhand	67.63	141.5
Karnataka	75.6	286.8
Kerala	93.91	1980.1
Maharashtra	82.91	357.4
Manipur	79.85	157.6
Meghalaya	75.48	128.8
Mizoram	91.58	261.7
Punjab	76.68	197.7
Rajasthan	67.06	342.7
Sikkim	82.2	156.9
Tamil Nadu	80.33	672.3
Tripura	87.75	106.3
UP	69.72	225.3
Uttarakhand	79.63	150.5
West Bengal	77.08	217.8
Andhra Pradesh	67.66	250.1
Chhattisgarh	71.04	323.9
Goa	87.4	186.2
Himachal Pradesh	83.78	242.3
MP	70.63	466.6
Nagaland	80.11	79.8
Odisha	73.45	243.2

Source: NCRB2016, Census 2011

The second literate state of India (91.58%) is Mizoram and it has a crime rate of only 261.7 with 15th position. The correlation between literacy and crime rate is estimated and it is 0.38 which indicates no strong positive relationship. It is interesting to note that if we are excluding Kerala from the analysis, the correlation is negative.0067. Similarly, metropolitan city crime rate is highest in Kochi (Kerala) with 2553.1 as the crime rate against the all India average of crime rate of 709.1. Nagpur follows Kochi with 1714.6. It is interesting to note that 1.91 % of city population of Indian cities, Kochi bags 6.7 % of city crimes of India. We cannot believe that all other city living population is ignorant to report crimes. Whatever may be the reason

imputed upon the high crime rate, we cannot agree that the license is given to literate states to conduct crimes. The crime rate in various heads of Kerala in comparison to India is in the table and it reveals the extent of the social development that Kerala lacks.

Table No: 4
Crime rate in various heads

Indicators	India	Kerala
Violent crime rate	33	37.9
Murder	2.4	0.9
Crime rate against women(IPC)	51.4	53.4
Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty	13.3	22.1
Rape	6.1	9.1
Cruelty by husband or his relatives(IPC)	17.6	18.9
Crime rate against women(Total)	53.6	54.9
Crime against children (Total)	22.4	30.8
Crime against senior citizen	20.2	13.6
Crime/atrocities against scheduled castes	20.6	26.6
Crime/atrocities against scheduled tribes	6.3	37.5
Economic offences	14.6	11
Cyber crime	1	0.8

Source: Compiled from NCRB, 2016

The facts given in table 4 are testimony to the instances of demoralized social and cultural impact upon the major chunk of population in a socially advanced state of Kerala. The state with 100 per cent enrolment in school education is making little successful efforts to make our younger generations aware of the negative aspect of increasing crime rate. Kerala has high rate in criminal rioting (31.4) against the national average of (6.2). This may explain the state's extraordinarily high rate of criminal hurt (60.7 against the national average of 27.7) and arson (1.6 against 1.0). It has to be seen that the per capita liquor consumption has been very high and enjoying the highest position among the states. The per capita liquor consumption was 11.1 litre/per person in 2013 and it is ahead of Punjab now. Excessive per capita consumption of liquor is a factor leading to high crime rate. It creates serious disturbances in family life, education of children and so it may increase the crime against women and children.

6. Concluding remarks

The present paper analysed the relation between literacy rate and crime rate in Kerala comparing the corresponding figures of other Indian states. Crime statistics is one important reason to rethink the famed Kerala model of socialist development. The general understanding that literacy rate and crime rate are negatively correlated has not proved correct in case of Kerala. In this context, the government and administrators, police and the general society should take steps to control the special type of crimes in Kerala as against that of other states. The service of psychologists in each police station is essential. The availability of intoxicants in the state has to be reduced. The state has higher potential to improve the law maintenance if the educated generations are properly guided.

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