

Urbanization and Crime in India: A Temporal Analysis from 1991 to 2011

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ABSTRACT

Urbanization is social as well as an economic process; it is a population shift from a rural agrarian society to an industrialized urban society. It is a result of the movement of rural to urban migration in search of a better quality of life, as well as is an outcome of natural population growth in urban areas. Urbanization is considered an indicator of the socio-economic progress of a society. It has been considered by most of the researchers that more urbanized countries are economically as well as socially well developed. In the economic aspect, urbanization is good for the development of a region because it promotes industrial growth and the development of the economy. However, rapid urbanization and expansion of cities as a result of continuous migration have created various problems in Indian cities. From a social point of view, there are several adverse impacts of urbanization; crime is one of them, which is recognised as the most negative effect of urbanization in urban areas especially in developing countries. Crime is one of the most contemporary social problems in urban areas of developing countries, and it is directly or indirectly correlated to the unplanned urbanization process. Some special urban characteristics such as size, high population density, heterogeneous population, impersonality, unemployment, urban poverty, and poor quality of life are responsible for the high crime rate in urban areas. The main objective of this paper is to understand some of the general theoretical as well as quantitative perspectives within which the link between urbanization and crime is explained in the best possible way in the context of India from 1991 to 2011.

KEYWORDS: *Urbanization, Crime, Social Problems, Socio-economic Progress, Quality of life*

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is a social as well economic process in which towns or cities grow naturally or through migration and become urban. The United Nations defines urbanization as a movement of people from rural to urban areas in search of employment and a better standard of life. (Heyer, Judith, Roberts, Pepe, Williams, 1981) believe that migration takes place because of the availability of desired employment in urban areas at any time. Urbanization is the outcome of the trend movement of people from rural to urban areas to seek a satisfactory economic as well as social life. Urbanization is always considered as the indicator of modernization and improved quality of life among developing countries (Soh, 2012).

Urbanization is driven by industrialization and results in the formation of towns, cities, and metropolitan areas. The urban system relates to the concentration of people engaged in secondary and tertiary economic activities and land-use change in specific areas. Economic opportunities and improved conditions for a better quality of life attract people from rural areas towards urban areas, but in developing countries due to lack of urban planning and scarcity of resources, this rapidly growing population creates several problems in urban areas. According to the UN at present, more than half of the world's population reside in urban areas and it is estimated that by the year 2030, it will be 60% and in 2050, it will be about

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68%. The population of the urban areas is increasing at a rapid pace and the same case is with India. In India, according to the 2011 census, the share of the urban population is only 31.16 but being the second most populated country in the world, the number of urban residents is above 377 million. The urban population in India is increasing at a rapid pace from 11.4% in 1901 to 25.7 in 1991, 28.53 % in 2001, and 31.16 % in 2011. This rapid urbanization brought enormous problems to the urban areas of India. The main problems faced in Indian cities by rapid and unplanned urbanization are; degradation of the environment, continuous increase in slums population of metropolitan cities, shortage of housing, lack of sewage treatment facilities, poor sanitation, problems of drinking water, and crime. Urbanization is necessary for the sake of industrial development and economic progress; however, encouragement of crime maybe the other face of this urbanization process, since the crime rate is high in large cities and urbanized areas. (Edwin H. Sutherland, 1939) stated that there are quantitative differences in the incidence of crime in areas of varying degrees of urbanization. (Wirth, 1938a) personal disorganization, mental breakdown, delinquency, crime, corruption, and disorder may be high in urban areas as compared to rural society under the prevalence of some special circumstances such as high population density, size, heterogeneous characteristics of the population.

According to the Habitat III, agreement New Urban Agenda (NUA) signed in Quito, Ecuador, in 2016, stated that safe cities should be one of the most important goals to be achieved in the next twenty years. Although, with the present pace of urbanization and urban transformation in India, urban crime tends to increase in many cities of India and questions whether India is ready to achieve safe cities goals. It is also believed that where there is a high population density, drastic changes in the social environment, and prevailing poor living conditions, the impulsive crime rate is high as well. Regards as the centre of diversity and socio-economic changes, urban areas provide many opportunities. However, these opportunities and socioeconomic changes bring income as well as social inequality in urban areas of India. According to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, living conditions of a large share of the urban population are pathetic with the high rate of hunger and malnutrition, lack of housing and basic infrastructure, poverty, unemployment, etc. which leads to the involvement of people in criminal activities.

Nexus between Urbanization and Crime: Evidence from Past Studies

Urbanization has created many social problems, among them crime has become a common phenomenon to all urban areas in developing and developed world. In most of the countries of the world unplanned and unimaginable level of urbanization is correlated with the high level of crime. Urbanization is always considered an indicator of modernization and improved quality of life among developed and developing countries (Clark, 1982). It is a process of social as well as economic transformation. Economic opportunities and improved quality of life attract people from rural areas towards urban areas. However, due to the lack of resources, infrastructural development, and proper urban planning, the process creates various socio-economic problems in urban areas; crime is the most significant and serious among them. (Kundu & Gupta, 1994)lopsided and uncontrolled process of urbanization generating social and economic inequality among people, which leads to social conflict, crime, and anti-social activities. (Knox, 1994) increase in crime problems correlated with the process of urbanization. (McIlwaine, 1999) stated that the increase in urban crime rate is correlated to urbanization and modernization. (Elis & Liu, 2018) urban areas well known for their facilities and opportunities, enhance the quality of life. Urbanization is encouraging crime as the rate of crime is higher in large cities and urbanized areas. With the advancement of Globalization, industrialization, urbanization, and modernization the rate of crime increasing all over the world (Kumar & Borbora, 2018).

However, developing countries with all these facilities and opportunities face some serious issues that are correlated to unplanned urbanization. Security and crime are the most serious among all these issues, urban crime is evil for every society, and becomes a herculean task to control urban crime for developed as well as developing countries. (Wirth, 1938b) claimed that the urban crime rate shows a more unstable nature of urban life.

“In a sense, social and economic conditions “cause” crime. Crime flourishes, and always has flourished, in city slums, those neighbourhoods where overcrowding, economic deprivation, and racial discrimination are endemic. Crime flourishes in conditions of affluence where there is much desire for materials goods and many opportunities to acquire them illegally.” **President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967.**

Simply, urbanization and crime are positively correlated especially in developing countries such as India. It is a well-recognised fact that a cluster of urban crime can be seen in most urbanised areas of cities, mostly at the centre of urban areas. As the population of urban areas increase as a result of migration or natural growth, the process of urbanization accelerates which increase the population size and density of that particular urban area, which leads to the formation of a crime cluster. Crime and rate of crime varies from one society to another and with temporal changes. However, crime have become an urban phenomenon as urbanization process carries some material of this crime and result in increase of crime rate in urban areas with the process of unplanned urbanization.

1.1. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this paper is to understand the relationship between urbanization and crime through a theoretical as well as a quantitative perspective in the Indian context.

1.2. Methodology

This study is mainly conducted through secondary sources of data such as; the census of India, the National Crime Records Bureau, books, articles, research papers, etc. A simple correlation (Pearson's r) has been adopted to analyse the relationship between urbanization and crime. For Pearson's correlation coefficient, the values of ' r ' are tested at a significance level of $p < 0.05$. The statistical analysis has been carried out by using SPSS and Excel software.

1.3. Review of Literature

Several attempts have been made by researchers of various disciplines to explain the relationship between urbanization and urban crime. (Malik, 2016) analysed the relationship between urbanization and crime in India. In his study, he concluded that increasing urbanization is responsible for less integration among people, which generates less informal social control. The process of urbanization and industrialization is responsible for changes in the structure of the society and changes in the space environment, which leads to a high level of crime, social disorder, and conflict. (Drèze & Khera, 2000) explored the link of crime with various socioeconomic variables such as poverty, urbanization, literacy, and demographic and social composition of the population. (Ahmad & Salihu, 2013) stated that criminal activities are performed unevenly in urban areas. However, crime can crop up anywhere, but the density of population and location play a vital role in crime occurrence in urban areas. (Gerben, 2007) A high level of social cohesion and well-ordered physical surrounding is responsible

for less confrontation with a crime in rural areas. Crime activities are more frequent in urban areas, as criminals often live in cities, it is assumed that the greater the distance from the city lesser the occurrence of crime. (Sijuwade, 2014) stated that urban areas are characterised by high population density, social mobility, a high degree of social and economic heterogeneity but when these traits are combined with unemployment, poverty, low level of literacy, unskilled labour and marital instability lead to a high level of urban crime and social unrest in the society. In this way, all the contemporary social problems directly or indirectly are associated with the process of urbanization. (Elis & Liu, 2018) urban areas are well known for their facilities and opportunities to enhance the quality of life. However, developing countries with all these facilities and opportunities face some serious issues that are related to unplanned urbanization. Security and crime are the most serious among all these issues, urban crime is evil for every society, and becomes a herculean task to control urban crime for developed as well as developing countries. (Soh, 2012) analysed the cause and effect relationship between urbanization and crime. The high population density of urban areas ensures that every form of crime is committed here. Cross border migration from Indonesia, Bangladesh, Vietnam etc., lead to the influx of illegal workers, which cause a rise in crime level in urban areas of Malaysia. According to statistics crime committed by illegal workers increased by about threefold from 1333 to 3113 between 1992 and 2002 respectively. (Abubakar, 2017) presented a comparative case study of urban crime in Malaysia and Nigeria. Urbanization created many social and economic problems in these two nations and other developing as well as developed countries of the world. Urban poverty, unemployment, and a high rate of urbanization due to rural to urban migration are responsible for a high rate of crime. High population density, poor living conditions, and unfavourable social environment coincide with a high rate of impulsive crime. (Boggs, 2005) explained the characteristics and pattern of urban crime. The crime rate is positively correlate to the urbanization. Crime pattern of an urban area suggests that homicides and assaults occurrence is high in offender residence areas, whereas business robbery, automobile theft and grand larceny occurs in high-rank social areas. (Wirth, 1938b) special urban characteristics such as size, high population density, heterogeneous population, and impersonality are responsible for the high crime rate in urban areas. The areas with high population density have higher crime level compared to scarcely populated areas. (Celia, 2004) urban areas are characterised by heterogeneous

population in the form of culture, belief, race, ethics, norms and values, religion, age and so on. These all are predisposing factors, which play a significant role in urban criminality. Comparatively, the crime rate is higher in the areas with high population density where there are a poor neighbourhood and pathetic living conditions. Street crime, robbery, and illegal drugs supply through trafficking, and a crime against women and children are directly related to the urbanization and pose a serious threat for the government. (Burgess, 1967) put forward the idea that a city can be ecologically divided into concentric zones based on varying crime rate. High crime rate may be recorded in the transition zone, which is also

known as the zone of deterioration. (Gold, 2002) analyse the relationship between urbanization and crime and stated that rapid urban growth had direct a relationship with increasing rate of crime.

Urbanization in India from 1991 to 2011

Basically, urbanization in India take place in two ways, first through the natural population growth in urban areas and second through the migration from rural to urban areas in search of better social and economic opportunities. After the economic reform of the 1990s, the opening up of the economy led to a rise in economic growth, but this economic growth was urban centred which result in a rapid migration from rural to urban areas.

TABLE -1 Urban Population of India from 1991 to 2011

Census Year	Total Population (in million)	Urban Population (in million)	Share of Urban Population to the Total Population	Decadal Population Growth	Decadal Urban Population Growth
1991*	846.4	217.6	25.71%	23.87%	36.5%
2001	1028.7	285.4	27.78%	21.54%	31.15%
2011	1210.2	377.1	31.16%	17.68%	32.13%

Source: Census of India, 1991- 2011

*for the decadal growth rate of 1991, the base year is 1981.

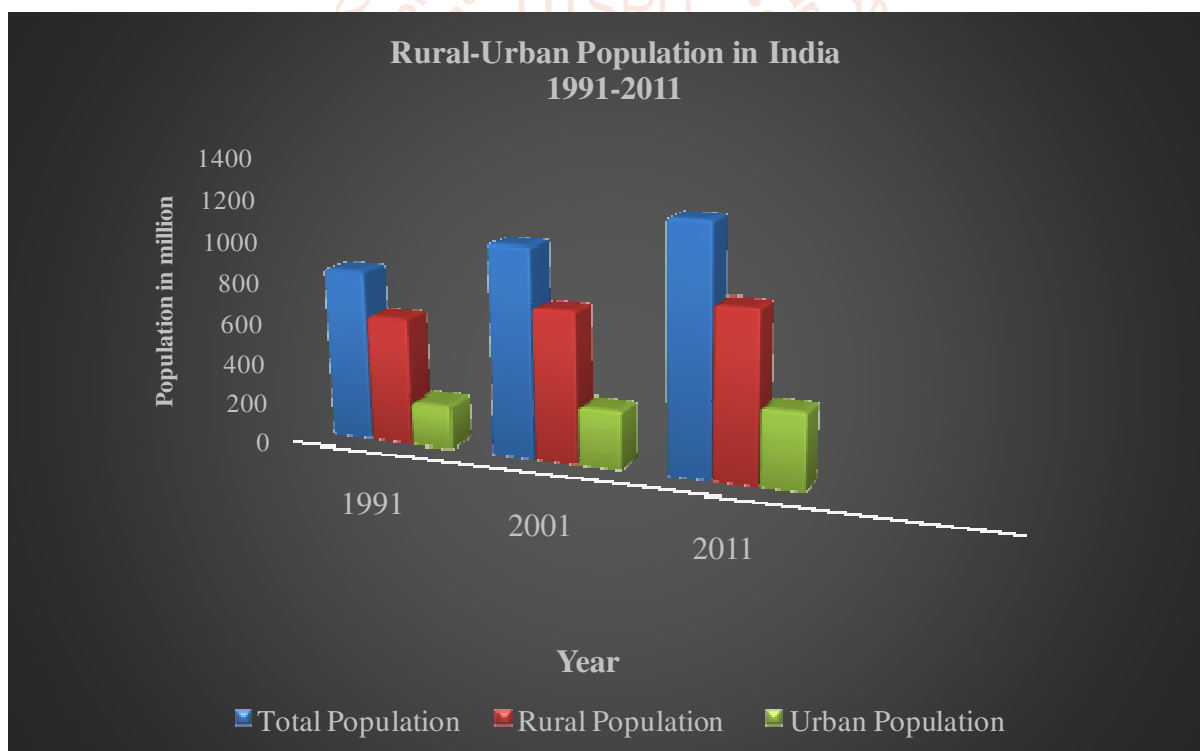


Fig 1- Urban Population of India from 1991 to 2011

Table 1 shows that there was a significant increase in the urban population from 1991 to 2011. According to the 1991 census, the urban population of the country was 217.6 million, which accounted for about 25.7 % of the total population, whereas, according to the census of 2001, the total number of urban residents was 285.4 million, which was 27.78% of the total population of India. There was an increase of about 68 million urban residents between the census of 1991 and 2001. After the beginning of the 21st century, India shows a high growth rate of urbanization. According to the census of 2011, the total urban population of the country was about 377 million, which accounted for 31.16% of the total population. The decadal growth rate of the urban population was recorded 36.5% for the census year 1991 over 1981 and it was 31.15 per cent from 1991 to 2001 whereas, between 2001 to 2011 census it was recorded 32.13 per cent.

TABLE -2 Class wise number and growth of the town in India from 1991 to 2011

Census Year	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V	Class VI	Total Number of Town
1991	300	345	947	1167	740	197	3996
2001	441	496	1388	1563	1041	232	5161
2011	505	605	1905	2233	2187	498	7933

Source: Census of India, 1991-2011

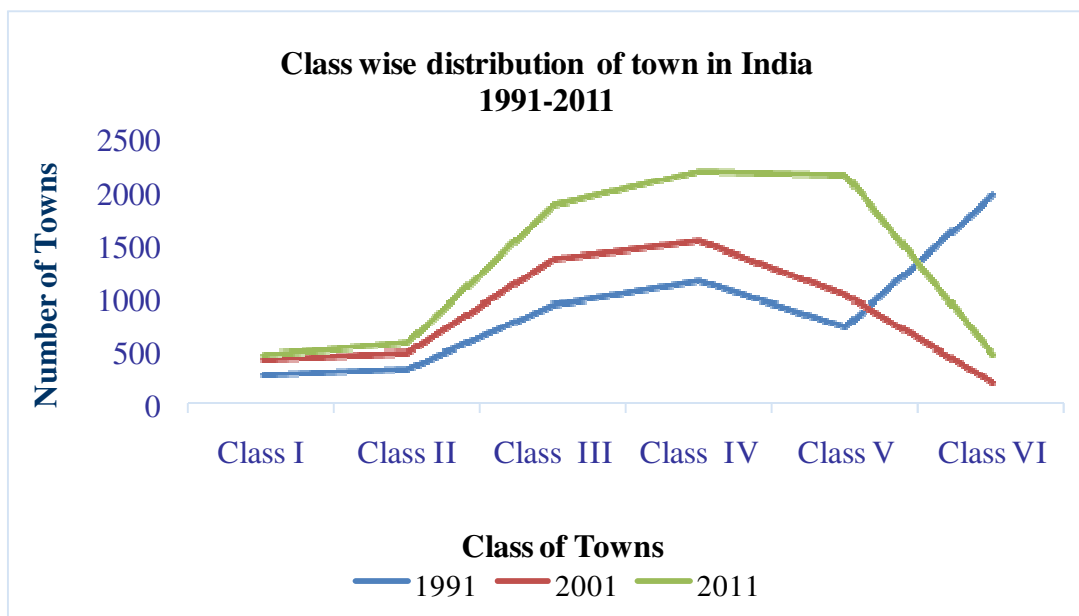


Fig2- Class wise number and growth of the town in India from 1991 to 2011

It is clear from table 2 that there is a significant increase in the total number of towns from 1991 to 2011. In 1991, the total number of towns in India was 3996 and it is almost double according to the census of 2011. There were only 300 first-class towns recorded according to the 1991 census and this number reached 441 and 505 in 2001 and 2011 respectively. Class III towns also show high growth, in 1991 only 947 towns were in this category but in 2011, this number reached up to 1905. The highest number of increases recorded in class V town from 1991 to 2011, which grow from 740 to 2187. Therefore, it is clear from the table that there is a significant increase in the number of towns in India, which is a sign of urbanization.

The crime rate of India in 1991, 2001, and 2011

Crime is one of the most serious problems around the world and poses a serious threat to the quality of life of a society.

According to Marshall and Clark, “A crime is any act or omission prohibited by public law for the protection of the public and punishable by state in a judicial proceeding in its name.”

In India, according to the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr. C. P.) all the crimes are classified as:

Cognizable crime and Non-Cognizable crime

Cognizable Crime – A cognizable offence or crime is a crime in which an officer-in-charge of a police station may investigate without the order of a Magistrate and arrest without a warrant. Cognizable crimes are broadly classified as those falling either under the ‘Indian Panel Code’(IPC) or under the ‘Special and Local Laws’(SLL).

Non-Cognizable Crime – A non-cognizable crime is a crime in which police cannot investigate without the order of a competent magistrate.

Table 3- Cognizable Crime in India from 1991 to 2011

Years	Total Cognizable Crime	IPC Crime	SLL Crime
1991	50,49,346	16,78,375	33,70,971
2001	53,44,538	17,69,308	35,75,230#
2011	62,52,729	23,25,575	39,27,154

Source- Census of India 1991-2011, National Crime Records Bureau 1991-2011

Excluding Jharkhand State.



Fig 3- Cognizable Crime in India from 1991 to 2011

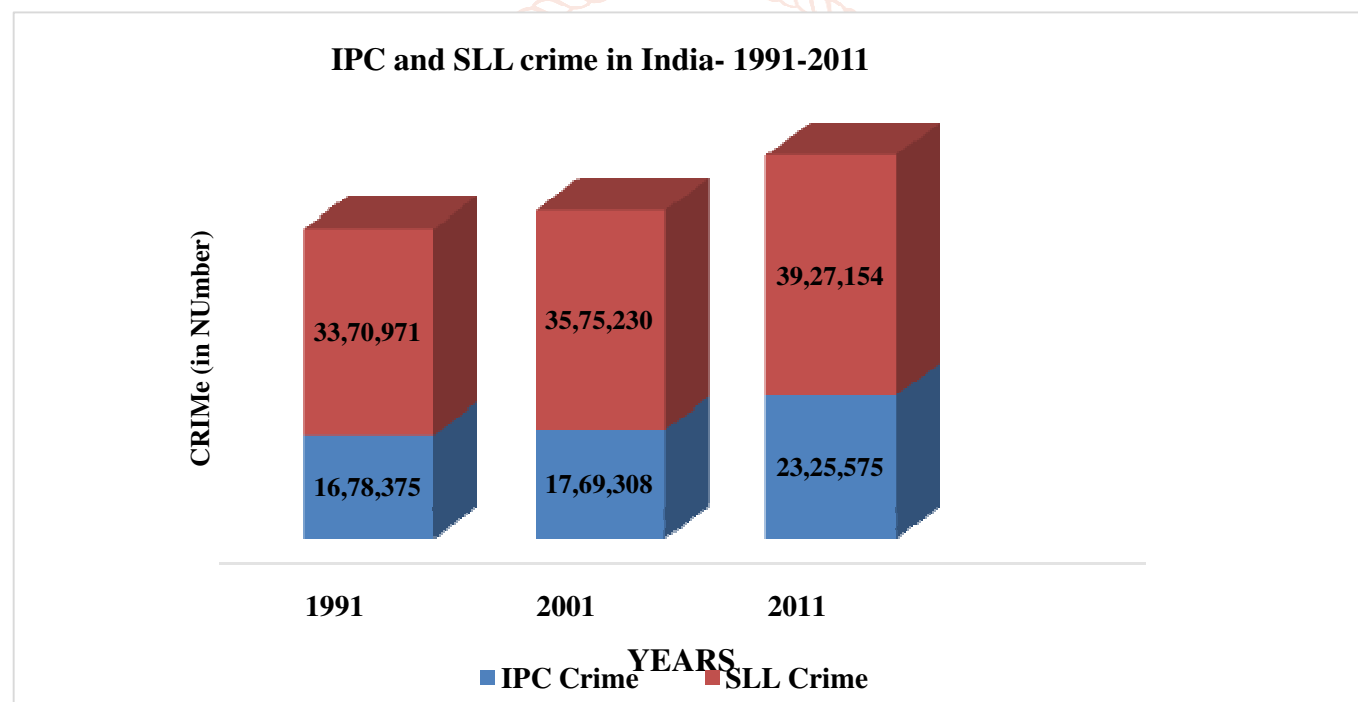


Fig 4- IPC and SLL crime in India- 1991-2011

Table 4: Crime Rate of IPC and SSL Crime in 1991, 2001 and 2011.

Year	Cognizable Crime Rate (Per Lakh Population)	IPC Crime Rate (Per Lakh Population)	SSL Crime Rate (Per Lakh Population)
1991	596.6	198.3	398.3
2001	520.4	172.3	348.1
2011	516.7	192.2	324.5

Source: National Crime Records Bureau 1991-2011

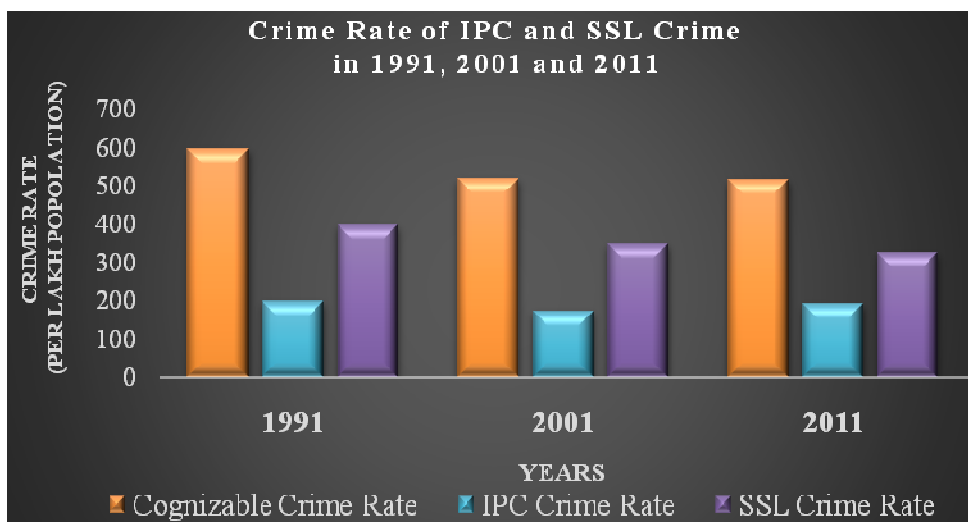


Fig 5- Crime Rate of IPC and SSL Crime in 1991, 2001 and 2011

It is clear from the table that the number of total crimes increased significantly from the year 1991 to 2011. In 1991, total 50,49,346 cognizable crime were recorded, in which 16,78,375 case were registered under IPC and 33,70,971 under SLL. In 2001, the number of cognizable crimes reached up 53,44,538 in which 17,69,308 cases were recorded under IPC and 35,75,230 under SSL, whereas from 1991 to 2011 there is a significant increase from 50,49,346 to 62,52,729 in cognizable crimes, which is about 23% higher than 1991. However, the rate of crime decreased from 1991 to 2011, there is a -0.7% decrease in the cognizable crime rate from 1991 to 2011.

Result and Discussion

The level of socio-economic progress of a region is reflected by the degree of urbanization of that region. Presently, more than half of the world’s population is lives in towns and cities. India, being a developing country, have a low level of urbanization in term of share, but in terms of urban dwellers, having an urban population above 377 million (census of India) ranked second after China with 690 million urban residents (World Bank, UN Census Bureau. India, with a large number of urban residents facing various issues, urban crime is one of the most serious among them.

In the year 1991 the total urban population of India was about 217.6 millions and the number of total cognizable crime in the same year recorded about 5.04 millions. According to 2001 census data the total urban population was recorded 285.4 million and this shows about 31.33% increased in compare to 1991. Although the the crime rate also increase between 1991 and 2001, however, the rate of increase was not much as urbanization. In 2001 the total number of cognizable crime recorded about 5.34 which shows about 5.9 % over the year 1991. In 2011, urbanization and crime rate show a significant increased over the previous decade. In 2011, the total urban population of India recorded about 377.1 millions with 32.13 percent increase over the year 2001. The total cognizable crimes recorded about 6.25 millions in the same year which shows about 17% change over the year 2001.

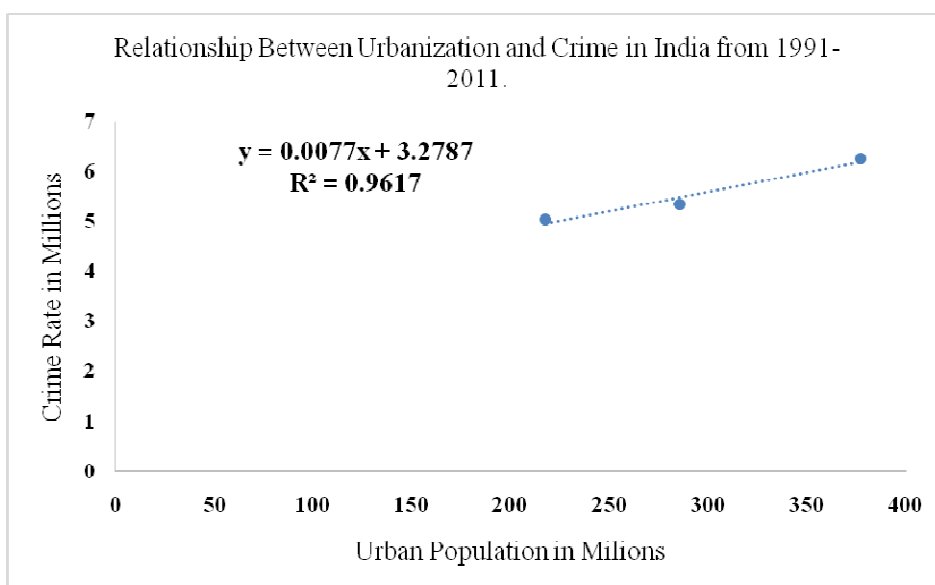


Fig 6 Relationship between Urbanization and Crime in India from 1991 to 2011

The relationship between urbanization and crime is shown by Pearson's correlation in India from 1991 to 2011 and the value of correlation (r) is 0.98 that means there is a positive correlation between urbanization and crime rate in India from the time period of 1991 to 2011.

Conclusion

The main conclusion is that there is a positive correlation between urbanization and crime in India with a correlation value of 0.98. It is clear that urbanization is an important determinant of crime in the case of India. Rapid and unplanned urbanization because of continuous migration from rural areas, created many problems in Indian cities. Urbanization is beneficial for economic progress. However, urbanization also promotes crime, as crime is more common in urban areas because the chances of crimes to take place are high when there are high population densities in a given place, rapid changes in social environments, and poor living conditions. Crime is primarily the outcome of multiple adverse social, economic, cultural and family conditions. It is a prime concern of planners and urban administration is to prevent crime, and for this purpose, it is necessary to know the root causes of crime. The root causes of crime in India are; employment, poverty, inequality and illiteracy etc. Most of the crimes such as murder, rape, kidnapping, riots, assault, theft, robbery, etc. are more prominent in the urban areas. The unimaginable rate of urbanization of India coincides with the rise in urban crimes in many parts of the country. The high rate of unemployment coupled with poverty among the urban poor is responsible for the high rate of urban crime in India.

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