

## Characteristics of Victimization in Ahmednagar City in India

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### Abstract:

The studies on victimization focused on the victim and victimization aspects of crimes. Many studies explored the specific aspects of victimization at the macro level. But there is a lack of comprehensive victimization studies at the micro-level. The current study assessed the individual and situational level of victimization characteristics based on the data collected in a household sample survey in Ahmednagar city police jurisdiction. The small sample (59 out of 1081 households) of victimization constrained over methods of analysis. Hence simple differences in frequency and percentage in the variables of victimization have been used to analyze victimization characteristics. The results revealed that many characteristics considered in the study are found vulnerable to victimization in this sample. Household victimization experienced nearly 27 % more than personal victimization. Males got victimized 35 % more than females. Day hours experienced 15 % more victimization than night hours. People below age 18 were victimized 25 % more than their other counterparts. Victims got victimized 60 % more by the unknown persons/offenders than the known persons/offenders. Victimization is reported nearly 25 % less in police stations than its actual occurrence. Incidents of burglary/robbery/dacoity occurred 70 % more in the absence of persons aged 18 or above in the household. The current study concludes that victimization is subjective to many personal and household characteristics of the victim and the surrounding situation. The individual characteristics of victims are associated more with the victimization than the situational characteristics of victimization. The vulnerable characteristics of victimization can be used to deter victimization incidents and decrease criminal incidents.

**Keywords:** Victimization; Characteristics of Victimization; Victimization Study in India

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### I. Introduction:

Crime is an action which constitutes an offence and is punishable by law (Gill, 2013). Every single incident of crime consists of four dimensions: *the law, the offender, the target (victim) and the place* (Andresen, 2014). *Laws* are the rules of conduct which are executed by the state upon its citizen and generally enforced by courts. An *offender* is a person whose action knowingly or unknowingly has broken the code of conduct as determined by law. The offender can be an individual or a group of people. The *place* is an individual point or small area in space, for example, a house, shop, street corner, company etc., while space is a broader term than the place. Space may include such areas as neighborhoods, census tracts or other longer territories (Lersch and Hart, 2011). A *target* can be a property or a person. When a target is a person, it is recognized as a victim. A victim is a person who got suffered physically or economically due to a criminal incident offended by the offender/s.

Victimization study is a distinct perspective in crime geography. There are many studies on victimization. Tilyer *et al.*, (2010) found the gender differences in adolescent school-based sexual victimization and also observed that school factors influence sexual victimization. Similar to this study, Hewitt *et al.*, (2020) observed that the motive of the rapist influences the distance of journey-to-crime at a crime scene between offender and victim. Pratt and Turanovic (2016) assessed the risk of victimization in the context of a theoretical framework. Pizarro *et al.*, (2007) focused on homicide victimization and found a significant difference in the length of journey-to-crime at the place of victimization by victim and offender. Hedayati Marzbali *et al.*, (2016) examined the effect of 'crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)' on burglary victimization and observed the association of CPTED with the low burglary victimization in the study. Malczewski and Poetz (2005) found significant variations in the relationships between the risk of residential burglary victimization and the population in multifamily housing. Many victimization studies explored the possibilities of repeat victimization. Frank *et al.*, (2012) estimated the actual victimization rates of burglary in Vancouver using police-recorded crime data. Kumar *et al.*, (2012) assessed the influence of spatio-temporal

factors on the residential burglary in Chennai city in India. Wang and Liu(2017) in the case study of a large Chinese city on near-repeat victimization found the risk of spreading burglary hotspots around previous hotspot areas.

Many of the studies reviewed above focused on some individual aspects of victimization. Even many studies are based on the victimization data collected by national agencies (Lowenkamp, T. Cullen, & Pratt, 2003; Sampson & Groves, 1989). But none of these studies explored the victimization characteristics in a small urban area using a sample survey. This study aimed to explore the characteristics of victimization in Ahmednagar city police jurisdiction (ACPJ) in India using a survey method.

### **1.2 The Study Area:**

The current study was carried out in Ahmednagar city police jurisdiction (ACPJ) which includes nearly 80 % of the urban population and 20 % of the rural population among 435,811 people (2011 Census of India). The ACPJ has three police sub-jurisdictions namely Tophkhana, Kotwali and Camp police sub-jurisdictions. But the civil administrative divisions are different from police jurisdictions. These three police sub-jurisdictions are composed of 26 election wards/villages. There are 18 urban election wards including 17 wards of Ahmednagar Municipal Corporation (AMC) and 1 ward of Ahmednagar Cantonment Board (ACB). The remaining 08 wards are adjacent villages considered in the Camp police sub-jurisdiction (Kadam, 2022). The unit of analysis in the present study is 'election ward/village' and there is a total of 26 wards/villages.

### **1.3 Data and Method:**

A random household sample survey has been carried out using a carefully prepared questionnaire which is based on the review of the literature. The sample survey collected a total of 1081 household samples from all 26 wards/villages in the study area during the year 2019. Among all 1081 household samples, the current study came across only 59 household samples in which respondents reported their personal and/or household victimization. These samples are considered victimization samples in this study. Victimization samples (59) shared only 5.5 % of total household samples (1081) collected in the study which is considered to be very small to run any of the statistical methods used above. Even the author believes that results generated from this small sample using any statistical test of correlation or association may not depict the reality of victimization in the study area. Therefore only exploratory analysis has been executed on the victimization sample using differences in frequency and percentage of various victimization aspects considered in the current study.

Based on the social disorganization approach (Lowenkamp et al., 2003; Sampson & Groves, 1989) and routine activity approach (Cohen & Felson, 1979) eight different characteristics of victimization are assessed in the study. These characteristics are mentioned in table no 1.1. A well-structured questionnaire for the household sample survey was prepared which included questions regarding these eight different victimization characteristics(Kadam, 2022).

### **1.4. Results and Discussion:**

Results are interpreted according to various aspects of victimization considered in the study which are as below (table 1.1)

#### **1.4.1 Victimization Types:**

The study found that 59 households reported personal or household or both victimization in ACPJ. Among all victimization, 52.2 % of victimization is household victimization and 25.4 % of victimization is personal victimization. On the other hand, 20.0 % of households experienced both types of victimization in ACPJ. From these results, it is observed that household victimization experienced nearly 27 % more than personal victimization suggesting the dominance of property victimization over personal victimization in ACPJ. This indicates that majority victimization has an economic origin.

#### **1.4.2 Gender of Victim:**

In all types of victimization, 67.8 % of victims are male and 32.2 % of victims are females. This indicates that males got victimized 35 % more than females. This may be because males are observed engaged in more activities than females. Particularly the working population is dominated by males. This exposes them to a criminogenic environment with non-household members which increases their risk of victimization. Even in interpersonal conflicts, it is observed that males take lead in fights or any other delinquent acts. This increases their chances of being victimized. This possibility might have been responsible for the dominant male getting victimized which is seen as consistent with the routine activity theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979).

**1.4.3 Place of Victimization:**

The current study found that there is no significant difference observed in victimization at or near the house and away from the house. Victimization occurred at or near the house (52.3 %) shared a similar percentage of victimization occurred away from the house (47.7 %). This is inconsistent with the idea of the routine activity approach (Cohen and Felson, 1979) which asserted that victimization (particularly personal) occurs more in the places away from home due to the nonappearance of capable guardians in a non-household environment.

**Table 1.1: Characteristics of Victimization in Ahmednagar City Police Jurisdiction**

Sr. No	Variable	Sub-variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Victimization Type	Personal victimization	15	25.4
		Household victimization	31	52.5
		Both	13	20.0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100.0</b>
2	Gender of victims	Male	19	67.8
		Female	9	32.2
		<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.0</b>
3	Place of Victimization	At or Near House	22	52.3
		Away from House	20	47.7
		<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>
4	Time of Victimization	Night Hours	17	42.5
		Day Hours	23	57.5
		<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>
5	Whether victim aged 18 or above?	No	36	62.7
		Yes	22	37.3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100.0</b>
6	Whether offenders were known?	No	31	79.4
		Yes	8	20.6
		<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.0</b>
7	Whether crime registered in the police station?	No	15	37.5
		Yes	25	62.5
		<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>
8	Persons present aged 18 or above at the time of burglary/robbery/dacoity	No	50	84.7
		Yes	9	15.3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(Source: Compiled by Authors)

**1.4.4 Time of Victimization:**

Nearly 57.5 % of victimization has occurred during the daytime (06 am to 06 pm) than the 42.5 % of victimization in the nighttime (06 pm to 06 am). Day-time victimization experienced 15 % more victimization than night hours. This may be particularly because of majority routine activities remain open during day hours and closes during night hours. Hence during day hours, people might have engaged more in non-household activities in the lack of capable guardians (Cohen and Felson, 1979) which might have reflected in more victimization during day hours.

**1.4.5 Age of Victim:**

The study found that nearly 62.7 % of victims were juveniles (age below 18). On the other hand, the remaining 37.3 % of victims were of mature age (age 18 or above). This indicates that people below age 18 were victimized 25 % more than their other counterparts. This is also consistent with the routine activity theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979) which stressed that minors have less resistance to defend themselves against offenders hence they get victimized more than their other counterparts.

**1.4.6 Knowingness of Offender:**

The study observed that 79.4 % of victims are got victimized by unknown persons (offenders). On the other extreme, only 20.6 % of victims are got victimized by known persons (offenders). This suggests that victims got victimized 60 % more by unknown persons/offenders than they know persons/offenders. This result is also consistent with the routine activity approach (Cohen and Felson, 1979).

**1.4.7 Reporting of Crime:**

The current study found that nearly 37.5 % of victimization is not reported in police stations against the 62.5 % of victimization reported in the police station. This indicates that victimization is reported nearly 25 % less in police stations than in its actual occurrence. This may be because people are less reluctant in reporting crimes at the police station. Causes of the same should explore in future research.

#### 1.4.8 Presence of Capable Guardian:

It is found that 84.7 % of burglary/robbery/dacoity victimization occurred in the absence of a person below age 18 against only 15.3 % of said victimization occurred in the presence of persons age 18 or above. This indicates that incidents of burglar/robbery/dacoity occurred 70 % more in the absence of persons aged 18 or above in the household at the time of the crime. This result is consistent with the routine activity approach which underlines the role of capable caretakers in preventing crimes (Cohen and Felson, 1979).

#### 1.5 Conclusion:

The victimization study is the most neglected aspect in the crime study both in policing and the academic field. The current study critically analysed the characteristics of the victimization in Ahmednagar city in India. This study observed that, in line with the previous macro-level victimization studies, that victimization is subjective to many personal and household characteristics of the victim and the surrounding situation in this micro-level analysis. Particularly it is observed that individual characteristics of victims are associated more with the victimization than the situational characteristics of victimization. The vulnerable characteristics of victimization can be used to deter victimization incidents and decrease criminal incidents. The awareness among a vulnerable group of possible victims can let them prepare to fight against victimization. But before this, a separate victimization survey should be carried out covering a large population and sample. As well as, the statistical significance level of these characteristics should be tested by using the appropriate statistical test on large samples/observations before using results in practice.

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