

Prevalence of Crimes in the Covid-19 Pandemic: Bangladesh and Global Perspectives

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Abstract

Over the span of the Covid-19 pandemic, more than eighteen million cases have been reported worldwide and the virus continues to affect populations globally. While attempting to adapt to the rapidly changing environment, groups have been taking advantage of the new social context that the pandemic created. Criminals, for instance, gained an opportunity to maximize profits. With a qualitative lens, and knowledge derived from secondary sources, the paper depicts the evolving global and Bangladeshi criminal landscape during the 21st century. During the pandemic, sudden social change, unemployment and limited resources plunged people into a cycle of misery. The new environment affected traditional crime patterns, and new types of crimes emerged. The paper emphasizes on how the pandemic expanded criminal opportunities in Bangladesh and worldwide.

Keywords: Violent crime, Property crime, Cybercrime, Transnational crime, Wildlife crime, Hate crime

Introduction

The global population has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, regardless of location. It has had a remarkable impact on various groups of people and brings existing inequalities to the forefront of discussion. In addition to a high death rate, the pandemic had devastating financial effects on vulnerable populations, including the elderly, women, children, and people of different ethnicities. The beginning of Covid-19 profoundly affected emotions of people, influenced the actions of law-abiding citizens and criminals alike. Due

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to the pandemic, numerous lives, economic activities, and the foundations of human existence were lost. Even though more people stayed at home, criminal activities increased simultaneously. Because of the offences associated with Covid-19, social orders and security organizations faced several difficulties.

If we take a look at significant scenes in the global arena, cities such as Vancouver saw an increase in violent crime, assault, arson, robbery, and theft as a result of the popularity of Corona, with assault, robbery, and mischief being particularly prevalent (Bula, 2022). During the Covid period, hate crimes against Asians in London increased by almost 180%. In March-April 2020, there were over 20,000 racial hate crimes, a 15 percent increase from the previous year (France, 2021). In addition, violence and rape against women increased significantly in England since the outbreak began. It can be understood by the increasing number of victims who file complaints; given that the domestic abuse growth rate is seven and the number of cases exceeded seven million. Also, the rate of rape cases was higher than that of other sexual offences, which was 37%. According to a study, approximately 17,300 rape-related crimes were reported between April and June (Syal, 2021). During the pandemic, it is also important to note that the rate of organized crime is significant. From the Western Balkans and Pakistan, it spread to Korea and Italy. Criminal organizations frequently chose fragile states such as Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon as their crime hubs (Global Initiative, 2020). The epidemic pushed approximately 100 million people into poverty, resulting in unemployment and disparity among the population (Pandey, 2021).

This study seeks to identify and analyze the scenario of crimes committed during Covid-19 in Bangladeshi society and around the globe.

The research objectives:

- To discuss the various crimes that occurred during the pandemic
- To determine whether the changing circumstances led to the emergence of new crimes

First, the study presents Covid-19 related facts and information; the methodology is then discussed. The third section presents the theoretical framework and the fourth outlines crime typologies assessing why certain crimes occurred more frequently during pandemic. Lastly, the article examines factual data which is used as the basis for evaluation and interpretation.

Methodology

The interpretation and comprehension of a particular form of content is the primary emphasis of the qualitative content analysis technique. This paper employs the qualitative methodology and secondary sources of information to collect data. Researchers analyzed offences that occurred from March 2020 to the present during the Covid-19 era both in Bangladesh and globally. The study's concepts were gathered from various sources, such as books, journal articles, academic literature, newspapers, published research documents, magazine articles, reports, the media, and related websites. Additionally, they checked several academic internet databases for authentic reports. Considering the typology of Covid-19 crimes, the data were classified into four major groups. These categories are violent, property, transnational, and cyber crimes. Subsequently, the sub-sections were illustrated using references to the situation in Bangladesh and worldwide. Even though it is desk work, it is nevertheless important since it maintains the reliability and validity of the study by gathering data from credible sources and academic works that are scholarly in nature.

Theoretical framework

Crime is frequently influenced by differences in our daily lives. When an opportunity to commit a crime presents itself, the crime is organized. People's social circumstances, such as poverty, unemployment, etc., assist them in committing crimes. During the Covid-19, the variability of a few specific crimes increased. People were confined to their homes, which significantly impacted their lives. Although street crime decreased, domestic violence increased due to its forced relocation inside the home. During the pandemic, there were numerous changes in burglary, trespassing, and other crimes (Felson, Jiang & Xu, 2020).

The study examined the routine activity theory, the rumor and conspiracy theory, and the crime pattern theory since these theories adequately describe the Covid-19 criminal situation in some way or another. The Cohen and Felson's (1979) Routine activity theory, according to which crime is inevitable when three essential components are present. These are a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. It combines aspects of normal behavior with other situational criminological theories and focuses on how criminals may encounter opportunities for crime in their daily lives. Crime magnets are areas that attract motivated offenders because they provide opportunities for criminal activity. During the Covid-19 pandemic, it was observed that many crimes were committed due to the incompetence of responsible supervision.

The researchers also investigated different gossip bits, such as taking on warm socks, consuming garlic and using goose lard on one's chest to treat the conceivably deadly infection. In order to accomplish a concealed purpose that is widely regarded as being illegal or evil, multiple actors get together in secret accord (Zonis & Joseph, 1994). Conspiracy theories considered the deadly virus as a bio-weapon subsidized by Bill Gates for other immunization deals (Silk, 2020). From that point of view, many rumors surfaced about the conspiracy against an individual or company. It is clear that there were some groups (likely offenders) who were taking the benefit by using the suitable target.

Crime will happen if a region gives a chance for crime and it exists inside a criminal's mindfulness space. An offender and a victim or target can materialize when the action spaces of both run into each other. The idea of crime pattern theory elucidates the way offenders find out a suitable target from a specific zone or place (Brantingham & Brantingham, 2008). The pandemic situation forced people to restrict themselves in the area they lived in. The crime pattern theory likewise predicts where certain crimes may happen. For example, we can say that during the lockdown, the demand for face masks, hand sanitizer, and PPE was high. So many people tried to sell fake masks and provide false information on different social media sites. The theoretical framework of the paper portrayed below in Figure 1.

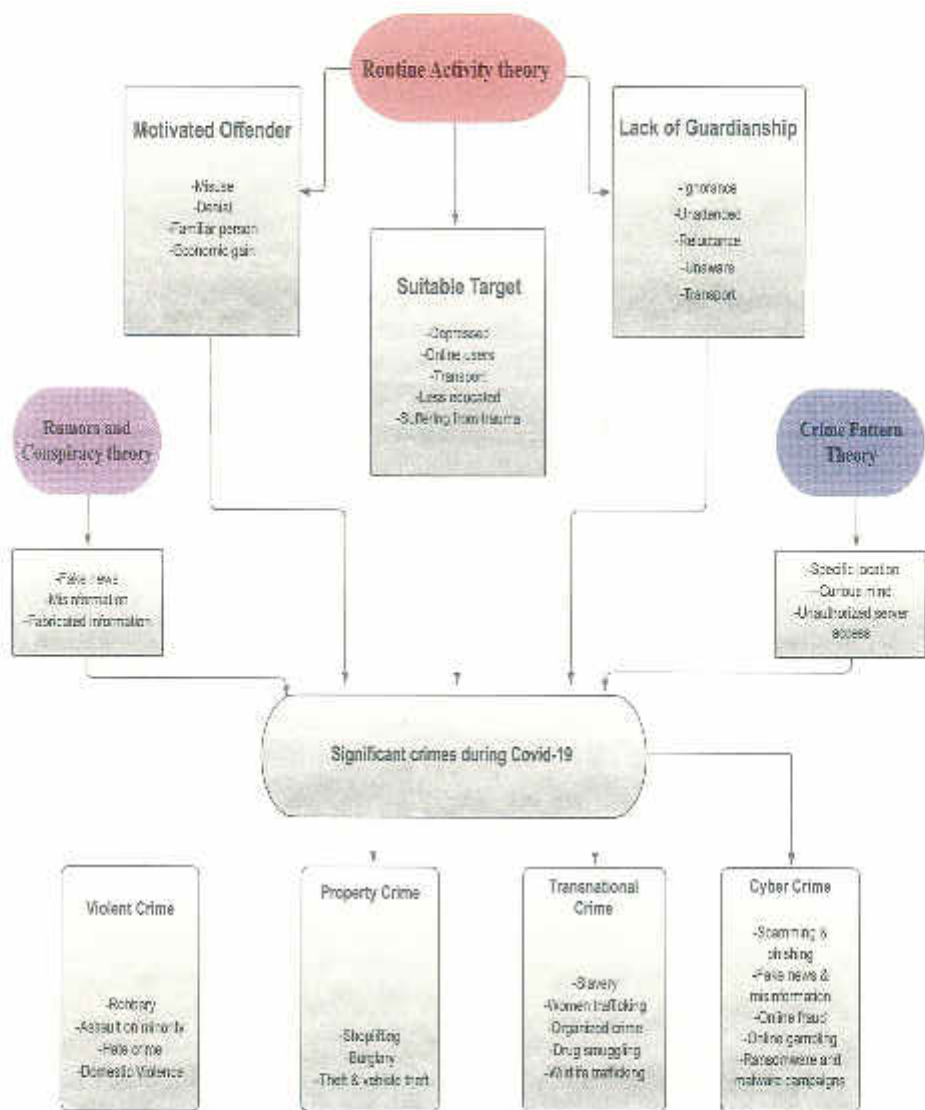


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the Paper (Cohen & Felson; Zonis & Joseph, 1994 & Brantingham & Brantingham, 2008).

Types of Crimes committed during Covid-19

Globally, lockdowns and isolations imposed in response to the Covid-19 virus had ramifications for daily life. Surprisingly, a vast majority of the consequences of the pandemic and its aftermath had been overwhelmingly negative

increasing death toll; work misfortunes, unemployment, and an impending global financial crisis were among the most frequently cited problems in the world. From this perspective, it is clear that many newer versions of crimes occurred during the pandemic. A local perspective in the case of Bangladesh provides a close-view into the comprehension of the situation alongside the global scene.

• Violent Crimes

Violent crimes cover an assortment of offences going from regular attacks to killing. Such offences likewise include using weapons, for example, guns, knives and destructive substances. During the pandemic, by the issue of George Floyd's demise in Minneapolis police care, violent crime was high in different states of the USA (Al Jazeera, 2020). However, researchers identified robbery, assaults on members of minority groups, hate crimes, and domestic violence as significant forms of criminal activity that occurred during the pandemic.

Robbery

Robbery stands out among the numerous violent crimes reported during the pandemic. Even though many crimes went unreported during the epidemic, the number of reported crimes increased dramatically. According to the Bangladesh Police Headquarters, there were over 900 robberies in 2020. A recent case was the robbery of Sonali Bank in the Chuadanga district of Bangladesh, in which every perpetrator was well-equipped and nine lacs taka were stolen. Criminologists and security experts concurred that the rise in unemployment, frustration, and anxiety during the Covid-19 pandemic compelled them to commit this crime (Islam, 2021). While the theft rate increased in Bangladesh, it decreased globally (Meyer, Hassafy, Lewis, Shrestha, Haviland & Nagin, 2022).

Assault on Minorities

Assaults on minorities are a common occurrence in both Asia and Europe; during the pandemic, it only increased and was highlighted across the world. During the lockdown in April and May 2021, there were thirty brutal incidents involving minority individuals in Bangladesh. On May 15, ten Hindu families' homes were vandalized (The Daily Star, 2020). The condition of minorities in various South Asian nations deteriorated between 2019 and the beginning of 2020. Many Europeans believed that they were losing their jobs due to immigration. In the pandemic, there was an increase in the number of hateful and divisive conversations centered on savagery against minorities as well as persistent financial prohibition (Minority Rights Groups, 2020).

Attacks and boycotts were witnessed as a result of falsely blaming Muslim gatherings at various sacred sites. The man named Mehboob Ali was brutally assaulted and dragged to a field within the city of Harewali, India. Sayed Tabrez (23), and his mother, Zareen Taj (39), were among seven Muslim volunteers whom a group of local BJP members assaulted on April 4 and 6 as they attempted to distribute food to displaced people in the Marathahalli and Dasarahalli areas of Karnataka, India (Petersen & Rahman, 2020).

Hate Crime

Hate crime is a criminal act, including savage crime, such as harassment, fire-related crime, defacement, assault, or threats to execute such violations against an individual or his/her property because of their real or perceived race, color, national origin, inadequate religion, ethnicity, sex, or sexual orientation. As a result of the pandemic, there was an increase in anti-Asian hate crimes, which may be attributed to a rise in prejudice and the normalization of xenophobia, fear of strangers, and weakness. Asian-Americans have been victims of real acts of prejudice and harassment (Gover, Harper & Langton, 2020). During the pandemic, rising statistics indicated increased hate crimes, particularly against Chinese and East Asian minorities. Different reports and police data from the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States reveal these shocking increases in hate crimes against East Asian minorities (Luthra & Nandi, 2020). During the first three months of 2020, Chinese minorities in the United Kingdom reported 267 incidents of hate crimes, compared to 375 incidents for the entire year of 2019 (Luthra & Nandi, 2020).

Moreover, as of January 2020, cases were reported of enduring racial blaming towards numerous Asian Americans, unjust work environment end, being spat on, actual savagery, outrageous physical distancing, and so forth because of defaming and blaming Asians for the spread of Covid-19 by media and government authorities (Croucher, Nguyen & Rahmani, 2020). In addition, in our neighboring country Sri Lanka, the public authority blamed the pandemic for criticizing Muslims and spreading Islamophobia. India's administration highlighted the Covid-19 pandemic as a chance to twofold its current Islamophobic arrangements (Suleiman, 2020). Several incidents have been accounted for in which Christians and Hindus were denied food apportions in Pakistan (Joshi & Joshi, 2020). In Bangladesh, at least 17 individuals were slaughtered in sectarian viciousness during the Covid-19 pandemic (Hussain, 2020).

As indicated by recent studies, hate crimes against east and Southeast Asians were seen to increase. In April, around 261 hate crimes were committed against

Asians, increasing to 323 in May, 395 in June, and 381 in July (Townsend & Iqbal, 2020). As a result of neighbors' intimidating behavior during lockdowns, the number of people seeking assistance increased by 62% by midyear. Sexual orientation-related crimes dramatically increased, and ethnicity- and race-related crimes were also prevalent (Binding, 2020). Nearly 2,100 anti-Asian American hate crime scenes, including verbal ambushes, physical assaults, workplace segregation, and online incitement, were identified by Covid-19 across the country (Donaghue, 2020). Political and social outcomes of the current response to the pandemic are likely to increase xenophobic, racist attitudes and hate crimes, particularly against Chinese and East Asian minorities, due to a misunderstanding of the financial crisis (Luthra & Nandi, 2020). It accurately depicts the situation of the potential offender:

Domestic Violence

According to multiple reports, many women encountered unexpectedly aggressive behavior at home as a result of the lockdown. Nationally, during Covid-19, domestic and dowry-related violence increased by approximately 2%. There were 228 residential and dowry-related violence incidents during the Covid-19 pandemic, compared to 224 during the pre-Covid-19 era. According to the Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), more than 200 women were murdered from January to July 2020 (The Financial Express, 2020). According to Ain-O-Salish Kendra (ASK), 235 women were murdered by their husbands or partners' families in the first nine months of 2020 (Rahman, 2020). It rendered women and children more defenseless against domestic aggression (Deutsche Welle, 2020). As per Action Aid Bangladesh, violence against women, particularly aggressive behavior at home, increased significantly during the lockdown period. In 2020, the number increases by 59% in Italy, 700% in Nigeria, 700% in Palestine, and 983% in Bangladesh compared to 2019.

• Property Crimes

Property crimes consist of criminal offences when the person is not directly affected or injured, but the individual's property is damaged. Theft, shoplifting, and burglary are notable instances of property-related crimes (Bulfinch, 2020). Remarkably, property-related offences decreased in the first lockdown phase and increased again after the lockdown was over (UNODC, 2020). However, organized property crime is additionally on the rise. The report noted a few cases where medical facilities and pharmacies were progressively focused on meeting the black market need for drugs and other clinical supplies and equipment (Meyer, 2021). There was a 22% expansion in calls for service and

a 25% expansion in property crime (Buffam, 2020). Likely offenders always seek for a reasonable opportunity to commit a crime. During the pandemic, there were many instances of not presenting the legal guardian in their respective places, and then the offenders made the opportunity to commit such crimes. From that point, it can be easily said that property-related crimes were perpetrated in different places because of the absence of proper guidance. The researchers focused on the following types of significant property crimes that occurred in Covid-19.

Shoplifting

While the phenomenon was not overtly eminent nationally, since the start of the Covid-19 financial crisis, shoplifting in the United States increased significantly. According to interviews with dozens of retailers, police departments, and security experts across the nation, the main target of the offender was more staples such as bread, pasta, and infant formula (Bhattarai & Denham, 2020). According to a study conducted by the Census Bureau in late October and early November, one in eight U.S. adults (in excess of 25 million) reported that they required more food to eat within the past week (Pomranz, 2020). Forty percent of businessmen report an increase in shoplifting since the start of the Covid-19 (Beer, 2020).

Burglary

Burglary is a distressing offence that can leave victims feeling victimized in their own homes. It is a violation of ownership and residence. During lockdown, there were numerous instances of burglary in Bangladesh, Britain and India. In Bangladesh, 137 cases of burglary and theft were documented. From January to March, 183 instances of theft and burglary were detected (Islam, 2020). As a result of the pandemic, many non-essential goods were inspected, and their owners were forced to remain at home. Due to the absence of a guardian, potential offenders exploited the opening, identified the proper target, and committed burglary.

For example, a burglary occurred in Bandipora, North Kashmir, at the deserted home of a Covid-19 patient, whose entire family was quarantined in a clinic; the thieves made off with Rs 3 lakh in cash and other valuables (Majid, 2020). Unknown individuals broke into a locked home in Hyderabad that belonged to a Covid-19-positive benefactor and stole gold and other assets. A few days prior to their return, the advocate's family discovered they had been robbed while quarantined for an extended period (The New Indian Express, 2020).

Theft and Vehicle Theft

The rate of theft and vehicle theft was reduced because people were not permitted outside unless there was an emergency. However, more than nine thousand thefts were reported in Bangladesh during the year of 2018 according to police records. In 2019, it exceeded the previous records (Islam, 2021). Due to the social deterioration, it has risen dramatically.

In comparison to global reduction of theft, vehicle-related crimes increased following the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the Merseyside police department, vehicle theft reports increased from 1738 to 2471 in the year following a major pandemic. Similarly, the number of reported cases in Manchester, United Kingdom, increased from 6,220 to 7,737 (Farnworth, 2022).

- **Transnational Crime**

Transnational crime is defined by criminal activity occurring in multiple nations. With the development of advanced technology, it becomes easier for criminals to commit crimes. They can quickly flee from one country to another to maintain anonymity and hierarchy. From this perspective, they plan and execute crimes in various countries. Drug-related crime, organized crime, women and drug trafficking were all mentioned during the pandemic even if not as much from a national perspective.

Slavery

Current forms of slavery, such as sex trafficking, unlawful recruitment, child sex trafficking, forced labor or obligation servitude, domestic servitude, forced labor, use of child troopers, and forced child labor, are also on the rise (Quinley, 2020). According to estimates by the United Nations, there are approximately 40 million victims of modern-day slavery across the globe. Existing Covid-19 dangers threaten to force a large number of men, women, and children into modern forms of slavery and other forms of deprivation unless governments act immediately to protect them (Thuiyan, 2020).

Women Trafficking

Around 72% of all victims of human trafficking worldwide are women and girls. Among them, almost 77% of female victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation (Regnér, 2020). Almost 60% of human trafficking victims are women and girls (Ali, 2020). Due to the pandemic, an additional 47 million women and girls faced poverty, which put them at risk for trafficking. As a result of the pandemic, it was possible for perpetrators who had been awaiting

the opportunity for days to act. Due to women's financial, employment, and other vulnerabilities, offenders got the opportunity easily.

Human rights organization records a 185% increase in human trafficking cases during the Covid-19 (Blake, Grant & Nitz, 2020). The pandemic had immediate and severe effects on women in the sex trade, who are among the most vulnerable women on earth. In the absence of food, shelter, and medical care, their risk of contracting Covid-19 increases (Farley, 2020). The Covid-19 worsened the predicaments of numerous sex workers who are single parents and have already been impoverished by severe measures (Shehadi & Partington, 2020).

As a result of the expansion of Covid-19, people have been subjected to unprecedented levels of unemployment, damage to employment, and shaky financial conditions, which have made them poorer. For survival, those in disadvantaged circumstances were subjected to forced labor, servitude, or other modern forms of subjugation (Bhuiyan, 2020). It has weakened the global population financially and sex labor is no exception. Many former sex workers returned to their jobs due to the pandemic. Again others have entered the field in a new way. Many sex workers must now accept much lower wages, more significant risks, or both to keep the market afloat (Yasseri, 2021).

The increment in women trafficking expanded to newer horizons with the aid of the pandemic. Since the release of Covid-19, approximately 66% of frontline trafficking workers were recruited online by traffickers and forced to produce online pornography by trafficked women and girls (Regner, 2020). Covid-19 hence accelerated new patterns of online selection of women and girls by traffickers, whereas their traditional systems are limited (Cook, 2020).

Organized Crime

During the covid period, numerous organized criminal groups attempted to carry out their criminal activities. They targeted numerous heinous crimes such as robbery, drug abuse, and fraud. Occasionally, they target medically-related objects. They communicate with one another via social media. In Canada, organized criminal groups are altering their illegal assignments to the Covid-19 and they attempted to create fear and deceit among the vulnerable population. In many cases, they were successful. Since the beginning of March, Canadians lost \$1.8M to fraudsters, an organized crime in which at least three or more criminals collaborated. Some were permanent or temporary coalitions formed to accomplish a particular criminal act. Their violations ranged from extortion and identity theft to managing firearms, drugs, and people (Fitzpatrick, 2020).

Organized offenders took advantage of the deception and fear inside social orders by offering fake therapeutic items online (Kennedy & Paul, 2020; Mazzolani, 2020). Interpol cautioned its 194 part nations to be highly cautious of organized wrongdoing systems endeavoring to penetrate supply chains to urge their hands on the immunization through fake websites and wrong cures (Reinstein, 2020). On the other side, organized offenders abused the Covid-19 emergency to dispatch phenomenal sums of drugs into the EU (Gallagher, 2020).

Smuggling of Drugs

The illegal drug trade is believed to be directly associated with heinous crimes which increased during the lockdown. Using smuggled drugs, traffickers sought alternative routes, such as the oceanic route, to transport illicit substances. During that time, benzodiazepine use, intravenous drug administration, and the sharing of infusion equipment were prevalent (UNODC, 2020). The prevalence of drug use was high in Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Bangladesh (Rabbi, 2020). From the Golden Triangle to the Golden Crescent, the Golden Age of India to the Golden Village of Bangladesh, these regions are known as the centre of the drug trade.

In Bangladesh, Yaba, Heroin, and phensedyl were transported in various food and other product containers. In April, Cox's Bazar DB police arrested three individuals with 20,000 pieces of Yaba in an emergency vehicle from Interface Street on Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Street. On June 9, RAB seized 150 bottles of phensedyl that had been hidden in mangoes, and a sub-inspector (SI) was caught with 11,000 pieces of Yaba in the capital's Mohammadpur. According to the police headquarters, 7,623 opiate cases were reported in March, 1,639 in April, and 2,460 in May. Based on these findings, it has been assumed that drug use during the lockdown period was excessive (Rabbi, 2020). Since November, 2020 the BGB has recovered more than six lacs of Yaba tablets along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border and captured at least ten suspected perpetrators, as indicated by the border force.

Elsewhere, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Vietnam had high rates of drug use during the pandemic. Thai specialists reported that 1.42 metric tons of precious stone meth were prevented from entering Malaysia. In May, Myanmar authorities announced Asia's largest drug bust in decades, seizing 200 million meth pills and 500 kilograms of ice, 35.5 metric tons and 163,000 liters of precursor chemicals and 33 suspects (Peter, 2020). On July 1, 2020, Italian police made the world's largest amphetamine seizure (Kupatadze, 2020).

Based on the information mentioned above, it can be concluded that drug dealing criminals have significantly increased their activities. They targeted border regions to conduct business. During the Corona era, when law enforcement agencies engaged in various activities; drug dealers also increased their criminal activity due to the presence of criminogenic substances, the availability of suitable targets, and the absence of appropriate guardians.

Wildlife Trafficking

During the lockdown, wildlife-related crimes rose. In the first nine months of the pandemic, China prosecuted over fifteen thousand individuals for natural life-related offences, 66% more than in 2019. Seven thousand of the total arrests involved the violation of fishing limits. Four thousand people were arrested for illegal hunting and 3,000 for illegally purchasing, selling, or transporting endangered wild animal products (Reuters, 2020).

It is well known that Pangolin products have been used in traditional Chinese medicine to treat various infections for millennia. The sale of these products increased following the pandemic. From 2014 to 2018, its rescue operations increased tenfold due to high demand. While the pandemic spread kept increasing, the wildlife industry expanded (The Dhaka Tribune, 2020). During the pandemic, when the mortality rate and health risks skyrocketed, it became crucial to improve its treatment. As a result, the probable offender began hunting wild animals, which were used directly and indirectly in various medical treatments.

• Cyber Crimes

We live in an age of science, which makes life easier and more accessible to people worldwide. It is comparable to the village known as the global village. People communicate through technological means. On the contrary, many individuals misuse technology from time to time and in various locations. Cybercrime is among these which are increasing daily. Cybercrimes are criminal offences using a network-connected device, such as a computer or a mobile phone. Cybercriminals or cyber terrorists are the individuals who commit cybercrime.

Throughout the pandemic, it exploded. At the height of the pandemic, cybercrime had multiplied by a 6,000% increase in Covid-19-related spam (Tert, 2020). Criminals immediately exploited the time of Covid-19 to attack defenseless people through online scams, phishing, and the spread of false news, which became an ideal method for cybercriminals attempting to sell products that they claim, would prevent or cure Covid-19 (Klein, 2020)

Around 111 cyber-related cases were filed in Bangladeshi courts in the first three months before the court closed in April due to the spread of the Covid-19. From April to June, police headquarters in Dhaka recorded an additional 108 cybercrime cases, according to the registrar of the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court. According to the report, 68% of cybercrime victims are women. Around 80% of cybercrime victims do not report incidents to law enforcement agencies, and 63% of victims do not know where to look for assistance. Among those who did seek legal assistance, 73.1% did not receive satisfactory results, according to the report (Tipu, 2020). There has also been more Internet fraud, phishing, data theft, malware that causes problems, and malicious domains (Ayling, 2020).

Scamming and Phishing

Scammers use fake emails or SMS to access sensitive personal information such as account numbers, login IDs, and passwords/PINs. Hackers use phishing messages to gain access to a computer or organization. Clicking on a link enables them to install ransomware or other programmes that can lock the computer and reveal its data. Scammers use legitimate company names or pose as well-known individuals (Kabir, 2020).

There are lots of criteria for scammers to commit online frauds which were commonplace during the pandemic. Scammers advertised on providing several grants, building Covid-19 relief funds, council tax reduction, diagnosed with Covid-19, free hand sanitizer and face masks etc. They also provided messages regarding TV Authorizing, telling individuals they qualified for six months without charge since the pandemic, upgrading their TV membership services, and false profiles on social media destinations (Read, 2020).

Fraudsters use phishing and content messages to obtain victims' personal information, bank account information, and passwords. Generally, phishing attempts originate from what appear to be legitimate sources, persuading recipients to click on a link or respond with required personal information. Concerning the pandemic, phishing attempts launched under the guise of government departments, health professionals, etc. (Cross, 2020; Patterson, 2020).

During the pandemic, a large number of frauds were observed such as antibody-related treatment scams (publicizing fake cures, vaccines), shopping scams (creating false stores, e-commerce websites, social media accounts), medical scams (Scammers may call and email individuals pretending to be doctors and clinics), charity scams (asking for donations for individuals), phishing and malware scams (stealing access to a computer or stealing credentials), and App scams

(e.g. creating mobile apps designed to track the spread of Covid-19). Scammers also used 'robocalls' or 'telemarketing' agents to promote everything from fake Covid-19 treatments to work-from-home money-making schemes (Kabir, 2020).

Fake News and Misinformation

It is known that bad news spreads quickly. According to this perspective, widespread misinformation and fake news were prevalent during the pandemic. If, for instance, news spread that Bill Gates created or financed the arrangement for Covid-19 to offer immunizations in order to gain global control. Different instances of false news during the pandemics included conspiracy theorists speculating that majority ruling governments were blaming the disease for converting their frameworks into absolutes, where 5G was blamed for the spread of the Covid-19, according to the report (Sheth, 2020).

Criminals posted false advertisements for medicines, test kits, and hygiene products. Numerous websites claimed to sell Covid-19 medications, tests, and antibodies. Eight hundred people perished as a result of drinking alcohol in an attempt to avoid infection based on false information. Due to the pandemic, many radicalizers and their followers had ample time to spend on the Internet and entered the modern world fully. It allowed fanatical groups to communicate with individuals.

Online Fraud

The Covid-19 pandemic redirected many consumers to online shopping, facilitating the spread of counterfeit goods. Numerous complaints against commercial internet centers were accumulated, including selling low-quality items, complicated and delayed discounts, and counterfeit goods. Customers were deceived on numerous social media platforms, including Facebook and web-based purchasing pages (Irani, 2020). This study provided examples of how the crime cycle achieves its appropriate objectives by entrapping individuals during a pandemic. During the pandemic, counterfeiting also became widespread. These were unambiguously linked to the Covid-19 pandemic, to which they have been added (Europol, 2022). Since March 2020, more than 34,000 forged surgical masks have been seized as part of various law enforcement operations worldwide (Tass, 2020).

Online Gambling

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, online gaming and gambling dependencies have risen significantly. In the United Kingdom, it is estimated that more than three lacs were affected by gambling addiction. Approximately one hundred sixty thousand Australians were influenced by gambling. During the

lockdowns, Spain, Belgium, and Latvia have imposed a few restrictions on online gambling to combat addiction. During the Covid-19 period, a bunch of groups found in casinos and sports fields across the country were immediately identified as potential outbreak sites. Recently, Belgian betting specialists imposed a weekly limit of €500 on locally-facilitated regions.

The Spanish government limited advertising restrictions to a four-hour window between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m., and Latvia prohibited internet gambling until Covid-19 restrictions were lifted (Pearson, 2020). As evidenced by the preceding example, they (the gamblers) developed a criminally inclined online community. They are accustomed to online gambling and send links to strangers where they look for various opportunities. Sometimes they stole money, and sometimes they associated with various individuals.

Ransomware and Malware Campaigns

During the pandemic, numerous medical care organizations were attacked by ransomware. Various ransomware attacks targeted clinics and hospitals. Despite this, numerous renowned organizations, such as Jack Daniels, Garmin, and the Ritz London, were affected by ransomware. In addition, the University of California, San Francisco, defense contractor Communications, Power Industries (CPI) in California, and Traveler paid ransom demands in millions of dollars in 2020, according to the report (Sheth, 2020). Because of Covid-19, 71% of cyber security worldwide is more concerned about ransomware attacks (Help Net Security, 2020).

On the internet and social media such as on Facebook, Twitter, and online publications, people encountered stigma, rumors, and conspiracy theories concerning the corona virus (Silk, 2020). In the United Kingdom, the gross betting yield (GGY) for e-sports betting increased by 2,992% to just over £1.5 million from March 2019 to March 2020, growing by 124% in April and then by 36% to £4.2 million in May (Mak, 2020). Adware was the most prevalent malware for Android devices in 2020, accounting for nearly 50% of malware in the first quarter, 27% in the second quarter, and 29% in the third quarter of all Android threats (Sheth, 2020).

As the number of people infected with Covid-19 continued to increase in the real world, malicious cyber campaigns such as spam messages, phishing, malware, ransomware, and malicious domains that use the disease as a trap also increase in the virtual world. Google reports that its Gmail administration has identified over 100 million phishing emails and 18 million daily malware identified with Covid-19 (Kabir, 2020).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates a great deal of crime during the Covid-19 pandemic. Newer patterns of crime like cyber-related crimes (e.g. online fraud, scam, phishing, misinformation, fake news, the rise of ransomware, Online Gambling), drug smuggling, hate crime, assault on minorities, domestic violence, wildlife and women trafficking, sex-related crime, slavery, etc. skyrocketed during the Covid-19 pandemic time. Overall, particular patterns were observed for crimes that were committed online and violent crimes. For the former, the study recorded an increase and larger frequencies over the period of the pandemic. Criminals waited online for opportunities. Likewise, as discussed above (appropriate target), online criminals took advantage of every opportunity they desired. Despite the rise of social media and its accessibility, social media misuse has not stopped. Even though the pandemic is spreading, rumors, misinformation, and fake news are on the rise. During the pandemic, the rate of cybercrime increased dramatically.

For the latter, there was a significant increase in violent crime, with a focus on domestic violence. The two patterns and trends observed for the two categories of crime were more or less consistent globally. Even though the statistics claimed a significant decrease in the overall number of crimes, the specific crimes mentioned above were significantly rising.

When many people are affected by job loss, financial instability, or work fragility, they are forced to remain at home, leading to stress, anger, and frustration. Frustrated people frequently vent their anger on the most vulnerable family members, such as children, spouses, and elderly parents (The Business Standard, 2020). As a result, unemployment makes it easier for people to be criminogenic, which is consistent with the likely offender theory of routine activity. When people are afflicted with a variety of problems due to the epidemic, criminals look for opportunities to commit crimes in various other settings, including medical, online, and retail. During the pandemic, individuals became susceptible to domestic violence and cybercrimes, especially fraud, misinformation, fake news, shoplifting, gambling, and counterfeiting, among other crimes. During the pandemic, the number of hate crimes committed against Asians increased, from 261 in April to 323 in May, 395 in June, and 381 in July (Townsend & Iqbal, 2020). As a matter of assault on minority, Hindus are affected in Bangladesh and Pakistan in which they were deprived of basic needs and vandalized (Republic world, 2020; The Daily Star, 2020). On the contrary, conventional Muslims were harassed in India and Sri Lanka (Kapur, 2020; Nazeer, 2020). In addition, Gambling in UK, Australia, Spain, Belgium, Latvia etc. went high.

Violent crime increased after the lockdown, and it has been seen that the expansion of violence was more among younger males. In Bangladesh, juvenile delinquency such as extortion, pilferage and drug abuse, especially snorting Yaba, are often seen (Sufian, 2020). The pandemic added elements to the list. Several newly formed Juvenile gang members were being engaged in drug addiction and business, harassing women and often in clashes and altercation in the areas and even the incidents of murder and rape are often happening (Nuruzzaman, 2020).

With emphasis on the Bangladesh context, there were similarities with the global context in terms of the rise of crimes online and violent crime that occurred within the households. With a drastic shift in consumer behavior depending on online shopping as well as online based transactions, such crimes saw a rise. Consequently, there was a fall in property crime over the first few months of the pandemic as the shift in consumer behavior ensued. With regard to domestic abuse, the same reflection can be made. There was an overall increase in cases reported by non-government organizations signalling the shadow pandemic which took place not only within Bangladesh but globally as well.

Criminals have the motivation to commit a crime; they always seek suitable opportunity, and the absence of a responsible guardian allows them to proceed to their goal. As a result of the pandemic, many easy targets for the crime were created when many people stayed at home and stayed off the roads. The atmosphere of dread and vulnerability caused by the pandemic contributed to the aggravation of everyday circumstances and the initiation of various types of crime and offenders. Activities such as social distancing, restricted travel, sheltering in place, and eliminating key neighborhood assets are likely to substantially increase the risk of various crimes (Usher et al., 2020). Europol (2020) warns that businesses and clinics are potential targets for organized burglaries.

Interpol cautioned member states to bolster their efforts in light of a potential resurgence of organized crime due to the increase in Covid-19 vaccinations. Therefore, governments and policymakers should make mindfulness about an expanded danger of violations during pandemic and feature the requirement for individuals to stay in contact with one another (Usher et al. 2020). Maintaining social connectedness is a significant issue during the time of epidemic. Improving wellbeing, forestalling crimes and connecting each other are very important to improve the current situation.

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