

**AN ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE ON FEMALE CRIMINALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: TRENDS,  
PATTERNS AND SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The 21st century has witnessed a profound transformation in the landscape of female criminality, challenging traditional stereotypes and prompting a re-evaluation of our understanding of this complex issue. This paper explores the evolving patterns, trends, and factors influencing female involvement in criminal activities during this era of change. Firstly, we delve into the changing patterns and trends of female criminality in the 21st century, examining the types of crimes women are increasingly engaged in, from cyber crimes to violent offenses. Through this analysis, we aim to uncover the underlying dynamics and motivations driving these shifts. Secondly, we identify the root causes and risk factors contributing to female criminal behaviour in contemporary society. Factors such as socio-economic disparities, gender dynamics, cultural influences, and access to education and employment opportunities are scrutinized to better understand the driving forces behind female criminality. Lastly, this paper assesses the legal and social responses to female criminality, including the evolving role of the criminal justice system and societal attitudes towards female offenders. We also explore rehabilitation and reintegration programs tailored to the unique needs of female offenders, emphasizing gender-sensitive approaches and equitable outcomes.*

**Keywords:** *Female Criminality, Traditional Stereotypes, Cultural influences, Fairness, Gender equity.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The 21st century has brought about profound changes in the global economy, impacting every facet of society, including the nature and dynamics of criminal behavior. Female criminality, once largely overlooked or stereotypically understood, is now emerging as a significant area of concern, particularly from an economic perspective (Alston,2022). The increasing participation of women in various economic activities, driven by globalization, technological advancements, and shifting gender roles, has also led to a corresponding rise in female involvement in criminal activities. This introduction explores the intersection of economic factors with female criminality, highlighting how socio-economic disparities, unemployment, financial stress, and the pursuit of economic empowerment have contributed to the evolving patterns of female crime. As women navigate these economic challenges and opportunities, the motivations behind their engagement in both traditional and modern forms of crime, such as white-collar offenses and cyber crime, are increasingly influenced by the desire for financial security, social mobility, and economic independence (Richie,2012). Understanding these economic underpinnings is crucial for developing targeted interventions and policies that address the root causes of female criminality, ensuring both justice and the promotion of gender equity in the criminal justice system. It has witnessed significant transformations in various facets of society, from technological advancements to shifting cultural norms and evolving gender dynamics. One area that has not escaped this era of change is the realm of female criminality. The traditional narrative surrounding crime often portrayed women as less prone to engaging in criminal behaviour compared to their male counterparts. However, the past few decades have challenged and redefined this stereotype, revealing a complex and evolving landscape of female criminality that demands our attention and analysis. As we delve into the 21st century outlook for female criminality, it becomes evident that the factors influencing women's involvement in criminal activities are multifaceted and interconnected. Changes in social, economic, and cultural contexts have contributed to shifts in the patterns, motivations, and consequences of female criminal behaviour. This evolving landscape presents both challenges and opportunities for understanding and addressing the root causes of female criminality and developing effective strategies for prevention and intervention.

In this comprehensive exploration, we will delve into the key trends and factors shaping the contemporary landscape of female criminality. We will examine the various types of crimes women are increasingly involved in, the factors that drive their engagement in criminal activities, and the consequences they face within a justice system that has historically been

designed around male offenders. Additionally, we will consider the evolving roles of women in criminal justice professions, as well as the efforts being made to support and rehabilitate female offenders in ways that are more attuned to their unique needs and circumstances. As we embark on this journey through the 21st century outlook for female criminality, it is essential to recognize that this complex issue cannot be examined in isolation. Instead, it must be understood within the broader context of societal changes, gender dynamics, and criminal justice policies. By gaining a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of female criminality, we can work towards a more equitable and effective approach to addressing and reducing criminal behaviour among women in the 21st century. This study acknowledges the evolving nature of female criminality, which challenges traditional stereotypes that often portray women as less likely to engage in criminal activities. Recognizing this transformation is essential for a more accurate understanding of crime in contemporary society. By examining changing patterns and trends in female criminality, the study can inform policymakers and law enforcement agencies about the types of crimes that are on the rise among women. This information is crucial for developing effective crime prevention strategies and allocating resources appropriately. Identifying the root causes and risk factors contributing to female criminal behaviour provides valuable insights into the societal factors that may lead women to commit crimes. This knowledge can guide efforts to address these underlying issues, such as socio-economic disparities and gender dynamics, which can contribute to crime (Henry,2022)

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The 21st century has witnessed a notable evolution in the landscape of female criminality, marked by changing patterns, motivations, and consequences. This research aims to address the following critical problem statement as to what extent have shifting socio-economic factors, evolving gender dynamics, and emerging crime trends influenced the landscape of female criminality in the 21st century, and how can these insights inform more effective prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation strategies? This problem statement encapsulates the need to comprehensively understand the multifaceted nature of female criminality in the contemporary era and underscores the importance of utilizing this knowledge to develop targeted and equitable responses within the criminal justice system and society at large.

## **3. DISCUSSION/ FINDINGS & ANALYSIS**

*i. Conceptual Framework on Female Criminality Using Law and Economic Tools:*

Female criminality can be analysed through the lens of law and economic tools, offering insights into the motivations and societal factors that drive women to commit crimes. Rational choice theory, a cornerstone of economic analysis, suggests that individuals weigh the costs and benefits of their actions. For women, socioeconomic vulnerabilities such as poverty, unemployment, and limited access to resources can tilt this cost-benefit balance, leading to crimes such as theft or fraud as a means of survival. Moreover, societal biases and perceived leniency towards female offenders might reduce the perceived risks, inadvertently influencing decisions to engage in criminal activity. Socioeconomic factors play a significant role in shaping female criminality. Gendered labour markets and wage disparities often leave women with fewer legitimate economic opportunities, pushing some toward illegal activities. The misuse of protective laws, driven by structural inequalities and moral hazard, also highlights how incentives and legal frameworks can be manipulated. Behavioural economics introduces the impact of emotional and psychological factors, such as domestic abuse or social stigma, which can frame criminal acts as justifiable responses to perceived injustice or desperation. Game theory provides another perspective, particularly in organized crime scenarios, where women may weigh loyalty against self-preservation when interacting with criminal networks or law enforcement. At the same time, feminist legal perspectives underline the structural inequalities that perpetuate female criminality, emphasizing the need for systemic reforms to address root causes. To mitigate female criminality, policy interventions must focus on economic empowerment through education, employment opportunities, and social support systems. Reforming laws to prevent misuse while maintaining protections is essential. Additionally, equitable enforcement of laws, along with tailored rehabilitation programs, can address the unique challenges faced by women offenders, fostering fairness and deterrence within the justice system. This integrated approach acknowledges the complexities of female criminality while promoting balanced legal and economic solutions (Belknap, 2007).

The exploration of socio-economic disparities and cultural influences on female criminal behaviour is a complex and multifaceted subject that requires an in-depth analysis of various factors. Female criminal behaviour is influenced by a wide range of social, economic, and cultural factors, and understanding these influences is essential for the development of effective policies and interventions (Baxi, 2012). The examination of socio-economic disparities and cultural influences that contribute to female criminal behavior involves an in-depth analysis of the interconnected factors shaping the criminal conduct of women. This exploration delves into

the intricate web of social and economic conditions, as well as cultural forces, which collectively impact and potentially propel females towards engaging in criminal activities. The investigation seeks to unravel the underlying dynamics of how disparities in economic opportunities, societal structures, and cultural norms may influence and shape the pathways leading to criminal behavior among women. By scrutinizing these multifaceted influences, researchers aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between socio-economic factors and cultural contexts that contribute to female involvement in criminal activities. The exploration of socio-economic disparities and cultural influences contributing to female criminal behavior involves a multifaceted analysis of interconnected factors. In dissecting socio-economic disparities, the availability of economic opportunities emerges as a pivotal factor, with limited access to education and employment potentially propelling some women toward criminal activities for survival. Societal structures, including gender roles, play a crucial role, as discrimination and unequal treatment may lead to criminal engagement as a form of resistance or coping. Additionally, institutional factors such as biases in the criminal justice system may exacerbate disparities, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage. Turning to cultural influences, prevailing norms, and values regarding gender roles, family structures, and acceptable behavior impact criminality. Media representations and cultural stigma associated with female criminality also contribute, influencing self-esteem and alternative pathways to empowerment. Intersectionality, considering race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender identity, further complicates the analysis, highlighting unique challenges faced by women from different backgrounds. In essence, this exploration seeks a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics between socio-economic factors and cultural contexts, aiming to inform policies and interventions that address and prevent female criminal behaviour (Miller, 2006).

*ii. Societal and Economic Implications*

The increase in female criminality has profound implications for society and the economy. Economically, the criminal justice system incurs substantial costs related to the investigation, prosecution, and incarceration of female offenders. Furthermore, female criminality can lead to the destabilization of families, particularly when women who are primary caregivers are imprisoned. This disruption can have long-term economic consequences for children and dependents, potentially perpetuating cycles of poverty and crime. From a societal perspective, the rising rates of female criminality challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Historically, women have been perceived as less likely to engage in criminal behavior, and their increasing involvement in crime may reflect broader social changes, including shifts in

gender norms and the evolving role of women in the economy. However, these changes also highlight systemic issues, such as inadequate access to education, employment, and social services, which may contribute to the economic marginalization of women and, subsequently, their involvement in criminal activities (Ghai, 2000).

*i. Economic Impact on the Criminal Justice System*

The growing number of female offenders places additional strain on an already burdened criminal justice system. This strain manifests in various ways, including the need for gender-specific facilities, programs, and services within prisons. Traditionally, the criminal justice system has been designed with male offenders in mind, leading to a lack of appropriate resources for women. For instance, prisons may not be equipped to address the specific health care needs of women, including reproductive health, mental health issues related to trauma and abuse, and substance addiction, which are more prevalent among female inmates. Moreover, the costs associated with the investigation, prosecution, and incarceration of female offenders are significant. These costs extend beyond the immediate expenses of maintaining prisons and court systems. There are also long-term economic consequences related to the loss of potential economic contributions from these women, many of whom are removed from the workforce and society for extended periods. The opportunity costs associated with incarcerating women—who might otherwise be productive members of society—are substantial and contribute to the broader economic impact (Miller, 2006).

*ii. Disruption of Family and Social Structures*

One of the most significant societal implications of female criminality is the impact on family structures. Women are often the primary caregivers in families, and their incarceration can lead to the fragmentation of family units. Children of incarcerated women are particularly vulnerable, as they may be placed in foster care or left in the care of relatives who may not have the resources or capacity to provide adequate support. The absence of a primary caregiver can lead to emotional and psychological trauma for children, which can have lasting effects on their development and future prospects (Daly, 2020). This disruption also has broader social implications. The destabilization of families can lead to an increase in poverty, as single-parent households or those headed by relatives may struggle to make ends meet. This economic instability can perpetuate cycles of crime, as children growing up in impoverished and unstable environments are at a higher risk of engaging in criminal behaviour themselves. The inter-

generational transmission of criminality thus becomes a significant concern, further entrenching social inequalities (Daly, 2020).

#### **4. BRIEF ANALYSIS OF LEGAL PROVISIONS AFFECTING THE RATES OF FEMALE CRIMINALITY**

The legal provisions related to female criminality encompass both protective and punitive measures, reflecting a wide-ranging perspective that aims to address women's roles as both victims and offenders. These provisions recognize the unique socio-cultural factors influencing women's involvement in crime while also addressing gender disparities in justice.

##### *i. Protective Legal Provisions*

- a. Protection Against Domestic Violence* The *Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005* aims to safeguard women from physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse.
- b. Anti-Dowry Laws:* Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the *Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961* criminalize dowry demands and harassment related to dowry.
- c. Sexual Harassment and Assault Laws:* The *Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013* and IPC provisions such as Sections 354, 376, and 509 protect women from sexual assault and harassment.
- d. Trafficking and Exploitation:* The *Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956* and other related laws target trafficking and exploitation, with special provisions to protect women forced into criminal acts.
- e. Protection of Reproductive Rights:* Laws like the *Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971* and the *Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994* safeguard women's health and rights while addressing crimes related to forced abortions and female infanticide.

##### *ii. Punitive Provisions Addressing Female Offenders*

- a. Gender-Neutral Offenses:* Women involved in offenses like theft, fraud, and drug-related crimes are tried under general criminal laws such as the IPC and the *Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985*.
- b. Mitigating Factors for Female Offenders:* Laws like Section 360 of the *Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)* and the *Probation of Offenders Act, 1958* allow for leniency in sentencing, considering women's caregiving roles and socio-economic vulnerabilities.

c. *Laws Addressing Female-Specific Offenses*: Cases involving infanticide, abandonment, or exploitation by women are addressed under specific IPC provisions, reflecting the unique dynamics of female-perpetrated crimes.

iii. *Gender-Sensitive Criminal Justice Reforms*

a. *Gender-Responsive Policing*: Encouraging gender-sensitive investigation techniques to address both victimization and offending patterns among women.

b. *Rehabilitation and Re-entry Programs*: Legal frameworks support rehabilitation for women offenders through educational and vocational programs.

c. *Family-Centric Approaches*: Special considerations in sentencing for women with dependent children, promoting alternatives to incarceration.

## 5. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Internationally, instruments such as the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* influence domestic legal frameworks to address female criminality and victimization. The legal provisions addressing female criminality must balance punitive measures with protective safeguards to ensure justice, fairness, and gender equity in both preventing crimes and rehabilitating offenders. These frameworks are critical for addressing the broader socio-economic and cultural contexts that influence women's involvement in criminal activities.

## 6. THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

Addressing the societal and economic implications of female criminality requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond punitive measures. There is a critical need for social services that address the root causes of female criminality, such as poverty, domestic violence, and lack of education. Policies that focus on prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration are essential to breaking the cycle of crime and reducing recidivism rates among female offenders. Social services must be tailored to the unique needs of women, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged or victims of gender-based violence. Providing access to education, job training, and mental health services can empower women to make positive life choices and avoid criminal behaviour. Additionally, support systems for children of incarcerated women are crucial to preventing the long-term social and economic consequences of family disruption (Saxena, 2009). The discussion of female criminality also necessitates broader societal reforms. Efforts to reduce gender-based inequalities and provide equal opportunities for women in education and employment are critical to addressing the economic



and social pressures that lead to criminal behaviour. Legal reforms that ensure the criminal justice system is sensitive to the needs of women, including alternatives to incarceration such as community service and restorative justice programs, are also important. Furthermore, public awareness campaigns that challenge stereotypes and promote a more nuanced understanding of female criminality can help reduce the stigma associated with women who have been involved in the criminal justice system. Reducing this stigma is essential for the successful reintegration of female offenders into society and for ensuring that they have the support they need to rebuild their lives (Chesney, 2004).

#### **7. SOCIETAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATION OF FEMALE CRIMINALITY IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

The evolving patterns of female criminality in the 21st century carry significant societal implications, fostering a complex interplay of changing gender dynamics, legal considerations, and community impact. As women increasingly engage in various types of crimes, traditional gender roles face challenges, prompting a reassessment of societal perceptions. Legal and judicial systems must adapt to ensure fair treatment, while families and communities grapple with the potential breakdowns caused by female criminal involvement (Saxena, 2009). Economic consequences arise from financial losses due to crimes such as economic offenses and white-collar crimes, necessitating increased resources for addressing the aftermath. Public perception and stigma surrounding female offenders may contribute to their social isolation, underscoring the importance of challenging stereotypes for effective reintegration. Enhanced social services and rehabilitation programs tailored to women's unique needs become imperative, addressing mental health issues and socio-economic factors contributing to criminal behavior. Educational and preventive measures are crucial, promoting opportunities and support systems to mitigate the root causes of female criminality. As the landscape shifts, community safety concerns arise, demanding collaborative efforts from law enforcement and communities to ensure well-being while addressing underlying issues. Policymakers must adapt with gender-sensitive policies, and acknowledging intersectionality is key to understanding and addressing vulnerabilities within diverse groups of women. In navigating these implications, a holistic and inclusive approach is essential, prioritizing strategies for prevention, rehabilitation, and the equitable reintegration of women into society. The societal implications of female criminality in the 21st century extend beyond gender dynamics and legal considerations, encompassing broader social, economic, and cultural dimensions (Reilly, 2016). The evolving patterns of female criminality challenge not only traditional gender roles but also prompt a critical examination of the factors influencing the rise in women engaging in various

types of crimes. Within legal and judicial systems, the need for adaptation goes beyond fair treatment; it involves a reassessment of sentencing policies, rehabilitation efforts, and the development of gender-sensitive approaches to justice.

The impact on families and communities is substantial, as female criminal involvement can lead to potential breakdowns in social structures (James, 1993). Community trust may be eroded, and proactive measures are essential to prevent the perpetuation of cycles of criminality. Economic consequences stemming from crimes such as economic offenses and white-collar crimes contribute to financial losses, emphasizing the need for increased resources to address the aftermath and potential restitution to victims. Public perception and stigma surrounding female offenders contribute to their social isolation and hinder successful reintegration into society. Challenging stereotypes becomes paramount for fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment. Social services and rehabilitation programs tailored to women's unique needs become imperative, addressing mental health issues and socio-economic factors that may contribute to criminal behavior. Educational and preventive measures are crucial in mitigating the root causes of female criminality. Empowering women with opportunities and establishing robust support systems can contribute to breaking the cycle of criminal behavior. Community safety concerns, arising from evolving crime patterns, necessitate collaborative efforts between law enforcement and communities to ensure overall well-being while addressing underlying issues (James, 1993). The societal and economic implications of female criminality in the 21st century are multifaceted, reflecting broader social, economic, and cultural shifts. Traditionally, crime has been predominantly associated with men, but the increasing involvement of women in criminal activities necessitates a deeper examination of the underlying factors and the subsequent impacts on society and the economy. The rise in female criminality challenges long-standing gender norms and stereotypes. Historically, women have been viewed as the "gentler" sex, less likely to engage in violent or criminal behaviour. However, the growing rates of female involvement in crime suggest that these traditional gender roles are evolving. This shift may be indicative of broader societal changes, such as the increasing empowerment of women, changes in family structures, and the greater participation of women in the workforce. One significant societal implication is the impact on families. Women, often primary caregivers, play a crucial role in the family unit. When women are involved in criminal activities and subsequently incarcerated, the family structure can be destabilized. Children, in particular, are profoundly affected by the absence of their mothers, which can lead to emotional trauma, behavioural problems, and even an increased likelihood of engaging in criminal behaviour themselves. The ripple effect of female criminality can

perpetuate cycles of poverty, crime, and social disintegration. Moreover, the rising rates of female criminality highlight systemic issues within society, such as gender inequality, economic marginalization, and inadequate social services. Women who engage in criminal activities are often those who have been marginalized by society—economically disadvantaged, lacking in education, and without access to adequate healthcare or social support. This suggests that the rise in female criminality may be symptomatic of broader societal failures, where women are left with few options but to turn to crime (Brien, 2001).

## **8. ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS**

The economic implications of female criminality are substantial. The criminal justice system incurs significant costs associated with the investigation, prosecution, and incarceration of female offenders. These costs are not just financial but also extend to the broader economy, particularly in terms of lost productivity and the economic impact on families and communities (Brien P., 2001). When women, especially those who are primary caregivers, are incarcerated, the economic stability of their families is often jeopardized. This can lead to a cycle of poverty, where children are deprived of economic security, educational opportunities, and social stability. The long-term economic consequences of this can be severe, as children who grow up in such environments are more likely to experience poverty and engage in criminal activities themselves, thereby perpetuating the cycle. Additionally, the increasing criminalization of women reflects broader economic disparities. Women involved in criminal activities are often those who have been economically marginalized, lacking access to education, employment opportunities, and social services. This economic marginalization can push women toward criminal activities as a means of survival, further entrenching their disadvantaged position within society (James, 1993). From a broader economic perspective, female criminality also has implications for the labour market. Incarceration can lead to a loss of human capital, as women who are imprisoned may lose their jobs, skills, and employability. This loss is not only detrimental to the individual but also to the economy, as it reduces the overall productivity of the workforce (Spalek, 2007).

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Addressing female criminality requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses economic, educational, legal, and social interventions. Comprehensive economic support programs targeting poverty alleviation, job creation, and financial literacy are essential to reduce the economic pressures that often drive women toward crime. Educational and vocational training

tailored to women, including those formerly incarcerated, can enhance their employability and economic independence, offering sustainable alternatives to criminal behaviour. Gender-sensitive reforms in the criminal justice system are necessary to consider the unique circumstances of female offenders, such as caregiving responsibilities, ensuring fair and rehabilitative sentencing and incarceration policies. Mental health services and counselling should be expanded, especially for women who have experienced trauma or victimization, addressing underlying factors contributing to criminal behaviour. Family-centered interventions can provide critical support to the dependents of incarcerated women, breaking cycles of intergenerational poverty and criminality. For non-violent female offenders, community-based alternatives to incarceration, such as probation, restorative justice, or community service, can help maintain family and community ties while emphasizing rehabilitation. Investing in improved data collection and research on female criminality is crucial to identify effective intervention strategies and develop evidence-based policies. Public awareness campaigns aimed at challenging traditional gender norms and stereotypes can reduce the stigma associated with female criminality, fostering a more inclusive understanding of gender roles. Legal reforms addressing gender inequities in the criminal justice system, including equitable access to legal representation and protection against gender-based violence, are critical for justice and fairness. Strengthening partnerships with NGOs and community organizations working with at-risk women ensures that resources and support are directed effectively toward prevention and rehabilitation efforts. Together, these initiatives create a holistic framework to address the root causes and societal factors contributing to female criminality, emphasizing rehabilitation and integration over punitive measures.

## **10. SUGGESTIONS**

Female criminality effectively requires a comprehensive approach that includes tailored rehabilitation programs specifically designed to address the unique psychological, social, and economic needs of women. These programs facilitate successful reintegration into society by focusing on individualized support. Empowerment initiatives, such as microfinance programs, entrepreneurship training, and leadership development, can economically and socially uplift women, reducing the likelihood of criminal involvement. Advocacy for policies that tackle the root causes of female criminality, such as poverty, systemic gender discrimination, and lack of education, is vital for long-term change. Cultural sensitivity training for law enforcement and judicial officers ensures a respectful understanding of the diverse cultural contexts influencing female criminal behaviour. For incarcerated mothers, childcare support programs are essential

to provide proper care and education for their children while preserving family bonds. Post-incarceration, long-term monitoring and support mechanisms can assist women in navigating re-entry challenges, thereby reducing recidivism. Preventive education programs in schools and communities play a critical role by teaching young women about the risks and consequences of criminal behaviour while offering alternatives and necessary support. Strengthening social safety nets, including welfare programs, housing assistance, and healthcare services, helps mitigate the economic vulnerabilities contributing to female criminality. Gender-responsive policing practices ensure the safety and dignity of women, particularly in addressing domestic violence, trafficking, and other gender-based crimes. Lastly, fostering public-private partnerships to create employment opportunities for women, especially those with criminal records, reduces economic barriers to reintegration and prevents repeat offenses. These comprehensive strategies collectively aim to address female criminality's root causes and provide sustainable solutions for prevention and rehabilitation.

## **11. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY**

Analysis of “An Economic Perspective on Female Criminality in the 21st Century” reveals that economic hardship and inequality are significant drivers of female criminality, with poverty and economic marginalization pushing many women into low-level crimes as a means of survival. Over time, there has been a noticeable shift in the types of crimes committed by women, moving from non-violent offenses to more organized and serious crimes, reflecting broader societal changes and the evolving role of women in the economy. Globalization and technological advancements have further contributed to these changing patterns, offering new avenues for crimes like cyber fraud and facilitating transnational crimes such as human trafficking. The societal implications of these trends are profound, challenging traditional gender norms and necessitating a more gender-sensitive approach within the criminal justice system. Additionally, the economic costs of female criminality are substantial, with the incarceration of women, particularly those who are primary caregivers, leading to the destabilization of families and long-term economic consequences for their dependents. The analysis underscores the need for policy reforms that address the root causes of female criminality, including poverty alleviation, improved access to education and social services, and the implementation of rehabilitative justice approaches. Moreover, it highlights the importance of considering intersectionality in understanding female criminality, as factors such as race and class intersect with gender to influence women's involvement in crime. Overall,

the analysis emphasizes the need for a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to addressing female criminality in the 21st century, taking into account both economic and societal factor

## **12. CONCLUSION**

The economic perspective on female criminality in the 21st century reveals a complex interplay of factors that shape the experiences and decisions of women involved in criminal activities. As society continues to evolve, so too do the economic pressures and opportunities that influence female criminality. In understanding this phenomenon, it is essential to consider the broader socio-economic context in which these women operate. The increasing participation of women in the labor market, while a positive development in terms of gender equality, has also exposed many to new forms of economic stress and exploitation. Women who are marginalized due to low income, lack of education, or limited access to resources may find themselves resorting to criminal activities as a means of survival. This is particularly true in environments where legal employment opportunities are scarce, and where women are expected to fulfill traditional roles while also contributing economically to their households. Moreover, the globalization of the economy and the rise of transnational crime have created new avenues for female criminal involvement, from trafficking and drug smuggling to cybercrime. Women's participation in these activities is often driven by economic necessity, coercion, or a combination of both. The criminal justice system's response to female criminality, however, has often been inadequate, failing to address the underlying economic and social factors that contribute to women's involvement in crime. Furthermore, gendered disparities in the criminal justice system, including biases in sentencing and treatment of female offenders, exacerbate the challenges faced by women involved in crime. Economic disadvantage is frequently compounded by legal systems that are not attuned to the specific needs and circumstances of female offenders, leading to cycles of recidivism and marginalization. In conclusion, the economic perspective on female criminality underscores the need for a more nuanced and intersectional approach to crime prevention and criminal justice reform. Addressing female criminality in the 21st century requires not only a focus on economic empowerment and gender equality but also a re-evaluation of societal structures that perpetuate inequality and marginalization. By tackling the root causes of economic disadvantage and providing support systems that enable women to thrive without resorting to criminal activity, society can reduce the incidence of female criminality and promote a more just and equitable world. This holistic approach is essential for breaking the cycle of poverty,

crime, and punishment that many women find themselves trapped in, and for fostering a society where all individuals, regardless of gender, can achieve their full potential.

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