



An Analysis of the Use of Plea Bargaining in Criminal Cases: Pros and Cons

Riya Kumari^{1*}, Dr. Ankita Shukla², Aarti Rawal³

^{1*3}LLM (Criminal Law) Student, Amity Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Amity University, Noida, India

²Associate Professor, Amity Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Amity University Noida, India

Corresponding Email: ^{1*}riyak2409@gmail.com

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Abstract: *The defendant agrees to plead guilty to a lower charge or to a reduced sentence in return for avoiding the possibility of receiving a sentence that is more severe. This is a widespread practice in the criminal justice system. The usage of plea bargaining in criminal cases is analyzed and examined in this research article, along with the benefits and drawbacks connected with this practice. According to the findings of the research, the process of entering into a plea bargain has a number of benefits, such as the speedy resolution of cases and the reduction in costs; however, it also has a number of disadvantages, such as the potential for coercion, unequal bargaining power, and the possibility of injustice.*

Keywords: *Plea Bargaining, Criminal Justice System, Prosecution, Defense, Defendants, Negotiation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a common practice in the criminal justice system to engage in plea bargaining. This is when the prosecution and defense negotiate an agreement that enables a defendant to avoid going to trial in exchange for pleading guilty to a charge that carries a lesser penalty or receiving a sentence that is less severe. Despite the fact that plea bargaining has become an essential component of the criminal justice system, the practice continues to be highly contentious. Critics believe that it is coercive and may lead to decisions that are not fair, while supporters argue that it is an effective and cost-effective method to handle disputes. Proponents also argue that it is an efficient and cost-effective way to resolve cases.

Throughout the last several decades, there has been a substantial rise in the usage of plea bargaining, with some estimates indicating that over ninety percent of criminal cases in the



United States are handled via the practice of plea bargaining. A number of people believe that plea bargaining is beneficial to the criminal justice system because it expedites the process of resolving cases, which in turn saves both time and resources. In addition to this, it may make it possible for offenders to obtain sentences that are less severe than those that would have been imposed on them had they been found guilty after a trial. Others contend, however, that the process of plea bargaining creates incentives for prosecutors to overcharge defendants and urge them to plead guilty in order to avoid the possibility of receiving a heavier penalty if the case were to go to trial.

There are also issues regarding the fairness of plea bargaining, since defendants may be pushed into accepting a plea agreement owing to uneven negotiating strength or poor legal counsel. This gives rise to the issue of whether or not the practice of plea bargaining is compatible with the concepts of justice and fairness. In addition, there are concerns that plea bargaining may have a disproportionate impact on particular groups, such as persons with low incomes and minorities, who may be more likely to experience pressure to accept a plea agreement as a result of inadequate resources and prejudices within the system.

Since many years ago, the practice of plea bargaining in legal proceedings has been the topic of much discussion and controversy. Some who advocate for the use of plea bargaining point out that it may expedite the settlement of legal disputes, cut down on the financial burden of conducting trials, and provide defendants the opportunity to escape more severe penalties. On the other side, those who are opposed to the practice of entering into a plea bargain claim that it may result in coercion, uneven negotiating power, and the possibility of injustice. The legal justice system in the United States is where plea bargaining first emerged, and it later made its way into the legal framework of the Indian criminal court system as well. One of the most famous quotes ever spoken by an American president was essential in the development of the idea of plea bargaining, and that remark is: "Reduce the likelihood of legal action. Convince your neighbours to reach a middle ground whenever it is possible. The lawyer is in a position of better potential to be a decent man because of his role as a mediator." said by Abraham Lincoln.

The Indian criminal justice system has seen substantial progress in recent years as a result of the introduction of the notion of plea bargaining. In certain jurisdictions, the practise of entering into a plea agreement is considered a kind of alternative dispute resolution, which is a direct result of the processes of negotiating and bargaining. The primary purpose of entering into a plea bargain is to put an end to the legal proceedings. The accused person and the prosecutor in a criminal case will engage in a procedure known as plea bargaining in order to reach a mutually agreeable disposition of the case, which will then be submitted to the court for approval.

The usage of plea bargaining in criminal cases is analyzed and examined in this research article, along with the benefits and drawbacks connected with this practice. In addition, the purpose of the study paper is to investigate possible answers to the issues that are related with plea bargaining.



Figure 1: Plea Bargaining

Pros of Plea Bargaining:

Effective conclusion of legal matters:

The ability to swiftly and cleanly resolve cases is among the most important benefits that come as a direct result of engaging in plea bargaining. Plea negotiating provides for a speedier settlement of cases, which is preferable to going to trial, which may be both time-consuming and costly. This, in turn, may lighten the load on the criminal justice system, which in turn can save the government and its citizen's money.

Reduced cost:

The use of plea bargaining may also result in cost savings. The expenses involved with preparing for and executing a trial may be significant, and plea negotiating provides both the prosecution and the defense with the opportunity to minimize these expenditures. Because of this, it is possible that both the prosecution and the defense will benefit, since it will enable them to direct their resources in other directions.

In order to avoid receiving more severe punishments:

In addition, criminals have the opportunity to avoid receiving more severe sentences via the use of plea bargaining. For instance, a defendant could agree to plead guilty to a lower charge in return for having their sentence reduced in order to get favorable treatment. This may be advantageous for the defendant since it gives them the opportunity to avoid the possibility of receiving a harsher sentence in the event that they are found guilty after going to trial and losing.



Cons of Plea Bargaining:

Risk of coercion:

The possibility of being coerced is one of the most serious drawbacks associated with the practice of plea bargaining. Since the penalties of going to trial and losing are so severe, defendants may feel as if they are under pressure to accept a plea deal, even if they are not guilty of the charges against them. This is something that may be particularly relevant for defendants who are facing long jail terms or who have little resources available to them.

Different levels of negotiating power:

The possibility for uneven negotiating power is another disadvantage of the plea bargaining process. Since prosecutors often have more authority and resources than defendants, it may be difficult for defendants to reach a fair agreement over a plea bargain. This may be a particularly important consideration for defendants who do not have legal representation or who have little available resources.

The possibility of unfair treatment:

The possibility for unfairness may also be created via the process of plea bargaining. Even if the defendant is innocent, they may agree to a plea bargain out of fear of the penalties that would result from going to trial and losing the case. Because of this, it is possible for innocent persons to be persuaded to plead guilty to crimes they did not commit.

Possible solutions:

Many alternative remedies have been presented in order to alleviate the issues that are related with the practice of plea bargaining. One possible approach is to improve the legal counsel that is provided to defendants. This would assist to guarantee that defendants have access to the tools they need in order to negotiate a plea deal that is fair to all parties involved.

Another possible approach would be to restrict the use of plea bargaining in some situations, such as those involving major crimes or those in which the evidence against the prisoner is not very strong. This would assist to guarantee that defendants are not pressured into taking a plea bargain when they should be sent to trial instead of having that option available to them.

2. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, plea bargaining is a practice that is fraught with controversy within the system of criminal justice. While it has a number of benefits, such as the prompt settlement of cases and a decrease in expenses, it also has a number of negatives, such as the possibility of coercion, an imbalance in the negotiating power of the parties, and the possibility of unfairness. In order to address these concerns, a number of potential remedies, including the provision of improved legal counsel and the restriction of plea bargaining in certain circumstances, have been suggested. In the end, it is up to those who set policy and those who work in the legal field to assess the benefits and drawbacks of plea bargaining and select which strategy would work best for the criminal justice system. It is possible that further study and analysis is required in order to guarantee that the use of plea bargaining does not result in results that are unfair or unjust for defendants.



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