

Exploring Women Involvement in Crimes in Pakistan

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Abstract

The present research focuses on exploring the etiology of female involvement in crimes and its effects on their family during imprisonment. Every crime adds in wretchedness to the world. The female crimes go past human observation as females are seen as pure and accommodating creature of God; loaded with adoration and joy. This examination conversely features the appalling side of female criminality in Punjab Pakistan; particularly studying the cases of those females who were convicted of murder. The in-hand research is intended to clarify that socio-economic and cultural factors i.e. low level of education, economical dependency and patriarchal system are the dragging factors which force the women to commit crimes in Pakistan. The study depicts how anger builds up in simple females with no criminal background which has led them to commit such cold blooded murders. The present research was based on the in-depth interviews conducted by the researcher herself from female convicted of murderers from five major jails of Punjab, Pakistan. Case studies were developed on each individual case and results were drawn through thematic analysis.

Keywords: Female incarcerations, etiology of crimes, effects of imprisonment, case study design, thematic analysis

Introduction

Men and women are the two basic units of a family in particular and of civilization in general. The differences in cultures stem from variation in roles and behavior patterns of these two units. Women have been considered as a nurturing icon since the inception of civilization. Particularly in Pakistan, a female is observed as a symbol of family cohesiveness, maintainer of customs, morality, communal norm and way of life.

In today's world, where technology has reached horizons no one imagined earlier, the role of women in such developments cannot be denied. Women are contributing on each and every ground at equal pace with men. This is one side of

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story while the other side is as dark as the bright one. Today when women's accomplishments are appreciated everywhere; the trends towards involvement of women in crime are also on peak.

Women criminology is no less common in Pakistan; a country where social norms are quite strictly followed. The women criminology is quite a vast field that encompasses social, public, intellectual, financial and opinionated milieu of Pakistan. Socio-economic and cultural factors i.e. low level of education, economically dependency and patriarchal system are the dragging factors which are forced the women to commit crimes in Pakistan (Zafar, et al., 2013, Abbas and Manzoor, 2015). On the other hand, females in addition are obligated to violent behavior for numerous similar reasons men do such as capital, authority and compensation (Kruttschnitt & Carbone-Lopez, 2006). Involvement of Pakistani women in crime is increasing at an alarming rate. This involvement has reached a frightening stage that has forced a large number of responsible scholars seek the prime causes of female crimes that has led to tremendous increase in statistics of violence by women.

According to a number of criminologists and sociologists, a major reason for increased women crime arose as a consequence of women liberation; as compared to house women, the women at work face more financial sorrow and greater than before municipal disorganization. Furthermore, deception and fake marriage are reasons that provoke women-type crimes (Steffensmeier & Schwartz, 2004).

Out of 207 million Pakistanis, 101 million are women (GOP, 2017) and they live under such conditions that may possibly protect them from the recognition and prosecution of the crime. Moreover, women deprive the right of mate selection, isolation, ingratitude, helplessness; desperation and extra sexual relation are those social elements which are indulged women in Pakistan toward crimes. Therefore, women criminality has been drastically increasing in the Punjab, Pakistan hence required an in depth analysis into the cause and effect relationship. The notion of women criminality is hidden cultural issue in Pakistan that has been dumped at the hands of male dominance and stereotypes attached in the Pakistani culture (Gillani et al., 2015).

The gravity of in hand research can be observed by The Nation News (2012) it was reported that in Punjab Police department have notorious at least 4,000 females criminals were concerned in kidnapping, theft, put to death, and other hideous crimes transversely the area. Particular information prepared by the regional police, explained that these females have murdered over 200 citizens and

offended 560 others throughout a range of incidents. These females have also carried out physical attack on 9 public servants, kidnapped 1,635 people, and committed 12 robbed and dacoits over 60 homes during 2011.

In reference to the report, it is stated that women criminals were also caught up in 1070 incidents of robbery, 325 cases of deception, two cases of fraud, 35 cases of narcotics like drugs and some 22 crimes that come under local and special laws. Official records additionally shows, around 360 cases that were registered against women on charges of illegal relations, 29 cases of kidnapping for revenge, 235 cases of relatives and dowry disputes, 15 cases of love affairs, over 70 cases of old enmities, 115 of simple aggression and quarrels, 12 cases of monetary disputes and 35 cases of marriage and nikkah disputes. Some 115 cases were lodged against women in connection with quarrels with their husbands. These findings are cited by this report i.e. the number of women in prison has increased at nearly double the rate of men since 1985, 404 vs. 209, respectively. Women in state prisons in 2003 were more likely than men to be incarcerated for a drug offense (29% vs. 19%) or property offense (30% vs. 20%) and less likely than men to be incarcerated for a violent offense (35% vs. 53%) (Brown *et al*, 2005). The present situation recommends that women criminality demands more attention and research curiosity than it has received. A number of researchers (Steffensmeier & Hebert, 1999; Steinberg, 2000; & Warner, 2012) have focused on noticeable inconsistency among male and women while (Imai & Krishna, 2001; Mahmood & Cheema, 2008; Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010; Sweeney & Payne, 2011, 2012; & Hicks & Hicks, 2014) focused on the social conditions behind the women crime that narrowed the sphere of activities open to females as a cause of disparity.

Women are usually involved in murder of their own husbands, siblings, and children etc. A horrible incident took place in Multan southern Punjab, Pakistan in which a newly married Pakistani woman has been arrested on murder charges after she allegedly poisoned her husband's milk and it inadvertently killed 17 relatives, a senior police officer says (November 2, 2017). Their disappointment in terms of their close relationships leads to this extreme act (Benekos and Merlo, 1995). It is generally accepted that women will be more inclined to kill their partners if they are "battered women" (Brown, 1987; Block and Block, 1993; Bannister, 1991). In distinction to men, women are more inclined to commit a violent crime at any easily available safe place like at home. Females are more inclined to murder their close relatives than strangers (Weizmann-Henelius *et al*, 2003). The few notorious women murderers have

made us to believe that as compared to their male counterparts, the public perceives these women in tremendously different manner. Research proposes that this difference is originated from the cultural forces, focusing the perception of females being naturally feminine and nurturing (Arrigo & Griffin, 2004).

Material and Methods

All the appropriate techniques and research designs were exercised to collect data, analyzing and interpreting debates from the valid respondents. It additionally encourages the researcher to depict and clarify the outline and methods of the examination. (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

The legitimacy and the exactness of the discoveries of an investigation may give a deceptive picture unless the examination has not been put to thorough and logical system (Liamputtong, 2013).

The prime importance of the present research is unfolds the horrific side of women crime within Pakistan. A society where women are assumed to be innocent, this research will explain what factors cause women to commit serious offence. West has largely accepted the notion as to inform the audience of the negative implications of crime, it is important to unveil the major factors that urge women to take up such wrong measures. Only then, authorities can prevent such criminal activities in future. Social stigmas are attached to various concepts like prostitution, drug abuse and male rapes, yet these are the realities of the twenty-first century and must be addressed at the earliest possible. This research will add promising contributions to existing literature as it entails qualitative research design that has not been done with these variables to test women crime status in Pakistan before. Amalgamation of these factors with their interdependence and collective effect on crime will provide a holistic picture of why women crime is on a rise these days. Moreover, this research will provide emotional as well as cognitive insight to the area of women crime; keeping in mind the sensitivity of the topic in context to Pakistan. Women occupy half almost of the total population in Pakistan. Therefore it is essential to address the women issues in connection to make the country peaceful and prosperous, Furthermore, this research has inherently focused on the Pakistani prisoners and will positively contribute to the Pakistani research as the sample size has been acquired from the same area and the underlying culture and norms have been kept in mind while conducting the study.

The present research was designed to explore the etiology behind females committing crimes in Punjab, Pakistan. In-hand research was qualitative by inquiry but case study research design was applied to collect information and interpreting dialogue from valid respondent who were in various jails in Punjab. Interviews from females offenders were conducted who had convicted murder/heinous crimes whether planned or un-planned. The researcher herself conducted each and every interview with the women offenders in face to face situation. Interview guide was used as a tool, including a number of variables, which directly and indirectly influenced the offenders. Due to constraint of time and resources researcher took five major Jails of Punjab as the representation of all the jails and 10 respondents were chosen from each Jail for detailed interviews that made total of 50 interviews that were conducted and detailed case studies were developed on each and every respondent during the analysis.

Results and Discussions

Elliott (2013) showed that violent behavior is shown by a person having different abilities. It is shown by a general's report on youth violence originates from the atmosphere, societal, physical and psychological health factors. Background of a family, relation is group and success in study is three elements that are causes of youth violence.

Grasmick et al., (1999) remarked six factors in self-control theory. They showed regarding Gottfredson and Hirschi (1993) unique statement:

- i. The people having weak self-control are impulsive.
- ii. People having low self-control are underprivileged of assiduousness.
- iii. Activities done by low self-control people are dangerous.
- iv. Physical activity preferred by people who have less self-control.
- v. Need of people are disregard by them.
- vi. Low self-control in people show low tolerance.

This study comprises of various socio-economic, demographic, psychographic as well as behavioral aspects leading women to the world of crime.

As crime is a social phenomenon stinging every nation around the world, hence, this study has used qualitative methods in order to provide an in-depth analysis of the problem at hand. Case study method has been adopted as case study methods are beneficial in the scope of studying human affairs as they are deep-rooted and provide

a comprehensive qualitative data that cannot be quantified especially emotions and feelings (Stake, 2013).

Pakistani females face the risks of several forms of violent behavior together with domestic violence, sexual violence as well as spousal murder and being scorched, stained with acid and vulnerable and sacrament of honor killings. Women in Pakistan experience from far above the ground rates of domestic violence, rape, and sexual assault. Unluckily, numerous types of aggression adjacent to females are not even documented as violent behavior in the Pakistani society. Still those cases which are documented are frequently unnoticed, condoned and defensible.

Every act of crime adds innumerable misery to the world however, the notion of woman crime goes beyond human perception as women are perceived as innocent and docile creatures; full of love and happiness.

The effects of women offence are extremely detrimental within any society especially for a closely knit and patriarchal society like Pakistan where already women oppression is widespread. Starting off from the individual basis, the offender goes through the pain of losing their status and family by being imprisoned. Even if crime was done in defense, yet if ruled out, the women suffer due to the law of the country. Apart from isolation and psychological stress experienced by the offender, she also faces physical abuse at the hands of immoral jail department of our country; adding to the misery and guilt of the offender (Anderson, 1999).

Women crime falls largely under a similar socio-economic profile and exhibits that socio economic factors largely contribute to rising woman crime (Entorf and Spengler, 2000). The Social Disorganization Theory makes a similar claim that assailants tend to commit crime due to the social environment they live in which largely includes their age, income, family status and background.

Social disorganization theory was proposed by Shaw and McKay in 1942 that largely focuses on the environment and neighborhood of people being the critical factors leading to crime. Sampson and Groves (1989) and Marcovitz et al., (2001) tested this theory and found out similar results that crime is largely caused because of certain environments and social structure that people reside in. Social disorganization theory focuses on certain assumptions where the community and the neighborhood along with certain social forces like income and age play a drastic role in bringing about unfavorable conditions for people to live in hence indulging in criminal activities.

Thomas and Znaniecki (1920) proposed the idea of disorganization which led to the result of crime, however, another study by Park and Burges (1925) focused on Darwinian evolution story that focused on how people live with other people but are always in conflict over scarce resources and the intense competition over time leads towards crime.

However within our analysis, within most of these cases, majority of the women were married with an exception of few that brings about a new argument that marriage and marriage related pressures cause great aggression within women and lead to criminal activities. Also, the cases exhibit a very important phenomenon that majority of the women were married off quite early in their lives which reflect their low ethical and moral grooming as they have engaged in criminal activities. Hence, marriage along with the notion of early marriages contributes to rising woman crimes which are consistent in majority of the cases.

Moreover, the majority of the criminal woman fall under the age bracket of 25-40 years of age and rarely includes juvenile girls or very old women, hence, showing a consensus that women who are married and range between this age brackets are mature however they still fall under such horrendous crimes (Klein, 1973).

The income level of majority of the cases was low-class as most of the women were residing in rural areas of Punjab and married off to men that were earning just sufficient amounts to feed their family members. Hence, these females range from poor backgrounds with a lack of resources and had a low state of well-being which contributes highly to crime rate. Poverty has been a major contributor to rising crime as women cannot fulfill their needs and coupled with greed; indulge in criminal activities (Alfred and Chlup, 2009).

Khan (2000) stated in his study “family background factors as related to murder” resulted that background of a family is a major factors which central murder. Warraich and Farooq (2015) remarked in the sociological study of “murder among women convict in central jail, Sahiwal” and reached at following conclusion:

- i. majority of the women were Muslim
- ii. All were the young
- iii. By caste people were majorly Rajput or Jutt
- iv. Majority of people was uneducated
- v. Majority of respondents were poor

- vi. Majorities were either living separately or were divorced (Kawsar and Rehana, 2004).

Our case analysis depicts that social disorganized theory is a sound theory in linking crime with women, as women face certain unfavorable circumstances like forced and early marriages, poor status, living in poor societies and neighborhood and age factor that contributes to them committing crime. Lack of formal education has been another dominating factor within these fifty cases as most of the women had received either no or just secondary education. Most of the women believed that education plays a significant role in the ethical and moral build up of a woman and had they received formal education, they would not have committed such horrendous crimes. Hence, most of the woman assailants ranged from illiterate backgrounds where their parents were also ill-read and they themselves were prevented from receiving formal education which led them to committing crimes (Clark and Dugdale, 2008).

However, a very small percent of the sample was well-read and only one assailant had received her Master's degree. Keeping the characteristics of the sample in mind, it is highly probable that illiteracy contributed positively to rising crime within females in Pakistan as illiteracy erodes the moral and ethical behavior of people and makes them more prone to committing crime (Steffensmeier, Darrell, and Allan, 1996).

Social disorganization theory by Shaw and McKay also exhibit a similar analysis that the socio-economic factors tend to contribute significantly to the level of crime as the social environments are the prime agents of crime in these cases.

Large family size and joint family system is another notable socio-economic factor observed within the sample as most of the women had more than 3 siblings and lived in joint families along with their in-laws where someone other than them made the important family decisions (Hotaling, Straus and Lincoln, 1989).

This can be linked to early marriages as most of the women were married off early and did not have much decision making power so they tend to have larger family size and agreed adjusting in joint families.

Cousin marriages cause complications and rifts between extended families as involvement and informality is high which leads to instant aggression and hurt egos. This leads to outburst and criminal activities like murders as suggested by Lakhani and Willman (2014).

“Baradri conflict” leads towards the criminal behaviors and it transfers from one generation to the next generation. In this case, cousin marriage and family enmity are the root causes of murder where male egos are on the peak and women have to sacrifice for their families and pseudo-egos of their male counterparts. According to Mumola (2000) females face extreme pressures at the hands of their families and commit crimes due to the “Baradri” conflict. This can also be explained with the help of study by Bersani (2009) which claims that the act of marriage increases the complications within family and urges people to commit horrendous crimes as done in this case.

Men using drugs don't fulfill their duties which led to problems within the household and caused them to consumer more and more drugs as also witnessed in the study conducted by Seddon (2000) who developed a relationship between drug and crime. Also, his family behaved irrationally and beat him causing him to die. Family pressure turned the entire blame on the wife and so caused her to go behind the bars. Similar study on family failures has been done by Petrosino (2009) which focused on family's negligible behavior, inducing crime. As the man was using drugs, he did not fulfill his duties which led to problems within the household and caused him to consumer more and more drugs as also witnessed in the study conducted by Seddon (2000) who developed a relationship between drug and crime. Also, his family behaved irrationally and beat him causing him to die. Family pressure turned the entire blame on the wife and so caused her to go behind the bars. Similar study on family failures has been done by Petrosino (2009) which focused on family's negligible behavior, inducing crime.

In Pakistan especially within rural areas, women are more comfortable being housewives rather than adopting a professional cloak and this is exactly what marks the occupational side of this study as most of the women were housewives and took care of their households and children rather than going out to earn money. However, about 10% of the sample had women who were involved in low-grade occupations like working in a salon or teaching in a small school. This highlights the low level of exposure these women have and the restricted mind-set they had acquired. Lack of education may lead to women being housewives or adopting low scale jobs and hence leading to crime (Shockley, 1967).

Another major factor is that the women are wrongfully charged. Such wrongful charging is explained by Rattner (1988) who said that criminals are

allegedly charged however they are innocent and there are other powerful members are involved. Men often put the entire blame of their crime on the woman.

Hence, keeping in view holistically the entire socio-economic factor base it is explained also through the help of Social Disorganization Theory that as most of the women were ranging from poor households, their education levels was also low and they were married off early which coupled together to answer rising levels of women crime. Hence, socio economic factors are consistent over the majority of the cases and exhibit a deep understanding of why these women committed crimes.

Conclusions

The socio economic factors of living within a low-class area, poverty, lack of education and meager social status are a reflection of Social Disorganization Theory and support the idea that women crimes are largely caused of certain environmental and social forces that are faced by women. The results demonstrated that most of the crimes were because of lack of money or poverty, absence of education, early marriage and undesirable relationships with others. Extra-marital affairs, betrayal by the partner, bride exchange and frustration build up because of peer pressure were some other relevant causes of the crime. The results also showed that process of committing crime is to a great extent comparable. Majority of the attackers have killed some other individual who are in some way related to them and killed them by hitting with some heavy object, the aggressor either utilized an overwhelming rock, a billhook, a stick, block and even a hatchet to hurt the victim as this is the most convenient way of killing. The results were supported by the previous literature and showed that the reasons for women criminality in Punjab, Pakistan are not much different from other nations. It is important to study the root cause of any wrong doing so that the specialists can work on eradicating the problem from its roots.

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