

Causes of Women's Delinquency in Pakistan: A Case Study Conducted in District Jail Sargodha

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ABSTRACT

Women delinquency in Pakistan is a phenomenon that demonstrates the social, economic, and cultural inequalities that are deeply entrenched in the context of influencing the involvement of women in criminal activities. This paper identifies the cause and trends of female delinquency using a qualitative case study carried out in the District Jail Sargodha, Punjab. The study was conducted to find out the key socioeconomic, psychological, and environmental conditions that led women into crime and the experiences of women prior to and post incarceration. The qualitative research design was employed which entailed ten in-depth interviews on incarcerated women through a convenience sampling approach. Thematic analysis demonstrated that there are several interconnected causes such as poverty, illiteracy, domestic violence, peer pressure, revenge, and patriarchal oppression. Women were also predisposed to criminal behavior by psychological distress and social isolation. It was also found that the prisoners in the prisons with their conditions characterized by neglect, abuse and insufficient rehabilitation services, tended to make the emotional and social states of women inmates even worse and thus move even closer to recidivism instead of reformation. The paper has concluded that structural inequality, gender-based discrimination, and poor social safety systems are the major factors that contribute to female delinquency in Pakistan. It prescribes extensive policy changes that are based on gender sensitive criminal justice processes, prisons education and vocational training, and post release rehabilitation systems to guarantee effective reentry into society.

Keywords: Women prisoners, Pakistan, female delinquency, criminogenic factors, prison reform, social exclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Crime is a social reality that has existed in all cultures and times of human civilization. Nevertheless, the discourse of criminology has always been male dominated, ignoring the trends and reasons of female criminality (Smith, 1995). In Pakistan, the delinquency of women is a very overlooked component of criminology as the number of women offenders is increasing in the prisons. The convergence of gender, poverty, illiteracy, and cultural oppression, as well as the lack of women skills, means that female delinquency in Pakistan is a very complex and multifaceted phenomenon (Manzoor, 2014).

The discipline of criminology acknowledges that the concept of crime is relative and depends on societies and different epochs (Marsh, 1986). What is behavior that is characterized as criminal in a given social setting may not be criminal in a different social setting. With the social structure being patriarchal and women being often placed in lower positions in Pakistan, their engagement in crime is more often driven by pressures, emotional control, or structural oppression than by a conscious choice (Islam, 2014). It is critical to understand these dynamics to be able to come up with informed policy responses that help in correcting the real causes of the problem, not just the effects.

One of the key social problems in developing countries has been termed as female criminality (Chambliss, 1975). In Pakistan, women who violate the conventional gender roles, be it in committing a crime or simply defying patriarchy, are more stigmatized than their male counterparts. In the past, women prisoners were not separated in prisons with men resulting in rampant cases of physical and sexual abuse (Cavan, 1962; Johnson, 1964). Systemic neglect, overcrowding, and absence of rehabilitation programs continue to be widespread issues, though the separate facilities are currently in place (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2011).

Female offenders are estimated at about 5 percent of the total population in the prisons worldwide (Mili, 2015). However, even in the face of their minority, women in prisons have other challenges. Their experiences are gendered, in that women are mostly poor, abused, and deprived of opportunities, and they are punished in a system that is mostly male (Bastick and Townhead, 2008). The women in Pakistan prisons mostly belong to the economically marginalized and socially excluded groups (Kiran, 2015). Most of them have suffered domestic violence, false allegations, or social control by their male relatives (Adeela & Nashi, 2015). Upon being imprisoned, they are faced with inhuman treatment, lack of access to healthcare services as well as almost complete isolation by their families and societies (Aliya & Nasreen, 2011).

Background and Rationale

The social structure of Pakistan is patriarchal in nature and regulates gender relations and specifies how women should behave in strict limits (Mittra & Kumar, 2004). In this framework, women are deprived of education, economic and legal opportunities that will enable them to live independent lives. A large number of the women in the Pakistan prisons have engaged in crime out of desperation- stealing petty goods, smuggling drugs or murder under emotional duress as opposed to committing planned or organized crimes. Lack of institutional support systems to women further increases their vulnerability leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation by members of their families, criminal gangs or even their spouses (Gill, 2009).

The case of female inmates in prisons is an indicator of a greater societal inability to enforce gender justice. Research shows that over 70 percent of female police inmates have been subject to some physical or sexual abuse (UNODC, 2011). Women inmates experience poor hygiene and overcrowding, and they have low access to clean water, food, and mental health care (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan [HRC], 2015). Prison system, which is a legacy of the colonial times, is punitive and not reformatory, which fails to consider the rehabilitative and reintegrative aspects of the female inmates (Siddique & Mazhar, 2014).

Problem Statement

Women delinquency in Pakistan has become a social and psychological issue, which is based on structural inequality. This is because the poverty, illiteracy, disintegration of families, and gender based violence, push many women into crime. However, the criminal justice system still treats female offenders

as exceptions and not people who fell victim to social conditions. Little academic interest in the problem has led to the creation of no gender sensitive policies, insufficient prison services to cater to women and few services of post-release rehabilitation.

This gap is filled by the current research, which examines the reasons why women commit delinquency in Pakistan and in particular, it looks at the experiences of the female inmates in the District Jail Sargodha. The case study sheds some light on the socioeconomic status, family setups and psychological strains that drive women to crime.

Objectives of the Study

The main aims of the study will be to:

- Discuss socioeconomic and psychological causes of female delinquency in Pakistan.
- Learn about the experiences of female prisoners prior to and after their imprisonment.
- Establish institutional issues that women inmates encounter in the prison system.
- Give policy recommendations to limit the extent of women in crime and make it possible to rehabilitate them.

Significance of the Study

The research is an addition to the body of criminology literature as it illuminates an underresearched community of female offenders in Pakistan. It offers empirical evidence of how gender, poverty and power intersect to produce female criminality by addressing Sargodha Jail as a microcosm. In addition, it matches the international criminological trend of explaining women routes to crime as the fruit of social injustice but not deviant nature (Adler, 1975; Klein, 1973). The results highlight the necessity of gender-responsive changes in the Pakistani penal and judicial systems, which is consistent with the international human rights provisions, including the Bangkok Rules (United Nations, 2010).

Conceptual Framework

The research is informed by three theoretical approaches namely biological, psychological and sociological.

- Lombroso and Ferrero (1895) suggest the biological perspective, which holds the female crime to inborn traits. Nonetheless, this deterministic model has been criticized because it has overlooked both environmental and cultural factors.
- The psychological approach focuses on emotional instability, frustration and maladjustment as the causes of criminal behavior (Elizabeth, 2008).
- In sociological perspective, structural inequalities, family conflict, and economic deprivation are identified as underlying factors of female delinquency (Islam, 2014; Sharma, 1963).

The combination of these views makes the study consider women delinquency as a multidimensional consequence of overlapping vulnerabilities- biological predisposition, psychological distress and sociocultural oppression.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Criminological studies have long overlooked women, with crime turning out to be a male situation since time immemorial (Smart, 1987). The first criminologists like Lombroso and Ferrero (1895) considered female criminals to be biological throwbacks whose deviance was due to their moral and physical

inferiority. This biological determinism influenced the perception of female offenders as abnormal or unnatural by the people. In the same way, the deviance of women was pathologized by Freudian theory of psychoanalysis that attributed it to emotional instability and sexual maladjustment (Carlen and Worrall, 2004).

Nevertheless, the notions started to be questioned by scholars of the middle of the 20th century. The concept of the masked or hidden female offender was presented by Pollak (1950), who believed that crimes committed by women were not reported because of the social chivalry. Later on, Freda Adler (1975) and Rita Simon (1975) proposed the liberation hypothesis which held that the higher involvement of women in the workforce and the rest of the life may result in an increase in the crime rates, as women would have more access to the criminal opportunities. Although the views broadened the argument, they tended to ignore the contextual realities of women in developing countries such as Pakistan where structural inequality and gender oppression, and not liberation, are the order of the day among women (Islam & Khatun, 2013).

The modern feminist criminology frames female criminality in the context of patriarchal power relations, and states that the majority of crimes committed by women are survival tactics against systematic marginalization (Carlen, 2002). This strategy acknowledges the fact that the social roles of women, economic dependence and the experience of gender based violence are very important factors that influence their participation in crime.

Female Delinquency and Theoretical Viewpoints.

Biological Perspective

Lombroso and Ferrero (1895) suggested that women criminals were primitive creatures who had physical and moral defects. Subsequent theorists, including Pollak (1950), however, proposed that women were prone to emotional stress and criminality due to hormonal changes during menstruation, pregnancy and menopause. These theories were once historically strong however, they have been disapproved as scientifically reductionist and gender-biased (Elizabeth, 2008). Contemporary criminology has acknowledged that biological aspects can be combined with the psychological and social environments, but not exclusive determinants of delinquent behavior.

Psychological Perspective

Psychological explanations put special stress on the involvement of emotional distress, maladjustment and personality disorders in crimes. Frustrated women, those who are rejected, or end up long suffering domestic violence can use aggression or illegal activities as a way of coping (Adler, 1975). Psychological antecedents to crimes like infanticide, stealing, or assaulting include depression, isolation, and guilt (Elizabeth, 2008). The two-sided pressures of meeting domestic demands and economic obligations creates a state of chronic stress, which, in other women, leads to delinquent behavior.

Sociological Perspective

The sociological perspective explains that criminality among women is caused by structural inequalities and environment-related strains (Islam, 2014). Sociological studies of female offenders have common themes of poverty, family breakdown, peer influence, and lack of education. Sharma (1963) discovered that the main causes of female crime in India were largely strained interpersonal relations, marital discord and deprivation of affection- a fact that is very much in line with the Pakistani realities. Manzoor (2014) and Kiran (2015) also confirmed that in Pakistan, female offenders mostly represent a lower

socioeconomic group, where unemployment, violence at home, and emotional dependence on men provide good breeding grounds to get involved in crime.

Patriarchy has also been recognized in this view. The Pakistani women are usually forced or even manipulated by the male members of the family to engage in criminal activities like drug dealing, smuggling, or fraud (Adeela & Nashi, 2015). In this way, it is impossible to explain their involvement in crime out of context of a systematic gender oppression.

Women, Crime and Criminal Justice System in Pakistan

The penal system of Pakistan is the one that was left behind by the colonial rule and it was mainly male-oriented. This means that in almost all areas of incarceration, such as investigation, sentencing, and imprisonment, women prisoners are discriminated (Siddique & Mazhar, 2014). According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRC, 2015), the majority of female prisoners do not have access to any legal services, medical services, or education. There is also the issue of judicial bias whereby the judges tend to uphold the patriarchal norms describing women as morally corrupt or emotionally unstable (Mariam, 2009).

Research works by Aliya and Nasreen (2011) and Chishti (2002) have recorded extreme abuses in the prisons such as sexual exploitation, physical torture and neglect of pregnant women. The conditions do not only abuse human rights, but they also hamper rehabilitation. Gender-sensitive correctional practices are highlighted in the Bangkok Rules (United Nations, 2010), but the rule is not followed well in Pakistan.

Furthermore, the majority of women in Pakistan are one-time offenders who are usually jailed due to a crime of poverty (petty theft, smuggling of narcotics, or self-defense murder) (Manzoor, 2014). Their incarceration becomes a vicious circle of stigma and marginalization, with women being socially ostracized once they get out of jail. Incarceration in a patriarchal society tends to cause permanent separation in the family and community and thus almost impossible to reintegrate (Gill, 2009).

Criminogenic Factors that Impact Women Delinquency

An examination of the international and local literature indicates that there are common criminogenic elements that contribute to female delinquency:

Socioeconomic Deprivation

In Pakistan, women criminality has a major motivator of poverty (Hasnat, 2011). Lower-income women are financially reliant on men, and they can resort to unlawful practices to survive in case they are deserted, widowed, or abused (Bhosle, cited in Manzoor, 2014).

Illiteracy and Ignorance

The female literacy rate in Pakistan is one of the lowest in South Asia whereby, only 46 percent of females are literate (Finance Division Government of Pakistan, 2012). Not only does illiteracy reduce the chances of employment but also creates ignorance on legal rights leaving the women at the mercy of exploitation.

Family Dysfunction

Family breakdowns, domestic violence, and infidelity in marriage are among the repetitive triggers of female crime. Women who are betrayed or abused by their husbands or in-laws tend to be violent or vengeful (Reema & Sana, cited in Manzoor, 2014).

Peer Influence and Coercion

Crime is introduced to many women by close people or by intimate partners. The women are manipulated by the criminal networks based on their emotional attachment and social weakness as safe carriers of narcotics or illegal products (Manzoor, 2014).

Revenge and Emotional Distress

The emotional impulsivity is usually caused by betrayal or exploitation and thus, makes women commit crimes of passion. Both Lombroso (1895) and Reckless (1961) had observed that women were prone to emotionally colored crimes and this trend remains visible in South Asian settings.

Cultural and Religious Limitations

Women are economically dependent and socially isolated in male dominated society with strict gender roles and code of morality (Anton, 1982). Karo-Kari, Swara and Watta-Satta are some of the practices that promote violence and marginalization of women (Mittra & Kumar, 2004).

Institutional Neglect

Reoffending is attributable to the lack of gender sensitive facilities and rehabilitation programs in prisons. According to HRCP (2015) and UNODC (2011), lack of nutrition, medical attention, and overcrowding worsen trauma and criminal inclinations in female prisoners.

Overview of Literary Lapses

Although existing studies on the topic of gender inequality and socioeconomic deprivation in relation to female delinquency have been conducted on an international scale, few studies have been conducted to examine gender inequality and socioeconomic deprivation in terms of female delinquency in the context of Pakistan. The literature on the topic is either too old or relies on quantitative surveys that cannot reflect the lived experiences of women offenders. Hence, this study fills the gap by applying the qualitative case study method to the District Jail Sargodha. It attempts to learn the women routes to crime in their own stories, providing subtle details of the existence of the gender, poverty, and justice in Pakistan.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design used in this study was qualitative because it aimed at understanding the causal factors behind the occurrence of delinquency among women, as well as the experiences of the imprisoned women in Pakistan. Qualitative enquiry enables investigators to maintain the multifaceted nature of social facts, where the focus is given to the meanings, feelings, and situations of the participants (Creswell, 2014). Since female delinquency in Pakistan is culturally, socioeconomically, and psychologically constructed, a qualitative approach offered the leeway to learn about motivation at an individual level and structural factors at the same time.

It utilized the case study method in order to carry out a detailed analysis of women prisoners in District Jail Sargodha, which is situated in the Punjab province. The choice of this approach is explained by the fact that case studies allow obtaining contextualized knowledge about real life circumstances, especially in cases when the limits between the phenomenon and the context are unclear (Yin, 2018). Sargodha jail was selected purposely because it has a diverse population of inmates and it is accessible to collect the data.

Objectives and Questions of the Research

The general objective of the research was to examine the factors leading to female delinquency and social life of women inmates in Sargodha. To be more precise, the research questions that the study attempted to answer were the following:

What socioeconomic, family and psychological conditioning leads to women committing crime in Pakistan?

- What are the perceptions of women regarding their experiences prior to and after incarceration?
- What are the institutional and systemic issues female prisoners encounter in prison?
- How can female delinquency be minimized and rehabilitation outcomes enhanced in Pakistan?
- The study area and target population will be presented in the following sub-headings.

The research was carried out at the District Jail Sargodha which is one of the central women detention centers in Punjab. Both under-trial and convicted female prisoners accused of different crimes, such as theft, smuggling narcotics, assault, and homicide are found in the jail. The number of female inmates in this facility varies between 15-25 which provides an easy sample size to conduct qualitative inquiry.

The target population was all female inmates whose age is 18 years and over and would be willing to volunteer. Diversity in age, marital status, educational background, and type of crime committed was considered as the inclusion criteria to make the experiences representative.

Sampling Technique

The research used a convenience sampling method, which is a non-probability approach that is appropriate in exploratory research when the researched people are chosen according to their availability and willingness (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016). In-depth interviews were done with ten respondents. Convenience sampling could also lead to poor generalizability but in this case, the researcher was able to get deep and circumstances data of the respondents who were usually reluctant to talk about their personal backgrounds due to stigma and fear.

Data Collection Procedures and Data Collection Tools

Semi-structured interviews were used as the main method of gathering primary data, and the participants were given an opportunity to share their stories and make them consistent across the cases. A guide of the interview was created, and it included the following:

- Family background and education.
- Prisoner economic status prior to imprisonment.
- Character of crime and the conditions that precipitated it.
- Police, court, and prison experiences.
- Prison psychological and social problems.
- Anticipations and anxieties about life after release.

The interviews were to be held in Urdu and Punjabi to make the participants feel comfortable and linguistically at ease. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants and took about 45-60 minutes. There was a high level of confidentiality and pseudonyms were employed to safeguard the personalities.

The secondary data was taken based on the official prison records, reports prepared by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the academic literature available. These sources served to put the findings into a bigger context of women incarceration in Pakistan.

DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data, and it is based on the six-step model suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006):

- Transcripts Repeated reading of transcripts.
- Generation of initial codes.
- Searching cases by patterns or themes.
- Revising and reworking themes.
- Defining and naming themes.
- Creating a logical analytical story.

The key themes which were identified were poverty and economic deprivation, illiteracy, family set up, peer influence, revenge and emotional stress and institutional neglect. Field observations that were made during jail visits were also incorporated into the analysis e.g. interactions between staff and inmates, hygienic conditions and the general in-prison environment.

Ethical Considerations

The research had high ethical standards that were adhered to. The University of Sargodha Department of Social Work and the District Jail Administration were contacted to give permission to collect the data. The participants were advised on the objective of the study, and their right to drop out at any time. Verbal and written consent was obtained. There was no compulsion or any incentives to participate.

All the identifiable data were anonymized to maintain confidentiality. The research has followed the principles of ethics of human beings, beneficence and justice as stipulated in the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

Limitations of the Study

The paper has a number of limitations. To begin with, the sample size is small, which limits the possibility of applying the results to other prisons or parts of Pakistan. Second, interviews were based on self-reporting and therefore, some answers might have been affected by fear of reprisal or social desirability bias. Third, convenience sampling restricts the ability to represent under-trial and convicted inmates. These restrictions notwithstanding, the qualitative method helped enrich the experience of women inmates and offered useful guidelines in future studies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Conducted in the local jail District Jail Sargodha, the ten case studies analysis showed that there is a complicated interaction of the socioeconomic, psychological, and cultural factors that lead women to delinquent behavior. Majority of the respondents were poor, illiterate and economically reliant on the male family members. Most of them were first-time offenders and had little or no criminal history. They were involved in stealing, drug trafficking, physical assault and homicide- most of the times duress, emotional pressure or being in a state of extreme deprivation.

The results support the previous studies according to which the criminal activities of women in Pakistan are hardly premeditated; instead, they are the result of situational pressures, intimidation, and survival tactics (Manzoor, 2014; Kiran, 2015). These findings are addressed based on the key themes based on the data.

Theme 1: Illiteracy and Ignorance.

One of the characteristics of respondents was illiteracy. Almost all the participants were uneducated and the majority of them could not read or write. They did not know their rights in the law and they were easily used by others. A large number of them claimed to have signed documents when police were investigating their cases without knowing what they entailed.

This observation is consistent with the social disorganization theory, according to which deficient access to education and access to legitimate opportunities undermine the moral and social controls of people making them more susceptible to deviant action (Shaw and McKay, 1969). Pakistan has a high illiteracy, which does not only restrict women in obtaining employment, but also isolates them in terms of social awareness and civic engagements (Finance Division Government of Pakistan, 2012). As one respondent stated:

“I was not aware of what was contained in the papers handed over to me by the police. I just did as my husband instructed me to do.”

Illiteracy also continues to keep people dependent on men, which strengthens the patriarchal structures that lead women into subordinate and even criminal positions.

Theme 2: Poverty and Economic Marginalization.

The influencing factor that came out as the most powerful cause of women engaging in crime was poverty. Majority of the respondents belonged to families with unstable earnings or no regular jobs. Some of the women would get involved in petty stealing or smuggling drugs to take care of their children who are either abandoned or widowed.

This is consistent with previous research that found economic deprivation and survival needs to be one of the major factors that lead to female delinquency (Bhosle, cited in Manzoor, 2014; Hasnat, 2011). Criminal activity may seem like the way out in a patriarchal economy of Pakistan, where the labor of women is devalued.

“My husband passed on and nobody was left to feed my children. One of the men told me that I could make a profit by taking a packet to Lahore. I didn't know it was drugs.”

These statistics indicate that the need and not greed among women are the causes of poverty induced crime. It advocates the strain theory (Merton, 1938) according to which people rejected in their attempt to attain culturally sanctioned objectives resort to illegitimate ones.

Theme 3: Family and Domestic Conflict.

Another theme that was prevalent was family disintegration. Some of the respondents claimed to have violent or abusive relationships with husbands, in-laws or male relatives. The reasons of most homicide and assault cases were the long-term domestic violence, infidelity, or betrayal. Other women explained that they did it in self-defense or revenge.

This is in line with previous studies by Sharma (1963) who discovered that female criminality is largely contributed by strained marriage relations and maladjustment of the family. In male dominated cultures such as Pakistan, women learn the art of violence and domination in the name of their duties and end up with unexpressed emotions that can one day culminate into aggression.

“My husband would whip me all the years. One day he arrived home drunk at night and attempted to strangle me. I struck him with a brick, now here I am.”

The statistics also show that the criminal behavior of women is in many ways a response to family oppression in a conflict situation and not pure deviance.

Theme 4: Men Pressure and Influence by Men.

Most of the women also said they were forced into crime by their male partners, relatives or friends. Women were employed as drug carriers or accomplices in robbery as the police do not search and search females often. This exploitation brings out gendered power relations where women are agents of crimes that are planned by men.

The same trend is observed by Manzoor (2014) and Adeela and Nashi (2015): women often join the crime due to emotional influence or pressure. In the research undertaken, a number of the respondents stated that they did this because they love their male counterparts, are afraid or are loyal to their male counterparts.

“My boyfriend claimed that he loved me and requested me to bring along some of his things to Multan. I trusted him. I found out later that it was smuggling.”

This observation highlights the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), which opines that behavior is acquired by observation, imitation, and reinforcement. The deviant behavior is normalized when criminal networks are the closest relationships of women.

Theme 5: Revenge and Emotional Stress.

In homicide and assault cases, there were emotional distress and revenge motives. Other women responded through violence when betrayed, infidelity or sustained abuse. Some wanted to regain their lives that were humiliated earlier. These results resonate with the psychological theory of aggression, which links reactive violence to chronic frustration and stress (Berkowitz, 1989).

“He got married to another woman and promised to remain with me. I was not able to endure the shame and indignation.”

The statistics indicate that a significant number of women did not have access to counseling or support network to cope with psychological trauma. Emotional repression would be converted to impulsive and violent behavior without external intervention.

Theme 6: Environment and Institutional Factors.

The Jail observations at Sargodha revealed extreme conditions, overcrowding, awful sanitation, absence of medical treatment and mental neglect. The prison staff was likely to treat the female inmates in an abusive, discriminatory, and dehumanizing manner. A large number of the respondents stated that they were beaten, harassed, or refused medical attention.

It is consistent with the findings of UNODC (2011) and HRCP (2015), which record widespread abuses of women in the Pakistani prisons. Lack of female officers, counselors, and healthcare providers who are trained worsens the trauma of inmates. Prisons are now more of a school of crime, rather than a place of reform as women come out more alienated than rehabilitated.

Moreover, there are few educational or vocational services and this implies that inmates are not likely to resume their lives after release, which promotes recidivism (Carlen and Worrall, 2004).

Theoretical Lenses of Interpretation of Findings.

The findings of this case study support several theories of criminology:

The strain and social disorganization sociological theories are good explanations of how poverty, unemployment, and poor family institutions lead to women committing crimes (Merton, 1938; Shaw and McKay, 1969).

Psychological Theories aid in the contextualization of the crimes of passion and revenge as a result of prolonged emotional repression and maladjustment (Elizabeth, 2008).

Feminist Criminology is a critique of patriarchal forms of social organization that penalize any form of resistance by women and overlook the injustices of a system (Carlen, 2002).

Collectively, these views indicate that the intersectional oppression is the cause of female delinquency in Pakistan- the combination of gender, classes, and social hierarchy restricts the agency of women.

Discussion with the Past Research.

The results of Sargodha Jail agree with the regional and international studies. South Asian and Middle Eastern research indicates that women committing crimes due to poverty, low levels of education, and abused by male partners are the same (Islam, 2014; Aliya and Nasreen, 2011). The situation is also similar in Bangladesh and India where female offenders are subject to stigmatization, the absence of legal representation and little post-release support (Mittra & Kumar, 2004).

But the most interesting aspect about Pakistan is that religion, culture, and patriarchy are so interwoven in defining the criminality of women. Women are usually denied justice within and outside prisons because of the abuse of religious norms and cultural taboos (Mariam, 2009). Therefore, the deviance of women in Pakistan cannot be attributed to other than the moral codes and institutional prejudices that characterize gender relationships.

Summary of Findings

As a summary, the research indicates that:

- Poverty, illiteracy and exploitation by patriarchy are the major causes of women delinquency.
- Immediate stimuli of committing a crime are emotional distress and pressure by men.
- Institutional structures such as police, courts and prisons tend to support rather than reduce injustice.
- There are practically no rehabilitation mechanisms and women are left to go through the cycles of crime and marginalization.

These results indicate that the issue of delinquency among women in Pakistan cannot be solved exclusively through structural reforms that are well beyond the punitive approaches. It demands a change

in the approach to criminalization to compassion and understanding that female criminals are victims of structural inequality.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

CONCLUSION

Women delinquency in Pakistan which is based on District Jail Sargodha case shows that criminality among women is seldom attributed to the state of inborn deviance or moral decline. It is rather a socially constructed reaction to structural inequalities, emotional abuse and poverty. The results show that the majority of female criminals are victims prior to becoming criminals, victims of poverty, domestic violence, illiteracy, and patriarchal coercion.

In line with the feminist criminological theory, the study highlights the fact that the routes of women to crime are highly entrenched in the social systems that alienate them (Carlen, 2002). The Pakistani situation is especially defined by the gendered hierarchies of power, during which women lack the autonomy to make their own economic and personal decisions. In this kind of environment, there is lack of institutional support systems, education, employment, legal protection, which creates conditions that are favorable to delinquency.

Another issue that came out in the case study is that the penal institutions in Pakistan are not well equipped to rehabilitate them. District Jail Sargodha, as well as most other prisons, does not have vocational programs, counseling, and educational opportunities to women prisoners. Due to incarceration, rather than promoting reform, trauma and social alienation often worsen. Women who have left prison have almost complete exclusion during their family and community life and this further exposes them to vulnerability and in some instances, they recidivate.

The statistics are a contradiction to the traditional belief that punishment is the only way to deter crime. Instead, the continuity of women delinquency in Pakistan is an indication of structural injustice because the failure to provide women with opportunities to lead a normal life in society and the institution propel them to conditions that lead to crime. Thus, the solution to the female delinquency issues should be based on the combination of social justice, economic empowerment, and gendered criminal justice reform.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were furnished by the researchers in the context of this study.

- The government must reinforce the law to make the process of handling the female offenders gender responsive. This involves the adoption of Bangkok Rules (United Nations, 2010) and the inclusion of provisions of safety, privacy, and dignity of women during the process of arrest, investigation, and trial.
- A lot of female prisoners do not know their legal rights or cannot afford the legal representation. It might be necessary to create state-funded legal aid cells and collaborate with the NGOs to guarantee the fair trials and minimize unjust sentencing.
- The justice system ought to consider implementing community service, probation, or restorative justice mechanisms to first-time and non-violent offenders rather than incarceration. All these options lessen the congestion and enable reintegration.
- Prisons need to be rehabilitated as opposed to being punitive. Women can be empowered economically on release through vocational training in tailoring, embroidery, computing and handicraft.

- Majority of the female prisoners experience some kind of trauma related to abuse, poverty or abandonment. Institutionalization should be done to encourage healing and emotional stability through regular psychological counseling and group therapy sessions.
- Poor sanitation, overcrowding, and inappropriate healthcare are all long-standing problems (HRCF, 2015). The government needs to set aside certain budgetary allocations on the infrastructure of the women prison such as maternity ward, childcare facilities and nutrition programs.
- Education programs ought to be introduced into the prison schedules since illiteracy is one of the causes of vulnerability among women. Empowerment and informed decision-making can be achieved through literacy classes and awareness on legal rights.
- Prisons, vocational institutes and local industries should be partnered to help them get a job after release. Employers who hire former prisoners should have incentive programs so as to decrease social stigma and recidivism.
- Released women should have halfway houses or transitional homes set up by the local NGOs and social welfare departments where they are provided with temporary shelter, skill building workshops and counseling. These institutions are able to fill the incarceration and reintegration gap.
- The civil society and media should be involved in the destigmatization of women offenders, bringing out their rehabilitation processes and promoting restorative justice instead of retributive justice.

Criminological and Social Policy Implications.

The results that have been produced in relation to criminology are that crime is a gendered phenomenon which depends on structural and cultural factors. The Pakistani situation illustrates how the traditional gender norms and patriarchal ideologies influence the participation of women in crime and their reception of the criminal justice system.

Policy-wise, female delinquency needs to be dealt with in a multi-sectoral approach, which combines criminal justice reform with gender development policies on a larger level. The NGOs, social welfare departments and government agencies need to work together in order to make the prisons to be a place of transformation and not degradation.

Lastly, this paper reiterates that female delinquency requires a humanistic and rights-based approach where women are not considered as criminals to be criticized but as citizens who deserve justice, dignity, and opportunity. Growth of sustainability will be based on the capacity of Pakistan to reconcile between law enforcement and compassion and rebrand its system of justice as a means of equity, empowerment.

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