

Women's Involvement in Crime in Islamic Society: A Case Study of Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

The present study emphasizes on investigating the etiology of women's association in crimes and its belongings on their personal relations as well family members and kids during sentence. Each crime on the world adds in grief, and negative affect to the world, either it is committed by male or female. In Muslim community like Pakistan, that crime might be thought of female crimes goes past human observation as females are seen as pure and accommodating creature of God; loaded with adoration and joy. This investigation contrariwise features the horrendous side of female criminality in Pakistani society of Punjab Pakistan; particularly studying the cases of those females who were convicted of murder that is strictly forbidden in Islam. The present research proposed to clarify that socio-economic and cultural factors i.e., Islamic society, low level of education, less implication of religious values, economically dependency and patriarchal system are the dragging factors which are forced the women to obligate crimes in Pakistan. The study depicts how anger builds up in innocent women with Islamic and religious values and no criminal background which has led them to commit

such cold-blooded murders. The in-hand research was grounded on the in-depth conversations conducted by the researcher herself from female convicted of murderers from five major jails of Islamic republic Punjab, Pakistan where ten imprisoned women were randomly selected for in profundity interviews from respectively jail and overall, 50 ladies were interviewed during the period of research. Case studies were established on each individual case and results were drawn through thematic analysis which confirmed that majority of the respondents were Muslims and have committed crime due to shortage of economic resources, absence of education, early marriage, bride exchange, less implication of Islamic values, illegal relationships and undesirable affairs with others that developed disorders in the females out of which frustration they were committed such stern felony.

Key words: Women confinement, etiology of female crimes, consequences of imprisonment, Religion of Islam, case study design, rational choice theory (RCT), thematic analysis

Introduction

Religion is a fundamental element of any society and has believed to provide the righteous moral code, peace of heart, differentiation between good and evil and a complete order of living life to many people.¹ Around one fifth people of the world are followers of the religion Islam. What differentiates Islam from other religions like Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism is its requirement for a complete submission to one Divine Being in all aspects of life.² Following the right and virtuous path in life is the essence of many religions especially Islam which guides its followers to abstain from all sorts of evil and misdeeds. Religion has largely been viewed as the moral code for individuals differentiating between right and wrong which is why it is believed to share a negative correlation with crime.³

Owing to the nature of this religion, where a significant emphasis is on community building and providing an identity to individual people in respect to their society, an Islamic ecology suppresses the rise of crimes that are prevalent in many individualistic western nations.⁴

The dark world of crime has largely been considered male-dominated which is why sparse research exists on the phenomenon of female criminality. However, increased news of female-led offenses has urged scholars to probe the much-neglected area of female criminality too. Women enjoy an elevated and special status within the religion Islam as they are considered meek, innocent, and subordinate to men in terms of strength and exposure to the world.⁵ She is an epitome of chastity, piety, and modesty in Islam. A Muslim woman is primarily responsible for bearing and nurturing her children while taking care of her house chores whereas the man of the house is the usual breadwinner.⁶ Considering that, Islam clearly disapproves of female exposure to the outside world and so has prescribed grave punishments for female offenders. The Moral Community Theory presented by Stark,⁷ helps understand female criminality through an Islamic perspective. According to the moral community theory, religious societies are more competent of reducing crime than non-religious societies because the actions of the individuals will be energized through that of the religious group he belongs to. Thus, in religious societies individuals conform to the morals of the community they belong to. Individuals behave in the manner that is acceptable to the people in their community and such behavior refrains them from indulging in criminal activities.⁸

The Islamic community repeatedly demands conformity for females thus reducing their likeliness to fall in the deep dungeons of crime. This Muslim brotherhood stresses goodness and abstinence from evil, hence its followers are more determined in avoiding offences.⁹

Muslim women in particular are closely knitted within the Islamic community so in light of the Moral Community Theory, women are discouraged from any immoral acts by the community and they too make extra efforts to avoid behavior unacceptable by the Islamic community as if found guilty they must face a grave punishment. As Islam provides a strongly knitted community and identity to individuals, the existence of this moral community, where women can associate themselves to, helps lessen the chances of them committing many grave acts of crime. Women Criminality in Pakistan rise along with the increase in crime against woman. The issue has reached to an alarming level which has compelled all the socially responsible

scholars to focus on root cause of women turning to criminal activities in larger numbers. Sociologists and criminologists proposed that as a result of women emancipation at the time, women experienced greater economic distress and increased inner-city disorganization, as well as an increased opportunity for female-type crimes, such as fraud and fake marriage.¹⁰

Women population is 101 million out of 207 million of the Pakistan's population¹¹, 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.¹²

The gravity of in hand research can be observed by¹³ in which reported that Punjab Police have identified at least 4,000 female criminals involved in murder, kidnapping, robbery and other heinous crimes across the province. A special report compiled by the provincial police, states that these women have killed over 200 people and injured 560 others during various incidents. They have also kidnapped 1,635 persons, carried out assault on 9 public servants, committed 12 dacoities and robbed over 60 homes during 2011. According to the report, female criminals were also involved in 1070 incidents of theft, 325 cases of fraud, two cases of cheatings, 35 cases of narcotics and some 22 crimes that come under local and special laws. Official data further shows, around 360 cases that were registered against women on charges of illicit relations, 235 cases of family and dowry disputes, 15 cases of love affairs, 29 cases of kidnapping for revenge, over 70 cases of old enmities, 115 of simple 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%).¹⁴

The present situation recommends that women criminality demands more attention and research curiosity than it has received. A number of researchers¹⁵ have focused on noticeable inconsistency among male and women while¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ Their disappointment in terms of their close relationships leads to this extreme act.¹⁸ It is generally accepted that women will be more inclined to kill their partners if they are "battered women".¹⁹ 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.²⁰ 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.²¹

Islamic Law against Crime:

Islamic law is largely conceived from the book of Muslims; The Qur'an which underlines the ruling of right and wrong and establishes a clear distinction between sin and virtue along with the consequences of these actions. What makes Islamic law so all-encompassing is the fact that it focuses on the minute as well as important aspects within the individual as well as society at large and form the Shariah.²²

The implementations provided in the Shariah are also speedy and certain. If a crime like theft has occurred, Shariah or Islamic law urges the power authority to immediately cut off one hand of the offender readily so to prevent such wrongdoings in future.²³ The more important and implicit message under such style of law is that it acts as a moral lesson and a warning

sign for the rest of the society, mitigating the chances of occurrence of such acts in future. As there is certainty of punishment hence, offenders will ponder over it a million times before attempting theft in future.

Moreover, Islamic law varies in what its terms as crime with the English law. Where females are considered to be the docile and precious parts of the society, the Islamic law also provides equal punishments for women offenders. Holy Prophet (PBUH) said that he would cut off the hand of a thief, even if she was her own child, Fatima (RA), hence highlighting the importance of crime within the eyes of Allah and how crucial it is to underline the repercussions of such crimes. However, with that, the Islamic law also provides a strong shelter for women that are oppressed at the hands of in-laws, other men and rest of the society. Rape cases are dealt with extreme strictness and justice is advanced, making Shariah one of the most liberating laws for women. ²⁴

Not just theft, the Shariah also delineates the punishments of other crime such as drug abuse, assaults, murders, corporate crime, bribery, interest, and even harming other creatures of Allah. Hence, the Islamic law focuses not on one individual but also on providing remedies for the entire society. ²⁵ The Islamic law is stringent as the basic goal with which man has been sent down to earth is to obey Allah and to stay away from crime and wrongdoing so to attain heaven, as crimes would lead a person towards hell. This ideology defines most of the activities as either being criminal or not and shapes the Islamic Shariah for Muslims around the world. ²⁶

There are number of verses of Quran regarding crime and criminal acts. Some of verses are being followed.

Shall We treat the Muslims like the *criminals*? (68:35)²⁷

This is Hell, which the *criminals* deny. (55:43). ²⁸

But no one misguided us except the *criminals*. 26:99.²⁹

So look what the outcome was for the *criminals*. (7:84)³⁰

and flock the *criminals* into Hell, thirsty, (19:86). ³¹

This is how We deal with the *criminals*. (77:18). ³²

And the Day the Hour appears the *criminals* will be in despair. (30:12). ³³

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

This chapter is consisted on the methods and procedures which were applied to gather data for in-hand research. 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.³⁴ 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. ³⁵ The present research was designed to explore the etiology behind females committing crimes in Punjab, Pakistan. It was qualitative research and interview guide was developed for collection and interpreting of details information from prisoner women after the face-to-face interaction by the researcher itself, who were behind the bar in various jails in Punjab. Interviews from females' offenders were conducted who had convicted heinous crimes whether sudden or 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 which was included number of variables that were directly and indirectly influenced on the offenders. The following variables with women criminality in Punjab, Pakistan were studied.

- Religion
- Illiteracy
- Poverty
- Childhood Environment
- Extra Marital Affair
- Early Marriage
- Bride Exchange
- Physical Abuse
- Mental Abuse
- Peer Pressure
- Socio- economic status

Population

The total Population of the present research was the total number of jails present within the area of interest. ³⁶ The aggregate numbers of Jails of Punjab, Pakistan are Presently there are Forty (40) Jails functional in the province including One (1) High Security Prison, Nine (9) Central

Jails, Twenty-Five(25) District Jails, Two (2) Borstal Institutions & Juvenile Jails, One (1) Women Jail and Two (2) Sub Jails.³⁷

Target population of in-hand research was all the ladies that were incarcerations in these Jails who had penalized the sentence on committing any kind of crime. The present examination was an endeavor to check the causes and effects of Muslims ladies 'imprisonment on their family. The real target of this examination was to decide the cause and effect of ladies' sentence on them and on their families in Pakistani society in Punjab Pakistan.

Sample size:

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. The five Jails that were selected as the general representation of all the jails of Punjab, Pakistan were:

- District Jail Rawal-Pindi
- District Jail Faisalabad
- District Jail Lahore
- District jail Sialkot
- Central Jail Multan

Primary data collection in qualitative research is the first step that explores information in research. It is the thing that we regularly envision as utilization of statistical methods.³⁸

Primary sources in our research only included personalized interviews with the women criminals through interview guide. Secondary sources included gathering data based on the already done researches³⁹ on this area of study and are collected using the following techniques.

- Academic Journals: Published Research Papers and other publications
- Punjab Prison's Website
- Newspaper, print and other sources of second-hand information
- Internet Sources

In our research all these sources were fully utilized to obtain full knowledge of the subject and to understand the contributions of other researchers in this field of study.

Sampling Techniques:

Convenient sampling technique was used to draw a sample from target population who were ready to take the interview. Researcher took fifty cases as a sample. The sample is selected from within the population and is a smaller representation of the big population. ⁴⁰ Each researcher has its own sample size, since our research was purely based on in-depth interviews; therefore, researcher took 50 women from 5 jails of Punjab, Pakistan.

Pre-testing:

According to ⁴¹ in research methodology the concept of pre-testing is basically an experimentation strategy where the effective trials are rehearsed and errors are minimized to stay from the mistakes in the final interview. Prior to the collection of data, it is required to test the correctness and work capacity of the data collection instrument. There is always a possibility that the interview guide contains the questions that are superficial or too bold for the respondents therefore before finalizing the interview guide it was pre-tested thrice with three different respondents and corrections were made in the interview guide based on the results of these tests.

Visit of Jails for data collection for gathering of information:

The most essential part of the examination work is information gathering since all the investigation depends on the data collected. The information was gathered in 45 days by the researcher herself from August 2017 to September 2017 in face-to-face interviews with the murder convicts.

Themes/frameworks identification:

After data collection the researcher analyzed the information and formed case studies based on individual cases. After that the researcher identified sub-themes and themes: patterns that have emerged from the collected data. The researcher described each theme suitably so that it is comprehensible to readers and future researchers.

Instruments for data collection:

Interview guide was used for the data collection from the prisoner women.

Interview Guide:

The analyst started with the research issue and later based the research on the interviews conducted in the Jail. Interview is the advancement observation, focus, dependability, and validity in a typical social demonstration of discussion.⁴²

Interview guide refers to a formal list of structured open-ended questions⁴³ that were asked from the respondents in order to gain full insight of their case and the crime committed by them. The interview guide comprised of the organized and structured open-ended inquiries, which were formerly prepared in English but at the time of the interview they were translated to the language that the respondents understand, Punjabi language and Urdu language and the answers were also recorded in their language which were later translated in English. The interview guide was based on the questions regarding their background data, about their financial status, attributes of these ladies, the interview guide was focused on investigating the impacts of basic elements upon their status, reporting different violations and dissect situational violation of law by imprisoned ladies, treatment and reformation of these ladies in jail and most importantly it focused on analyzing the key elements that urges the women to commit a crime. The researcher attempted her best to get as near the actualities as could be expected under the circumstances. Every respondent was met independently. Time devoured per interview was estimated from 40—55 minutes.

Case Study

According to⁴⁴, The case study method often involves simply observing what happens to, or reconstructing 'the case history' of a single participant or group of individuals (such as a school class or a specific social group), i.e., the idiographic approach. The case study is not itself a research method, but researchers select methods of data collection and analysis that will generate material suitable for case studies such as qualitative techniques (semi-structured interviews, participant observation, diaries), personal notes (e.g., letters, photographs, notes) or official document (e.g., case notes, clinical notes, appraisal reports).

Data Collection

The crime data used in this research was collected from District Jails of the cities Faisalabad, Rawal-Pindi, Lahore, Sialkot and Multan in the period of 2 months from August, 2017 to September, 2017. The data that the researcher had was based on the complaints filed in the Local Police stations of these cities from 2001-2016 and based on those complaints the sample was selected that best suited our research and have been proven guilty in court as well. The permission was seeking from I.G Punjab to visit the jails by the researcher herself and the application was sent by post to IG Punjab by mid of March, 2017 and the first approval of visits was received by the researcher in 10.03.2017 in which only one jail, District jail Faisalabad was allowed for data collection due to the sensitivity and security issues. Then again researcher itself visits the office of Inspector General Prisons Punjab and requested again to collect data from 5 jails of Punjab, Pakistan. The researcher herself visited the Jails and interviewed the convicts to collect the data. Full security was provided by the Police Department while the researcher was collecting the data.

Time Frame for Research

The data was collected from 20-08- 2017 till mid of September, 2017 and was then analyzed and compiled and was submitted.

Data Interpretation and Case Study Development

After collecting the data from the respondents 50 independent case studies were developed based on the interviews that were conducted from each respondent individually. The case studies comprised of the background data or socio-economic profile of the respondent, her social information, role in society, the reason behind her crime, how she was committed it, how she ended up in jail and all the relevant information of her case. Researcher critical analysis was followed in each case at the end.

Themes/frameworks identification

After data collection the researcher analyzed the information and formed case studies based on individual cases. After that the researcher identified sub-themes and themes: patterns that have emerged from the collected data. The researcher described each theme suitably so that it is comprehensible to readers and future researchers.

According to⁴⁵ thematic analysis is a procedure for encoding qualitative information. The theme of any research catches something essential about the information in connection to the research question and speaks to some level of designed reaction or significance within the information collected.⁴⁶

As per⁴⁷, thematic analysis is a subjective systematic technique for analyzing, interpreting and reporting patterns of information. It negligibly portrays and sorts out research informational index in (prosperous) component. However, over and over it goes more than this, and deciphers an assortment of parts of the examination subject

According to,⁴⁸ data can be collected through a variety of sources that may include sources such as field diaries, historical data available, observed circumstances, interview, survey or information collected from audio or video already recorded or recorded by the researcher himself. The researcher used interview guide to conduct interviews and then the information was interpreted and analyzed to make case studies that contained information of all the cases, every case representing the background and crime story of one criminal and the impact of those crimes on the lives of the subjects.

Information consolidation:

In the end the researcher finalized and gave the name of each theme, wrote its explanation and illustrated it with a few quotations from the original text to help communicate its meaning to the reader.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The basic objective of this study is to highlight the most imminent factors contributing towards women's crime within the vicinity of Punjab, Pakistan. 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.⁴⁹

Thematic analysis

Causes of Criminality among women in Islamic Society

Women crime has been denoted by a number of factors that couple together to give rise to this phenomenon in Pakistan. The socio-economic and religious factors along with psychological factors and negative pressures have added to the rise of women criminality. Most of the cases exhibit striking similarity within the causes of crime. Most notable reason has been less implication of Islamic law and Islamic values in their family environment. Furthermore, poverty and illiteracy as women were exhausted of their poor living conditions and meager resources, so in pursuit of a better lifestyle, they committed crimes that they would not have done otherwise like kidnapping and robbery attempt which ultimately led to murder.⁵⁰

Poverty and conservative mindset of majority of people in Pakistan has led to the rise of illiteracy where women are snatched of their basic right to education which leaves them morally and ethically immature and they cannot distinguish between right and wrong; leading to criminal activities.⁵¹ These cases are consistent in deeming illiteracy as one of the most prominent causes of women criminology in Pakistan as majority of the women were illiterate or had received very minor formal education.

The Rational Choice Theory (RCT) was proposed by Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham in 1997 which focused on individual's rational choice and own individualistic decision-making power to achieve any outcome. Certain assumptions are drawn from this theory which explains that humans are rational and certain outcomes will be achieved if individuals will focus on choosing the desired inputs. Another striking postulate of RCT is that a social phenomenon is a by-product of individual action and hence can be linked to the world of criminology.

Cornish⁵² investigated the RCT within crime control policies and concluded that if people were provided with measures to correct their individual behavior, then crime control policies would be a success. RCT supports this idea as people are tired of their poor status and work in their own self-interest by committing crime in pursuit of elevated status. Pursuit of a better lifestyle urges these women to indulge in criminal activities which strongly supports majority of the cases analyzed.

The Rational Choice Theory has certain assumptions and is largely based on an individualistic viewpoint of man and that everyone is a rational person,

working in their self-interest. ⁵³ tested the rational choice theory and concluded that people because of their greed tend to commit crime.

However, this study supports the assumptions of Rational Choice theory because most of the women had a choice and they chose to murder another person as all of them were safe and sound women and not mentally disturbed however they acted out of self-interest. Poor socialization and deny of Islamic values are another cause of crime as some of the women committed crime because their family environment was not much religious and all the family members were free in their own matters. There was not strong hold of head of family member on the whole family. So, women want free environment at everywhere, even in their laws. Women were desired/want free environment like western countries that no one asked them about their illegal relationships and if their husband asked them and try to stop them, women were thought that their husbands are narrow minded and is creating hurdles on their freedom so to get rid of such disturbing family life, these women decided to commit crime and get rid of their husbands. ⁵⁴

According to RCT, women who were facing poverty and had witnessed cases of drug abuse, they took the matter in their own hands and worked in their self-interest to improve their conditions. The Social Control Theory also highlights this point as drug abuse is not regulated by many authorities in Pakistan and government does not keep a sound check on eradicating drug abuse which leads to a lot of women crimes. The inter-family conflicts and bride-exchange is another factor that was consistent under some of the cases and contributed to women criminology. In Pakistan, families are closely-knitted hence interference either from in-laws or external family and relatives is high which causes aggression and conflicts among women and leads to crimes like murder. ⁵⁵

The Socialist Feminism Theory supports this idea and claims that when females feel suppressed and harassed due to patriarchal society, they commit certain crimes of crimes as observed in our study. The pressures from family within the scope of marriage is deemed as the most common cause of women crime within this study approximately 50% of the sample had marriage related pressures and problems of extra-marital affairs either themselves or by their husbands that led them to commit crimes. This has been supported now

and then in extant literature by,⁵⁶ who explained that extra-marital affairs and a broken marriage urge people to commit crimes that they would not commit otherwise.

Also, women are harassed within marriage and unduly pressured which was evident in some of the cases and led them to retaliate and commit crimes.⁵⁷ Social Learning Theory proposed in 1972 supports this case as women are harassed so they learn the wrong path to lead their lives and choose a similar track of wrongdoing. Some of the cases also committed crime under self-defense and their nature of crime was accidental and not planned. Almost 20% of the sample had committed crime by accident and it was not planned. Sometimes self-defense crime is also considered as crime as it results in a loss of life that would have been there otherwise. Hence, consistent analysis of the cases shows that majority of the crimes were due to poverty, illiteracy, marriage and unhealthy relationships with others.

Conclusion:

A theoretical understanding of women's crime, in the Islamic society where crime is not only a social phenomenon but also religious matter. Western countries have accredited the impression as to illuminate the assembly of individuals of the aggressive ramifications of crimes, it is important to unveil the main deliberations that impulses women to take up such illegal practices and only then specialists can counteract such criminal exercises in future. It was very strange to see that women are participating in crime equally to men and ratio of crimes are increasing day by day. In Pakistani society where women are seen as most obedient, sacrificing member of their family and preserver of her family included for their husband and kids. Majority of Women commit severe crime like murder of their own husband, that show the poor socialization and less implication of Islamic values. It is very clear from the above article that no individual is a born criminal and it is only their choice to choose the wrong path and worst conditions around them which make them resort to numerous criminalities like murder, fraud, illegal relationships and Zina etc.

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