

## **Psycho-Social Factors Leading to Criminal Behaviour**

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### **Abstract**

*India is a country witnessed rapid socio-economic changes since independence. With the rapid urbanization and emergence of new towns and cities, the rate of crime has continuously increased over the time. For the recent years crimes in our society has become very common everywhere. Due to modernization the values and mores were weaken. The rapid social change tends to produce social disorganization and consequently the rate of crime is also increasing. The violent crimes such as homicide, rape, kidnapping, assault and robbery etc are more rampant than other major offences. According to the report by National Crime Records Bureau-2015, Kerala is the State has highest cognizable crime rate ie; 723.2. The State Kerala has contributed 8.7 per cent of the total cognizable crimes reported in India. As much as the government has initiated a very strict penal provisions and various measures to stop this social evil, but still the rate of crime recorded is very high.*

*In these circumstances the study was conducted with an intension to identify the psycho-social causes of criminal behaviour. The major objectives of the study were, to find out the social, psychological and economic factors leading to criminality. For the purpose of the study there are 80 samples were selected in a prison from Kerala by using purposive sampling method. The whole samples consisted of male respondents only. The respondents were selected on the basis of the types of crimes they had committed. The major social factors leading to criminal behaviour such as familial factors, peer group influence, educational level, alcoholism and usage of drugs, influence of movies, ganging and political motivation etc, were found in this study. The psychological factors such as anxiety, stress, depression and jealousy etc were identified as the reasons for criminality.*

**Keywords** *Criminality, Social Disorganization, Penal Provisions*

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## **Introduction**

Crime is one of the major social problem restrain from the overall development of any society. Crime is an “act of violation of law” (Madan. G.R, 2009) and it is an “anti-social behaviour which rejects and to which it attaches penalties” (Sharma.R.K, 2004). In India every day media has reporting many crimes including brutal murder, rape, crimes against women, kidnapping, robbery, corruption, violation of rule of law and other deviant activities etc. Even though the State has taken necessary steps to bring down the rate of crime, but still it remains in an increased a manner. The State Kerala remains as the top position in education and development. But the highly literate State has recorded with very high crime rate and it tops in the cognizable crimes as compared to the other Indian States. As stated by National Crime Records Bureau-2015, the State has recorded with higher crime rate ie; 723.2. So it is necessary to analyse, since the State continues as the leading position in education and economic development, but crime has remains very high in rate. “Organised crime has become a major threat to peace and prosperity in the country. They are resulted due to technological developments and the emergence of new market system eshtablished under globalization” ( Gandhirajan,2004 ). Due to modernization the values and mores were weaken. The rapid social change tends to create social disorganization and consequently it paves the way for increase in crime rate. Thus the problem of crime must be addressed in a larger spectrum. In these circumstances the study was conducted to analyse whether the sociological, psychological and economic factors are more responsible.

## **Psycho – Social Factors Leading to Criminal Behaviour**

Many Sociologist, Psychologist and Criminologist have identified the several factors that leading to criminality. Sociological theories explain criminal behaviour in terms of “social influences such as, community disorganization, stigmatization and labeling, peer group influences, delinquent subcultures and social bonds” (J .B. Helfgott, 2008). In this present study the main task of the researcher was to identify various psycho-social causes of criminal behaviour. Before analyzing the typical case histories, the researcher’s task was to generalize the causes from the selected samples. The social factors influencing criminality such as, familial factors including socialization, peer groups, level of education, alcoholism and usage of drugs, movies, religiosity, ganging and political motivation etc were identified.

There were 55 percent of the respondents from the nuclear family background. Family control over the behaviour of an individual and the socialization process are contributing major role of their activities. There are 50 percent of the respondents who felt too much control from their parents and 45 percent had experienced the absence of family control over their behaviour, and remaining 5 percent of the respondents faced a moderate level of control. So from this observation we can understand that too much family control and absence of family control both were reflected in 95 percent of the respondent's action. In terms of privacy at home, there were 65 percent of the respondents who felt that they had a lot of privacy at home, at the same time 35 percent of the respondents felt that the absence of privacy at home. So like the family control, there also reflect the majority of the respondents ie; 65 percent demonstrated crime due to a lot privacy they enjoyed at home. It was also noticed that 50 percent of the respondents felt that they were very often punished by the parents even for small matters. So both the absence of punishment and very frequent and severe punishments reflected in their criminal behavior.

In this study another major important inquiry was the type of relationship between father and mother. Every individual's character is highly influenced by the relationships among their parents. In this study 85 percent of the respondents conveyed that there had been uncongeniality between their parents. In that 75 percent had created uncongeniality due to the alcoholic behaviour of their father.

The respondents were highly influenced by the integration of peer group activities or behaviour, because 85 percent respondents peer groups were alcoholics, gambling and some were doing deviant activities and those persons mainly engaging in small scale offending also. So this shows that the peer group integration also a major factor of criminal behaviour of the respondents. In this study 90 percent respondents have been educated upto S.S.L.C and below. It is also found that there were no illiterate respondents.

85 percent of the respondents were frequently consuming alcohol in an enormous amount. In that about 60 percent of the respondents often used drugs such as, hashish, cigarette, cocaine and IV injection etc. These respondents had committed crime under the influence of such drugs and in abnormal consciousness. Movies also play a major role in the commitment of crime. In addition to this, certain movies introduced new method and techniques of deviant activities in crimes like robbery, planned murder etc. In this present study 90 percent of the respondents

were highly interested in watching such movies and they stimulate them to do deviant activities.

Some times low religiosity also leads them into criminality 85 percent of the respondents had very low religiosity or no religiosity at all. Ganging is an important factor in commitment of crime. From this study 75 percent of the respondents were belonging to one or other gangs. In this study 80 percent of the respondents were actively involved in the political participation from their adult age onwards. In that 40 percent have actively participated in student's politics during their school days. By analyzing the influence of political participation among the crime committed persons it is found that 27 percent of the respondents had done the particular crimes for the politically motivated causes.

The criminal behaviour was also influenced by a number of psychological issues that had prompted them to do the crimes they had committed. Every individual in his normality can keep a control over their emotions and actions. The psychological factors include anxiety and stress, depression, jealousy etc were found in this study as the reason for crime commitment.

Anxiety and stress has been a regular feature noted in the study. Their habit of responding to things in a spontaneous manner is worth noticing. 70 percent of the respondents exhibited a sense of anxiety in the mode of their response, and while analyzing their case history, this assumption stands proved. In the case of depression, present study shows there are 40 percent of the respondents faced depression and a gloomy state of mind during their criminal behaviour. Jealousy and Greed are other important factors that influence people to show deviant behaviour. An unquenchable thirst and hunger for material gains which had acted as a provocative force among 70 percent of the respondents for committing crime.

The study shows that absolute poverty has least do with upsurge of criminality. Money does stand as an immediate driving force for the commission of the crime, yet its poverty aspects seem to be literally nil. Higher rate of criminal behaviour have been recorded among the respondents with low income. This study shows economic creed and craziness stand as a driving force towards criminality. Thus this study reveals that a number of above said collective forces which provoke an individual's deviant codes and stand as a driving force to commit crimes.

## **Case Studies**

In this present study, on the basis of the types of crimes committed some typical cases were selected to give an in-depth analysis. The types of crime included are, homicide, small scale offence, culpable group annihilation with economic motivation, and situational crime etc.

### **Case No. 1**

#### **Type of Crime: Homicide**

This case was selected because the respondent was a criminal charged with 17 proven cases of criminal offences including three murder cases.

The respondent is 27 years old, and he belonged to the nuclear family background with four members including him. The respondent was residing in an urban area along with his family members. His father was a government servant who died before nine years ago. The respondent was from an economically well off family. During his childhood he had lived with his father and mother. But great uncongeniality had existed within his family due to his father's alcoholism. His parents had controlled him in a very strict manner and they restricted in going out with his friends and playing with other children. So this case also exhibited the characteristics of too much control of their parents over him. During his childhood he usually went to the temple of two times per week. This shows he was highly influenced by the religious beliefs. He was an average student but he had a lot of interest in his study. During his school days he was very active in sports and also active participant of a student's politics. After completing S.S.L.C he had stopped his education and engaged himself in a low paid job.

When he was engaged in job, he had fallen in certain bad companies who had started to consume drugs, alcoholism, smoking etc and such deviant activities as early as when he was 17 years of age. Later he took part in strong political activities and had participated in agitations against opposition party members. Since this respondent was a frequent consumer of alcohol and other drugs, he started committing crime under the influence of alcohol. He is an unmarried person and he usually went to see movies especially the action thrillers. He was a tensed personality and expresses the feeling of anxiety even on small matters. He used to do any criminal activity for getting money. Thus the major reasons had contributed to the criminal behaviour of this respondent was familial and social.

## **Case No: 2**

### **Type of Crime: Small Scale Offence**

This respondent is a small scale offender and hence very significant for this study. There were 47 such cases registered against this respondent including theft.

The respondent is a 36 year old unmarried person who had resided in an urban area. This respondent was from the nuclear family background. He was not from an economically well – off family but they managed their life in a possible way and never feel severe poverty. He lost both his father and mother at the age of 12, and he was looked after by his aunty. When he was a child he lived with his parents. His father was an alcoholic and often he drunk alcohol and under its inspiration used to quarrel with his mother and ill- treated her. His father exerts too much control over him and was very strict in his behaviour. He restricted him from going out with friends and playing with other children around his house. The respondent expressed that very often he had a feeling that his parents punishing him even for doing small faults.

In his early stage of education, the respondent has no interests in studies. But he went to school due to his parents' compulsion and fear of his father. At the high school level he was an average student and he showed a very much illegal actions. But he had passed S.S.L.C with an average marks.

After he had completed S.S.L.C he stopped his studies and he decided to go for a job. Thus he went for job with stone workers. Few months later he couldn't adjust with his co-workers due to his anxiety and emotional behaviour. Thus he left from that work and initially he did certain activities of his own, but later he reached to the particular gang of deviants. Later he became a master of such acts and he was a small scale offender who will do anything for getting money. He was an active participant in politics and he was motivated to commit crime on the grounds of political agitations. This respondent often went movies with his gang members and there they collected money from innocent people by threatening. He also revealed that often he engaged in sex with the prostitute by giving money. The major reasons existed behind the criminality of this respondent was his father's deviancy, emotional disturbances from his family members and the peer group influences were noted.

**Case No: 3**

**Type of Crime: Culpable group annihilation with economic motivation**

The purpose behind the selection of this respondent was that, the crime was characterized by high economic motivation. The respondent was also from an extended family with ten members. He was married and rural area background. During his childhood days his parents were engaged in low paid jobs.

During his childhood days his parents lived together and they were very liberal on his behaviour. The respondent had enjoyed high privacy at home. His father occasionally scolded him for wrong doings, he had done. Often his parents showed partiality against him, even in the case of giving pocket money. So during his childhood days he had stolen money from his own house and he pick pocketed money from his father. He explained that there was no ill- treatment of his father towards his mother. He was educated only upto 5<sup>th</sup> standard. At the age of 12 after his father's death he stopped his education.

After he had stopped his education he started to do work in his uncle's shop. One day he stole some money from his uncle's shop and left the place. After some years due to his high economic ambition the respondent had started a shop of his own. His business was completely filled with corruption because the major aim of the respondent was to make money. He often borrowed money when his business was undergoing dullness. The respondent was addicted only for smoking and he adopted this behaviour from his peer groups. But he never consumed alcohol even though he was selling it. After a long term of business his corrupted business created a big tragedy. Then he was imprisoned.

This respondent was married at the age of 21 and had six children. The respondent revealed that he was maintaining a normal or cordial relationship with his life partner. From his childhood onwards he had a little belief in religious belief and practices. The major reasons which had contributed to the criminal behaviour of the respondent were familial and social. In his childhood the absence of control of father on his behaviour had motivated him to liberal spending. Peer group influences and high economic motivations reflected on his behaviour.

**Case No: 4**

**Type of Crime: Situational Crime**

This case was selected because this crime entirely different from the previous

cases. In this case, the crime was committed under the specific circumstances. The respondent is a 51 year old married person. There are nine members in his house including him, and who had resided at a rural area. During his childhood his parents controlled him in a moderate and well disciplined manner. He also revealed that within his family there existed a mutual relationship among the family members and the relationship between his father and mother was always very cordial. He was a well studied student and passed his S.S.L.C. examination with high first class and after completed his pre-degree he joined for B.A in English Literature. After completed his course he joined to the central government job outside the state.

This respondent had implied very mutual relationships towards his life partner. His life partner also worked as a government employee. He conveys his family members were highly religious. The immediate reason behind the crime committed was that his younger sister was often teased by another person. So he resorted to talk and solve the problem through a negotiation with the man. But the talk ended in a duel. As an icing over the cake the other man got killed in the duel and the respondent was pronounced culprit and sentenced into life imprisonment.

### **Findings and Conclusion**

It may be concluded that variety of causes leading a person into criminality. The major social factors that influenced crime was found in this study were, familial factors, peer group influence, educational level, alcoholism and consumption of drugs, movies, low level of religiosity, ganging and political motivation etc. The psychological factors identified in this study were anxiety, stress, depression and jealousy etc. From the above all factors an individual's behaviour is largely responsible and shaped by his family environment. For the recent years it may be seen that the family disintegration has created many deviant children. This deviant nature often tends them to commit crime. As the present Kerala society adopts many liberal ideas, it is necessary to socialize the children in a proper way.

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