

Poverty: A Major Cause of Criminality in Women in Pakistan

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Abstract

Millions of people and communities worldwide experience poverty. This research examines the complex relationship between poverty and crime, showing how economic hardship can lead to criminality in Punjab Pakistan. The research synthesizes material to explain how poverty causes crime. The relationship between poverty and crime has long fascinated experts, policymakers, and the public. Numerous studies have linked poverty to higher crime rates, especially in underprivileged neighborhoods. Due to limited access to education, healthcare, and work, poverty can foster crime. This research discusses strain, social disorganization, and relative deprivation ideas that explain poverty-crime. These beliefs argue that economically disadvantaged people are more inclined to turn to crime to meet their wants and advance socially. The abstract also examines how poverty may affect crime. It describes how economic deprivation can affect educational attainment, healthcare access, and social mobility, raising the likelihood of crime. Data was collected from 5 major prisons in Punjab Pakistan by the researcher herself through the Questionnaire. Major findings included, a lack of genuine prospects and the promise of quick money can lead some to unlawful activities, perpetuating poverty and crime. Poverty-crime policy consequences are also discussed in the research. Poverty reduction through social welfare, education, and job creation is stressed to lower crime rates. Evidence-based socioeconomic initiatives can interrupt the poverty-crime cycle in underprivileged communities. Poverty and crime have a complicated relationship. Poverty is a major factor in crime, as this research shows from the literature. It proposes a holistic approach that addresses poverty's core causes to reduce crime and promote community well-being.

Key Words: Women, Poverty, Unemployment, Criminality, Prisons, Punjab, Pakistan.

Introduction

Criminality refers to the tendency or propensity of individuals to engage in criminal or unlawful behavior. It is the quality or characteristic of being inclined toward committing crimes or violating the law. Criminality is often assessed by studying an individual's criminal history, behavior, and the factors that may contribute to their involvement in illegal activities. Criminality can manifest in various forms, from minor offenses like petty theft to more serious crimes such as violent acts, fraud, or drug trafficking. It's important to note that criminality is not an inherent or fixed trait in individuals; rather, it can be influenced by a range of factors, including social, economic, environmental, and psychological conditions.

Understanding the concept of criminality is vital for criminologists, law enforcement, and policymakers as they seek to address the root causes of crime, develop crime prevention strategies, and design rehabilitation and reintegration programs for individuals involved in

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criminal activities. It can also help in identifying risk factors and working toward reducing the prevalence of criminal behavior in society.

Since the birth of society in general and the family in particular, the woman has served as the primary pillar upon which both are built. Particularly in Pakistan, a woman is seen as the guardian of societal standards, traditions, customs, morals, and the unity of the family unit. It is disheartening to realize that in the modern world, women's achievements are increasingly being stretched towards crime in Pakistan's social, cultural, economic, and political environment. This is a disturbing trend. In Pakistan, low levels of education and economic dependence, together with a patriarchal social order, are the main elements that push women to commit crimes. These variables, along with a patriarchal social order, contribute to a patriarchal society. (Zafar, et al.,2013, Abbas and Manzoor, 2015).

According to Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez (2006), women commit acts of violence for many of the same reasons that men do, including money, power, and the need for retribution. Women's involvement in criminal activity in Pakistan is rising in tandem with the growth in the number of crimes committed against women. The problem has reached an alarming level, which has forced all academics who are socially responsible to concentrate their attention on the underlying causes that lead to a greater proportion of women engaging in criminal activity. In Steffensmeier and Schwartz (2004), sociologists and criminologists proposed that the emancipation of women at the time resulted in greater economic distress and increased inner-city disorganization for women, as well as an increased opportunity for female-type crimes such as fraud and fake marriage. These findings were based on the observation that women experienced greater economic distress and increased inner-city disorganization.

There are 101 million women in Pakistan, out of a total population of 207 million (GOP, 2017), and they live in situations that make it possible for them to avoid being recognized and prosecuted for committing crimes. In addition, women in Pakistan are denied the ability to choose their own partners, which can lead to feelings of alienation, ingratitude, helplessness, desperation, and extra sexual interactions. These are some of the societal factors that encourage women to engage in criminal behavior. As a result, there has been a significant rise in the number of female criminals in Punjab, Pakistan, which necessitated an in-depth investigation of the relationship between the causes and effects.

According to Gillani et al. (2015), The impression that women are more prone to commit crimes than men is a cultural issue in Pakistan that has been thrown under the rug owing to male dominance and the preconceptions that are connected with Pakistani culture. This

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problem has been swept under the floor because of the preconceptions that are linked with Pakistani society. The significance of the in-hand study may be seen in a story by The Nation News (2012), which said that the Punjab Police had identified at least 4,000 female offenders involved in murder, abduction, robbery, and other serious crimes all around the province. This report demonstrates the seriousness of the research that is now available.

According to a specialised study that was created by the provincial police, these ladies are responsible for the deaths of over 200 individuals and injuries to 560 others as a result of a variety of situations. During 2011, they were also responsible for the kidnapping of 1,635 people, the assault of 9 public workers, the commission of 12 dacoities, and the burglary of more than 60 dwellings. According to the findings of the survey, female offenders were also involved in a total of 1070 instances of theft, 325 instances of fraud, two instances of deception, 35 instances of drugs, and about 22 violations of local and special laws.

The official data also shows that approximately 360 cases were registered against women on charges of having illicit relations; 235 cases were cases of family and dowry disputes; 15 cases were cases of love affairs; 29 cases were cases of kidnapping for revenge; over 70 cases were cases of old enmities; 115 cases were cases of simple quarrels; 12 cases were cases of monetary disputes; and 35 cases were cases of marriage and nikkah disputes. There were around 115 charges brought against women as a result of disagreements with their spouses.

This research cites these data, which state that the number of women incarcerated has climbed at a pace that is nearly double that of males since 1985, with 404 women serving time compared to 209 men. According to Brown et al. (2005), women in state prisons in the year 2003 had a higher likelihood than males of being jailed for a drug offense (29% vs. 19%) or a property offense (30% vs. 20%), but a lower likelihood than men of being detained for a violent offense (35% vs. 53%). The current state of affairs suggests that the topic of female crime should attract a greater amount of attention and study curiosity than it has so far.. A number of researchers (Steffensmeier & Hebert, 1999; Steinberg, 2000; & Warner, 2012) have focused on noticeable inconsistency among males and women while (Imai & Krishna, 2001; Mahmood & Cheema, 2008; Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010; Sweeney & Payne, 2011, 2012; & Hicks & Hicks, 2014) focused on the social conditions behind the women crime that narrowed the sphere of activities open to females as a cause of disparity.

In most cases, women are the ones who are responsible for the murder of their own spouses, siblings, children, and so on. A senior police official stated on November 2, 2017 that a newlywed Pakistani lady was detained on murder charges following a horrific occurrence

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that took place in Multan, which is located in the southern province of Pakistan. According to the officer, the woman is accused of poisoning her husband's milk, which then resulted in the deaths of 17 of her husband's relatives. According to Benekos and Merlo (1995), this extreme behaviour is precipitated by the individuals' dissatisfaction with the intimate ties in their lives. It is a widely held belief that "battered women" are more likely to be violent towards their spouses, which is supported by research published by Brown (1987), Block & Block (1993), and Bannister (1991). As opposed to males, women are more likely to conduct violent crimes at any conveniently accessible safe area such as at home. This is in contrast to the behaviour of men.

According to research done by Weizmann-Henelius et al. in 2003, studies have shown that women are more likely to murder close relatives than total strangers. Because there are so few notable female killers, we have reason to suppose that the public views women who commit murder in a vastly different light than they do their male counterparts who commit the same crimes. According to research conducted by Arrigo and Gryphon (2004), this disparity may have its roots in cultural influences, including the idea that women are inherently loving and feminine.

Methodology

Research methodology in social research refers to the systematic process by which social scientists and researchers conduct investigations, gather data, and analyze information to better understand various aspects of human behavior, society, and culture. This methodology is essential for producing reliable and valid findings in the field of social sciences. Here are the key components of research methodology in social research:

Research Methods

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Research Methods

Qualitative Research: This involves non-numerical data, such as interviews, focus groups, content analysis, and ethnography. Qualitative research aims to provide insights into the meanings, perceptions, and experiences of individuals and groups.

Data Collection:

Data Collection Instruments

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The researcher designs and selects tools or instruments for data collection. In this research, the researcher herself collected the data through the physical visits of prisons in Punjab Pakistan. Visits in jails include surveys, questionnaires, interviews, observations, or content analysis.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Data Analysis:

Researchers analyze non-numerical data to identify themes, patterns, and trends. Common techniques include thematic analysis and content analysis.

Data Interpretation and Reporting

After analyzing the data, researchers interpret the findings and draw conclusions. They then report their results in academic papers, reports, or presentations.

Major findings and Conclusion:

Poverty is a complex and multifaceted social and economic condition characterized by the lack of financial resources and the inability to meet basic human needs. It is a condition in which individuals or communities do not have access to an adequate standard of living, and they struggle to afford the basic necessities required for a decent and dignified life. Here are some key aspects and factors related to poverty:

1. **Income Insufficiency:** One of the primary indicators of poverty is a lack of income or resources to cover essential expenses. This includes income for food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, education, and other basic needs. People living in poverty typically have limited financial means to provide for themselves and their families.
2. **Relative and Absolute Poverty:** Poverty can be relative or absolute. Relative poverty is often defined in relation to the living standards and income of the rest of the society. Absolute poverty, on the other hand, is a fixed threshold below which people are considered to be living in poverty, often defined in terms of income needed for basic necessities.
3. **Multidimensional:** Poverty is not solely about income. It is a multidimensional issue that encompasses factors like inadequate access to education, healthcare, clean water, sanitation, and housing. People in poverty may also experience social exclusion and a lack of opportunities.
4. **Cyclical Nature:** Poverty can be cyclical, meaning it can be passed down from one generation to the next. Children born into poverty often face significant disadvantages, including limited access to quality education and healthcare, which can perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

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5. **Causes of Poverty:** Poverty has various causes, including but not limited to:
 - **Economic Factors:** Lack of employment opportunities, low wages, and economic inequality can contribute to poverty.
 - **Social Factors:** Discrimination, lack of access to education, and limited social mobility can play a role.
 - **Political Factors:** Political instability, corruption, and inadequate social safety nets can perpetuate poverty.
 - **Environmental Factors:** Natural disasters and environmental degradation can lead to impoverishment.
 - **Health Factors:** Illness and disability can lead to increased medical expenses and a loss of income.
6. **Poverty Eradication:** Efforts to reduce and eliminate poverty involve a combination of strategies, including economic development, social safety nets, education and skills development, healthcare access, and equitable wealth distribution. International organizations and governments often work together to address poverty through policies and programs.
7. **Measuring Poverty:** Poverty is measured using various indicators, such as income, the poverty line, the Human Development Index (HDI), and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which take into account multiple dimensions of poverty.

It's important to recognize that poverty is a global issue that affects people in both developing and developed countries. Addressing poverty requires a comprehensive approach that considers economic, social, political, and environmental factors, with the ultimate goal of improving the well-being and quality of life for those living in poverty.

The issue of women's involvement in criminal activities in Pakistan is a complex and multifaceted one. Women's criminality in Pakistan has historical, social, economic, and cultural dimensions that shape the nature and extent of their involvement in criminal behavior. Here's an introduction to the subject:

Historical Context:

Women's criminality in Pakistan cannot be understood without considering the historical context. Pakistan's history includes periods of colonization, conflict, and political instability, which have had a profound impact on the socio-economic status of women and their participation in criminal activities.

Social Factors:

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Patriarchy: Pakistan is characterized by a deeply entrenched patriarchal social structure, which often limits women's opportunities and autonomy, making them vulnerable to criminal involvement.

Limited Educational Opportunities:

In many parts of the country, women have historically had limited access to education. A lack of education can hinder economic opportunities and contribute to criminal behavior.

Forced Marriages and Domestic Violence:

Forced marriages and domestic violence are prevalent issues in Pakistan, and women who escape such situations may resort to criminal activities for survival or to escape abusive environments.

Economic Factors: Poverty: Poverty is a significant driver of criminal behavior in Pakistan, affecting both men and women. Women living in impoverished conditions may turn to crime for economic survival.

Limited Employment Opportunities:

Gender disparities in employment opportunities and wage gaps can force women into the informal labor sector or criminal activities to make ends meet.

Cultural and Legal Factors:

Cultural Norms and Stigmas:

Cultural norms in Pakistan often dictate the roles and expectations of women. Women who defy these norms may face stigma, which can drive some toward criminal activities.

Legal Discrimination: Discriminatory laws and a lack of effective legal protection can make it difficult for women to seek justice in cases of violence or discrimination. This may lead to vigilante actions or involvement in illegal activities.

Types of Women's Criminality:

Women in Pakistan can be involved in various types of criminal activities, including but not limited to drug trafficking, theft, prostitution, and white-collar crimes. Their involvement may vary based on region, socioeconomic status, and personal circumstances.

Efforts for Change:

Efforts are being made in Pakistan to address these issues. Organizations and activists work to promote gender equality, improve access to education, and reform legal systems to provide greater protection for women.

In conclusion, women's criminality in Pakistan is a complex issue shaped by historical, social, economic, and cultural factors. Understanding and addressing the root causes of women's

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involvement in criminal activities is essential for creating a more just and equal society in Pakistan.

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