

## **School Crimes: A Border Crossing and Responsibility of the Learning Academies**

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### **Abstract**

As ubiquitous phenomena; crime is one the central and core issue of the human existence that goes along with life above the age, space and time. It is the part of all human societies, having different in shape and occurrence it affects all individuals and groups in one way or other. School crimes are one of the pivotal problems that needed to be addressed for improved learning environment and character building of the learners. The current study in hand was aimed to explore the awareness of the educators about the school crimes and to determine the role of education in the school crimes. All the teachers and principals working at government secondary and higher secondary level in district Mardan constituted the population of the study. 140 teachers were selected through stratified random sampling in which 80 were male and 60 were female government school teachers. There were also interviewed 40 heads of the institution. For this study funnel analytical approach was applied. Informal interview was used as data collection tool. After codification, themes and patterns were drawn from the interviews. Data was refined, unified and the conclusion was drawn. Recommendations were made after drawing the conclusion.

**Keywords:** schools, crimes, educators, students, learning

### **Introduction**

Subject to controversy and debates that criminals are made or born? Anthropologists are searching to trace the roots of delinquency and crimes. Most of the theorists believed that it is rooted in traits and inherent or inborn tendencies while other are of the opinion and think for biological aspect. Some of them considered and related it to environmental factors. Dahlberg and Krug (2002) said that violence is the using of deliberate and intended force against other individual or group and community that resulting in injury, murder or deprivation or harm them psychologically. It is a threatening and jeopardizing action for other people. Rubel and Ames, (1986) said that crimes may be domestic, local, national and international having risk for the peace of the society and disturb the

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life. Breaching and infringing the rules and laws and awarding of punishment as advised and lay down by some governmental authority. Crime as a word derived from the Latin word "crimen" (genitive criminis) having root cerno and stand for charge (in-law), allegation and guiltiness.

### **School Crimes**

Mostly it is agreed that schools are producing safe environment and positive activities to develop the young one. Practically all schools have some sort of violent incidents and trivial offences are common in all type of schools while the extreme and severe violence are odd (Mazerolle, 2010b). The concept of school crimes or violence developed about a decade or two ago. It has been grown up as complex phenomena involving criminal acts and aggression in learning academies which hamper learning and is also harmful to the school environment (Furlong & Morrison, 2000).

As crimes are found everywhere and every place, schools are also the part of the society and not separate from it. Learning academies are the institutions of the society and considered the cradle of civilization, a place where the civilization preserved, nurtured and transferred from one generation to another generation and a place where character building process take place. According to James, Noonan and Malissa, (2007) learning academies i.e. schools and colleges play important role in the building of nation's foundations and provide platform for growth of the future generations. Crimes in these learning institutions are considered is one of the most tiresome and tedious social evil or problem. Apart from those who are involved in the criminal occurrence it also effects the social growth and consistency. Henceforth, it is of vital importance to understand the phenomena of crimes in learning institutions i.e. schools, colleges, universities and the offenders who commit this violence and even the law enforcement agencies, schools' administrators, policymakers and the common man to coup these things and trim down these crimes.

It is a fact that minor violence and incidents are common among the students (Gottfredson, 2001). Recently there are so many questions aroused that why schools violence is prevailing these days. What is the hazard and threatening factors for students, their families and schools? Why are students interested to commit violence and how parents, teachers or other students can hook the warning signs? It is also matter of concern that how schools or learning institution can coup with these violence (Rubel and Ames, 1986). It is the matter of apprehension for teachers, students and people that crimes, aggression and disruption exist in schools. National Institution of Education (1978) reported that the risk level is

higher for youngsters in schools as compare anywhere else (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1982). A research studies indicated that physical violence is very common in schools and high level of assaults are founded in studies of schools' violence in Australia and abroad (Grunseit, Weather burn & Donnelly, 2005). It is the schools where about two-third of the robbery and half of the assault's cases are detected in schools among the average age between 12 to 15 years. Surveys revealed that numerous of secondary schools' students' i.e. 14 percent to 25 percent feeling fear for their security and protection (Wayne, Ivor and Rubel, 1982).

Perceptions about the violence of the students have been changed recently. There are various factors that caused schools violence. These factors operating at the community, family, schools, individual and even at social level. Effective tactics are needed at various levels by applying integrated approaches which admit developmental needs of children and grownups (ARACY, 2010; Farrington & Ttofi, 2010). The factors which are the source of school crime and violence are varied, complex and interrelated. These factors may be related to economic sphere of life, social environment and having family structures. According to Gottfredson and Dipietro (2009) school crimes are the characteristic of schools. There is evidence that schools' characteristics and policies influence crimes victimization growth. Grunseit et al (2005) expressed that some schools obviously have strong influence over violent activities; factors related to individual and family are also connected to violence committed in schools' areas.

### **Nature of the Schools Crime**

School crimes are intricate and many-sided and can be understand with the inclusion of perpetrators of violence, the victims, sensing and feelings of insecurity, fright and anxiety, anti-social behaviour, criminal attitudes and the established system of discipline in the school Furlong and Morrison (2000). Crime and delinquency should be distinguished; delinquency is stands for illegal, deviant or immoral behaviour with respect to the values of the society while crime is the breaking of law. There is slight or no confusion as what illegal and legal behaviour is (Travis, 1992). Aggressiveness, threatening, daunting, devastating and menacing behaviours are some antisocial behaviour. These are different and ranged from non-criminal activities such as noisy behaviour and profanities to the criminal activities such as the use of drugs, destruction of property and robbery (Williams et al, 2009). Schools violence are different in pattern depends upon the age of the students. In junior high schools exhibit violent behaviour i.e. ground fighting while in drug and weapon use are very common in the high schools

(Furlong & Morrison, 2000). Bullying is the form of aggressive behaviour it should not be associated with aggressiveness or violence. According to Rigby (2010) bullying is a repeated and organized abuse of power. It may be generally defined to dominate or hurt someone, imbalance of power, unfair action and feelings of oppression and humiliation.

The ruthless and harsh behaviour like drugs use, gang activities and the uses of weapons are the crime they are very quickly growing in the middle and high schools' environments. They are crimes related to the society. These crimes promote incivility among the students as the spreading of rumours, pushing, jostle, intimidation, threats and even sexual harassment (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). The involvement of female in gangs has been dramatically increased recently in schools. Female gangs are mounting in the different cities of America i.e. Chicago, Washington, Boston and New York. Girls engage in similar violent activities as the boys do in gangs. They are violent, crimes perpetrators and make uses of the weapons (Horta Moriconi, 2006). According to Osofsky & Osofsky (2001) nudging, shunting, chewing gum, making noises, running in lobby, jolts etc were the behaviours that led to disciplinary action in 1940's. Nowadays alcohol drinking, drug abuses, gang membership, teen pregnancies, possession of weapons and different type of assaults are prevailed in schools.

### **Effects of Crimes on Learning Environment**

Victimization that occurs in school's environment negatively affects the students physically and emotionally and it also negatively effect on the learning of the students (Rubel and Ames, 1986). School crimes i.e. violence or threats of violence can emasculate the learning process (Grunseit et al, 2005). Academic achievements are highly affected by the different types of violence in schools such as hounding and harrying, uses of drugs, gangs and other vandalism activities. Sugai & Horner, (2001) is of the opinion that troublesome, Insolent and defiant behaviour negatively affected the teaching and learning process for everyone they involved in learning process.

Gilmartin, (1987) is of the opinion that the victims in schools let fall the self-esteemed, it creates anxiety and is the source of depression among the students. According Beale (2001) the victims of violence in schools suffer the students academically and socially as well. Although the students are the victims and perpetrators in the school crimes, yet the teachers are not secured. According to survey in 2003-04 about 7 percent of the teachers were injured, 3 percent were

physically attacked. In 1993-94 about 12 percent of the teachers were threatened and 4 percent were attacked (Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2007).

### **Kinds of Crimes**

Every school suffers from different disciplinary problem which are peculiar to every school and community. The problems faced by schools' administrators are ranged from minor breach of law to severe attacks i.e. from ordinary absenteeism, class-cutting and verbal abuses to attacks on students, robberies and uses of drugs in different forms.

1. **Tobacco uses:** Uses of tobacco in different form have been observed in learning institutions such as smoking, use of snip, cigars, pipes and smokeless tobacco.
2. **Alcohol possession / uses:** Uses of alcohol or possession of alcohol, possession is in various forms i.e. to keep such things in bags, rooms, pockets or drinking of alcohol beverages etc.
3. **Physical violence/attacks:** Students participation in different offences that involving physical violence, it has two types, one is physical violence only offending, no victimization, only offending activities are involved and other is threat of physical attacks i.e. any threat which is in the form of verbal, written, or electronic by a student's that caused a physical attack or injury.
4. **Sexual harassment and assaults:** Requesting unwanted or unsolicited sexual favours, verbal or physical behaviour or conduct of sexual nature or such other acts that creates threatening or frightening and offensive educational environment. Sexual assaults include different types of forcible penetration that is anal, vaginal and oral penetration against the will of the person. It included molestation of children, rape cases and other such licentious activities.
5. **Theft:** Stealing of different articles or property with the permission of the holder such as school's property, staff property and other students' property without force, violence and harm.
6. **Robbery:** Robbery has two types; one is threat of robbery and other is robbery using of force. Committing threat of robbery included any threat in form of verbal, written and electronic while other is taking and attempting to take the property of other person by force or violence.

7. **Vandalism:** Vandalism means to damage, to sabotage or harm the property. In vandalism, malicious intentions are involved.
8. **Homicide:** It included murder or slaughter of person.
9. **Kidnapping or abduction:** It included detention, transportation or unlawful seizure of person against the will of the person.
10. **Knife:** Uses of knife or other such things that is unlawful to bring them to bring schools.
11. **Uses of weapons:** It included the uses of gun and firearm or exhibition of such things that harm, injured or cause threat to other person.
12. **Bullying:** The uses of aggression and threat of aggressor in various form to threaten something is called the act of bullying. It may include physical and emotional harm, hurt spoils and destroy the property of the school. It creates hostile environment in learning institutions and infringes on the rights in schools and the disruption of education of the school.
13. **Burglary/Larceny:** It included the following activities:
  - throwing items
  - pushing
  - grabbing
  - kicking
  - biting
  - hitting with fists
  - using a sharp instrument
  - hitting with an object
  - pulling hair
14. Possession of other illegal substances

### **Areas of the Crimes**

Generally, classroom is the safe place in school, it is the parking area, hallways, stairs, restrooms, gymnasium, grounds and canteens are the risks areas for these types of crimes (Rubel and Ames, 1986). According to NCASA at Columbia University, (2010) generally gangs' activities are occurred mostly in public schools as compared to private schools. There are 46 percent of students involved in gangs in government school while only 2 percent in private schools. According to NCVS (2007) school crime supplement found that in 2005

there are twenty eight percent of the youth aged 12 to 18 involved in bullying in school; 79 % of those bullied inside the school and 28 % outside of the schools and 8 % in the school's transport.

### **Role of Schools (Learning Academies)**

Mostly it is agreed that schools are producing safe environment and produced positive activities to develop the young one. Practically all schools have some sort of violent incidents and trivial offences are in common while the extreme and severe violence are odd (Mazerolle, 2010b). Disruptive behaviour affected on other students as well, safe schooling required safe and orderly environment which is precondition for teaching and learning process. Hectic, chaotic and frenzied environment are obstacle to inculcate higher level of thinking skills or to make the learner competitive to meet the market needs. It is the responsibilities of all those who are concerned and interested in safe and effective school environment to reduce the school crimes and misconducts. The initiative for policy change and then implementation must be rest in the hand of school's superintendents, principals, boards of the schools and teachers. For the success of the program that brings positives change in the behaviour of the learner is impossible and incomplete without the active participation of the students, their parents and all the concerned people of the society.

Gottfredson (2001) says that schools are helpful to bring positive and constructive changes in students because it is the places where the students spent most of the time. Positive and healthy school's environment brings constructive changes and can plan reduce and curtail the violence activities in school. Schools have also the potential to make influence on the anti-social and violent behaviour outside the learning academies by providing suitable opportunities to prevent the violent activities. A long-term approach has been suggested by Mazerolle (2010a) to make sure the safety of schools. These steps included are:

1. Development of partnerships between the schools and community
2. Need of inclusive assessments
3. Well-developed school plan
4. Identification of suitable strategies and program for implementation
5. Conduct appraisal and
6. Sharing of the results and adjustment as pointed out or suggested.

According to Heaviside et al., (1998) during the year of 1996 -97 the National Centre for Education statistics showed 11,000 cases of physical fights or attacks in public schools in which weapons involved and 190,000 attacks occurred

in which weapon were not used. The statistics showed 115,000 theft cases 98,000 vandalism incidents, 7000 cases of robbery and 4000 cases of rapes and sexual violence occurred in one-year spin.

### **Statement of the Problem**

School crimes are very serious problem that needed to be addressed for improved learning environment and character building of the learners. It is the responsibility of the learning academies to make schools safe place for learning and cope with all the elements and activities that cross the border and make the learning academies unsafe for learning. The main theme behind the study was to explore the awareness of the educators about the schools' crimes and to determine the role of education sector in the school crimes.

### **Significant of the problem**

The study in hand is very significant for everyone especially the teachers, parents, schools administrator and other stakeholder of the education department and learning academies. Crimes are the omnipresent phenomena and the core issue paced by mankind since the time of immemorial and above the space age and time. Education and learning academies are also suffering from these evils and made the learning environment unsafe. Schools violence and crimes are very serious and posed great threat to the learning academies. It not only affects the learning but also hander the social, emotional and physical growth of the learner. According to Sugai & Horner (2001) the disobedient, troublesome, rude and violent behaviour reduce and dwindle the effectiveness of teaching and learning of everyone who involved in the teaching learning process.

### **Objective of the study**

1. To explore the awareness of the educator about school crimes
2. To determine the role of education in the school crimes.

### **Methods and Procedure**

#### *Research Design*

It was a qualitative and phenomenological study. The focus of this kind of study was to investigate things or events from the lens of veteran and experience people. The aim is to gain insight into the phenomena and provides plenty of stuff for description of lived practices and experiences (Rose et al, 1995).

### Participants

The study was conducted in district Mardan, one of the central districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. All the teachers working at secondary and higher secondary level in Mardan district constituted the population of the study. According to the Annual Statistics of Government Schools issued by Elementary and Secondary Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there were total 185 secondary and higher secondary schools in Mardan district in which 101 schools were for boys and 84 for girls. In these schools, there were total 2855 teachers in which 1836 males and 1019 females (EMIS, 2015). A total 140 teachers were selected through stratified random sampling and convenient sampling techniques in which 80 were male teachers and 60 were female teachers. 40 heads of the institution were also interviewed.

Table 1 shows the total number of schools, teachers and heads of the institution and the sample in district Mardan.

**Table: 1**

S.#	Schools	Numbers	Teachers		Heads	
			Population	Sample	Population	Sample
1	Schools for Boys	101	1836	80	101	20
2	Schools for Girls	84	1019	60	84	20
<b>3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>2855</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>40</b>

### Data Collection and Analysis

An informal interview was used as instrument for data collection as in-depth information was needed for the research study. Interviews were conducted by two interviewers. From the male respondents, the data was collected by the researcher himself and from the female teacher's data was collected by an expert female teacher as per the instruction provided by the principal researcher. Funnel analytical approach was applied, initially general questions were conducted and later it was focused on the phenomena under investigation. The process is repeated until data collection, analysis and interpretation was exclusively focused on the phenomenon under the study and produced solid result. Themes and patterns were drawn from the interviews and codified separately by both the interviewers. At the end of refining process of the raw data, the findings of the both interviewers were unified, and the conclusions were drawn.

## Findings

The purpose of the study was to explore the awareness of the educators about the school crimes and to determine the role of education in the school crimes. The study was descriptive and qualitative in nature. Thus, funnel analytical approach was applied, and informal interviews were conducted to get the responses of the participants regarding the schools' crimes and role of the education in schools' crimes. Themes and patterns were drawn from the interviews and codified separately by both the interviewers. From the analysis it was revealed that crimes are increasing these days in schools especially in government schools. There are so many causes that have direct connection with school's crime. This study exposes some of the factors that are related to the crimes. These are:

1. *Social environment of the learner*: The Society in which children live act upon their personality and growth. Thus, there are many crimes that come from the society and school is one of the institutions of the society which reflect the characteristic of the society.
2. *Family environment of the learner*: Family environment of the learner is also act upon the individual most often crime prevailed in family is transmit the younger one the family such as smoking, other tobacco use, drinking of wine or other intoxicating things.
3. *Schools environment*: Environment prevailed in schools is also contributing in creating school's crime by itself. Lose and inefficient administrative system, discipline problems, defective curriculum badly effect on the behaviour of the learner. For example, more focus is given to science subjects and scoring due to examination and assessment process that prevailed in education system of the country and there is no importance given to moral and ethical development. Rules of law, weak relationship among the all stakeholder, no framework for violence prevention, sound planning and other administrative flaws give rise to the school crimes.
4. *Political interference of institution*: Political and other irrelevant interferences in educational institution are also responsible for schools crime. In third world countries mostly, the political parties have their organizations and unions in learning institutions which deteriorated the learning academies. Political parties in these countries use students for their own motif and cause. Non-maturity, emotional attachments of the grownups aggravate the situation of the learning academies, because difference in ideologies they attached.

5. *Guidance and counselling program:* There are no guidance and counselling program existed in our learning academies for students to work upon such disruptive and criminal activities and to curtail and minimize it.
6. *Democratic values:* Lack of democratic values in learning institutions give space to schools' crimes. Lack of tolerance, acceptance, paying respect to the feeling of others, equity and cooperation among the various organ of the learning institutions i.e. teachers, administration and officers are some of the values that strongly needed by the learning institutions for the smooth transaction.
7. *Lack of parent and community interest:* The study revealed that mostly in government schools there is lack of interest seen on the part of parents. It is necessary for community to participate and take active, positive and constructive involvement in schools affair. In government institutions the learner comes from the middle or lower strata of the society and their parents have very low concern about their children.
8. *Psychological facilities:* The respondents believed there are no psychological facilities observed in our learning institutions. It has seen that most of the crimes have psychological consideration and can be redressed through psychological treatments.
9. *Moral education:* The respondents believed there is lack of moral or ethical education in learning institutions. More stress and importance are given to science subjects due to the prevailing examination system and very less importance is given on the character-building process. Students, teachers, principals and other concerned are running after marks and ethical consideration has been ignored.
10. *Media role:* Media always play constructive role in the awareness of the masses. However, it has also negative effects on children and grownups. Role media in the form of films, mobiles, games, Face book, promotion of foreign culture, etc affected the negatively on the individual which directly effects on the learning environment because these academies are finally the institutions of the society.

## **Discussion**

As the study revealed that there is no single factor that is the source of the schools crimes. Schools crime is multifaceted, multiphase and multifocal phenomena. According to James, Noonan and Malissa (2007, Learning academies i.e. schools and colleges play significant role in the building of the foundation of any nation. It serves the arena where the future generation grows and gets

stability. So, these institutions are very valued and dignified place in society. Schools crimes are therefore is considered very terrified, horrified and wearisome social problem that has been observed. The study highlighted some points that can play a positive role if truly implemented. The study revealed some factors that contribute positively in safe school environment. These factors are managerial factors, personal factors and factors related to social environment. School discipline, monitoring system, principal teachers' relation and implementation of the rules and regulation in learning academies related to the managerial area. Improved managerial skills needed to reduce the school crime and make environment safe for learning.

According to Gottfredson and Dipietro 2009) schools' crimes are the characteristic of schools. There is evidence that schools' characteristics and policies are influences crimes victimization growth. The study found out that environment prevailed in schools contribute in creating schools crime by itself. Lose and inefficient administrative system, discipline problems, defective curriculum badly effect on the behaviour of the learner. For example, more focus on science subjects due to examination and assessment prevailed in education system of the country and there is no stress and importance is given to moral and ethical consideration. It was revealed that some of the crimes are arise due to the social environment of the learner. Children and young learn from social environment through non-formal education. It the society which stamps the child or individual in which he lives through informal and non-formal education. Family environment is also act upon the individual most often crime prevailed in family is transmit the younger one the family such as smoking, other tobacco use, drinking of wine or other intoxicating things.

The study revealed that there are some factors that are related to the individual by itself that contributes in creating school crimes. There are many children and grownups in schools that have emotional problems or other psychological problems that lead to school crimes. The study revealed that lack of moral development, Lack of parent interest, Poverty, different type of diseases are also the sources of school crimes. The respondent opined that teachers should provide special training that how-to coup with the activities that leads to the committing of the crimes. The study exposed that monitoring system in most of the government schools are defective, so more focus should be given to make the monitoring more effective. The study pointed out that due to the prevailing examination and evaluation system of teacher and students are conducted on the bases of scoring marks and grading and there is no test etc are conducting for the

measuring the behaviour of the learner in educational academies. The study also pointed out that there is no system of guidance and counselling exists in our schools to check the growth of schools' crimes i.e. aggressive and disruptive behaviours, belligerency and antagonistic feelings of the students in learning academies. There should be place for a specialized psychologist to work on the unruly, troublesome and hard liners and to solve the problems and provide them positive reinforcement. In nut shell it can be said that school crimes are hander in the learning process as expressed by Furlong & Morrison, (2000) and (Grunseit et al, 2005). Thus, school crimes should be checked out in one way or other way for safe schooling.

### **Recommendations**

The violence can be reduced by applying prevention strategies. Schools should devise effective measure to prevent or to curtail the schools crime and violence. The following measure can be easily applied to prevent violence in schools. These are:

1. **Management based measures:** In the light of finding it was recommended the school management should be improved. Trainings and refresher courses should be conducted and arranged for managerial staff to improve their skills with new and updated techniques. Maintaining of discipline, behaviour of the students, cooperation, improved monitoring system, and healthy relation with other department such as police and law enforcement agencies and punishment are the area they should work upon.
2. **Modification in schools environment:** It involved changing of the physical and social environment of the schools to be made safe and sound by using detector like video camera, security guards and Procter system using of uniforms.
3. **Curriculum based measures:** Devising program for teaching students behaviour, conflicts resolution activities, gang's prevention programs should be the part of the school curriculum. Trainings and regular courses should be provided to the educators to coup with the schools' crime. Conduct of seminars, symposium, workshops and debates, on the issue should be the part of schools' curriculum.
4. **Guidance and council cell:** Guidance and counselling plays very productive role in social, mental, emotional, and aesthetic development and preventing disruptive deviation of the learners. Guidance and counselling are helpful in promoting emotional stability of learners. Thus, Guidance and counselling cell/ program should be established in learning academies. It is

very important because there are so many problems the students faced these days in school and they needed proper guidance to tackle these problems.

5. **Recruitment of psychologist:** It has been observed that most of school crimes are due to psychological problem faced by the learner. So, it is recommended there should be scope for psychologist to encounter these things in time and to nip the evil in bud.
6. **Interference of non-stakeholders:** Political and other irrelevant elements interferences in educational institution that aid fuels to fire should be checked. It is very important to make rules and regulations that prevent such types of interferences to make the schools safe for teaching and learning process.
7. **PTC role:** The role of parent teacher council is very passive especially in government schools. Parent should play constructive and active role to make the schools environment safe place for teacher learning process.
8. **Media role:** There are some crimes that are directly or indirectly affect negatively on the students. So, media must play positive role in all its form i.e. print and electronic by eradicating these crimes from learning academies.

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