

Relationship of Pessimistic Attitude with Childhood Abuse Among the Female Prisoners of Punjab Prisons

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Abstract

This study will examine the relationship between experience of abuse and pessimistic attitude among the female prisoners in the Punjab Prisons. Data was collected with the help of questionnaire and psychological test was conducted. Results revealed correlation between experience of abuse and pessimistic attitude among the female prisoners in the Punjab Prisons. This study may promote the needs to attend to psychosocial problems of inmates for rehabilitation purposes and help the planners and policy makers in controlling recidivism rate.

Keywords

Problem Statement

There is a relationship between pessimistic attitude and abuse among the female prisoners in the Punjab prisons.

Introduction

Correctional experts have seriously neglected the female offenders and the prisons they reside in for the reasons that these forgotten offenders have been neglected for so long merely for the reasons that female inmates are limited in number. Limited number of female criminals does not mean that the problem is ignorable. The apathy attached to the problem in fact misses out the very important issues and problems faced by female under trial / convicted prisoners. Once convicted or even suspected of a crime, a woman becomes even further marginalized. The female criminal is labelled a "fallen woman," and both men and women shunned anyone suspected of being a "fallen woman." Because of this stigma, the female prisoner was largely neglected and often subjected to harsh treatment and abuse. Crime is simply a human act considered undesirable, bad, or illegal from the viewpoint of the social, moral and legal aspects of society, but ones committed by female offenders becomes a taboo issue causing deep emotional and mental stresses. A psychological insight into their lives invariably shows harsh treatment and sexual abuse. *This study examines the relationship between female criminality and the experience of abuse.*

Table: 1 Indicates total female prisoners population in jails of Pakistan with province-wise break up (position as on 30-06-2009)

Table 1: Detail of Female Prisoners in Pakistan

Name of Province	Under Trial	Convicted	Condemned	Drug Addicts	Drug Trafficker	Total
Punjab	249	162	148	6	196	761
Sindh	90	-	01	0	76	167
NWFP	50	123	0	0	80	253
Balochistan	4	11	0	0	9	24
Baltistan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Azad Kashmir	15	0	0	0	0	15
Total	408	296	149	6	361	1220

Source: Research, Development and Planning Wing, Central Jail Staff Training Institute, Lahore,

Statistically small number is not enough to explain why female offenders are not treated like male criminals or treated as having some abnormality. Actually it is need of the time to treat female criminality as a psychosocial problem not as mental abnormality.

Women are important part of our population. They are daughters, sisters, wives and mothers. Their role is not ignorable. Any criminal tendency, precipitated by any of the psychosocial cause may affect their emotional health also. Child abuse or child battering is a form of excessive punishment. It is of different types of child abuse. Non intentional abuse can be even shaking, tossing, throwing and grabbing a baby because these can cause severe mental and functional abnormalities in future ghost like figures were used to terrify children or shutting the child in dark room is another frame of mental abuse. Child abuse is a risk factor for behavior problems in later life A person who is abused or neglected as child would have likelihood of arrest as a juvenile 53% as an adult 38% and for a violence crime by 38%. During later years an abused child suffers more from mental and emotional problems, for example, low self esteem, depression, anxiety, psychological disorders and suicide attempts. An extensive body of research has demonstrated that a history of child abuse may lend to criminal activity. In US department of Justice report more than 4 in 10 female inmates reported they had been physically or sexually abused. In the same survey, more than a quarter of inmates reported that their parents or guardians

were alcohol or drug abusers. Violent child victimizers are substantially more likely than those that victimize adults to have been physically or sexually abused as children.

Regarding Pakistani Society there are still unexamined factors, which may be contributing to the increase of crimes, committed by woman. Abuse is one such factor. According to Herman (1992) the adult abused as child (whether physical, emotional or sexual) will have difficulty in negotiating the demand of adult life the personality formed in an environment of coercive control is not well adapted to adult life. The survivor is left with fundamental problems in basic trust, autonomy and initiative. She approach the task of early adult hood, establishing independence and intimacy burdened by major impairment in self care in cognition and memory, in identity and in the capacity to form stable relationships. On the whole a victim of abuse is prisoner of her childhood.

Keeping in view the relationship of abuse and crime, present study has examined, if abuse is a correlate to crime among female prisoners of Punjab prisons it was also a correlate to pessimistic attitude among the female prisoners.

Review of Related Literature

This is basically an empirical study, reason being very little research work has been done regarding the female crime situation in Pakistan, we do not find much literature on the topic, except some research reports regarding male criminality we will try to use literature published in Europe and America on this issue which only provide us a frame work but basically indigenous situation, will be pointed out by research. We may not consider female criminality as a minor and invisible issue as it is a fact that even when the crimes are known to the police only a small proportion lead to arrest, (this is another researchable issue) conviction, sentencing or other out comes which closes the case. There is intense need to explore the crime, which is left unclear and fall into the dark figure of crime, about which very little details are available such as sex, age, socio-economic status of the preparator. In the late 19th century Lombroso (1900) Theorized (his theory was based on Social Darwinism) that women non-whites and poorer were less evolved than white, upper classmen therefore, more likely to commit crime. Later on Simon and Landis 1991, focused their attention on the negative environmental factor and their impact on human behavior, especially incase of females. According to them "there are four major theories of why women commit crime. First one is related to Adler's work. Adler stated that as women are liberated and assume more traditional male social roles and assert themselves in male ways, becoming more aggressive, pushy and hard headed" (Simon & Landis 1991, *The Crime Women Commit the Punishment they receive*, P-2). Third is the opportunity thesis

..... Women commit crimes due to the lack of opportunities to make money this thesis was strongly rejected. During the past three decades, efforts were made to evaluate everything that might directly or indirectly influenced their behavior especially the behavior of criminals one such factor was experience of childhood abuse, maltreatment and its effect on person's behaviour. Dreama G. M. et al 1991, found that for black women, abuse and lower levels of self-esteem are correlated with multiple drug use, where as among white women, multiple drug use is correlated with history of criminal justice system involvement. Furthermore women, who were abused as a child, would be unable to negotiate the environmental stressors and other emotional problems; these were the findings of a research conducted by Byrne in 1990. Marcus S et al 1993, conducted a research and found out that abused female reported more emotional and substance abuse problems and negative attitude towards life. According to Johnson, A (October 2001) child abuse is a vicious circle, typically, abusive parents have history of abuse or deprivation in childhood and in turn treat their children. Female prisoners need psychological guidance and support, indicated by Shankardas, D R 2001 in her research study on female prisoners of Andrapradesh, this research work was sponsored by PRI an international NGO. A survey was conducted by office of national statistics on prison mental health on 1999, 'Female prisoners were more likely than male prisoners to report neurotic disorder, depression. Jack, W. B, 2003, stressed upon the importance of socialization and correctional education for female prisoner. Shah, Z 2003, stressed that there is an urgent need to sensitize the jail authorities as well as judges of the fact that women prisoners need psychological guidance.

Objectives

1. The main objective of the study is to find out the relationship between emotional, physical, sexual abuse and pessimistic attitude among the female prisoner of the Punjab prisons.
2. The study is to gather detailed knowledge about women, who end up in prisons by administering a psychological test House Tree Person Test

Methodology

a. Sample

The sample of this study was consisted of 400 female prisoners of Punjab prisons. The sample was selected across different subjects, age, type of crime, duration of sentence, both the educated, non-educated prisoners, convicted and under-trial prisoners of Punjab Prisons.

Purposive sampling procedure was adopted. Sample was selected from four prisons of Punjab, Central Jail Lahore, District Jail Faisalabad and Central Jail Gujranwala and Central Jail Rawalpindi. This research was undertaken in the above-mentioned prisons due to highest incarceration rate and financial constraints.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated, it was found that coefficient of correlation between abusive experience was significant at 0.01 level of significance ($r=.411$ $p<.01$) $p=.000$. Where as there was also a significant correlation between emotional abuse and pessimistic attitude ($r=.419$ $p<.01$) $p=.000$. The correlation between sexual abuse vs. pessimistic attitude was significant ($r=.190$ $p,.01$) Similarly the coefficient of correlation between physical abuse and pessimistic attitude was $.180$ $p,.01$) $p=.000$, indicating relationship between physical abuse and pessimistic attitude.

c. Discussion

The findings highlighted that there is a relationship between abuse and pessimistic attitude among the female criminals of Punjab prisons and the victims were more likely to have some emotional problems. Although the findings of the current research has added to the growing literature about the relationship between experience of abuse and pessimistic attitude for the first time in Pakistan as very little work is done on the psychological problems of the female prisoners. Present research is part of the research work carried out by the researcher to understand whether abuse might be a correlate to crime among the female prisoner of the Punjab prisons (Pakistan) Researcher has also administered psychological test (House Tree and Person Test) the main purpose was for rapport building and to have the knowledge of any pathoformic sign about the female prisoners The house tree person test was used ,it requires the drawings of the three objects along with post drawing inquiry (PDI) Which gave the levels of maladjustment. Statistical analysis indicates there is a relationship between pessimistic attitude and experience of abuse. Present research is a first attempt in Pakistan in which for the first time psychological problems of female prisoners were highlighted, and it will definitely open the new horizons to study this vast field with the help of scientific research.

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