

A qualitative study on criminal behavior and causes of criminal behavior in District Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract:

Prison was often defined as where people convicted of crimes were sent to serve their sentences. It has been found through different research studies that in most cases, women took the extreme step either in self-defense or in an impulsive movement arising from pent-up frustration due to cruelties inflicted day after day. An in-depth study was conducted in the District Jail of Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. The main and overall objective of the study was to investigate the socioeconomic and behavioral causes of women's criminality in District Jail Faisalabad. A well-structured and well-designed interview schedule was prepared for data collection. The women respondents were interviewed through this

interview guide. A sample size of 10 respondents was selected randomly. Thematic analysis was used for data analysis.

Keywords: poverty, illiteracy watta-satta -marriages, Case studies, Interview guide, thematic analysis.

Introduction:

Crime committed by women is one of the major problems in Pakistan. The rise in crime rates across the country has become a serious issue. Criminal behavior is usually associated with poor physical, mental, social, and economic conditions of the poor. Poverty, unemployment, and corruption are major factors that lead women to commit crimes in Pakistan. The number of women committing crimes is increasing, partly due to narrowing socio-economic gender gaps. Women have more freedom than before, yet they are also exposed to more opportunities to commit crimes. The current research has focused on the social and cultural patterns that motivate and force women to commit criminal behaviors. It also focuses on the conditions that create situations that motivate women to engage in criminal behavior with specific motivations. Therefore, in formulating the basic assumptions, the current research is focused on the social and cultural factors that determine the crimes committed by women in Punjab, Pakistan (Islam et al., 2023). Women play an equally important role in criminology in Pakistan. Although social norms are rigorously adhered to, women's involvement in criminal activity spans a wide range of sectors, including the nation's intellectual, financial, police, social, and ideological environments. Women in Pakistan are motivated to commit crimes and delinquencies by a variety of social factors, including their basic rights, the ability to choose their life partner, ingratitude, loneliness, helplessness, despair, and extramarital affairs. Women's involvement has grown dramatically in Punjab. Delinquency among women has grown to be a significant social issue in both developed and developing nations worldwide. Women are weaker than men in terms of their physical, legal, and economic

standing. In the cultures and societies of developing nations, women's participation in criminal activity and delinquency is a recent development. A study claims that during the past ten years, the proportion of female inmates has grown significantly (Aslam et al., 2023). Numerous social, economic, and cultural factors influence the complicated problem of women's involvement in crime. According to several studies, women typically engage in fewer criminal activities than men, though certain circumstances may make them more vulnerable. Gender inequality and ingrained gender roles that restrict women's agency and opportunities are the primary causes of this. Several studies have demonstrated that women in cultures with more rigid gender roles and norms that condone violence against women frequently turn to crime as a way to vent their frustration or rage. Some women may be forced to turn to illegal activities as a means of surviving due to factors like displacement, a lack of education, and restricted access to resources. Women's participation in criminal activity can also be influenced by marginalization and violent conflict. When formal economic and social structures fall apart in areas impacted by instability and unrest, women may unavoidably get involved in criminal activities like drug trafficking, etc. However, in certain post-war contexts, women's expansion has been temporarily facilitated by the disruption of traditional gender norms (Baloch, 2012). Increased market and civic engagement is a direct result of empowerment and economic opportunities. Crucially, the report highlights that women's criminal behavior is frequently motivated by frustration, anger, and self-defense rather than intentional intent, in contrast to the trends seen among male offenders. Additionally, women who are associated with male gang members are more likely to experience violence, including sexual violence, from both their own and rival gangs. Research generally indicates that the destabilizing effects of conflict factors, lack of economic and social opportunities, and gender inequality all have a significant

impact on women's involvement in crime. Reducing female crime requires addressing these factors (Mukhtar, 2022). Poverty affects millions of individuals and communities worldwide. This study looks at the intricate connection between poverty and crime and demonstrates how, in Punjab, Pakistan, financial difficulties can fuel criminal activity. The study compiles data to show how poverty contributes to criminal activity. Experts, decision-makers, and the general public have long been captivated by the connection between poverty and crime. Numerous studies have found a correlation between poverty and increased crime, particularly in impoverished areas. Poverty can contribute to crime because of restricted access to jobs, healthcare, and education. To explain the connection between poverty and crime, this study looks at the concepts of stress, social unrest, and relative deprivation. According to these theories, people in poverty are more likely to turn to crime as a means of obtaining necessities and moving up the social ladder. The study also looks at the effects of policies on crime and poverty. To lower crime rates, the emphasis is on reducing poverty through social welfare, education, and job creation. In underprivileged areas, evidence-based social and economic programs can end the cycle of crime and poverty. The relationship between poverty and crime is complicated. Women's involvement in criminal activity and the impact of incarceration on their families are the main topics of current research. The world becomes more miserable with each crime. Since women are viewed as God's favored and pure beings, full of joy and worship, their crimes transcend human perception. Rather, this study highlights the horrifying aspects of women's criminal activity in Punjab, Pakistan; in particular, it looks at the cases of women who were found guilty of murder. The goal of the current study is to show that low educational attainment, economic dependence, and patriarchy are socioeconomic and cultural factors that motivate women in Pakistan to commit crimes. The study explains how anger builds up in regular

women without criminal histories, leading them to ruthlessly commit such crimes. The researcher's in-depth interviews with women convicted of murder in five major Punjabi prisons served as the basis for the current study. For every case, a case study was created, and thematic analysis was used to extract the findings.

1.3 Women's Criminality According to Islam

The Muslim holy book, the Qur'an, which emphasizes the concept of right and wrong and makes a clear distinction between sin and virtue as well as the repercussions of such actions, is largely the source of Islamic law. Islamic law is comprehensive because it incorporates the law while concentrating on the nuanced and significant facets of the individual and society at large. Sharia is also implemented quickly and with certainty. According to Sharia, or Islamic law, if a crime like theft is committed, the authorities must immediately cut the offending party's hand to prevent him from committing the same crime again. The fact that this kind of law serves as a moral instruction and warning to the rest of society, thereby decreasing the possibility of such acts happening in the future, is a very significant and nuanced message. Because they know they will be punished, thieves consider their options carefully before attempting to steal again (Mizdran, 2022). Furthermore, criminal law and Islamic law are not the same. Despite the belief that women are gentle and valuable members of society, Islamic law punishes female offenders equally. To emphasize the significance of crime in God's eyes and its repercussions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared that he would cut off a thief's hand even if it was that of his daughter, Fatima. However, women who are oppressed by their husband's families, other men, and society at large are strongly protected under Islamic law. In addition to prescribing punishment for theft, Shariah also addresses drug use, violence, murder, institutional crimes, bribery, usury, and other offenses that injure other divine creatures. As a result, Islamic law offers solutions for the whole society as well as for the individual. Islamic law is

rigorous because the main reason humans were sent to this world was to obey Allah and stay away from evil and crime to enter Paradise. This philosophy establishes Islamic law for Muslims worldwide and classifies the majority of actions as either criminal or non-criminal (Islam et al., 2022). The current study looks into the causes of women's criminal activity and how it affects their families, children, and interpersonal relationships while they are incarcerated. Whether committed by a man or a woman, every crime in the world causes suffering and has a detrimental effect on society. This crime can be regarded as a female crime that is beyond human observation in a Muslim society such as Pakistan, where women are revered and joyfully worshipped as pure and pleasing creatures of God. Conversely, this study highlights the horrifying aspects of women's criminal activity in Punjab, Pakistan; specifically, it examines the cases of women convicted of murder, which is strictly prohibited in Islam. The goal of the current study is to make clear that women in Pakistan commit crimes due to socioeconomic and cultural factors, such as patriarchy, low educational attainment, lack of religious values being shared, economic dependency, and Muslim society (Woźniakowska- Fajst, 2022). The dark underworld of crime has always been considered male-dominated and hence there is little research on the phenomenon of female criminality. However, the rise in news reports on crimes committed by women has prompted scholars to also investigate the largely neglected area of female criminality. Women enjoy a special and high status within the religion of Islam as they are considered docile, innocent, and subordinate to men in terms of power and exposure to the world. They are the model of chastity, piety, and modesty in Islam. Muslim women are primarily responsible for giving birth and raising their children along with taking care of household chores, while men are the regular breadwinners of the family. Given this, Islam opposes women's exposure to the outside world and thus prescribes

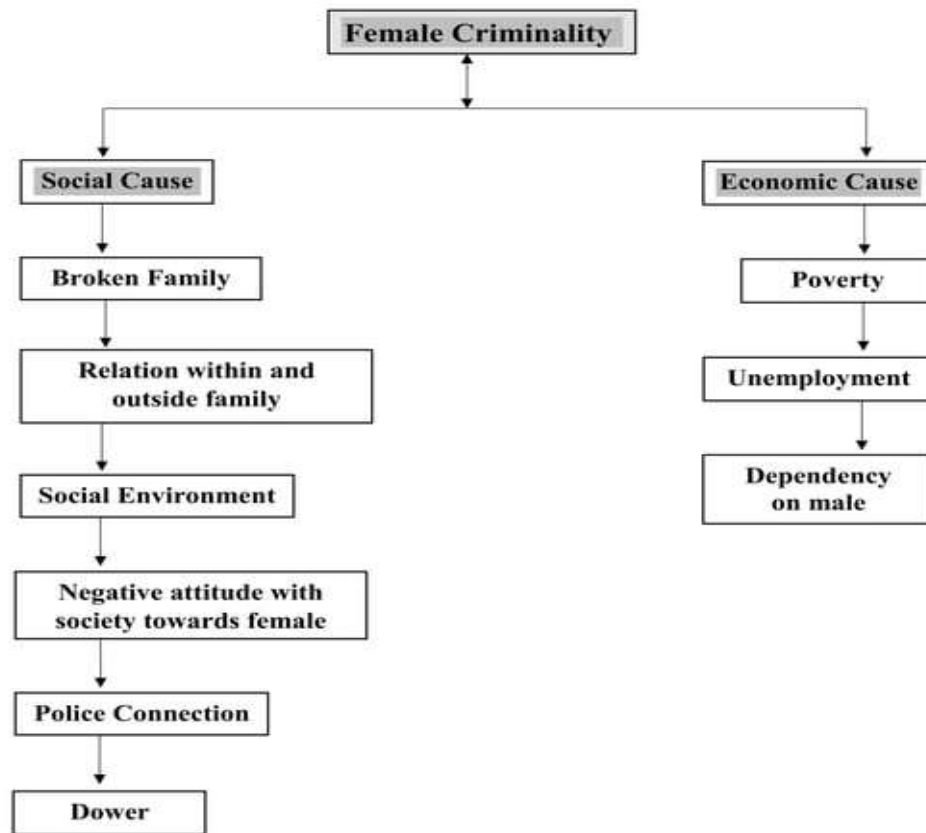
severe punishments for female criminals. The moral community theory presented by Stark helps in understanding female criminality from an Islamic perspective. According to the moral community theory, religious societies are more efficient in reducing crime than non-religious societies because the actions of individuals will be actively influenced by the religious group to which they belong. Therefore, in religious societies, individuals conform to the morals of the society to which they belong. People behave in a manner acceptable to their community and this behavior prevents them from engaging in criminal activities (Kardas, 2023). Islamic society repeatedly demands women to conform, thus reducing the chances of them falling into the deep dungeons of crime. This Muslim Brotherhood emphasizes goodness and abstaining from evil, so its followers are more determined to avoid crimes. Muslim women in particular are very much interconnected within the Islamic society, so under the theory of moral community, they are discouraged from immoral acts by the society and they also make extra efforts to avoid behavior that is not acceptable to the Islamic society, as if they are guilty and should face severe punishment. Because Islam provides a cohesive society and strong identity for the people, having this moral community, which women can relate to, helps reduce the chances of them committing many serious criminal acts (Henga et al., 2022). Causes of women's criminality Women's criminal behavior and their paths through the criminal justice system are greatly influenced by psychological vulnerabilities, trauma, abuse, mental health conditions, and substance abuse. These elements frequently combine to form a complicated web of issues that affect women's involvement in criminal activity. According to feminist criminology, women's criminal behavior stems from the unequal distribution of power between men and women. The ability to select a spouse is one of the most fundamental rights denied to women in Pakistan. Women commit crimes and deviance due to social factors such as ingratitude,

loneliness, helplessness, and despair. Criminal behavior is influenced by a variety of factors, including early life experiences, psychological disorders, social learning, cognitive processes, and socioeconomic factors. Deviant behavior is primarily the result of a variety of adverse social, economic, cultural, and family conditions (Shuja & Abbas, 2022). Several socio-demographic factors including marital status, education, and economic status may influence the behavior of female offenders. Women who are divorced or who experience financial and social problems may be more likely to engage in criminal behavior. Early puberty, combined with stressors such as conflict with parents and relationships with delinquent peers, are unique risk factors for women. Lack of family supervision and control is causally related to crime, but ineffective parenting, family conflict, growing up in poverty, lack of stable caregivers, and frequent household moves can all play a role. Crime statistics in Pakistan show that, like other countries around the world, the number of reported crimes increases rapidly over time. This is mainly due to high unemployment, high poverty, high inflation, and urbanization. Several other non-economic factors are also responsible (Gulo, 2024). Numerous factors, such as genetics, environment, personality traits, and social influences, can have an impact on criminal behavior. Criminal behavior is influenced by genetic factors, and studies indicate that some genes may be linked to a propensity for criminal behavior. Economic factors, such as average income, poverty levels, and job opportunities, are major contributors to crime. Cultural elements as well as traits related to education, leisure, and religion. Family circumstances related to cohesion and divorce. The theory of female crime holds that as women's opportunities, abilities, and social relationships increase, the female crime rate will also increase. The major risk factors for crime and incarceration are family dysfunction, trauma, mental health, substance abuse problems, and interactions with deviant peers. The crime triangle identifies three

factors that lead to criminal offending. The offender's desire to commit the crime; the object of the offender's desire; and the opportunity to commit the crime. Poverty, neglect, low self-esteem, and alcohol and drug abuse are some of the causes of crime that may have something to do with why people break the law. Some people's circumstances put them at risk for crime (Shala, 2024).

Causes of Female Criminality

There is given a chart below which shows causes of female criminality:



Research Methodology:

Research technique is one way to systematically address the research challenge. One could consider it a science that examines scientific research methods. In it, we look at the various methods a researcher usually uses to analyze his study problem and the justifications for them. An interview guide was used by the researcher to gather information from the District Jail in Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. Ten female criminals were scheduled to participate in this study due to population concerns. Interviews were conducted with 10 female participants who were older than eighteen. Women from Faisalabad prison were selected and given a useful examination. A total of ten participants were then asked to provide the necessary information. The meeting guide assisted in gathering the material, which was presented as a contextual research technique. Qualitative research methodology, gathering data using a standardized interview guide. Simple random sampling was used in the data collection process. Thematic analysis was used for the study of the collected data. In an eye-to-eye situation, the researcher herself collected the data in November 2024. With permission from the I.G. prison, Punjab, Pakistan, and under the supervision of the lady superintendent jail in district Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. Thematic analysis was used for data analysis.

Results and discussion:

Theme 1: Poverty and Women's Criminality:

Definition of poverty.

Poverty is a complex problem that includes restricted access to resources, social isolation, and economic hardship. It impacts people's capacities and maintains inequity.

➤ Key Dimensions of Poverty:

1. **Economic Instability:** Unstable income, limited job opportunities, and inadequate access to necessities.

2. **Social Isolation:** Reduced social support networks, stigma, and marginalization.

3. Economic Necessity

- Women engage in criminal activities to meet basic needs due to financial struggles.

- Examples: theft, prostitution, murder, or drug trafficking for survival.

4. Limited Opportunities

- Poverty restricts access to education, employment, and personal development.

- Consequences: limited job prospects, inadequate skills, and vulnerability to exploitation.

5. Social Exclusion

- Poverty perpetuates social isolation, stigma, and marginalization.

- Outcomes: reduced social support, increased susceptibility to abuse, and decreased access to justice.

6. Psychological Consequences

- Poverty's emotional toll contributes to mental health issues, low self-esteem, and decreased resilience.

7. Interconnected Factors

Poverty intersects with gender inequality, racial disparities, and limited access to healthcare and social services

8 Substance Abuse and Exploitation

The hazardous or excessive use of substances, such as alcohol, narcotics, or other chemicals, that adversely affects a person's physical, mental, and social functioning is referred to as substance abuse. It frequently entails using these drugs repeatedly despite negative effects, such as harm to relationships, employment, or everyday obligations.

➤ Exploitation

Exploitation means unfairly taking advantage of someone or something for your benefit. It often happens when someone uses another person's work, resources, or weaknesses without giving them what they deserve in return.

Pakistan's Poverty Crisis: A Vicious Cycle

The lack of employment opportunities in Pakistan has led to a surge in poverty rates. When individuals are unable to secure jobs, they are unable to support their families, resulting in increased poverty. This, in turn, places a significant burden on women, who are often expected to manage the household with limited financial resources. When families are unable to make ends meet, they are forced to make difficult decisions, such as pulling their children out of school.

Pakistan's education system is already struggling, and poverty only exacerbates this issue. Even for those who are educated, job opportunities are scarce, leading to increased poverty rates. Furthermore, Pakistan's wealth gap is significant, with the rich continuing to accumulate wealth while the poor struggle to make ends meet. Corruption is also a major issue, with those in power often exploiting their positions for personal gain. The cultural practice of dowry payments also contributes to poverty in Pakistan. Families often spend years saving for their daughter's dowry, only to have it spent in a single day. This practice places a significant financial burden on families, leading to increased poverty rates.

Pakistan's rapidly growing population is also a major contributor to poverty. With limited resources available, the increasing population puts a strain on the country's infrastructure, leading to conflict and poverty. The consequences of poverty in Pakistan are far-reaching. Crime rates are higher in areas with significant poverty, with individuals often turning to desperate measures to support themselves. Domestic conflicts also increase, with relationships suffering due to financial stress. In extreme cases, poverty can even lead to suicide. When individuals feel they have no other options, they may turn to desperate measures. So, Pakistan faced a high level of poverty. **Analysis:**

Men are the only providers for their families in developing nations, particularly in Pakistani society (rural and underdeveloped areas). The male provides financial assistance and serves as the family's head. The man provides for the entire family. Poor household women in rural and underdeveloped places are entirely reliant on men for their fundamental needs. Women in rural communities rely on men for financial support. She engages in criminal activity when she believes her spouse fails to provide for their fundamental needs and deprives them of those necessities. Low-income households in Pakistani society do not receive enough assistance from the government. Despite working at various jobs, the impoverished are unable to provide their family with wholesome food. The ladies in these households go in the wrong direction as a result of their suffering and harsh circumstances. They also become involved in illegal activities including prostitution, small-scale pocketing, and large-scale robbery as a result of their low income. They use these unlawful methods and criminal activity to swiftly obtain money and provide for their family. Therefore, the main factors contributing to female criminality in Pakistan are unemployment and poverty. Poverty and substance abuse intersect, contributing to female criminality. Women may turn to substances as coping mechanisms, leading to dependency. This can drive them to

engage in criminal acts to support their habits. Poverty's Impact on Relationships and Women's Empowerment in Pakistan When poverty rates are high, relationships suffer, and conflicts arise. In Pakistani society, women often bear the brunt of poverty's pressures. With limited financial resources, women are compelled to seek employment to support their families. Unfortunately, many women in Pakistan remain uneducated due to poverty, forcing them to seek low-paying jobs in other households or on farms. Additionally, women are expected to manage the household, including cooking, childcare, and caring for the entire family. The pressure to balance domestic and external responsibilities can be overwhelming. When conflicts arise with their husbands or family members, some women may turn to crime as a means of survival. Poverty is, therefore, a significant contributor to women's criminality in Pakistan.

Key Points:

1. Poverty exacerbates relationship conflicts in Pakistani society.
 2. Women bear the brunt of poverty's pressures, often seeking employment to support their families.
 3. Limited education and job opportunities force women into low-paying jobs.
 4. Women's dual responsibilities – managing households and working outside – can be overwhelming.
 5. Poverty contributes significantly to women's criminality in Pakistan.
- Substance abuse as a coping mechanism
 - Dependency leading to criminal acts
 - Exploitation by partners or criminal networks

Pakistan's Societal Pressures: A Catalyst for Women's Criminality

In Pakistani society, women are often expected to manage household chores and face mental distress. Many women, particularly those from impoverished backgrounds, are uneducated and forced to work in other households.

The husband's addiction to drugs often exacerbates the situation. Despite the wife's efforts to provide for the family, the husband demands more money, leading to physical and emotional abuse. The consequences of this toxic dynamic are devastating. Women, already burdened by poverty and lack of education, become desperate and may turn to crime as a means of survival. Financial Control and Its Consequences on Pakistani Women In many Pakistani households, husbands or male family members exert significant financial control over their wives. They often demand detailed accounts of every rupee spent, creating an atmosphere of mistrust and tension.

This financial scrutiny can lead to several negative consequences:

1. **Unmet household needs:** The constant monitoring of expenses can result in essential household needs being neglected.
2. **Conflict and tension:** The pressure to account for every rupee can lead to arguments, resentment, and conflict within the household.
3. **Women's depression and criminality:** The emotional distress caused by this financial control can contribute to depression and, in some cases, drive women to commit crimes.

Case Analysis: Socioeconomic inequality and limited opportunities restrict impoverished women's access to legitimate economic advancement. This forces them into low-paying jobs or unemployment, making criminal activities seem like viable alternatives.

Providing women with education, vocational training, and comprehensive support systems is vital for reducing criminal involvement. Research indicates that socioeconomic empowerment, coupled with mental health and trauma recovery programs, can effectively break the cycle of poverty and criminality.

Poverty

Analysis of a Case:

High Poverty

I'm 46 years old and live with my family. My name is XYZ. I am a Muslim, I live in a rural area, and I practice Islam. A state of general lack in any family or economy is called poverty. Men are typically the family's only provider in Pakistani society, and women in low-income households must rely on their men to meet their basic needs. These impoverished women turn to unlawful means to acquire resources when they believe that their needs are not being satisfied or that their children are being denied them. These tactics could involve helping to carry out a large-scale bank heist or even stealing small amounts of valuables from their lover's home. But the situation is still the same: poor women have weakened psychological characteristics and are more likely to obtain resources, even if they do so illegally. These women believe that their families are denied wholesome food while people drive fancy cars and that the government is not doing enough to help them. Women are pushed in the wrong direction by these hardships and terrible circumstances. Low income in Pakistan can lead to women turning to illicit means of obtaining income, such as prostitution, which is illegal but provides them with quick cash to support their families. While some women use prostitution to satiate their sexual cravings, the majority of prostitutes are women looking to make money to meet their basic needs because, in Punjab, if a woman from an uneducated and low-class family works hard and legally but does not

receive the results she expects, it can be a major contributing factor to prostitution.

Conclusion

Poverty's complex relationship with women's criminality demands a comprehensive approach. Addressing poverty requires economic empowerment, education, healthcare, social inclusion, and psychological support to break the cycle of criminality.

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