



SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED TO NATURE OF CRIME OF PRISONERS IN CENTRAL JAIL OF KOTA (RAJASTHAN)

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ABSTRACT

Background: Crime is a man-made concept. Crime and its relation to various socio-demographic factors has been subject of debate since time immemorial. Crime is wide spread, diverse in nature and increasing frequency. Objectives of the study were to pinpoint socio-demographic profile and to find out the association between socio-demographic parameters of the study subject in relation to nature of criminal behavior.

Method: 134 Prisoners in Central Jail Kota by adopting a random sampling. A socio-demographic characteristics of study subjects, was obtained by interviewing them. Inferences were drawn in form of percentage and applying chi square test

Results: Majority of criminals were male (85.8%) in young age group 20 to 40 year (74%) and married (64%). (57%) of prisoners were of rural background and majority of them (66%) belonged to lower and lower middle socioeconomic status. (44%) of prisoners were illiterate. In category of murderers motive of the crime in half (50%) cases was petty quarrel and family vendetta and fights over land were the motive in (22.06%) of the prisoners. (60.5%) prisoners were belonged to violent category according to nature of crime.

Conclusions: Job oriented education system strengthened and strong family values incorporated through IEC since childhood.

Keywords: Prisoners, socio-demographic, nature of crime

INTRODUCTION

Crime and its relation to various psychological factors & psychiatric causes has been subject of debate since time immemorial. Crime is widespread, diverse in nature, and increasing in frequency. "Why an individual indulges in crime?" is a big question and major subject of debate. People have

tried to establish a relation between behaviour of an individual and the circumstances, the personality type of the individual and various other factors.

Crime is a man-made concept; it is whatever a society chooses at any particular time to decree as unlawful. It is subject to changing attitudes over

time within a given society, and to international differences between societies. For example, murder may be almost universally unlawful, except at times of war, but willfully ending the life of a terminally ill person may be legally permitted in some countries and a crime of murder in others. In the foreword to the 2002 World Report on Violence and Health [1], Nelson Mandela states, "The twentieth century will be remembered as a century marked by violence." According to 2002 figures, no country or community is untouched by violence. Based on numerous studies [2] of primitive and advanced societies, the consensus seems to be that violent conflicts motivated by jealousy, revenge, dominance, and sexuality (i.e. rape) are universal human behaviours and are especially characteristic of men. CDC uses a four-level social-ecological model to better understand violence and the effect of potential prevention strategies.[3] This model tries to take account of (1) the individual, biological, and personal factors influencing violence (e.g. education, income, psychological disorders, experiencing abuse); (2) relationships (e.g. family and friendship patterns); (3) community context (e.g. schools, workplace, neighbourhoods); and (4) social factors (e.g. cultural norms, priority of parental rights over child welfare, male dominance over women, economic and social inequalities among groups within a society).

Overcrowding makes environment worse for prisoners. As per data of 2006 by National Human Rights Commission,[5] prisons of India having a total capacity of 248,439 while actual number of prisoners living in prisons was 358,177. Studies on Indian prisons are very limited and out of them only one study was from Rajasthan state by Bhojak et al.[4] who studied prisoner of Central Jail, Jaipur located in central area of Rajasthan. To fill this gap at some extent we took this study to examine prisoners of Central Jail, Kota located in south-east area of Rajasthan known as Hadoti region and try to find nature of crime and motive behind crime and its association with socio-demographic factors.

METHOD

A written permission was obtained to carry out the study from the Director General, Prisons, Rajasthan and the Superintendent, Central Jail, Kota, Rajasthan. The plan of study was approved by ethical committee of Govt. Medical College, Kota. The jail was having a total of 1129 male prisoners

including, 526 convicted males and 603 under-trial males and 28 under-trial female prisoners. For Sample size for study 10% of male prisoners and all female prisoners were taken. As others studies done by Fazel and Danesh[6] and Singleton et al.[7] were used as reference. Using all above, a purposive sample size of more than 100 was considered as adequate for present study. Considering the fact of release of prisoner from jail before the interview and refusal by some prisoners to participate in the study, a total of 130 male and all 28 female prisoners were decided to be selected for study. Then all the prisoners were numbered from 1 to 1129 as per serial number in register of jail and using simple random sampling method 130 male prisoner were selected. Informed consent was obtained from selected prisoners to participate in study. Eight male prisoners were released on or before the day of interview and 7 male and 9 female refused to participate in the study and. Finally,134 prisoners participated in the study. The prisoners were interviewed in a room at jail provided by the jail administration. Interview included details for socio-demographic data, history of previous imprisonment, drug dependence, motive behind crime and family history of criminal behavior.

Socio-demographic characteristics of the study subjects were assessed by working out appropriate frequencies and percentages along. Data generated was transferred into the computer using Microsoft Excel and analyzed using statistical package SPSS 20 and appropriate table were generated. For drawing inferences, statistical tests (percentage, X^2) were used.

RESULTS

The results of this study are in two sections. Section 1: Distribution of prisoners, socio-demographic profile, nature of crime and its relation to socio-demographic factors.

Table 1.1: Age and gender wise distribution of the study subjects

Age (Years)	Male No. (%)	Female No. (%)	Total No. (%)
≤20	4 (3.5)	1 (5.3)	5 (3.7)
21-30	53 (46.1)	07 (36.8)	60 (44.8)
31-40	33 (28.7)	03 (15.8)	36 (26.8)
41-50	13 (11.3)	05 (26.3)	18 (13.4)
>50	12 (10.4)	03 (15.8)	15 (11.2)
Total	115 (100.0)	19 (100.0)	134 (100.0)

Our study found that most of the prisoners were male and the crime was more prevalent in younger age groups, mean age of prisoners were 34.1±11.5 years.

In our finding by religion more than three fourth (83.6%) were Hindus, more than half belongs to rural area. The study showed more than two third of the study subjects were married. Majority of the inmates were illiterates followed by primary schooling and least were the graduates. Majority of the study subjects belonged to lower and lower middle socioeconomic status. History of criminal behavior in family was found in more than half (54.1%) prisoner.

Table 1.2: Socio-demographic distribution of the prisoners

Variables	Distribution No. (%)
Religion	
Hindus	112 (83.6)
Muslims	18 (13.4)
Sikh	4 (3.0)
Domicile	
Rural	
Urban	58 (43.3)
Marital status	
Married	90 (67.2)
Unmarried	35 (26.1)
Widowed/Divorced	09 (6.7)
Type of Family	
Joint	99 (73.9)
Nuclear	35 (26.11)
Family size	
Large family (>7member)	84 (62.8)
Small family (1-6 member)	50 (37.2)
Occupation	
Business/service	25 (18.7)
Skilled worker	20 (14.9)
Unskilled worker	69 (51.5)
Others (Unemployed)	20 (14.9)
Literacy	
Illiterate	33 (24.6)
Just Literate (Up to Primary)	26 (19.4)
Middle	33 (24.6)
Secondary	26 (19.4)
Graduate & above	16 (12.0)
Lower	49 (36.6)
Lower middle	40 (29.9)
Middle	20 (14.9)
Upper middle	13 (9.7)
Upper	12 (8.0)
Family history of criminal behavior	

Yes	72 (54.1)
No	62 (45.9)

Table 1.3: Distribution of Prisoners according to nature of crime

Variables	Distribution No. (%)
Violent Nature	
Murder	57* (42.5)
Attempted murder	11* (8.2)
Kidnapping	3 (2.2)
Armed robbery	2 (1.4)
Rape	5 (3.7)
Violence in relation to dowry	3 (2.2)
Total	81 (60.5)
Non violent	
Theft	11 (8.2)
Cheating / Fraud	6 (4.5)
Minor offences	9 (6.7)
Total	26 (19.4)
Drug related (NDPS ACT)	
Drug trafficking	8 (6.0)
Drug trading	5 (3.7)
Drug possession	14 (10.4)
Total	27 (20.1)

Regarding the nature of crime in our study we found that three-fifth (60.5%) prisoners were involved in violent type of crimes, one-fifth (19.4 %) in non violent type of crimes and every fifth prisoner of our study was involved in drug trafficking or related crimes. Violent crime included 42.5% murder, 8.2% attempted murder and 3.7% rape cases.

In our study overall prisoners from rural area, belong to joint family and having large family size, having family history of crime and unskilled worker were significantly associated (p<.05) to violent nature of criminal behavior

Section 2: Applicable to murders/attempted to murder only (*n=68)

Regarding relationship of prisoners to victim, precipitating factors, motive behind crime we have included murderers because these parameters are only applicable on them. Total study subjects in this group are only 68. About half (48%) of the victims were 'known' to offenders and 15% & 13% were relatives & neighbors respectively. Only 10% were 'unknown' to the victim. In our study 50% of prisoners no clear precipitating factor was present whereas in 19% the precipitating factor was "provocation by victim". Smack and alcohol abuse was responsible for only 23.5% of the crime.

Table 1.4: Association between nature of crime of prisoners and socio-demographic factors

Variable	Distribution of criminal according to nature of crime					Test of significance
	Violent		Non violent		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	
Age (Yrs)						
<20	3	60.0	2	40.0	5	$\chi^2= .714$ Df= 4 P= 0.950
21-30	37	61.7	23	38.3	60	
31-40	21	58.3	15	41.7	36	
41-50	12	53.3	6	46.7	18	
>50	8	66.7	7	33.3	15	
Domicile						
Rural	58	76.3	18	23.7	76	$\chi^2= 16.99$ Df= 1, P= 0.0000
Urban	23	39.7	35	60.3	53	
Marital status						
Married	60	66.7	30	33.3	90	$\chi^2= 4.795$ Df= 2 P=091
Unmarried	16	45.7	19	54.3	35	
Widow/widower	10	55.6	8	44.4	18	
Family history of criminal behaviour						
Yes	50	68.3	22	31.7	72	$\chi^2= 3.741$ Df= 1 P= 0.049
No	32	51.2	30	48.8	62	
Type of Family						
Joint	64	64.6	35	35.4	99	$\chi^2= 9.930$ Df= 1, P= 0.002
Nuclear	33	48.4	2	51.6	35	
Family size						
Large family	62	73.8	22	26.2	84	$\chi^2= 15.364$ Df= 1, P= 0.0000
Small family	19	38.0	31	62.0	50	
Literacy						
Illiterate	20	60.6	13	39.4	33	$\chi^2= 7.909$ Df= 4 P= 0.06
Just Literate (Upto Primary)	17	65.4	9	34.6	26	
Middle	20	60.6	13	39.4	33	
Secondary	13	50.0	13	50.0	26	
Graduate & above	11	68.8	5	31.3	16	
Occupation						
Business/service	15	60.0	10	40.0	25	$\chi^2= 11.602$ Df= 3 P= 0.011
Skilled worker	7	35.0	13	65.0	20	
Unskilled worker	51	86.44	18	30.5	59	
Others	10	33.33	10	33.33	30	
BG Prasad Economic classification						
Lower	30	61.2	19	38.8	49	$\chi^2= 3.148$ Df= 4 P= 0.533
Lower middle	25	62.5	15	37.5	35	
Middle	9	45.0	11	55.0	20	
Upper middle	8	61.5	5	38.5	13	
Upper	9	75.0	3	25.0	12	

Table 2.1: Relationship of Prisoner/Criminal* to victim (n=68)

Relation	Distribution No. (%)
Known	33 (48.5)
Relative	10 (14.8)
Neighbors	9 (13.2)
Spouse	5 (7.4)
Friend	4 (5.9)
Unknown	7 (10.20)

Table 2.2: Precipitating factor for *crime (Murderers only) (n=68)

Precipitating factor	Distribution No. (%)
No evident precipitating factor	34 (50.0)
Addiction of smack and Alcohol	16 (23.5)
Provocation by victim	13 (19.2)
Others	5 (7.4)

In (50%) of the prisoners the motive of the crime was a petty quarrel and family vendetta whereas fights over land were the motives in 20.66% of the prisoners. About one-fifth (22.10%) of the prisoners denied any clear cut motive behind the crime.

Table 2.3: Motive behind *crime (Murderers only)

Precipitating factor	Distribution No. (%)
Petty quarrel & family vendetta	34 (50.0)
Fight over land	14 (20.6)
Denies motive	15 (22.10)
Others	5 (7.4)
Total	68 (100.0)

DISCUSSION

Section 1: In our study (Table 1.1) age and sex distribution of prisoners was consistent with a study done by Bellad et al. [8] among the prisoners of central jail, Belgaum and Kumar SD et al [9] among prisoners in central jail in south India. This may be because our population is a male-dominated society; men have greater involvement in the matters outside the household and aggressive nature. They move about in society more freely than women and therefore higher risk to commit crime in all communities and all age groups. At this age, there may be problems like family feuds and unemployment which might have led to an increase in crime.

(Table 1.2) In our finding by religion more than three fourth (83.6%) were Hindus, more than half belongs to rural area it was similar with the study done by Kumar SD et al [9] in Gulbarg city jail and Aggarwal et al. [10] in Amritsar jail. This may be attributed to more number of conflicts occurring in rural places owing to illiteracy, unemployment and petty quarrel over land as compared to urban where people relatively confined in their own. In our study (Table 1.2) showed more than two third of the study subjects were married. This was comparable to the study done by Kumar SD et al [9] among prisoners in central jail in Gulbarg city and Sundar et al.,[11] in central prison, Bangalore. Marriage is a crucial factor in the understanding of a person's most intimate and important interaction with life. Any sense of failure, frustration, or victimization on this front may provoke unusual behavior.

Prison population is dominated by low intelligence quotient (Birmingham et al.)[12] This fact was indirectly reflected in our study as majority of the inmates were illiterates followed by primary schooling and least were the graduates which are consistent with the study done by Aggarwal et al., [10] in Amritsar jail. Nearly half of them were doing unskilled work. Lack of job satisfaction and low income in unskilled work might have provoked them to commit crime.

Coming to the socioeconomic status majority of the study subjects belonged to lower and lower middle socioeconomic status (Table 1.2) which was consistent with a study done by Bellad et al.,[8] among the inmates of central jail, Belgaum, Kumar SD et al [9] in prisoners in Gulbarg city central jail, and Sundar et al., [10] in central prison, Bangalore. This may be due to majority of the prisoners are from rural background. Socioeconomic status reveals the functional efficacy of an individual and the presence or absence of the sense of gratification, one may derive from it. Poverty and lack of satisfaction of wants generally serve as stimulants to crime and, majority of them belonged to joint family and large family size. History of criminal behavior in family was found in more than half (54.1%) prisoner since majorities were in young age group. Table 1.4 Association between nature of crime of prisoners and socio-demographic factors we could not find more study.

Section 2: (Table 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3) Many of the characteristics of the prisoners are in accordance with other Indian and Western studies. Bhojak et al [4] also found that in 46% of the cases the offender was a known person. Morris and Hawkins (1970) found that 80% of all homicides in America were done by the known persons. They said, "You are safer on the streets than at home; safer with a stranger than with a friend or relative". The findings of our study are in line with Gurmeet Singh (1982) who reported that in 42% of the cases the crime (murder) was planned and was carried out in a calculated manner i.e. there was no precipitating factor. In same study he reported that in about one-third of the cases, victim provoked to commit the crime. In 26% of the cases crime was committed under the influence of alcohol. Bhojak et al [4] also found that in majority of the cases (60%) there was no precipitating factor and alcohol abuse was responsible in 10% of the total case.

CONCLUSION

In our study prisoners from Rural area, having joint and large family size, having family history of crime and unskilled were significantly associated ($p < .05$) to violent nature of criminal behavior. So job oriented education system must be strengthened and strong family values incorporated through IEC since childhood since majority were in young age group.

LIMITATION OF STUDY

The study was carried out in a single prison and hence the results cannot be generalized on prison population of India. We suggest a larger multi-centric study involving all or several prisons of different areas of India to make a better understanding of factors associated with criminal behaviour of prisoners.

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