

A SOCIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF MURDERS IN THE PUNJAB (PAKISTAN) PROVINCE

Arshad Hussain Hashmi', Saqraz Hassan', Ishtiaq Hassan" & Muhammad Akram
IFaculty ofAgricultural Economics and Rural Sociology,University ofAgriculture, Faisalabad
2Adaptive Research, Department ofAgriculture, Government ofthe Punjab

Crime is the breach of ethical, religious and moral values and sacred customs in any society. In this study we tried to find out the main causes of murders in the Punjab. Main causes of murders were found as *gair* ("Zan", "Zar", "Zameen"), revenge and enmity, sectarianism, sudden provocation and self defence.'

Key words: murders in Punjab, sociological investigation

INTRODUCTION

Crime is a phenomenon as old as human society. Human society has developed on the basis of life in groups. Human beings cannot survive without society. Society imposes certain moral, ethical and social restrictions upon its members and social living is controlled by certain rules and regulations which are termed as laws. In the eyes of society deviation from its laws is considered as a crime. Crime is a major social problem of the day. Criminals violate sacred customs, laws and values of the social system. A majority of the society members suffers from the side effects of crimes (Logan, 1994). Crime is a breach against the laws of a state, community or groups intentionally committed by a person of competent age and normal mind. These acts are punishable by the law. Among the punishments are exile, fine, imprisonment, death penalty, etc. The word criminal denotes a person who has done an injurious act detrimental to the dominant behaviour or violation of some religious or moral codes for which negative sanctions are awarded by the society. In the eyes of religious people who regard a behaviour as a crime if it meets their criteria for sin, regardless of what the formal law decrees. Crimes are never welcomed but are condemned by the people of all races and colours (Flynn, 1996).

Crime of murder is as old as is the murder of Habeel by Qabeel among the first sons of Adam (ARS). Murder is the most injurious of all the crimes. It is considered highly undesirable by all societies and states but it exists in every society. One murder actually ruins at least two families, the family of murderer and that of the murdered. Its sociological significance becomes more clear when we take the structure and frame of our society into consideration. In our society if once a murder is committed, a chain of murders is started. Each generation then considers its duty to take revenge of its ancestor's blood. This

bloodshed takes thousands of lives and ruins so many families. Many studies on murders have been conducted in Pakistan (Sadiq, 1993) and abroad. Studies conducted in Pakistan were not based on scientific lines and covered only a few aspects of murders. The researchers wanted to explore the relationship of some socio-economic characteristics of murderers with their act of murder. It was considered very important to find out causes and background of such murders which excite an individual to such an extent that he is forced to commit such an heinous act.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was conducted in 1997 for determining the various reasons of murder in the Punjab province. For this purpose three jails were selected i.e. Central Headquarter Jail, Faisalabad, District Jail, Multan and District Jail, Sialkot so as to represent different ecological regions of the province and only convicted persons were interviewed. The case history method was employed to collect the required information. By using a purposive sampling technique, a satisfactory valid sample of 26 respondents was selected from above mentioned jails with the cooperation and assistance of the jail authorities.

The case histories of the murderers were constructed on a well designed, comprehensive and pretested interviewing schedule for each respondent separately. Evidently, interviews concerning personal life and on a sensitive topic like this, carried some trying moments for the researchers in building confidence in the respondents for a free and frank question-answer session. Appropriate techniques were then applied to analyze data in conformity with the requirements of the case studies method of inquiry so that important similarities and dissimilarities may be highlighted for establishing the probable causes of murders.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Main Causes of Murders in Punjab

Gain ("Zan", "Zar", "Zameen"): It is accepted world wide that among others, three main factors often lead to murders i.e. 'Zan', 'Zar' and 'Zameen' (women, money and land). According to present study, 42.31 % murders were due to gain factor.

Revenge and Enmity: It was noted that the murders were committed intentionally and with planning to take revenge of any previous murder or enmity. Almost 15.38 % murders in Punjab were because of the revenge and enmity reasons.

Sectarianism: The wave of sectarianism has disturbed the whole social setup in the province. According to teachings of Islam, all Muslims are brothers of each other, however, confusing statements made by so called religious leaders have created enmities among the followers of various religious sects, resulting into cold blood murders. Data of this study indicated that 7.69 % murders were committed on this account.

Sudden Provocation: It was observed that some times murders were committed unintentionally and without any planning under shock and sudden provocations. More than 11.54 % murders were found to be due to sudden provocation.

Self Defence: Nearly 23% murders were committed by the people for the sake of their own defence. Majority of the people here believe that protection of their honour, property and life is their right. Such a commitment thus results into a large number of murders.

Almost all of the murders are committed due to direct or indirect involvement of anyone of the above mentioned factors.

Major Findings: A huge majority (80.77 %) of the respondents belonged to the age group of 24-44 years. Majority (65.38 %) of the respondents had less than 10 years of schooling. More than 60% of the respondents were agriculturists by occupation. More than half (53.85 %) of the respondents had family income between rupees 20,000 to 60,000 per annum from all resources. Nearly 40% of the respondents had small land holdings. Half of the respondents were unmarried and an equal number of the respondents were facing death sentence.

Suggestions and Recommendations

1. It is suggested that the rural people must be motivated to receive education. It would bring tremendous awareness in them towards the good and bad things of life. Education would be of

great help to minimize the crime rate and it would help make people aware of the highly detrimental effects of committing crime.

2. Honourable judges need to look into the intricacies of the judicial system and try to remove them. The promotion of justice at all levels is very necessary. Eye witnesses should be the respectable citizens instead of professional witnesses. Law and order situation in the country should be improved. Islamic laws must be enforced.
3. The rural people must be motivated to actively participate in Govt. efforts for the improvement of their socio-economic status. Government should ensure at least the minimum social security for all citizens in the province.
4. Police must perform their duties honestly. Our police uses the primitive methods of investigation, which do not suit the present day requirements, of investigations because techniques of murder are totally modernized.
5. It is recommended that there should be a complete ban on illegal weapons and drug trafficking. The production, smuggling, illegal marketing and procurement of drugs and weapons must be forcefully banned.

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