

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

"Women Convicted Under Murder Charges: Case Studies"

Gurmanjit Kaur

Associate Professor, Khalsa College of Education, Ranjit Avenue, Amritsar.

Gurmanjit Kaur, Women Convicted Under Murder Charges: Case Studies, -- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18(10), 1866-1874. ISSN 1567-214x

Keywords: Murder, mental status, availability of facilities, Rehabilitations programs/ Educational/ Life Skill Development Programs.

Abstract

In this paper, women convicted under murder charges lodged in prisons of Punjab (India) have been taken for case studies. Two unique cases of convicted women have been selected for the purpose. One highly educated (married but separated from husband) woman was convicted in murder case; as she had hired a criminal person to murder a higher official working in judiciary (married having children); who was from her family friends and her boy friend before marriage. In the second case, a girl who had lost her parents in childhood murdered her paternal uncle, who was her caretaker after the death of her parents. The girl got involved with a group of gangsters. This very talented girl shot her uncle and commits the crime. These two women have been studied on the basis of a self-prepared questionnaire; containing questions to get information about the reasons to commit the crime, mental status after committing crime - sub-divided under two headings a) about self and b) about fellow inmates, perceptions of the women about the availability of facilities in prisons of Punjab and the attitude of these women towards Rehabilitations programs/ Educational/ Life Skill Development Programs has been examined. A Plan of action for rehabilitation of these women through different Educational, Skill Development and Life Skills Development Program has been prepared.

The serial killers Renuka Shinde and Seema Mohan Gavit confirmed the death sentence for killing five children between 1990 and 1996 in Maharashtra's Pune, Kolhapur, and Nasik cities, and Fahmida Sayed, who planted a car bomb in Mumbai that left 54 people dead in 2003 are among 13 women on death row in India (Masodi, 2018) shows the women involvement in hard core crimes including murder. As in recent decades, women's participation in all sectors has increased considerably in almost all the countries in world over; a similar movement toward gender convergence seems to be occurring in the criminal world. Technological progress and change in social norms have empowered women; have increased their participation in both the positive and negative activities. So now the crime is no longer a men's business, rather women are also becoming part of hard core crime. A few decades before there was less reporting of women involved in heinous

crimes, but now women are arrested for much harder and sophisticated crimes. No doubt masculinity has always been associated with crime, and number of women is relatively less in cognizable crimes, but now the involvement of women in every crime is evident. In India, both men and women are engaged in all crimes viz. property, burglary, theft, and white-collar crimes. So even are not forming an equal part of the crime world. If we take women as an excluded section of society then we shall be mistaken, because women are not excluded section of the society. They are differently integrated in society (Patricia, 2009). Again the socio-economic base does not become the reason of crime among women. The research reveals – ‘The overlap of gender and class emerges as a strong determinant of female criminality, and most female offenders belong to economically weaker sections’ (Madhurima 2009, Saxena 1994), opposite to this finding; this research includes the women from well off section of society. Kaufman (2015) revealed that men, meanwhile, were more likely to have been locked up for murder, rape or sexual assault. Almost 13 percent of men were jailed on murder charges and 13 percent for rape or sexual assault, while 11 percent of female inmates were there on murder charges and 2 percent for rape or sexual assault.

Prison is ‘a place properly arranged and equipped for the reception of persons who by legal process are committed to it for safe custody while awaiting trial or for punishments’ (Oxford dictionary). In Punjab (India) prisons, women of all ages, from different socio-economic strata, with different kind of crime have been lodged together. The attitude, psychological status and vision towards rehabilitation of these women are different from one another.

Method and procedure:

- **Design of the study:** The study falls under the domain of case study research.
- **Sample:** A sample of only two women involved in kidnapping of children was taken for case studies. Though both of these were involved in kidnapping of children; but were entirely different from each other.
- **Tools:** The data was elicited through questionnaire (prepared by investigator) related with demography, reasons to commit crime, mental status after in lodging – (a) views about self and (b) about others, availability of facilities for women prisoners and perceptions about the rehabilitation programs. In addition to it an individual plan (for each woman selected for case study) of Rehabilitation through Education and life skills / skill development program has been prepared.

Findings: The findings of the case studies are summarized under the following heads:

- Demographic characteristics of inmates women based on the demography viz. age, locale, level of education, monthly income, marital status, organization of the crime, number of co-accused, legal status of case and educational status after conviction.
- Reasons to commit crime
- Mental status after in lodging; (a) About self and (b) About fellow inmates
- Available facilities
- Rehabilitation and educational/life skills development programs

Case Study I (Navneet Kaur: Gangster + Number of cases)

Navneet (not real name) aged 26 is a married girl, from Punjab, now having flat in Chandigarh (lodged in Kapurthala Central Jail). The girl is charged under many crimes – kidnapping a man on gunpoint, carjacking, possession of illegal pistol and drug trafficking. She is an educated girl with GNM certificate and degree in B.Tech from a reputed college. The girl is multi-talented - as she is a volley-ball player, knows painting, stitching, embroidery and became the first cab driver of Punjab. She is in judicial custody under different sections of IPC in a number of cases (306). The girl is having a very different story of life. As a child she lost her both parents at a very tender age i.e. six. After that her four year sister were looked after by their paternal uncle, as the property of their father was also under his control. Navneet's maternal aunt married in same village also use to take care of them. She is full of hatred for her uncle as she along her sister were put on fast and beaten badly over trivial matters. This bitterness was reached at the highest level that ultimately she murdered him at home in front of the family. When women do commit 'Violent crimes', often they are acts of retaliation, given the increasing levels of violence against women (Freeman & Sandler 2008; Ahuja 1996); perhaps this finding suits best in the case of Navneet. She has lost her sister also, as she has been murdered by some unidentified people, leaving behind two children. These children were now staying with her, taking education and leading comfortable life.

(i) Reasons to commit crime: Navneet's story of crime started, after completing the school studies, when she joined the college. Navneet's life is full of struggles. In a bizarre scene, in college she was beaten very badly and met with many other atrocities by the boys. She came in contact with a group of gangsters and stepped in the world of crime. First case was charged against her at the age of 17 years (NDPS). Though she confessed she was involved in some crimes but admitted that she has been charged with a number of other crimes also, which she has not done. She had joined (who has been in lodged in jail in six cases of bank robbery) a group of gangsters, tied marital knots with a boy from the opposite group of gangsters.

(ii) Mental Status: (a) About Self: While answering about her mental status after committing the crime, she mentioned that she usually over react over trivial matters and her lack of self-control lead towards the happening of the incidence. She does not feel regret after coming in jail, and though considers her crime against womanhood and societal values, a stigma on her family and feels that people in society have negative views about her. Navneet sometimes feels emotionally dead and wants to tell other women never to commit a crime like her.

(b) About Fellow Convicts: Navneet's views about other fellow convicts, who were habitual criminals, are like the others as she feels that these women do not feel ashamed of committing crime and they misbehave and quarrel, assault and call by names, fake complaints against staff are a common practice among women who are habitual to crime and consider themselves as Boss of the barrack. Though she admitted that even she also considers herself superior to others but denied any complaints against staff. When asked from other about her, she is found to be a very sensitive girl, who is always ready to help others, caring the ill ladies sincerely, helping poor ladies financially but her attitude towards staff is not appreciable as she thinks they have negative views about her.

(iii) Available Facilities: Navneet admitted the availability of facilities like Prison

Calling System (PICs), special food and care is taken for pregnant women, babies, children and breast-feeding mothers, attachment of crèche and nursery, proper arrangement to meet gender appropriate needs of women (Sanitary pads, medicines etc), entertainment literature, daily newspapers. Free legal awareness camps and free legal aid for needy women, counseling sessions, spiritual programs, yoga and meditation, provision for physical exercises are admired. The regular visit of superintendent jail and judges to visit female wards and suitable arrangements to address the genuine grievances are admitted as a good practice.

(iv) Rehabilitation and Educational/life Skills Development Programs: Though she needs not to improve her financial status with any skills and has not learnt any skill during her in lodging, but she trains others in embroidery, stitching, painting etc. She admits to earn money for her family after release, but is not hopeful to earn her respect back even by applying the new ways of life.

Navneet had been a victim of poor adverse environment at home, because of parents' death. The adverse childhood experiences have been known to produce anxiety, anger and depression in children. The adverse childhood experiences of a child may not only cause externalizing (aggression) and internalizing (depression, anxiety) behaviors, but also exhibit diagnosis of attention disorders and impact on future violence and lifelong health problems. There is a relationship between child maltreatment and deviant behavior (Widom & Maxfield; 1996). As admitted by Navneet, she was beaten badly in her childhood, so this may be reason of her deviant behavior. The research explores that Physical abuse is the most consistent predictor of deviant behavior, in juveniles (Maas, Herrenkohl & Sousa, 2008; Braga et al., 2017) and young adults (Braga, Cunha, & Maia; 2018).

The parents/ guardians in Indian society expect their children (especially girls) to be very disciplined and obedient, but when children do not abide to the rules and every order/ dictate of the elders in the family and society at large, they are labeled stubborn or indiscipline. Hilton (1973) notes that those who fail to conform to the norms of the wider group may find themselves labeled immoral, abnormal criminal or sick depending upon the context. One is socialized and acquires a self-fulfilling prophecy and acts and behaves as per the characteristics of the labeled behavior. Burgess (1996) says that deviance is caused by inappropriate socialization, for instance when the learning of deviant ways is not outweighed by the learning of non-deviant behavior. This socialization is viewed as taking place within the context of primary group relations, lie further argues that restricted opportunities for achieving legitimate goals, a feeling of stress and access to deviant mode of relief are all important background conditions for evolution of deviant patterns of behavior.

How to use Navneet's Energy: Navneet needs Psychodynamic therapy in addition to positive reinforcement to make her behavior normal. Psychodynamic therapy is based on the idea that behavior and mental well-being are influenced by childhood experiences and inappropriate repetitive thoughts or feelings that are unconscious (outside of the person's awareness). A person works with the therapist to improve self-awareness and to change old patterns so one can more fully take charge of one's life. Positive reinforcement includes praise, a reward system, or a token economy system. There is need to evolve a strategy of 'Positive reinforcement' (praise), for

the girl. A therapist, well-versed to meet needs of the girl and praise her to use her talents in a number of ways, should be deputed for her. In these days when a number of activities are going online, some programs may be handled by her. She needs to be encouraged to prepare videos, containing lessons of painting, stitching, and embroidery or Physical exercises and tips to play Volley-ball. As the use of internet is not possible for her (as per the Punjab Prison rules), so the authorities need to upload her videos and inform her about the viewers, sharing and liking of the videos. A particular day in a month can be decided to highlight the activities and achievements of every woman convict with the help of a big screen or T.V. by a competent authority. The superintendent of Prison should delegate this duty at least to a person of Sub-inspector rank. It will certainly change her mind and in a result to her behavior. At the beginning, the purpose of this should be to develop her behavior as a person that would enable to make her a better and more manageable prisoner. After achieving the target, she should be given counseling to conform her behavior to standards of society at large.

Rehabilitation Plan: Navneet is a girl, who is left out of a course. So, she needs to improve her academic qualification; Qualification/ Skill Development/ life skill development of convict (Navneet) has been presented in Table 1. below:

Table 1: Preparation of a Plan of Rehabilitation through as well as improvement of skills; and learn art of life.

The plan to enhance Academic Education/ Skill Development:

Type of education	Activities	Educational Development Content	Skill Outcomes
Academics	Self-development through education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studying daily for a particular time period through continuous education) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of education to get some certificate/ degree
Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports events for young generation women Preparation of sports videos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working as sports coach Preparation of team rules Formation of teams Participation in inter jail sports tournament Uploading of videos by authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best utilization of time Change of mindset and behavior Development of self-respect Feeling of satisfaction A changed person with new image
Life Skills	Seminars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral Values Spiritual Intelligence Importance of regular physical activity and exercise can help your physical and mental health Healthy eating habits Self-help and activation of intrinsic values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in depression Harnessing Spiritual Quotient Good health Motivation to live healthy life

	Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art of life by changing neighborhood living conditions. • Gratitude of non-materialism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing motivational power • Decrease in materialistic desires
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To implement the drafted program, the role of civil society and NGOs should not be ignored.

Case Study II (Dr. Ramandeep Kaur: Murder - Crime of Passion)

Ramandeep (not real name) aged 56, separated from husband (not divorcee), from urban area of Patiala is (lodged in Patiala Central Jail). She was a gynecologist (M.D.) running her own nursing home. She is convicted for life term for planning a murder. In a bizarre incident Vijay Singh, a 42-year-old additional session’s judge, was brutally murdered with a sharp-edged weapon at Patiala on the night of October 13, 2005, by an unknown person (later on caught), while he was taking a post dinner stroll in Polo Grounds in Patiala. The cold-blooded murder of a judge was masterminded by his beloved, Ramandeep Kaur, and who later on was awarded life imprisonment, as she had paid Rs five lakhs for the murder. Kaur had been known to the Judge since her childhood as their fathers were good friends. Kaur, a mother of one, wanted the Judge to divorce his wife and marry her. However, the Judge, a father of three, had refused to do so after which she plotted to kill him. Kaur had gone missing on December 15, 2014, leaving behind a suicide note at her native home during her first parole. Kaur had forged a voter ID card in the fake name of Arpita Jain, a resident of Jalandhar. She kept hiding in various towns of Nepal and was arrested when she sneaked into India for the collection of fake documents. She was arrested with 1-kg gold and Rs 12.9 lakh in cash, when she boarded a bus from Kashipur to Rudrapur. Kaur lived in Maoist-dominated towns of Nepal under the fake name. She allegedly used all her last three paroles to arrange logistics for her final escape. She even underwent a facial treatment at a cosmetic clinic in Chandigarh.

(i) Reasons to commit crime: Kaur confessed it as crime of confession to accept the challenge, to hide her identity and denied any one from family or / friends to force her to commit the crime. Though she admitted that she had paid (to hired person) to commit the crime. No doubt she committed the crime in ignorance as was unaware of the unpleasant facts and possibilities of crime. None among her friend / family woman had been come to jail, before her and she had not been prompted to commit the crime by media.

(ii) Mental Status: (a) About Self: While answering about her mental status after committing the crime, she mentions that she sometimes over react over trivial matters and her lack of self-control is not responsible for the happening of the incidence. She feels regretted after coming in jail and consider her crime against womanhood and societal values (as she kept silent). She considers her crime as a stigma on her family and feels that people in society have negative views about her. Kaur feels emotionally dead and wants to tell other women never to commit a crime like her.

(b) About Fellow Convicts: Her views about other fellow convicts, who were habitual criminals, are like the others as she feels that these women do not feel ashamed of committing crime and they misbehave and quarrel, assault and call by

names, fake complaints against staff are a common practice among women who are habitual to crime and consider themselves as Boss of the barrack.

(ii) Available Facilities: Kaur admits the availability of facilities like Prison Calling System (PICs), special food and care is taken for pregnant women, babies, children and breast-feeding mothers, attachment of crèche and nursery, proper arrangement to meet gender appropriate needs of women (Sanitary pads, medicines etc), entertainment literature, daily newspapers. Free legal awareness camps and free legal aid for needy women, counseling sessions, spiritual programs, yoga and meditation, provision for physical exercises are admired. The regular visit of superintendent jail and judges to visit female wards and suitable arrangements to address the genuine grievances are admitted as a good practice.

(iv) Rehabilitation and Educational/life Skills Development Programs: Though Kaur needs not to improve her financial status with any skills but has learnt Painting, pickle making, stitching, fulkari and making bags from waste material. She admits to earn money for her family after release, but is not hopeful to earn her respect back even by applying the new ways of life.

Kaur’s is a lady with a different attitude. Her behavior is unpredictable, as sometimes is very good and arrogant at other intervals. Her qualities cannot be ignored. She admitted that she tries her best to improve the attitude of her fellow convicts and not to use abusive language. Being related to health department, she feels worried about the hygiene of the inmates, so tries to tell them to take care of themselves and makes them aware about health, skin diseases, cleanliness etc. Kaur tries her best to suggest the women from lower socio-economic status to make use of the facilities provided to them, but sometimes feels depressed as many among them hardly bothers about that and even sometimes make fun of her. She guides them about spirituality and encourage to do yoga and exercise. She admitted that as she is an educated lady related with health profession, so she is helping inmates (medical purpose). Emergencies in women ward are dealt by her and Jail Medical Officer is called only afterwards (i.e. in case of dire need).

Rehabilitation Plan: Ramandeep Kaur being a highly educated woman does not need to improve her academic qualification; rather improvement of skills; which may help her to start her business after release; and her mental well-being while staying in the prison.

The plan to enhance Academic Qualification/ Skill Development/ life skill development of convict (Ramandeep Kaur) has been presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Preparation of a Plan of Rehabilitation through Education/ Skill Development:

Type of education	Activities	Educational Skill Development Content	Outcomes
Academics	Giving class	• Taking classes of semi-educated women (for continuous education)	• Helping others to get some certificate/ degree
Liaison with some group of medical	• Meetings with prison/ visiting/ specialist doctors	• Preparing medical history of new women inmates and	• Earning during conviction • Helping prison authorities and medical staff

experts (including prison doctors)	during their visit to women wards	discussing their psychological issues	
Skill Development of inmates	Preparing educated women for para-medical duties (lesson on emergency situations)	<p>Authentic and rich content on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid • Tips related to Treating Sprains, Cuts & Scrapes, Heat exhaustion, Hypothermia, Treating Burns & Fractures, Allergic reactions • Medicines for pain relief • Applying a light gauze bandage • Dental Hygiene • How to act as Nursing Care Assistant • Giving injections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best utilization of time • Development of self-respect • Feeling of satisfaction • Serving Humanity
Life Skills	Seminars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral Values • Managing Revenge and Aggression • Spiritual Intelligence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in depression • Suppression of negative feelings • Harnessing Spiritual Quotient
	Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art of life - to shatter feelings of anger and hatred towards a person. • Handling the emotions through meditation • Writing research articles/books based on past experiences (profession) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing motivational power • Decrease in materialistic desires • Productive initiatives

Implications of the Study:

As per the findings of the study, the living conditions of the women are not very inhumane/ unhygienic/ improper clothing and so on, as described by the previous research; rather there is need to add a few new facilities like providing beds/ court to them. Not only the material like soap (bath and washing) is provided to the women to bring cleanliness among the convicts; but also the preventive measures like organizing awareness lectures, frequent checking, by the officials, is organized against the spread of skin disease and importance of cleanliness. The present study can help the state government/ Prison administration and NGOs in the following ways:

- As far as rehabilitation of woman prisoners is concerned, it also requires some micro level measures.

- The prison administration needs to classify the women having equal educational needs and try to lodge them in one jail/ ward only, so that their educational needs may be met at great extent.
- There is need to establish a strong liaison between Prison Administration and N.G.Os. The Prison Administration should personally approach local and reputed N.G.Os to promote vocational and educational programs for female prisoners. Not only Prison administration but also N.G.Os should personally try to promote employment and educational programs for the inmate women.
- Local organizations can also have a human approach in rehabilitating the women prisoners and show their ways to live with self-confidence.

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