Chapter 5

There is an urge in human beings to do something that deviate the rules and regulations set by the society (Hirschi, 1969). Some people are egotistical and self-centered that they must be motivated by the fear of punishment, which provides a tangible motive for them to obey the law and suppress the despotic spirit that resides in every person (Devine, 1982). Their behavior and passions are also being controlled due to the fear that their illegal behavior will damage their relationships with others (Hirschi, 1969). In addition the decision to forgo crime may be based on the individual’s perception that the economic benefits are no longer there or that the risks of apprehension is too great (Bayer, 1981). Conversely, some people find it difficult to stop the very Id (immediate and spontaneous fulfillment of desires) from fulfilling those urges that force them to deviate from the rules.

According to the rational choice approach, law-violating behavior occurs when an individual decides to risk breaking the law after considering both personal factors and situational factors (Rengert and Wasilchick, 1985). Before choosing to commit a crime, people evaluate the risks of apprehension, the seriousness of expected punishment, the potential value of the criminal enterprise, and the immediate need for criminal gain. Some people consider it as high risk because they are indigent or disturbed may never violate the law whereas others who are seemingly affluent and well adjusted may risk criminal behaviour given enough provocation and/or opportunity, greater rewards, admiration, and excitement (Rengert and Wasilchick, 1985). Whether someone with criminal propensity actually commits a crime depends largely on the circumstances (Cohen and Felson, 1979).

There are certain risk and protective factors in our societies, cultures (family values), system (educational, political, law-enforcement), economy,
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and so on that endorses as well as motivates the criminal activities of an individual (Lyman and Potter, 2007). Usually a combination of such factors is behind a person who commits a crime (Melkonyan, 2008). The patterns or combinations of these developmental risk factors as a whole are needed to be considered for understanding the development and continuation of antisocial/criminal behaviour. The present study adopts a person-oriented approach to investigate how different combinations of psychosocial factors i.e., individual risk factors (aggression, impulsivity), familial factors (parental attachment and rejection), and social risk factor (peer pressure and rejection) leads to later criminality.

As infants, all humans form attachment relationships with their primary caregivers. Attachment is an affectionate tie that one person forms to another specific person, binding them together in space and enduring over time (Ainsworth, 1973). Among the many different relationships individuals form during the life span, the relationship between mother and child is the most important. This relationship will mediate mother-child attachment. The development of attachment relationships between children and parents constitutes one of the most important aspects of development. Attachment is evident when a child is strongly inclined to seek proximity or contact with a specific person, usually the parent, in situations of anxiety, stress, illness, or fatigue (Bowlby, 1969). In general, attachment is the emotional bond that individuals form with their caregivers over the course of their infancy. The quality and timing of attachment could determine the quality of later development (Malekpour, 2007). The affective ties between children and caregivers have long been considered relevant to the development of prosocial and antisocial behaviour (van IJzendoorn, 1997). Young children who do not have a relationship with at least one emotionally invested, predictably available, caregiver—even in the presence of adequate physical care and cognitive stimulation—display an array of developmental deficits that they
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endure over time (Malekpour, 2007). Individuals with an insecure attachment tend to exhibit behaviour problems (Moss, Rousseau, Parent, St-Laurent, and Saintonge, 1998); externalizing behaviours (Fearon, Bakermans-Kranenburg, van IJzendoorn, Lapsley, and Roisman, 2010) such as conduct disorder and aggression (Cassidy, 1988); disruptive and antisocial behaviour (Patterson, Reid, and Dishion, 1992); and criminal behaviour (Hirschi, 1969).

For children and adolescents, parent support is one important context of security that has been associated with many positive outcomes (Doyle and Markiewicz, 2005; Milevsky, Schlechter, Netter, and Keehn, 2007), whereas many adjustment problems have been associated with rejecting or hostile parenting behaviours (Chang, Schwartz, Dodge, and McBride-Chang, 2003; Khaleque and Rohner, 2002). When rejection occurs within valued relationships with others such as parents or among peers, this can affect individuals’ conceptions of relationships and their expectations of others, especially during childhood. Some of these conceptions have been referred to as rejection sensitivity, which is usually defined as anxious expectations of rejection and the tendency to readily perceive and overreact to it (Downey and Feldman, 1996). The higher levels of parental neglect during childhood were associated with more rejection sensitivity in adulthood (Downey, Khouri, and Feldman, 1997). There are two affective responses that may accompany expectations of rejection (Downey, Lebolt, Rincon, and Freitas, 1998b). Individuals who are anxious may be more prone to react to rejection but do not project their aggression externally, while those people who are aggressive have the tendency and temptation to externally show their aggression (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Downey, Freitas, Michaelis, and Khouri, 1998; Ayduk, Mendoza-Denton, Mischel, Downey, Peake, and Rodriguez, 2000). Parental rejection appears to be a major predictor of almost all forms of behaviour problems, and antisocial behaviour (Ingoldsby, Shaw, Winslow,
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Schonberg, Gilliom, and Criss, 2006; Shaw, Winslow, Owens, Vondra, Cohn, and Bell, 1998; Fagan, 1995; Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986).

Some studies have noticed the effect of harsh parental discipline on child aggression (Weiss, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, 1992). Aggression is a deliberate series of actions that lead to harm, injury, or destruction of another organism and is the most common factor promoting violent crimes. Beyond being the immediate cause of physical injury, aggressive behavior also produces profound long term emotional disabilities in its victims (Weinshenker and Siegel, 2002). Loeber and Hay (1994), underlined parents’ inappropriate child-rearing practices, which either directly fuel a disruptive behaviour or do not lead to the desired effect of curtailing the problem behaviour. This process was also denominated as ‘arrested socialization’ (Patterson, 1982), as parents may fall back on coercive rearing practices that only exacerbate the problem behaviour. It is even suggested that being aggressive can become an established pattern of behaviour and a way of life which is likely to be repeated by imitation across generations (Huesmann et al., 1984). Among potential early child-rearing factors, parental rejection, harsh punishment of children and inconsistent or overly permissive discipline are related both to childhood aggression and to adult aggression, antisocial behaviour and criminality (Eron et al., 1991; Dishion et al., 1994; Farrington, 1994; McCord, 1994).

Ineffective parenting practices, therefore, are the main factor determining the level of self-control (impulsivity) according to the general theory of crime (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). The parent-child bond affects how strongly a child values parental approval—weakly bonded children tend to be much more impulsive and difficult to control (Widom, 1989). Impulsive individuals demonstrate less ability to inhibit behaviour as well as show a lack of reflection upon the consequences of their behaviour.
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(Patterson and Newman, 1993). The general theory of crime claims that the level of self-control is determined in early childhood and does not change throughout the course of life. The effect of parental socialization and management, as argued by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), determines criminality only through self-control. Relative to nonimpulsive people, impulsive people tend to be more aggressive (Krueger et al., 1996; Tangney, Baumeister, and Boone, 2004), be more violent (Bogg and Roberts, 2004), choose short-term over long-term rewards (Funder, Block, and Block, 1983), and commit more crimes (Wulfert et al., 2002). In order to create an adequate level of self-control, parents must monitor the child's behaviour; recognize deviant behaviour when it occurs; and punish such behaviour (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990).

During middle childhood, intimacy and companionship increases with peers, and children increasingly rely on peers for a sense of belonging (Laursen, 1996). Children, who are rejected at home by their significant others or when parents by being either over protective or opting inconsistent disciplining techniques, do not allow their children to play with their peers or join any other kind of groups, gets emotionally disturbed all the more if they are very sensitive. Such children are seen to be not that popular, lack the positive aspects of interpersonal relationships, and having incapability to make and maintain interpersonal relationships which in turn invoke rejection from peers. Due to this even if they receive invitation from antisocial peer gangs they join it wholeheartedly. In order to confirm their place in the respective gang and keep strong their membership they do whatever they are asked to do even if it means to go to the extent of deviating from the norms, violating the rules and regulations put forward by the society. In every level of the social structure youths who fall in with bad crowd become more susceptible to criminal behaviour patterns (Jackson, 1979). People who
maintain close relations with anti-social peers sustain their own criminal behaviour (Siegel, 2007) into their adulthood (Warr, 1993).

Children are also rejected by peers for many reasons; it is often the case that they are rejected due to their aggressive behaviour (Patterson, 1982; Bierman, Smoot, and Aumiller, 1993) or disruptive behaviour (Miller-Johnson et al., 2002) or impulsivity (Gomes and Livesey, 2008; Olson, 1992; Sharma, Ally, and Vaillancourt, 2006). The experience of peer rejection has been associated with increases in externalizing (Dodge et al., 2003; Keiley et al., 2000), but also internalizing behaviour problems (Deater-Deckard, 2001; Keiley et al., 2000). Aggressive adolescents who have been rejected by peers are also more likely to have a "hostile attribution bias" which leads people to interpret the actions of others (whether they be hostile or not) as purposefully hostile and aggressive towards them (Dodge and Somberg, 1987). This often leads to an impulsive and aggressive reaction (Dodge et al., 2003). Hostile attribution bias however, can appear at any age during development and often lasts throughout a person’s life. Children who are rejected by their peers are more likely to display aggressive behaviour, disrupt group activities, anti-social behaviour (Siegel, 2007; Wright, Caspi, Moffitt, and Silva, 2001) and engage in criminal offending (Ollendick, Weist, Borden, and Greene, 1992; Parker and Asher, 1987).

Related studies have suggested that rejected–aggressive youth exhibit more pervasive social deficits that hinder the development of adaptive interpersonal skills and increase children’s risk for later externalizing and risk behaviours (Bierman and Wargo, 1995). On the other hand, there is evidence to suggest that impulsive children are rejected by peers and as a result are posited to exhibit delinquent behaviour based on low social status and individual factors (Olson, 1992). These rejections affect the child’s ability to be socialized properly (Bartol and Bartol, 2009). Early peer relationship
problems and rejection by socially competent peers may increase the likelihood that these children will form affiliations and social networks with other rejected and antisocial children (Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Gest, and Gariepy; 1988; Dishion et al., 1991; Simons et al., 1991). Hoping to belong and to be accepted in at least one peer group, no matter its damaged reputation, they feel compelled to engage in more anti-social activity in an effort to gain standing and approval (Siegel, 2007).

Association with antisocial peers was related to the emergence of antisocial behaviour at adolescence among youths who had not previously exhibited behaviour problems (Bartusch et al., 1997; Fergusson, Lynskey, and Horwood, 1996). The influence of deviant peers on later-onset (adolescence-limited) antisocial behaviour appears to be much stronger, however, heightened susceptibility to peer pressure of individuals in middle adolescence is most consistently seen when the behaviour in question is antisocial, such as cheating, stealing, or trespassing, and it is especially true among boys (Maseko, 2009; Erickson, Crosnoe, and Dornbusch, 2000. But Burton, Ray, and Mehta (2003), noted that these peers pose an influence that is a common source for negative activities for students like experimentation with drugs, drinking (Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986); vandalism and stealing.

**Problem**

To explore psychologically how criminal psyche constellation (psychosocial background) is being formed and flourished leading to the development of a criminal.

**Aim and Objectives**

1. To explore the behaviour of criminals, their personality and other supportive psychosocial factors for their specific behaviour development and
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the flourishing of criminality, based on the existing theories and from their own perspectives.

2. A detailed in depth study of criminals’ cases to explore individual unique characteristics.

3. To identify the relation of certain psychosocial factors such as attachment, rejection sensitivity, aggression, peer pressure and impulsivity with the criminal behaviour, by considering related demographic factors.

4. To develop a model on antisocial/criminal behaviour development.

METHOD

Participants

360 prisoners who were identified by law as criminals, who had committed violent crimes intentionally either in solitude or in groups whether first time offenders or habitual offenders and 35 law enforcement officers, from the three central prisons of Kerala which are Kannur Central Prison (Pallikkunnu, Kannur), Poojappura Central Prison (Thiruvananthapuram) and Viyyur Central Prison (Thrissur) were selected purposively as participants for the purpose of research.

Measures

The present study dealt with variables viz., attachment, rejection sensitivity, aggression, peer pressure and impulsivity, most of which had no standardized tools that could measure them in the present population. Due to the unavailability of scientifically valid and reliable tools, the investigator was forced to develop tools in order to assess the peer pressure experienced by the prisoners in their life and their impulsive nature, thereby getting it validated and standardized. The measures used for the present research were as follows;

1) Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) (Armsden and
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Greenberg, 1987)
2) Peer Pressure Inventory (Ameen, 2011)
3) Buss-Perry Questionnaire (AGQ) (Buss and Perry, 1992)
4) Impulsivity Inventory (Ameen, 2011)
5) Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire-Adult (RSQ) (Berenson et al., 2009)
6) Personal Data Sheet

Once the quantitative assessment had been completed, the investigator realized that all the aspects of the prisoner population could not be studied using just the tools. Thus, qualitative assessment had also been done using the following methods to make a deep exploration into the prisoners in order to study the unique and common features seen in them respectively. The qualitative methods used for the research purpose were;

1) Unstructured Descriptive Interview
2) Structured Interview
3) Case Study
4) Naturalistic Observation

Procedure

The investigator sought and received formal permission from the Home Ministry at the Secretariat situated in the capital, Thiruvananthapuram, to enter all the central prisons of Kerala, which are Kannur Central Prison (Pallikkunnu, Kannur), Poojappura Central Prison (Thiruvananthapuram) and Viyyur Central Prison (Thrissur) for the purpose of data collection as part of the research. Later, the permission of the jail authorities was taken and appointments were made to visit the prisoners. The prisoners were provided enough understandable information by the investigator to make a voluntary decision. He made them understand the relevance of the research and why
they had been chosen as the sample. Informal consent was taken from the participants who voluntarily accepted the request to participate in the research. Identities of the participants were kept high in confidentiality. A strong rapport was established by the investigator with the participants.

The total procedure consisted of 6 different phases. Phase 1 was conducted to explore out certain psychosocial variables which would lead the participants to the path of criminality. In this phase three activities carried out were: i) studying the prison system and administration using unstructured interview method; ii) conducting uncontrolled observation using naturalistic observation method; and iii) conducting unstructured descriptive interview using unstructured interview method. Thematic analysis of the theories related to crime causation and theories related the variables under study viz., attachment, rejection sensitivity, aggression, peer pressure, and impulsivity, which pave way to criminality were carried out in phase 2. Phase 3 dealt with the construction of standardized tools due to the unavailability of scientifically valid and reliable tools to assess the peer pressure experienced by the prisoners in their life as well as their impulsive nature. In the 4th phase quantitative data were collected from the prisoner participants using standardized tools viz., Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA); Peer Pressure Inventory; Buss-Perry Questionnaire (AGQ); Impulsivity Inventory; and Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire-Adult (RSQ). Qualitative methods like, structured interview and in-depth case study, based on self theorizations of the prisoners, in order to verify the contribution of the research variables in the development of antisocial/criminal behaviour qualitatively were used in phase 5. Finally phase 6 encompassed the development of Antisocial/Criminal Behaviour Development Model.

Major Findings
1. Childhood experiences are seen to be very important as most of the prisoner participants reported of having undergone terrifying incidents when they were children. This clearly indicates how childhood experiences may create an influence over a person’s future life, as this very period may mark the base for all the future mishap that takes place in an individual’s life.

2. Majority of the participants reported to having been victims of physical and sexual abuse in their childhood, which is still not forgotten by them.

3. Those prisoners who happened to have gone through sexual abuse in their childhood were reported to have been doing the same to other cohabitants in the prison.

4. There were participants who experienced parental absence either by death or separation. Many opined about the ill treatment they received from their step parents.

5. A thematic analysis of theories on criminality and the self reports of the prisoners revealed the importance of five major psychosocial variables namely attachment, rejection sensitivity, aggression, peer pressure and impulsivity respectively.

6. Quantitative assessment tools were constructed and validated by the investigator in the absence of proper scientific tools of two variables under study i.e., peer pressure and impulsivity to measure the extent to which these variables under study were present in the prisoners.

7. In the quantitative analysis correlations between the variables were done, which thereby showed significant correlations to some extent.

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8. Exploration of the research variables through individual analysis (interview) and in-depth case study indicated specific complex relationship among the variables, to generate criminality.

9. Majority of the participants reported having low attachment with their parents, especially with their mothers.

10. Most of the prisoner participants were reported to have been rejected by their parents and peers.

11. Some of the participants opined that along with the rejection they faced from their parents and peers, their parents’ authoritative disciplinary practices forbid them to play with others which made them get along well with those who had gone through similar experiences that in turn paved way to the formation of hemophilic gangs.

12. Those respondents who were not allowed to play with their peers during adolescence reported to have strong pressure of peers either direct or indirect over them that continued to their middle age. This led them to be in a state of peer fixation.

13. Most of the participants had negative peer pressure. Amongst them most have accounted getting into bad habits and peer pressure having accounted by quarter population of being a factor that led to commit crimes.

14. Majority of the respondents were reported to be impulsive and to show physical aggression on other prisoners too. Their impulsive behaviour led them to commit crimes, state those participants.

15. Murder was seen to be the most common crime to have been committed by the participants, followed by rape.
16. Majority of the respondents justified on their own that they were not the offenders but, sadly the victims of the society’s harshness without any remorse or repentance.

17. The investigators developed a model which proposes that; Insecure or lack of parental attachment would lead individuals to become aggressive in nature and lack peer relationships that might affect their social development. Due to their aggressive nature they also get rejected by their parents and peers. Children facing such similar problems may have the tendency to get along; thereby forming gangs. Such individuals face strong peer pressure from the gang members which may make them do anything, even if it means to go against the norms of the society.

18. The investigators proposed a model based on the results and findings. Individuals who are sensitive to rejection get strongly affected if they are rejected by their significant others, especially by their parents and peers. They also have got a tendency to perceive rejection even from minute cues (very low threshold). When such people have attachment problems along with the rejection they face in reality, they become highly vulnerable to peer pressure. There is a tendency for such individuals to form a gang which encompasses individuals who have gone through similar situations. In case the peer influence continues, peer pressure too becomes strong. With the strengthening of peer pressure the members of the gang learn to express aggressiveness physically and verbally. These individuals tend to be impulsive in nature. This affects these individuals cognitively, behaviourally and affectionally. Finally these lead to the development of antisocial behaviour which happens to facilitate these individuals to repeat the offenses with peer influence making the environment suitable for them.
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Each time these individuals escape from being caught enhances their habit formation. Their cognitive pattern was seen to be rigid and lacked flexibility that led to rigid forms of thinking, thereby leading them to do deviant acts and getting imprisoned. This increases the chances of repeating the offences again and again. The ego strength of offenders was found to be increasing with each offense committed by them. There are many environmental factors which may precipitate criminals to commit crimes such as hunger, poverty, lack of social commitment and so on.

Precautions

1. Appointments were fixed as per the convenience of the prison officials and the prisoner participants.
2. The consent of the prison officials’ and volunteer prisoner participants’ were taken before collecting the data from them. No one was forced to participate.
3. A strong rapport was established between the participants and the investigator. The research purpose was shared with them and the authorities.
4. Scientific tools were used and administered individually.
5. The data was collected on an individual basis instead of group data in order to give more attention to the prisoner participants by the investigator.
6. Incomplete responses/omissions given by the prisoner participants were excluded.
7. Multiple methodologies such as quantitative method (correlation) and qualitative methods (unstructured descriptive interview, naturalistic observation, structured interview, and case study exploration) were used to confirm results.
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8. The prisoner participants were given the freedom to quit whenever they wanted from the research processes.

9. A very clear and strong assurance was given to the prisoner participants by the investigator that none of their comments or their opening would affect their case in any way.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was exclusively conducted on male prisoners.

2. The investigator was not able to meet the relatives of the prisoner participants.

3. The presence of Welfare Officers and the Police Constables brought in a sense of inhibition in the prisoner participants that they felt uneasy to cooperate with the investigator in sharing their biography.

4. Lots of participants were scared to talk to the investigator as they were not willing to believe the purpose of the study thinking it would turn against them if they said anything related to their cases to the investigator.

5. Many a times the investigator was not able to collect the whole data at a stretch during the consecutive visits to the prison as the presence of visitors at visiting hours prevented some of the respondents from concentrating in the data sheet given to them since they were emotionally disturbed because no one had visited them.

6. Besides, many a times the investigator would lose the participants as those participants seen by the investigator may have got transferred to other central prisons; some may have been let out on parole; some may have gone for routine medical checkup; and so on made the participants leave half way during the data collection.
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7. Even though the study is smooth going, the interaction is used only for data collection and model presentation, but not for intervention.

8. Post and pre test interventions were not done in the prisoner population.

Implications

1. This study shall help law enforcement officers to know more about criminals, their behaviour, how the criminal psyche is developed and what could the law enforcement officers do to prevent a person from committing crimes in future.

2. Case studies and interview techniques were given prime focus to make an in depth exploration into what made an offender/individual do that particular act which made him a prison inmate.

Scope for Further Research

1. Future researchers may utilize the data, analysis or model to develop intervention or psychological rehabilitation programs.

2. Interventions were not attempted in the current research. Hence, in future attempts are to be made to intervene in order to know the extent to which the prisoners are getting rehabilitated before they are re-introduced to the society.

3. It would be preferable to conduct the same on female prisoners.

4. It would be recommended to conduct the study on a smaller prison sample so as to do an in depth study into childhood exploration with the help of familial background.

5. Intervention strategies should be made from the school level itself to prevent children from doing violent acts.
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6. Social skill awareness camps to be conducted in schools and social skills training to be given to children.

7. The study would be more effective if done on a longitudinal method.

8. Individual oriented intervention programs could be made.

9. Studies could be done focusing upon the juvenile delinquents and later extending to the adult prisoner population to go deeper into the root causes of the criminal pathways.

10. Personalities could be measured and explored using personality tests.

11. A huge comparison between criminals who have committed various kinds of violent and non-violent crimes can be made. This would help to find out the minute subtle effects of contributing psychological factors.

12. Psychologists are to be appointed in prisons to ensure full rehabilitation of the prisoner’s.

13. Psychological tests and therapies are to be administered by psychologists on prisoners for reformation to take place in them.

14. Focus should be made on the offender alike the victim. Since, in the contemporary society more focus is given to the victim and how to punish the offender. Efforts should be made to see more in depth as to what made the offender do that particular act and the root causes.

15. Community awareness programs to be conducted on regular bases especially focusing on how to accommodate a person in the society after he comes out of prison.