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Scope of Criminal Psychology

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ABSTRACT

There are always reasons why someone commits a crime. Reasons are the foundational elements of psychology. When a person believes he has strong reasons to hide and commit a crime, such excuses are merely a reflection of that person's criminal psyche. and anytime the topic of what can be done to prevent or lessen the rising crime rate comes up. Criminal psychology is the study of offenders' ideas and conduct. It provides a solution to the issue, "Why do criminals do what they do?" Criminal psychology has been glorified in television dramas such as Criminal Minds and CSI. As we all know, what we see on television does not necessarily mirror reality. The first step in reducing crime is to understand the criminal's psychology, because psychology develops from causes, and it is difficult to minimise crime until the reasons are understood. As a result, the criminal psychologist's role enters the picture. This article describes the character and job of a criminal psychologist in today's society, when crime is on the rise like never before. Everything has been thoroughly studied in this book, from the fundamental notions of criminal psychology to the obligations or activities that criminal psychologists must complete.

Keywords: *Crime, Psychology, Criminal minds, Criminal psychology.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, crime has become an essential component of civilisation, and we cannot even envision a society free of crime. Crime is described as a deviation from recognised societal standards, morality, and conduct that has a negative influence on society as a whole. Different countries have their own criminal codes that codify these offences and outline strategies to prevent future occurrences. Hence, it is difficult for the government to make its citizens feel safe and secure by preventing crime and criminals in society. Even if the government tries to do so, they can't do so just by enacting additional criminal laws or by punishing all criminals harsher.

So, in order to prevent crime and criminals from entering society, we must first understand-

- Why crime occurs?
- How does a criminal mind function?

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- What is the source of the crime?

All of these questions will be answered in Criminology or Criminal Psychology. To eliminate crime and criminals from society, one must first learn and become an expert in criminology and criminal psychology.

Criminals can be classified into two types, according to psychology. Psychopaths and Sociopaths, for example. Psychopaths are individuals who are born with strong criminal tendencies. Sociopaths are people who are not born with high criminal tendencies, but chose a path that leads them to crime due to extrinsic reasons such as emotional imbalance, economic troubles, and family issues. Nobody wants to be a criminal in their life, as we all know. However, they inadvertently engage in an act that leads them to commit crime and become a criminal.

Now we can see why Criminal Psychology is so important in preventing crime and offenders in society.

II. WHAT IS CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY?

Criminal psychology is the study of a criminal's thinking patterns and behaviour. A criminal psychologist is more concerned with what may have prompted an individual to commit a crime rather than why. It investigates an individual's ideas, behaviour, feelings, and emotions in order to determine the criminal circumstances that prompted him or her to commit a crime. Criminal psychologists can identify a criminal's likelihood of committing a crime again and again by researching the criminal's mental pattern.³

The term "criminal psychology" has been defined in a number of different ways. Even today there is no accepted definition. For example, ten years ago two leading criminal psychologists in the UK, i.e., G.H. Gudjonsson and L.R.C Haward defined it as "that branch of applied psychology which is concerned with the collection, examination and presentation of evidence for judicial purposes."⁴

According to the legal dictionary, criminal psychology is considered as the study of will, intention, thoughts, feelings, and reactions of criminals and those who engage in criminal behavior.⁵

³ Sneha Mahawar, All about criminology and criminal psychology, available at: <https://blog.ipleaders.in/all-about-criminology-and-criminal-psychology/> (Visited on June 07, 2022).

⁴ Psychology of crime, available at: https://advocatespedia.com/Psychology_of_Crime (Visited on June 07, 2022).

⁵ Nyayik Vigyan, Role of Criminal Psychology in Criminal Justice System, available at: <https://nyayikvignyan.com/role-of-criminal-psychology/> (Visited on June 09, 2022).

It implies by behavioral and mental health professionals whose findings are used to make judicial determinations. Criminal psychology also helps to assist police in the investigation, advises on interviewing suspects and witnesses, and also works for the rehabilitation process.⁶

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY IN LEGAL SYSTEM

Crime, like a pot in a pond, has an impact on people every time it occurs. It has never been more important to identify those who are accountable for ensuring an open and fair judicial process. Crime psychologists help law enforcement catch criminals and teach them about the criminal mind through their analytical research.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Professor Lionel Howard, a pioneer in UK criminal psychology, suggested four viable routes for psychologists to help in criminal cases through professional participation in 1981. Those are:

1. **Clinical:** In this case, the psychologist is present during the evaluation to make a clinical decision. To aid in the assessment, the psychologist may use screening techniques, interviews, or psychometric testing. These tests will assist in establishing how the injured person will be handled. For example, this can be used to examine a person's or offender's mental condition in relation to a specific offence.
2. **Experimental:** This can include conducting experimental testing to demonstrate a point or provide additional information to the courts (For instance, how likely is it that someone can accurately identify an object in an individual's hand from a distance of 200 metres at twilight?). Alternatively, psychologists can provide the court with an overview of current research findings that may be relevant to the situation at hand.
3. **Actuarial:** In this context, the term "actuarial" refers to the use of statistics to inform a case. A psychologist may operate in an actuarial position if they are compelled to give actuarial facts to the court about the likelihood of an event occurring. For instance the court may call upon a psychologist to inform them of the probability of an event.
4. **Advisory:** In this, a criminal psychologist advises police on an investigation. It also assists judges in understanding the criminal behaviour or psychology of the accused, which aids in the establishment of appropriate justice.

⁶ *Ibid.*

V. ROLE OF CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGIST

- **Profiling:** Criminal psychologists can act as profilers, assisting agencies in developing psychological profiles to aid in the apprehending of suspects. Unlike what you see on TV, a real-life psychologist is unlikely to accompany police to face suspects, and a high-profile serial killer only appears once in a blue moon. A criminal psychologist may visit a crime scene, but they are more likely to spend their time in an office with case files or in a record room reading over evaluations of potential suspects. Examining research and data related to cases is a big element of criminal psychology. It can almost feel intellectual at times. Furthermore, criminal profiling is merely one of their numerous responsibilities.
- **Assessment:** The psychologist must analyse the cognitive state of both the victim and the accused. The psychologist determines whether a victim or accused is mentally ill as they say, or whether a victim or accused is mentally unfit about which no one, including the victim or accused, is aware. The assessment entails measuring the strength, aptitude, intellect level, personality, and so on to predict what type of employees should be hired who have the necessary strength, intelligence level, aptitude, personality, and so on to counter criminals. The assessment also aids in determining what social, biological, and environmental elements contribute to the development of a specific type of criminal behaviour.
- **Consultation:** Criminal psychologists frequently use their knowledge of human behaviour to advice law enforcement and others in the criminal justice system on various aspects of a case. They can, for example, assist them in asking proper questions during questioning or provide important material to help direct their enquiry.
- **Correctional System:** If criminals are apprehended, it is the responsibility of the responsible government to develop a programme to assist convicts in reintegrating into society; otherwise, prisons will become overcrowded. As a result, the concerned authorities would want the assistance of criminal psychologists in order to transform criminals into better human beings. There should be a separate penal system for different types of crimes and convicts, such as children, women, and men, as well as the severity of the crime. One correctional system or intervention strategy would not work for everyone. The correctional system would also be required for a victim or witness and, notably, for law enforcement employees to improve their efficiency.
- **Experimental:** Research on specific instances is essential to gain insight into the perspective of a victim, a criminal, or an eyewitness.

- **Private Practitioner:** The psychologist also works as a private practitioner, assisting the general population. The private practitioner can be of tremendous assistance in resolving domestic or divorce-related difficulties without having to go to court. Advocates will seek the assistance of such private practitioners if their case needs it.
- **Court Testimony:** Criminal psychologists are frequently called to testify in court as expert witnesses and to explain aberrant psychology to juries. Some psychologists base their entire practice on providing their expert judgment. They make their decisions based on testing they have performed or by reviewing assessments and evidence offered by other specialists.
- **Psychotherapy:** A criminal psychologist may be called upon to provide psychotherapy to people who have committed crimes. Their role is to assist their clients in coping with the consequences of criminal behaviour and in rehabilitating so that they can be productive members of society.
- **Interviewing, Detecting and Eye witness:** The collection of trustworthy evidence is one of the most significant duties during the investigation. Psychologists have played an important role in formulating guidelines and suggestions on how to question witnesses and suspects, as well as educating various police agencies on these tactics. The police might also consult psychologists to learn how to interrogate specific types of witnesses or suspects. A criminal psychologist can testify as an expert witness in criminal psychology.
- **Evaluation:** Evaluation is an important aspect of criminal psychology. Psychological examinations are used to examine a defendant's mental state. For example, if a suspect is in a stable mental condition to be evaluated and possesses characteristics that match the claimed crime, a Psychologist may have to make a decision.
- **Rehabilitation of Prisoners:** A criminal psychologist's duty encompasses more than just assisting cops in jail. Many societies and governments are concerned about convicts' ability to re-socialize after their release from prison. To accomplish this purpose, authorised government organisations work with forensic psychiatrists to create specific procedures that prohibit criminals from committing a felony while simultaneously allowing them to restore their place in society.

VI. CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY VS. FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

When comparing criminal and forensic psychology, it's critical to recognise the major contrasts between professions and traditional approaches. There are some differences between the two

paths in terms of the training required for their current tasks. Many people mix the words crime and forensic psychologist. People can identify as one or the other and perform the same responsibilities. There are, however, a few key differences. If you're talking about identifying a suspect, you're usually talking about a criminal psychologist. A forensic psychologist is the most likely to conduct an examination, but a criminal psychologist is not required to do so. Other scholars study the psychology of criminals, while many people who do quantitative work call themselves forensic psychologists. The distinction is that forensic psychologists deal with all areas of litigation, including civil cases, whereas criminal psychologists only deal with criminal cases.

VII. CONCLUSION

Criminal psychology has evolved as a vital discipline that will assist law enforcement agencies and courts in improving their performance and effectively combating crimes and criminals. Criminal psychology is still in its infancy in India. More finances and suitable infrastructure must be provided by the government so that students and researchers are drawn to criminal psychology and more study and experiments may be conducted to achieve a better end.

The field of criminal psychology is extremely broad. A person who studies criminal psychology and want to pursue a profession in it has several alternatives. They can work as law enforcement officers, investigators, and so forth. Amit Shah, our Minister of Home Affairs, recently suggested for the establishment of a National Police University and a Forensic Science University, with linked colleges in every state. A person who is interested in criminal psychology and is looking for a job can find a variety of good possibilities.
