

Preventive and Rehabilitative Strategies for Sex Offenders in Pakistan: An Analysis

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Abstract

In this article, an effort has been made to propose preventive and rehabilitative strategies to deal with the sex offenders in Pakistan. Sexual violence is a serious issue in Pakistani society. However, there are hardly any formal measures which focus on the prevention of this dreadful crime and rehabilitation of sex offenders. The proposed strategies can effectively prevent the occurrence of sexual violence and rehabilitate the sex offenders in such a way that they do not reengage in acts of sexual violence. Sexual violence is a dreadful crime which demands not only serious practical steps on part of the government but also warrants a systematic and rigorous research and holistic approach of society in order to effectively deal with this issue. It has been argued in this article that there is lot of room for devising and implementing effective strategies to deal with sex offenders. In order to prevent the occurrence of sexual violence in society, this article recommends a number of measures which not only involve the formal role of the government but also informal role of society. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. The primary data were collected through interviews of experts, focus group discussions, and official documents. The

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secondary data were collected from published books, research articles, and reports of individuals and organisations. The data support the contention of this article that there is a need to identify preventive and rehabilitative strategies aimed at dealing with sex offenders and that the proposed strategies can effectively prevent the occurrence of sexual violence in Pakistan.

Keywords: Sexual violence, rehabilitation, prevention, sex offenders, strategies.

Introduction

Sexual offence is becoming widely recognised as a significant cause of social unrest and concern around the world. Because of the harm this does to the victims and their families' physical and mental health, it is regarded as one of the most severe types of violence. Such incidents deeply impact the cultural, social, economic, and political realms of society. The sexual violence not only devastates the mental and physical health of victims but also produces societal stress at large. In fact, this is a grave issue that needs serious consideration by both the government and society. The World Health Organisation (WHO), institutions of government, NGOs, mental and physical health experts, and other private organisations are working to encounter this challenge in the world. Electronic, social, and print media are regularly reporting incidents of sexual violence to create awareness among the masses and mobilise the government and relevant stakeholders to devise measures to address the issue of sexual violence.

The complete list of cases of sexual violence around the globe is not available. However, different governments and organisations present different estimates in this regard. According to WHO, over 30 percent of women worldwide have experienced sexual violence of one type or another at the hands of an intimate partner or non-partner at some point in their lives (WHO, 2021). Pakistan is no exception in two respects: a) the

existence of sexual violence; and b) the availability of authentic data on cases of sexual violence. The increasing number of cases of sexual violence is not only a serious headache for the government but also the society in Pakistan.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) publishes a report every year where it collects yearly data on the state of human rights in Pakistan. According to the 2022 report, there were 3,901 rapes, 325 gang rapes, 937 cases of child sexual abuse and 10 trans persons were victims of sexual violence in Pakistan. With a conviction rate of less than one percent, the number of rape cases in the province of Sindh increased significantly by 200 percent (HRCP, 2022).

In its report for 2021, the Aurat Foundation collected data related to various indicators of violence against women from 25 districts across the country. According to this data, a total number of 329 cases of rape/gang rape were reported in the year 2020 (Perveen, 2021). The Sustainable Social Development Organisation (SSDO) publishes data on violence against women and children monthly or bi-annually. The data collection is sporadic. The collected data at times covers overall situation in the country and at times mostly covers the Punjab and Sindh provinces. Its report on district-wise analysis was published in 2021. According to this report, 4,643 cases of rape and 2,678 cases of child sexual abuse were registered in 2021 (SSDO, 2021).

Regarding child sexual abuse, Sahil's 'Cruel Numbers Report 2022' stated that a total of 4253 cases of child sexual abuse (CSA) have been reported in 2021. The data shows that 12 children on average every day were subjected to sexual abuse (Sahil, 2022). The number of cases of sexual abuse and violence reported by different organisations may differ, however, it shows the prevalence of sexual violence in society.

Most of the laws related to sexual violence and abuse in Pakistan are concerned with the protection and rehabilitation of the victims of sexual crime. There are exhaustive federal and

provincial legislative measures that protect the victims and witness and punish the sexual offenders. For instance, the most pertinent and recent special federal legislation is the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021 and Rules made under this law aim to address the matters concerning the crime of sexual violence and abuse expeditiously in respect of women and children. This law provides for adopting special procedures for investigation, evidence collection, and trial. It requires the establishment of Special Courts, Anti-Rape Crisis Cells (ARCCs), and Special Sexual Offences Investigation Units (SSOIU). The law also requires a list of Independent Support Advisors (ISAs) to be maintained and notified by the Ministry of Human Rights, to provide legal, financial, and psychosocial support to the victim and witnesses in each district.

The other relevant federal legislations, including the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, provide a mechanism for the investigation and prosecution of electronic crimes including child pornography or inducing a person to engage in sexually explicit acts. The law punishes the offenders for committing electronic crimes of sexual nature. The Prevention of Trafficking in Person Act, 2018 punishes the offenders who are involved in trafficking for sexual and commercial purposes. This law also provides protection, rehabilitation, and compensation for the victim and witness.

Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 (PPC), and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, (CrPC) have been amended at various junctures to improve the criminal justice system, secure convictions for sex offenders, and provide measures to protect victims and witnesses in sexual violence and abuse cases, in particular the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, XXIV of 1984; the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2004; the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act 2006; the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2010; Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act, 2011; the Prevention of Anti Women Practices, Criminal Law (Third Amendment) Act,

2011; The Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act, 2016; the Criminal Law (Amendment) Offence relating to Rape Act, 2016; the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2018; and the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021.

Each province and territory in Pakistan have enacted special legislation for the protection and rehabilitation of children who may be, among others, victims of sexual abuse. These laws include the Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act, 2004, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act, 2010, the Sindh Child Protection Authority, 2011, the Balochistan Child Protection Act, 2016, the AJK Child Rights (Care and Protection) Act, 2016, the Gilgit Baltistan Child Protection Response Act, 2017, and the Islamabad Capital Territory Child Protection Act, 2018.

However, there are no provisions in the above-cited federal and provincial laws that provide mechanisms or place obligations on the state for the rehabilitation of adult sex offenders except the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018 (JJSA) which requires rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. These juvenile offenders may include juvenile sex offenders. Section 20 of JJSA requires that the government, “may establish and maintain observation home and Juvenile Rehabilitation Centres for the reception of juveniles, including separate centres for female juveniles”. In practice, there are hardly any juvenile rehabilitation centres established in Pakistan after the enactment of this legislation to enforce its provisions in its true spirit. Moreover, there exist no specialized rehabilitation programmes for prisoners who are serving their sentence as sex offenders

The rising cases of sexual violence in Pakistan underscore the necessity of rehabilitating sex offenders. Effective rehabilitation programmes can play a crucial role in reducing the number of cases of sexual violence in the country.

The objective of this study is to propose preventive and rehabilitative strategies for sex offenders to overcome the

problem of sexual violence in Pakistan. It is hoped that the proposed preventive and rehabilitative strategies will benefit law enforcement agencies and other relevant stakeholders that are required to counter the crime of sexual nature. These agencies and other stakeholders will benefit from these strategies in two ways: a) the preventive strategies would prevent sexual crimes from occurring; and b) rehabilitative strategies are likely to stop the sex offender from reengaging in the crime of sexual violence.

Methodology

A qualitative research method is used in this study. A number of data collection techniques have been used to collect relevant data. These data collection techniques include focus group discussions (FGDs), open-ended questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, official documents, and scholarly research studies. The interviews were conducted with relevant persons, including legal experts, officials of law enforcement agencies, and psychological practitioners. In line with the recommendations of researchers who use focus group discussions in their researches, an effort was made in this study to include in our FGDs people with similar backgrounds and experiences together in a moderated setting to discuss the specific topic of their common interest (George 2023). That is the discussion of preventive and rehabilitative strategies to prevent not only the occurrence of sexual violence but also sex offenders from re-engaging in sexual crimes.

Sex Offenders and the Nature of Sexual Crimes

In social science research, one of the important but difficult tasks a researcher has to do is to define the central concepts of his/her research. The definition of such concepts is important because it is the definition that delimits the subject matter at hand. The definition of social concepts is difficult because these concepts are often elusive and attract different definitions. However, a modern national justice system cannot afford to operate with

elusive concepts that invoke a breach of a national penal code. In most legal systems around the world, there is no ambiguity in the definition of such concepts. The concept of sex offender which invokes a violation of the penal code of Pakistan is no exception.

In the Cambridge Dictionary, a sex offender is defined as “a person who commits a crime involving a sexual attack” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). According to the Section 1(h) of the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021, a sex offender is “any person convicted under sections 292A, 292B, 292C, 371A, 371B, 375, 375A, 376, 377, 377A, and 377B of the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 (XLV of 1860) or Sections 21 and 22 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (Act XL of 2016).” These sections are included in Schedules I and II of the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021. A woman or a child under the age of 18 years may be the victims of sexual violence according to these sections. The offences under these provisions relate to acts of rape, sodomy, sexual abuse, and exploitation, giving the victim exposure to seduction, pornography, selling and buying of sex, engaging in attack or using criminal force against a woman to violate her modesty, as well as assaulting or using criminal force against any woman and forcibly removing her clothing. Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021 does not cover those sex offenders who commit sexual violence against adult men and transgenders.

Types of Sex Offenders

One can identify two broad types of sex offenders through a review of contemporary literature and legal frameworks. Kieliszewski (2019), a forensic psychologist with expertise in the evaluation of sex offenders, distinguishes between sex offenders of adults and sex offenders of children. In addition to these two broad categories, Jeglic (2019), who has expertise in crime prevention and reduction and treats those who are involved in sexual assault, has identified a number of sub-types of sex offenders. The first type of sex offenders commits sexual violence

against adults. This category encompasses the most dangerous and stereotypical offenders. These sex offenders typically target strangers. This group can be further divided into two subtypes: a) those who use violence for their sexual acts; and b) those who commit rape without resorting to force. Often, these sex offenders abandon their deceptive behaviour when caught and display resistance to treatment, a situation which increases the likelihood of their re-engaging in sexual violence

The second type of sex offender commits sexual violence against children. These sex offenders are called paedophiles. Paedophilic disorder is defined as the presence of repetitive and intense sexual fantasies, impulses, or actions that involve children. There are two sub-types of paedophiles. The first sub-type of paedophiles desires to target children who have not hit puberty. The second sub-type commits sexual violence against teenage children (Kieliszewski, 2019). According to Jeglic, paedophiles are amenable to treatment and show a lower risk of reoffending.

The sex offenders engage in a number of sexual crimes. Jeglic mentioned the following five acts of sexual violence:

- a) **Incest:** Incest involves a sexual contact among blood relatives. It is not uncommon for an incest offender to offend several members of the same family. The most common sexual contact is between a father and daughter, or a stepfather and a stepdaughter. The majority of victims of incest are female children. Incest offenders commonly deny or minimise their offences.
- b) **Paraphilic Acts:** Sex offenders involved in paraphilic sexual crimes experience intense sexual arousal towards atypical objects, situations, fantasies, behaviours, or individuals. In this situation, sex offenders commit an offence from a distance. Such sex offenders expose their sex organs to others from a distance, set up cameras in the bathrooms of their victims, etc. As far as their

treatment is concerned, these sex offenders are amenable to treatment and their risk of reoffending is lower.

- c) **Exhibitionism:** Exhibitionist sex offenders expose their genitals or entire nude body to their victim, during which the exhibitionists achieve arousal. Occasionally, such sex offenders are likely to masturbate and will not attempt further sexual contact. Generally, these offenders respond poorly to treatment.
- d) **Voyeurism:** Voyeurism is another kind of act of sexual violence where observers desire to watch unsuspecting individuals who are naked, getting undressed, showering, or engaging in sexual activity. Their purpose is to get arousal. Sexual contact with the person is not sought; they just fantasise about having a sexual experience with the observed person. This behaviour tends to be chronic.
- e) **Frotteurism:** Frotteuristic sex offenders like touching and rubbing against a nonconsenting person. It involves rubbing genitals against the victim's thighs and buttocks or fondling their genitals with hands. Usually, these scenes occur in crowded places from which a person can easily escape arrest, such as subways, sidewalks, etc. Generally, males are involved in such acts. The highest prevalence is between the ages of 15 and 25, with a decline afterward.

Each of the above subtypes of sex offenders exhibits unique behaviours, motivations, and responses to treatment. The comprehensive categorization provided by Jeglic offers a comparatively detailed understanding of the diverse spectrum of sex offenders and their varied behaviours.

Common Characteristics of Sex Offenders

Sex offenders share certain common traits (Lösel & Schmucker, 2017). Most sex offenders are typically those individuals who have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse in the past

(Munroe & Shumway, 2022). They frequently suffer from mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, substance misuse, and antisocial personality disorder (Dame, Olliffe, & Hill, 2020) or lack of social or emotional skills, including inadequate impulse control (Leroux, Clow, Motayne, & Seto, 2020), as well as neurological deficits or intellectual disabilities (Lösel & Schmucker, 2017). These individuals also often have several bizarre beliefs and cognitive distortions (Steel, Newman, O'Rourke, & Quayle, 2020), such as the rape myth, which may also be a factor in their abnormal behaviour (Dame, Olliffe, & Hill, 2020). Recidivism is high among them because many sexual offenders do not acknowledge that their behaviour is criminal, do not take responsibility for it, or are most likely to argue that the conduct they engaged in was consensual or the result of the victim's actions (Araújo, Cruz, & Moreira, 2023).

Preventive Approaches

The researchers, practitioners, and law enforcement officials in particular and society in general emphasize the use of preventive approaches to obviate the occurrence of sexual crimes. From the available literature, one can glean the following five preventive approaches to sexual violence:

Firstly, the feminist approach to sexual violence focuses on issues of patriarchy, power relations, and cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity. It views sexual assault as a cultural phenomenon and places it within the context of a 'rape culture.' Prevention efforts are often located within a feminist critique of society that challenges unequal and discriminatory legal and cultural practices (Westmarland, 2005).

Secondly, the human rights approach views sexual violence as a violation of human rights, recognising that it robs individuals of fundamental rights such as physical and mental health, security, equality in the family, and equal protection under the law. The state is often blamed for its failure to take the necessary

actions to combat such forms of violence (Amnesty International, 2004).

Thirdly, the criminal justice approach assumes that effective and prompt legal responses to acts of sexual violence can deter potential sex offenders from committing such acts. Such legal measures are likely to prevent the occurrence of sexual violence and reduce the long-term harm to society (Khan & Zaman, 2011).

Fourthly, the public health approach, commonly used by major organisations globally, is a science-driven, population-based, interdisciplinary approach that seeks to provide maximum benefit for the largest number of people while extending better care and safety to the entire population. It suggests that sexual violence is not the result of any single factor but rather an outcome of multiple risk factors and causes (Schweig, 2014).

Fifthly, the medico-legal approach integrates both public health and criminal justice approaches to prevent sexual violence. On the one hand, this approach emphasizes the adoption of effective and prompt legal measures to deter acts of sexual violence. On the other hand, it emphasizes the provision of better care and safety to the entire population in a national society (Jina, Jewkes, Christofides, & Smith, 2011).

Rehabilitation Strategies for Sex Offenders

To lower the rate of reoffending and facilitate the reintegration of offenders into society, it is crucial to conduct an adequate risk assessment of the sex offenders (Olver, Marshall, Marshall, & Nicholaichuk, 2020). Such assessment will in turn inform the rehabilitation strategies for sex offenders. The two broad types of rehabilitation strategies include medical and behavioural treatments.

Medical Treatment

The existing literature suggests that sexual offenders exhibit a physiological anomaly which is the basis for their deviant behaviour. There are three main types of medical treatments: a) sexual castration; b) hormonal treatments like antiandrogens (like medroxyprogesterone acetate and cyproterone acetate); and c) psychosurgery that targets the frontal lobes and limbic system. The empirical evidence indicates that castration is associated with a reduction in sexual recidivism, and in a meta-analysis, hormonal treatments emerged as among the most effective interventions for reducing sexual reoffending (Jeglic, 2019).

Behavioural Treatment

Not only the existing literature but also the researchers and practitioners focusing on sex offenders argue that sex offenders can be prevented from re-engaging in acts of sexual violence and reintegrated into society through behavioural treatments. In this regard, the following three strategies for behavioural treatment have been suggested:

- a) **Risk Needs Responsivity (RNR):** RNR assumes that the programs that can help reduce sexual recidivism must be developed based on the assessment of the level and kind of risk sex offenders pose to society, the services they need and the situation they are kept in. For example, an intensive program focusing on addressing behavioural deficits and dynamic risk factors is designed for those sex offenders who pose a higher risk (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). The rehabilitation programmes developed in an RNR model utilise Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to address risk factors that have been empirically associated with reoffending (such as interpersonal skills deficits, cognitive distortions, and a lack of victim empathy). Some scholars are of the view that cognitive and behavioural techniques are well suited to address

risk factors associated with reoffending (Chesin, Jeglic, Moster, & Wnuk, 2010).

- b) **Relapse Prevention (RP):** RP facilitates self-management for post-treatment sex offenders. Instead of changing risk factors linked to offending behaviour, RP focuses on teaching offenders to recognise situations prone to reoffending and applying coping strategies learned during their treatment (Larimer, Palmer, & Marlatt, 1999).
- c) **The Self-Regulation Model (SRM):** SRM is a new approach to sexual offender treatment that addresses shortcomings in the RP approach. It is based on self-regulation principles of behaviour and considers the variability in offense-related goals and how individuals regulate their behaviour to achieve these goals. Offense-related goals can be inhibitory or avoidance goals, which aim to avoid undesired states or outcomes, or appetitive or approach goals, which aim to attain desired states and outcomes. Offenders with avoidant goals may desire to avoid offending but lack the necessary awareness and skills to control their behaviour effectively. This leads to failure to achieve avoidance goals and ultimately, they become offenders. On the other hand, offenders with approach goals actively seek out opportunities to offend. Offending occurs as a response to situational cues, and cognitive schemas that support offending are activated by these cues. The success of achieving goals depends on an individual's self-regulation capacity, with some offenders failing to control behaviour, others using counterproductive strategies, and others having intact self-regulation abilities without deficits (Ward & Hudson, 1998).
- d) **Good Lives Model (GLM):** GLM was introduced as a rehabilitation approach for sexual offenders following

the development of the SRM. The GLM posits that sexual offenders, like all humans, aim to achieve primary human goods (primary goods) as part of a well-balanced life. However, they often attempt to achieve these goals through harmful behaviour toward others. The problem lies in the means they use to achieve these goals. Following the GLM, treatment is presented as a positive, approach-oriented activity to help clients achieve a better life. Treatment activities are conducted directly in service of this goal, while also managing the risk of re-offending. This approach addresses the issue of sexual offenders' attempts to achieve primary goods and achieve a fulfilling life. This approach suggests that understanding an offender's unique needs and finding more adaptive ways to meet them can curb offending, contrasting with RNR's focus on reducing reoffending risk through addressing criminogenic needs and dynamic risk factors (Ward & Brown, 2004).

The Good Lives and Self-Regulation models have recently been combined to guide the treatment of sexual offenders. This model focuses on promoting a good life and managing risk, understanding the relationship between risk, sexual offending, and clients' attempts to implement a good lives plan. It also assesses primary and secondary goods, offense-related goals, strategies, and pathways. The GLM/SRM-R approach utilizes various cognitive-behavioural treatment methods to maximize intervention effectiveness in helping clients manage risk and attain good lives (Yates & Ward, 2008).

The above behavioural treatments have been applied to change the behaviour of sex offenders in the past. A study that used systematic reviews and meta-analyses found that some treatment methods, including cognitive-behavioural and relapse prevention strategies, and the risk-need-responsivity model, have been shown to help change the behaviour of sex offenders.

However, the success of these treatments is not the same. Those offenders who respond positively to treatment tend to experience some behavioural change. Importantly, these treatments have the potential to reduce sexual reoffending by 5 to 8 percent over 5 years. According to this study, the two treatment models, the self-regulation model and the good lives model, are recent advancements in the field. (Przybylski, 2015).

Situational Analysis in Pakistan

In the context of Pakistan, some scholars are of the view that sexual crimes have been on the rise in the recent past. Some of them used in-depth interviews with experienced professionals to identify various factors that contribute to sexual crimes. Of all the causes of sexual crimes, the alienation from Islamic teaching stands out. Other main factors which contribute to sexual crimes in society include westernisation, destructive use of modern technology, lack of awareness and education, poor implementation of laws, late marriages, lack of control over chatting podiums on the internet, frustration, and substance addiction (Rani, Hayat, & Noreen, 2022). In another study that interviewed 20 recidivist ex-convicts revealed that social experiences, societal resentment, and a harmful environment contributed to sexual crimes (Abbas & Shuja, 2022). These findings offer valuable insights for developing effective interventions to change the behaviour of sex offenders in Pakistan.

The Ministry of Law and Justice notified the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Rules, 2023 to maintain a Sex Offender Register (SOR) in order to develop a comprehensive database of individuals convicted of sex offences. The purpose of this register was to allow all stakeholders within the criminal justice system to actively utilise this database to identify and prevent instances of sexual crimes in Pakistan. According to Rule 3(2) of the Rules, the SOR is intended to investigate and prosecute cases. The notification of SOR is a significant step for the investigation and

prosecution of cases of sexual offences. It can be used for public interest and safety. The IT-based policing which relies on data analytics, a practice that the police leadership is increasingly adopting in their daily operations, can greatly benefit from such databases to prevent the occurrence of sexual offences. Instead of going through corrective measures upon their release from prison, sex offenders often re-offend with a sense of impunity (Adil, 2023). Such a situation highlights the importance of implementing comprehensive programs for the rehabilitation of sex offenders to address the root causes of recidivist behaviour and equip such individuals with the necessary skills to reintegrate into society as law-abiding citizens.

Findings

As already pointed out in the preceding discussion, one can hardly find any insightful discussion in the existing literature on rehabilitative and preventive strategies to counter sexual crimes in Pakistan. In this research, an effort has been made to identify such strategies on the basis of the views of clinical psychologists and psychiatrists. In these interviews, these professionals offered their insights on a number of areas, including rehabilitative and preventive strategies. The following findings were gleaned from these interviews:

General Situation

- The experts emphasised that it is a myth that only victims of sexual crimes require rehabilitation. In their view, sex offenders must also receive the same level of care to reduce the number of sexual crimes. It was also pointed out during the interviews that having sex is an impulsive behaviour and can become an addiction which necessitates a recovery. It ought to be handled the same way that an illness is handled. The fact that both victim and offender see their consultant demonstrates that both

want and need treatment. The offender often mentions depression for which he/she needs treatment.

- Young people are more likely than other age group individuals to commit sexual offences in Pakistan.
- In Pakistani culture, people are encouraged to repress their sexual desires. The suppression of these desires increases the urge for physical gratification. People in this situation are more likely to end up committing sexual offences.
- An inappropriate parenting approach is dangerous. Without even using the right parenting techniques, parents are just reproducing their kids. Most parents have no idea how to raise a child. Parents need to properly educate their children about social relations, including sexual relations, and instil in them respect for other individuals, especially the opposite gender, and encourage them to share their issues of a sensitive nature with their parents. There must be no breakdown in communication between parents and children in matters related to social relations.
- As a result of the neglect of parents and inappropriate upbringings, children sometimes navigate straight to easily accessible pornographic websites. Such children use it as an outlet for their frustration and become addicted to such outlets which are more likely to lead them to commit horrible sexual offences.
- In Pakistan, there is no proper sex education for adolescents. Without any proper guidance in this regard, their personality is not shaped properly, and they lose their self-esteem if they are abused in their childhood. As a result, they may become aggressive and are likely to commit sexual crimes.

Preventive Strategies to Counter Sexual Offences

On the basis of our detailed discussions with the prominent practitioners, the following strategies have been identified for the prevention of sexual offences in society:

- **Research on Genetics**

There is a need to conduct genetic research, particularly within the domain of criminal psychology, where some individuals may be predisposed to engage in sexual crimes. It is important to note that acknowledging the influence of genes does not imply that a person is less responsible or that criminal activity is inevitable. Instead, it underscores the crucial role that genes play in this complex phenomenon. However, the experts also suggest that family values, upbringing, and the education system should play a role in training children from an early age and such training can circumscribe the influence of genes in this regard.

- **Inclusion of the Rehabilitation Process in Anti-Sexual Crime Laws**

A rehabilitation programme for sexual offenders should be an essential component of anti-sexual crime laws because it preserves the values of justice and human rights and at the same time the general public benefits from a reduced number of cases of sexual crimes. This method acknowledges that criminals, even those who have committed horrible atrocities of sexual nature, may be able to change and reintegrate into society if given the right care and assistance. In addition to addressing the underlying causes of sexual offences, rehabilitation also dramatically lowers the likelihood of reoffending, enhancing public safety while upholding the dignity of the individual.

- **Proper Sex Education**

Proper sex education should be given to students in schools to help them avoid becoming a victim of sexual offences. The need is to include age-appropriate chapters on sex education in the textbooks of schools. These textbooks must help students know the difference between affection and inappropriate physical

touch. Students must know about good touch and bad touch systems as well as areas of good and bad touch in the body. In addition, they must be taught about the personal space concept. Experts say that the concept of personal space is taught with the help of rings. Students are familiar with the concepts of small and large rings. If they are in small rings, nobody can touch them easily because the small rings are for those people who are their near and dear ones. The large rings are for strangers. In this way, children know about the basic idea of personal space. Moreover, they are also taught that rings can be enlarged based on the people they encounter daily.

- **Parenting Skills**

Parents who encourage open communication, instill good boundaries and connections in their children, keep an eye on their children's internet and peer influences, and quickly address any worrying behaviour can help prevent their children from adopting attitudes that could eventually lead them to become sexual offenders. In the same way, parents must educate their children on how to avoid becoming an easy victim of sexual offences. To help shape their children's attitudes and behaviours healthily and responsibly, parents must provide accurate sex education, model empathy, respect, and create a supportive environment at home.

- **Controlled Media Reporting**

To prevent sex crimes from happening in society, it is necessary that the reporting of already-happened sexual crimes be controlled. Practitioners believe that media reporting works as an inspiration for those who have committed such crimes. It is suggested that if a sex offender is released from jail, it should not be reported in the media, as it is likely to encourage those who want to commit sexual crimes. For example, it is observed that if any media personality commits suicide, the rate of suicide increases because it gives motivation to fans. The same is the

case with sexual abuse reporting. Therefore, it should be controlled.

- **An Effective Ban on Easy Access to Pornography**

Bad parenting, suppression of feelings and cultural values, and no proper sex education are likely to promote untrained minds in society. Individuals may directly land on the internet for pornographic content. With raw minds, they see such stuff that they cannot understand properly. As a result, they want an outlet for their feelings, which is likely to lead them to commit sexual crimes. The easy access to pornographic content is likely to lead them to commit sexual offences in society. Therefore, there should be an effective ban on pornographic websites, as merely blocking these sites does not deter these individuals from finding alternative means to access explicit pornographic content.

- **Profiling of Sex Offenders**

In order to prevent the occurrence of sexual crimes in society, many practitioners consider profiling of sex offenders as a necessary step. It plays a crucial role in crime prevention by helping law enforcement agencies identify potential offenders and their methods, thus enabling them to safeguard potential victims. Profiling serves as a valuable investigative tool, providing insights into the behaviour of sex offenders and the factors which lead them to engage in sexual crimes. Additionally, it aids in determining not only the risk that offenders pose to society but it also informs the sentencing and rehabilitation strategies. Profiling contributes to public safety by predicting and managing potential threats, aids in victim identification and resource allocation, and supports policy development and research in the field of criminal justice. However, it must be carried out ethically and within legal boundaries to prevent stigmatisation and discrimination.

- **Overall Changing the Mindset**

In some societies, people come up with apologetic explanations of sex crimes. Pakistan is no exception in this context. The reasons

that are often forwarded in this regard include women wearing inappropriate clothes, being in mixed gatherings such as educational institutions, not following social values, etc. For example, when students go to schools, colleges, and universities, it is necessary to teach them not to engage in and justify their sexually offensive behaviour with reference to someone wearing provocative clothes. Such counselling can serve as preventive measures which will help reduce the incidents of sexual crimes in society. A formal college or university degree alone is insufficient; instead, ethical values should be instilled in individuals so that they stay away from sexual offences.

The need is to change the overall mindset of society through a holistic approach toward the prevention of sexual crimes. There must be proper upbringing of the child, a change in the patriarchal mindset, proper early childhood education, an infusion of moral values, a friendly type of family orientation, respect for brothers and sisters, husband and wife, parents, children, etc. The purpose of these measures should be to strengthen social values among individuals which will help them avoid committing sexual offences against other members of society.

Rehabilitation of Sex Offenders

In addition to identifying preventive strategies, practitioners also suggested a number of rehabilitative strategies for sex offenders. In their view, prevention is not sufficient; rather sex offenders must be rehabilitated into the mainstream society as law abiding and productive members so that they do not reengage in sex crimes after serving their sentences. The following rehabilitative strategies have been recommended for rehabilitation of sex offenders:

- **Psychotherapies for offenders**

There are rigorous psychotherapies through which sex offenders' behaviour can be modified and their minds can be reoriented. However, the treatment of a sex offender is based on the nature

and type of their offense. The treatment of chronic sex offenders is, of course, very tough. For example, it is difficult to treat psychopaths as most of them have a history of sexual abuse. Most practitioners are of the view that most sex offenders can be treated with psychotherapies. They believe that cognitive behaviour therapy is the most effective therapy to treat sex offenders involved in different sexual crimes. For example, pedophilic offenders can be treated effectively with cognitive behaviour therapy. The cognitive behaviour therapy is used in different models, including RNR and GLM. GLM is also a very promising model which can help us understand the deep-seated needs of offenders. However, some experts believe that the rehabilitation process is extremely difficult.

In the opinion of a number of experts, it is important to start therapy for sex offenders during their jail time. A proper counselling for sex offenders must start immediately after they arrive in the jail. The counselling is necessary because if sex offenders are sentenced for their sexual crimes and they come out of jail after serving many years of sentence, the first thing they are likely to do is to take revenge and commit the same crime again. Therefore, the punishment and rehabilitation processes should be started side by side. The steps in the rehabilitation strategy should be included in the prison rules and regulations.

In Pakistan, some jails employ clinical psychologists who offer counselling services to those convicted of sexual offences, although the availability of such services is limited. It is imperative to recognise the need for a greater presence of qualified experts for the counseling of convicted sex offenders in jails. These experts should be experienced in the complex issues surrounding sexual offences and their rehabilitation. They can play a pivotal role in designing and implementing comprehensive treatment programmes that address the root causes of offending behaviour, facilitating the reintegration of offenders into society as law-abiding citizens.

- **Medication**

Many sexual crimes are attributed to a number of underlying factors such as addiction or psychological disorders, making it essential to address the root causes of impulsive and harmful behaviour of sex offenders. In sexual crime cases, medication, in the views of practitioners, can play a crucial role in controlling impulsive thoughts and actions. More importantly, hormonal treatments are necessary and effective, and such drugs are effective in reducing testosterone levels. Medication may help manage the urges and compulsions that can lead to sexual offences, particularly in individuals with conditions like paraphilias or other impulse control disorders. However, it is important to emphasise that medication should be part of a comprehensive treatment plan that includes therapy, counselling, and ongoing support to address the complex psychological and emotional factors contributing to these behaviours. Combining medication with therapy can provide a more holistic and effective approach to rehabilitation, reducing the risk of reoffending and enhancing the well-being of the individuals involved.

Recommendations

In view of the preceding findings, it can be safely recommended that of all preventive strategies to reduce the incidents of sexual crime, profiling of sex offenders must be given priority as it can greatly help law enforcement agencies to identify the sex offenders, rehabilitate them, and protect their potential victims. As a result of such profiling, the incidence of sexual offences is likely to go down in society. In addition to preventive strategies, rehabilitative strategies, which have been largely ignored by state authorities, must be adopted not only in rules but also in practice. Such counselling can be provided to sex offenders inside as well as outside the jail. Practitioners are confident that rehabilitative strategies, especially Cognitive Behaviour

Therapy and the Good Lives Model, can produce promising results for the rehabilitation of sex offenders. In other words, such systematic counselling can help reduce the incidence of sexual crimes in society. It is important to actively involve the families of sex offenders in the process of counseling. The rehabilitation of sex offenders will be easier if they do not have to face stigmatization at the hands of the state and society. An awareness campaign be launched to protect sex offenders from such stigmatization which can alienate them from society and engender them anger and revenge instead of repentance toward society. Such alienation may incline them toward re-engaging in sexual crimes. In the absence of targeted medication for sex offenders inside and outside the jail, it is recommended that a targeted medication program for sex offenders must be adopted at the state and societal levels, especially with the involvement of their families. The targeted medication program for sex offenders will help control their impulsive and harmful behaviour.

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