

BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MALE PSYCHOPATHS SERIAL MURDERERS INVOLVED IN SEXUAL HOMICIDES IN INDIA

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Abstract

Murderers have existed for as long as humans have, and they can be stopped when one understands why they are killing others. Serial murderers are among those who plot, assault, and kill. In order to stop such dangerous killers, one must go deeply into their minds, which uncovers everything and offers a solution. These days, forensic or criminal psychologists oversee investigations and help law enforcement officials find criminals by creating profiles of them that are used at every turn to identify potential crimes in the future. Criminal profiling is lacking in many cases in India where it is most needed, such as in cases involving psychopaths committing crimes. It is nearly impossible to comprehend the illness that afflicts mentally sick criminals. The purpose of this qualitative cases study is to identify and observe the behavioural psychological individual characteristics variables in male serial murderers involved in sexual murder cases.

Keywords: Criminal Profiling, Serial Killers, Psychopaths, Behavioral characteristics, Sexual Homicides

INTRODUCTION

Criminal profiling is lacking in many cases in India where it is most needed, such as in cases involving psychopaths committing crimes. It is nearly impossible to comprehend the illness that afflicts mentally sick criminals. Criminal profiling is a behavioural investigative technique used to help investigators effectively identify and describe the characteristics of unknown criminals. Providing a "psychological assessment of items found in the possession of the offender" helps law enforcement agencies to undertake a comprehensive review of the offender's social and psychological characteristics. When tangible proof is absent, psychological evidence comes in handy (Nesca et al., 1999). Profiling involves trained specialists in psychology utilizing their knowledge of human behaviour, motivation, and pathological tendencies to create a comprehensive report (Offord et al., 2013).

1.1 Serial Murderer

A serial murderer is an individual who commits the act of killing three or more victims within a relatively short duration of time. The term "serial killer" can have varying interpretations depending on the individual. They would commit multiple homicides, earning them the designation of "serial killers." Agent Robert Ressler of the FBI in the United States is acknowledged as the initiator of the term (Mitra, 2022). In order to carry out their murders, serial killers need a strategy known as modus operandi. While carrying out the act, a murderer must adhere to this sequence of events. Take the ability to tie up the victim in a particular way—it's crucial for the murderer to have this skill. A murderer's method of operation could shift and alter over time. For example, Jack the Ripper would slash the throats of prostitutes with a knife before doing anything further to stop them from yelling for help.

(R. M. Holmes et al., 1988) classified serial killers according to the underlying motives and presumed psychological reinforcements for their actions. They recognized the following categories of serial killers.

1.1 Visionary Type

Their delusions and visual and aural hallucinations drive these criminals to believe in the reality of their psychotic symptoms, which in turn leads them to kill. The belief that they are being instructed to kill is what drives them to murder. Criminals with a mental disorder tend to be clumsy murderers.

1.2 Mission-Oriented Type

In their quest to wipe out a particular group of people, these people selectively target certain types of people. Some criminals believe it is solely their duty to aid in the global annihilation of certain individuals. People of certain ages, genders, races, and professions are only a few instances.

1.3 Hedonistic Type

Two categories comprise these kinds of offenders (S. T. Holmes et al., 1999);

1.3.1 The Lust Killer

These killers gratify their sexual urges by exploiting the people they kill. Although they may be pleasurable for the killer, they seldom include traditional sexual acts. After the victim has been slain, there are additional ways to get sexual pleasure, such as masturbating, cannibalizing, mutilating, or engaging in necrophilia.

1.3.2 The Thrill Killer

The thrill of the kill motivates these assassins to carry out their murders. This is why they include extended periods of torture and sadism in their executions. After learning that the victim has died, the criminal loses interest in doing the crime.

1.3.3 Comfort Oriented Killer

Those who murder for the purpose of obtaining wealth; for instance, wives who murder their husbands in order to collect an insurance payout or an inheritance.

1.4 Power/Control-Oriented Type

The majority of serial killers fall under this category because they seek power and control over their victims. These violent offenders take pleasure in taking advantage of their victims' subservience. Their primary objective is not sexual gratification but rather the victim's sense of powerlessness in order to gain control of the situation.

PSYCHOPATHS

Psychopathy is one of the best-validated constructs in the realm of psychopathology (Hart et al., 1995). According to the FBI, psychopathy is a personality disorder characterized by individuals who employ a combination of charm, manipulation, intimidation, and sometimes violence to exert control over others, with the aim of fulfilling their own selfish desires. Psychopathy is a psychiatric personality condition that is often referred to as an *Antisocial Personality condition (APD or ASPD)*. Psychopaths exhibit not only a lack of conscience and empathy, but also consistent behavioural characteristics such as a lack of fear, lack of inhibition, and stimulus-seeking behaviour, as well as physiological abnormalities like a decreased physical response to negative stimuli and indifference to the threat of pain and punishment, according to research (Sepaha, 2016). Aberrant behaviors are suggestive of psychopathy, including impulsivity, a deficiency in empathy, guilt, or loyalty, an incapacity to form meaningful relationships with others, an inability to learn from experience or consequences, extreme self-centeredness and superficial charm, consistent engagement in criminal and antisocial activities without displaying remorse for the harm caused to others, and a propensity for aggression, particularly when intoxicated. Previous study indicates that psychopathy manifests in individuals at an early stage of life and persists into middle age. The "prototypical psychopaths" were responsible for the most heinous acts. Signs such as drug misuse, theft, antagonism, absenteeism, lying, and low academic accomplishment are commonly observed behaviors (Sepaha, 2016). Criminologists say that the most well-known killers exhibit five essential characteristics, which range from being narcissistic to cunning and charming (Ürmösné Simon, 2018). Other experts have discovered specific traits that serial killers possess. Neglected or abused children may develop a deep suspicion of other people as adults and find it difficult to build genuine relationships. They might also exhibit features that are commonly linked to serial killings, such as guilt, aggression, antisocial behaviour, or a lack of empathy. We must realise, though, that experiencing trauma and neglect as a child does not always make a person a serial killer, though it can certainly contribute significantly to it.

The dynamics of the family and the bond between parents and children are crucial to a child's psychological growth. Abuse, aggression, and absent parental figures are characteristics of dysfunctional households that negatively impact the mental well-being of the child. The brain regions that regulate emotional impulses have been harmed in many serial killers who have learned to repress empathy as a result of early mother separation or childhood trauma. It was in 1963 when psychiatrist J.M. Macdonald initially proposed the Macdonald Triad—also called the Triad of Sociopathy—as a theory. This theory proposes that three distinct personality traits such as Animal cruelty, unhealthy preoccupation with arson, Bed-wetting beyond the age of five, first displayed during childhood, may foretell violent or even serial killer tendencies as an adult.

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METHODOLOGY

Secondary Data collected from Case reports of serials crimes happened across India. A total of 4 crime case details were collected from past studies, case files, and newspapers relating to the offense collected. Information was also collected from peer-reviewed publications found in journals such as Science Direct, Murderpedia, PubMed, ResearchGate and Google Scholar. Sci Hub was used to collect relevant books for getting relevant information. A qualitative research design was used in this study.

Case Study I

M. Jaishankar a.k.a Psycho Shankar

Female Victims: 19-21

Other Names: Psycho Shankar

Convictions: Rape-Murder

Span of crimes: 2008–2011

Cause of Death: Suicide

Method of murder: Stabbing with a machete

The horrific string of rapes and murders perpetrated by Indian predator and serial killer M. Jaishankar, commonly referred to by his alias "Psycho Shankar," between 2008 and 2011 brought him widespread notoriety. Rumor has it that he was engaged in 30 or more robberies, murders, or rapes in the Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu areas. A black purse was an ever-present in his life. On highways, he would abduct sex workers and rape them near Dhaba's, which are roadside restaurants. On top of that, he raped additional women after befriending them in the field. Some of them he viciously killed. In addition, ladies in farmhouses were his other intended victims. Any woman who dared to resist would meet her untimely demise at the hands of the machete, a tool that resembled a huge knife, which he would keep in his luggage.

Case Study II

Surinder Koli a.k.a Nithari Killer

Victims: 19-21

Other Names: Satish, Nithari Killer

Convictions: Kidnapping-Rape-Necrophilia-Cannibalism

Span of crimes: 2005–2006

Cause of Death: Death penalty

Method of murder: Strangulation

Among India's most famous serial murderers, Surinder and Mohinder are legendary. Out of all the horrific and gory events that happened in 2006, the Nithari case stands out. The issue was brought to light in 2005 and 2006 when a number of youngsters, both male and female, from the Nithari hamlet close to New Delhi, went missing. The murder of multiple girls and their involvement in paedophilia, sexual exploitation, cannibalism, rape, organ trafficking, and murder led to the arrest of Mohinder Singh, a wealthy businessman from Noida, and his housekeeper, Surinder Koli. Two individuals were charged with the heinous crimes of raping and killing sixteen minors and one adult.

Case Study III

Mohan Kumar a.k.a Cyanide Mohan

Victims: 20

Other Names: Ananda, Cyanide Mohan

Convictions: Rape-Robberies

Span of crimes: 2005–2009

Cause of Death: Death penalty

Method of murder: Poisoning

"Cyanide" Mohan in his heinous criminal tale, came up with the notion of seducing young women, engaging in sexual relations with them, and then tricking them into swallowing cyanide tablets, which were actually contraceptives, so that he could steal their valuables and run away with the money. Most of Mohan Kumar's victims were young adults in their late twenties or early thirties and came from low-income backgrounds, which suggests that he was picking them up with great care. Mohan, a skilled orator, targeted his victims in public and won them over with the prospect of an arranged marriage that would not require a dowry. "The idea of lack of marital prospects must have prompted them to acquiesce to the idea of marrying without dowry," Mohan Kumar adds, referring to the investigation it led to.

Case Study IV

Umesh Reddy a.k.a The Bangalore Serial Killer

Victims: 18+

Other Names: Rajulu, Ramesh, Venkatesh

Convictions: Rape-Murder

Span of crimes: 1996-2002

Criminal Penalty: Life Imprisonment

Method of murder: Stabbing with knife

Sexual maniac at the top of the list of most terrifying serial killers was Umesh Reddy, who was accused of raping and robbing more than twenty women. In the late 1990s, Reddy—a former police constable—became the catalyst that caused both women and police to flee for their lives. Houses where women lived alone were his targets. Before robbing their homes, he would bind their hands, rape them, and then kill them. From 11 a.m. until 3 p.m., when men were not at home, he would visit housewives, carefully selecting his victims. By posing as a water deliveryman or someone seeking an address, he would eventually get access to the victim's home. After they passed out, he would rape and choke them. Subsequent to this horrific deed, he would proceed to murder the victims while stealing their jewelry to conceal his tracks. Additionally, he gathered women's underwear and put them through their paces. Ten bras, eighteen pairs of underwear, six sarees, two nightgowns, eight churidars, and four blouses were discovered in bags containing women's apparel after he was arrested.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Table 4.1 Behavioral characteristics of the Serial Murderers
Behavioral characteristics of Male Psychopaths serial killers

Behavioral characteristics	Case I Psycho Shankar	Case II Surinder Koli	Case III Cyanide Mohan	Case IV Umesh Reddy
Holmes & Holmes Typology	Lust & Power-Control	Thrill	Comfort & Lust	Comfort & Lust
Organized or Disorganized	Disorganized	Organized	Disorganized	Disorganized
Offenders' Fantasies, Obsessions	killed those who resisted sex maniac psychopath	necrophiliac paedophilic and cannibalism		necrophiliac, Fetish, obsession of collecting lingerie of victims after killing them
Degree of Violence	High	High	Low	High

4.1 Holmes & Holmes Typology

According to Holmes and Holmes (1998), there are four types of serial killers: visionaries, who carry out murders at the bidding of supernatural beings like God, Satan, or angels; missionaries, who target certain groups of people because they are morally repugnant or otherwise undesirable; hedonistic killers, who commit murder for hedonistic reasons (such as sexual gratification or the thrill of the kill); and power/control killers, whose desire for power and control over others is the driving force behind their murderous acts. Result findings of this study showed that Case I was characterized by lust and power-control, and Case II was characterized by a thrill type. Similarly, the comfort and lust type was the most prevalent in both case III and case IV. Likewise, several serial killers come from dysfunctional households where they were unable to develop a consistent personality. Hence, individuals persistently seek to fulfill their wants by indulging in fantasies centered around dominance and control (García-Baamonde et al., 2022)

4.2 Organized or Disorganized

An organized offender is someone who has an intelligence that is average to above average, is socially competent, prefers skilled job, is sexually competent, maintains a controlled mood while committing a crime, and lives with

a partner. This person leaves an organised crime scene, which includes a planned offence, the use of restraints, the body being hidden, and the absence of weapons or evidence. On the other hand, a disorganized offender (being below average in intelligence, socially inadequate, having unskilled work, being sexually incompetent, having an anxious mood during the crime, and living alone) leaves behind a disorganized crime scene (spontaneous offense, minimal use of restraints)(Ressler et al., 1985).According to the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the individuals involved in case I (M. Jaishankar) and case IV (Umesh Reddy) are classified as organized murderers. On the other hand, the individuals involved in case II (Surinder Koli) and case III (Mohan Kumar) are classified as organized killers.

4.3 Offenders' Fantasies, Obsessions

Perpetrators who revealed their fantasies were more prone to: having encountered factors pertinent to difficulties with parental and childhood social connections; being perceived as a solitary individual with limited companions; experiencing challenges in relating to their chosen gender during infancy; and exhibiting behavioral issues (Nicole & Proulx, 2007); (Briken et al., 2006); (Grubin, 1994).

Sexual fantasies play a significant role in the context of sexual homicides. Nevertheless, individuals who commit sexual homicides, similar to other sexual offenders, may be reluctant to reveal their fantasies related to the offense. Necrophilia, an uncommon paraphilia characterized by a sexual attraction towards deceased bodies, is a condition that has been documented since ancient times (Rosman & Resnick, 1989).Individuals who derive pleasure from causing pain and engage in sexual violence have been discovered, with a significant emphasis on the role of fantasy in their criminal behavior. Blanchard (1995) suggested that the occurrence of 'desire murders' could be attributed to the formation and escalation of sexual fantasies. These sexual fantasies are believed to stem from childhood experiences of physical and sexual disruption. (MacCulloch et al., 1983) and Blanchard regarded imagination as a motivating force behind cruel violence, including killing. The results of the investigation revealed that the individual involved in case II (Surinder Koli) had a perverse desire to engage in sexual acts with deceased victims and also consume their flesh. Similarly, the individual involved in case IV had a fixation on collecting and donning the undergarments of their victims subsequent to sexually assaulting and murdering them.

4.4 Degree of Violence

All of these serial killers had deviant erotic interests, which they flaunted at the crime scenes after committing sexually motivated murders. According to (García-Baamonde et al., 2022) the indicators of sexual sadism and criminal traits align with a more aggressive kind of aggression, known as proactive or instrumental violence, rather than affective or reactive forms of aggression. The study found that the subject's level of violence toward the victims was modest in only one of the four situations (case III).

CONCLUSION

The relevance of psychology can be better understood by considering that man is what his or her mind reflects. Since its inception, psychology has classified murderers based on their acts, giving rise to a lead every time it is modified (Kusuma, 2020). This investigation has given us valuable insights into the minds of serial killers, helping us better understand what drives them to commit such heinous acts. By exploring historical cases, different types, and how they are classified, we've gained a deeper understanding of the complex characteristics that define serial killers.

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