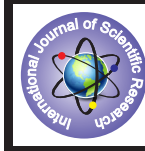


The Elderly Victims of Murder



Social Science

KEYWORDS : Victim, Offender, Murder

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ABSTRACT

The elderly often become soft targets for criminals. They are targeted for grievous hurt, robbery, murder and sexual assault. Criminal murder is probably the most personalized crime in our society. The main objective of the study was to know the motives and methods of the criminality. In the present research work, the newspaper reports have been the source of data. In this study the news items related to the elderly have been collected and their content has been analyzed. The robbery has been found the main motive for the murder. It was also noticed that 1/5th of the murders were committed by stabbing. The lure is, of course, cash and jewellery. And, in a number of cases it was found that the perpetrators found it easy to target elderly people as the latter rarely possessed to put up a resistance.

INTRODUCTION

Murder is a general term used to describe the killing of one person by another (Macdonald, 1961). The complexity of human behavior is never more evident than in the events surrounding the taking of another life (Flewelling & Williams, 1999). Homicide is a diverse and complex multidimensional phenomenon (Rojek & Williams, 1993; West, 2000). Yet, while no two murders are the same, some are more similar than others.

Marvin Wolfgang's (1958) classic study, patterns in criminal Homicide was one of the first works that recognized the need to categorize homicides for the purpose of analysis. Wolfgang proposed that if criminologists are to acquire general principles of homicides that are essential to effective control, prevention and treatment they must seek patterns, similarities, and repetitions that can become the basis for classifications and generalizations.

Murder (section 300) in Indian Penal Code

Culpable homicide is murder, if the act by which the death is caused is done with the intention of causing death, or-

Secondly- if it is done with the intention of causing such bodily injury as the offender knows to be likely to cause the death of the person to whom the harm is caused or-

Thirdly- if it is done with the intention of causing bodily injury to any person and the bodily injury intended to be inflicted is sufficient in the ordinary course of nature to cause death, or-

Fourthly- if the person committing the act knows that it is so imminently dangerous that it must, in all probability, cause death or such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, and commits such act without any excuse for incurring the risk of causing death or such injury as aforesaid (www.theindiankanoon.com/murder).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The legal definition of homicide is the killing of one person by another, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Homicide includes murder, manslaughter, justifiable homicide, and the accidental killing of one person by another (Ferguson, 2010). Black (1990), murder involves willful actions that a reasonable person should realize will likely lead to a fatal outcome. Like many offenders, female and male homicide offenders tend to come from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and communities (Mann, 1996). Accumulated research has identified a set of contextual features associated with homicide, including family structure, concentrated poverty and inequality (Parker, McCall, & Land, 1999). These social- structural sources of homicide are similarly related to women's and men's lethal violence (Schwarth, 2006; Steffenmeier & Haynie, 2000). These factors also related to all sorts of homicide offending, including partner homicide, child homicide (Kubrin, 2003; Papachristos & Kirk, 2006).

The aged persons often become soft targets for criminals. They are targeted for grievous hurt, robbery, murder and sexual assault. Criminal murder is probably the most personalized crime in our society. Elderly are mostly murdered at or near their homes by their children, relatives and miscreants. Elderly victims have been perceived as a burning problem. One way of accessing the importance of the problem is by analyzing the cases reported in the newspapers. The main objectives of the studies are the following:

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know about the motives in criminal act.
- To know the methods by which death was inflicted.
- To know about the interpersonal relationship between victim and offender.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present research work, the newspaper reports (From January 2005 to December 2011) have been the source of data. In this study the news items related to the aged both male and females 60 years and above have been collected and their content have been analyzed. The method of content analysis has been adopted for the study. Total 105 cases of murder have been found against the elderly.

RESULT

Demographic comparison: Gender, Age, Residence, Scene of crime

In this study 105 cases of elderly murder cases have been found reported in print media. Of these 105 cases of murder, 124 victims were affected by crime.

Victims' gender

In case of victims' sex, 64 male elderly and 60 female elderly were murdered by the offenders. In the 19 cases couple of victims were murdered by the offenders (in 17 cases, husband and wife and in 2 case both females).

Offenders' gender

As usual in Indian scenario, male offenders are more in number than female offenders (male 61, female 01, couple 02, not mentioned 41 cases).

Place of incident

In case of urban and rural area crime, it was found that 71 cases in urban area and 34 cases were committed in rural area.

Victims' age

Analysis shows that victims have their highest rate (64 victims) between ages 60-65, and their second highest rate (28 victims) between ages 66-71, third highest rate (09 victims) between ages 72-77, in last (04 victims) 78 and above.

Scene of crime

Result shows that 68 cases were committed indoor scene of crime whereas 36 cases committed outdoor scene of crime. Only one case was committed in mobile as victim was thrown

outside the running train.

Table 1 about here

In Table 1, shows the victim offender relationship. Robert Nash Parker and Dwayne Smith focused on differentiating homicide according to victim offender relationship. Their work used two classification of homicide: primary homicide is the most frequent and involve family members, friend, and acquaintances, and

They are usually characterized as expressive crimes because they often result from interpersonal hostility, based on jealousy, revenge, romantic triangles, and minor disagreement. Non-primary homicides involve victims and offender who have no prior relationship and usually occur in the course of another crime such as robbery. These are referred to as instrumental crimes they involve some degree of premeditation by the offender and are less likely to be precipitated by the victim (Parker & Smith, 1979).

Result shows that in 44 cases offenders were known to the victims however in 61 cases, offenders were unknown to the victims. In known persons included son, grandson, brother, daughter-in-law, relative, neighbor, servant, milkman.

Table 2 about here

In Table 2, shows the methods of inflicting death. The offender and his victim often play a significant role in the type of weapon used. It is probably safe to content that many homicides occur because there is sufficient motivation or provocation, and that type of method used to kill is merely an accident of availability. Gun is used because it is in the offender's possession at the time of incitement, but that if it were not present, he would use a knife to stab, or fists to beat his victim to death (Wolfgang, 1958). In the present study, methods by which death was inflicted by the offenders are: stabbed to death 22 cases, strangled to death 18, set ablaze 06, shot dead 03 and others 34 cases. In others included axed to death, bombed to death, hit by hammer, crushed by stone, attacked with sticks, cover nose and mouth with cloth, pushed off in moving train, poisoning.

Table 3 about here

Table 3, shows the motives behind the murder. Jesse (1952) believes that murder motives fall into six classifications, including murder for gain, revenge, jealousy, the lust of killing, and from conviction.

In this study, robbery was found highest in number, (22 cases) for the cause of murder. Others are, property dispute 10 cases, domestic quarrel 07 cases, and old enmity 05 cases. Rest of the other cases are involved in parent's burden, delaying son's marriage, denied child to watch pornographic picture, ill-legal relation with daughter-in-law, dispute over the temple offering, disturbances by the loud talking, elderly man was drunken, demanded water for drinking liquor, elderly man coughing continuously.

DISCUSSION

The result shows that total 105 cases of murder of elderly people have been reported from 2005-2011. Male and female

victims were found nearly in same ratio i.e. (male 64, female 60). The result also shows that only 2 female offenders were involved in the case of elderly murder. The age of victims varied between 60- 80 and above years which indicates that the crimes against elderly does not respect age. Nearly 40% offenders have been found known to the victims; most of the offenders were the members of the family like son, grandson, and brother. Robbery was found the main motive behind the murder of elderly. During the analysis, it was also found that most of the elderly were living alone their homes.

CONCLUSION

Murder is rare, but it is more common in some groups, places, or time periods than in others. Murder offending is more common among young. Murder of elderly is increasing day by day. It becomes a burning problem in our society. As observed in media, older people live in greater fear of crime. Elderly people, however, are less likely to take crime preventive measures.

Table: 1 Victim offender relations

Victim-Offender Relation	Number	Percentage
Known	44	41.90
Unknown	61	58.09
Total	105	100.0

Table: 2 Methods of inflicting death

Methods	Number	Percentage
Stabbed to death	22	20.95
Strangled to death	18	17.14
Set ablaze	06	5.71
Shot dead	03	2.85
Others	34	32.38
Not mentioned	22	20.95
Total	105	100.0

Table: 03 Motive for murder

Reason	Number	Percentage
Robbery	21	20.0
Old enmity	05	4.76
Property dispute	10	9.52
Domestic quarrel	07	6.66
Others	32	30.47
Not mentioned	30	28.57
Total	105	100.0

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