



The serial killers phenomena

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Abstract

Serial killing has been defined as the act of committing multiple murders over an extended period, with a cooling-off period between each crime, serial killing represents the darkest manifestation of human depravity. The menace of serial killing has been deep rooted since ancient times. The serial killers are considered demon in that time. However this image has changed over the period of time due to many theories and psychological evidences. In this article the researcher has tried to uncover the definition, types of serial killers and the reasons behind the menace of serial killings. Along with it the researcher elucidates different provisions of legal statutes and suggestions tackle the evil of serial killings.

Keywords: Phenomena, committing multiple, serial killings

Introduction

Serial killing has been defined as the act of committing multiple murders over an extended period, with a cooling-off period between each crime, serial killing represents the darkest manifestation of human depravity. Throughout history, the shadowy realm of serial killing has captured the morbid fascination of society, simultaneously evoking terror, revulsion, and a desperate need for understanding. Serial killers, often portrayed as monsters lurking in the shadows, emerge from diverse backgrounds, defying simplistic generalizations. Their motives range from sexual gratification to a thirst for power and control, or even a twisted sense of self-gratification and dominance. As we peel back the layers of their disturbing psychology, a perplexing tapestry of childhood trauma, personality disorders, and societal influences begins to emerge. However, attempts to construct a definitive profile of a serial killer often prove elusive, as their motivations and methods can vary significantly.

The history of serial killing is a haunting chronicle that stretches far back into antiquity. From the reign of ancient Rome's "Monster of Rome," Locusta, to the infamous Jack the Ripper in Victorian England, these notorious figures have both plagued and fascinated societies throughout time. Modern times have witnessed the emergence of serial killers who have cemented their names in the annals of infamy, such as Ted Bundy, John Wayne Gacy, and Jeffrey Dahmer, leaving an indelible mark on the collective consciousness.

Types of Serial Killers

There is widespread agreement on categorising serial killers into four types based on the goals of the crimes. These are:

1. Thrill-seekers: These serial killers get every satisfaction they can from outwitting police and investigating organisations after committing killings. They thrive on media attention in order to get their points over to the wider population. They keep meticulous records of all their kills, although they occasionally disregard appropriate preparation in favour of a last-minute action/thrill to get away from the inquiry.

2. Mission-oriented: This is the most extreme type of xenophobia-related serial homicides, in which the killers think they are doing society a favour by eliminating certain groups of people. They specifically target persons linked with any group against which they harbour ill will. Young ladies, drug dealers, prostitutes, and homosexuals are the most prevalent targets of these murders.

3. Visionary: This subset of serial killers believes that they are being ordered to kill others by a higher power. They feel/believe that they are obligated to kill individuals in accordance with the orders they get, or else they will perish.

4. Control and power: This type of serial killer relishes inflicting misery, pain, and intimidation on their victims' faces. They are the organised murderers, as evidenced by the manner in which they kill individuals as someone with expertise in the area. They are mostly those who have experienced childhood abuse, which causes them to grow up as helpless persons until they realise they need to assert their authority and control over others. They engage in sexual acts with their victims without being motivated by lust.

Reasons behind Serial Killings

The serial killing by serial killers several reasons about which the modern study has to say a lot. The modern study of serial murder can be broken down into three primary fields of analysis:

1. Biological, which includes things like head injuries, organic neuropathology including structural and functional abnormalities, metabolic dysregulation, neuropsychiatric diagnoses and illness, hereditary and other genetic factors, and foetal toxin exposure and prenatal trauma.

2. Social, which includes things like early childhood development, relationships with parental figures, and peer groups.

3. Psychological, which includes things like repressed emotions, personality disorders, and impulsivity.
4. These factors have deep impression on serial killers' mind and actions in the fit of which they tend to commit such a heinous crime in search satisfaction, attention and authority.

Legal Perspective The concept of serial killers doesn't have its mark in the Indian Code. The only sections to deal with it are Section 299 and Section 300.

▪ **Section 299 of The Indian Penal Code says:**

Whoever causes death by doing an act with the intention of causing death, or with the intention of causing such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, or with the knowledge that he is likely by such act to cause death, commits the offence of culpable homicide.

▪ **Section 300 of The Indian Penal Code explains that:**

"Except in the cases hereinafter excepted, 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."

Culpable homicide and murder have only a thin line of difference. Generally, if a person kills someone, they will have motive and intention to kill them. Motive leads to intention. A motive is a malicious mind which is the ultimate object. Intention refers to the immediate act caused. In the case of these serial killers, they will have the intention to kill those persons but there is no motive. It is said that mens rea is partially absent in their cases. Some have argued with this partial mens rea and Section 84 of The Indian Penal Code.

- According to Section 84 of The Indian Penal Code: "Nothing is an offence which is done by a person who, at the time of doing it, by reason of unsoundness of mind, is incapable of knowing the nature of the act, or that he is doing what is either wrong or contrary to law."

But the same rule was absent in the Criminal Procedure Code and Mental Health Act of 1987. The Bombay High Court in the case of *State of Maharashtra vs Sindhi Alias Raman, S/O Dalwai* quoted that the medical insanity that the criminals have might not be the same insanity said in Section 84 of The Indian Penal Code. Though the insanity is same as quoted, these criminals are able to identify the consequences of the committed act. Though they do not have a guilty mind they knew that they were committing a wrong or illegal act. Automatically Section 84 of the Code doesn't apply here. There were many cases in India

regarding serial killers. In the famous *Auto Shankar case*, Shankar and his associates were found guilty of six murders committed over a period of two years between 1988 and 1989. The victims' remains were either charred or found within 12 homes. In *Joshi- Abhyankar case*, four commercial art students have committed ten murders within January 1976 and March 1977. At times they have also robbed and drank alcohol. In all the serial killer cases the killers are hanged or given life imprisonment. But in all these cases there was no question regarding psychopathy was raised.

Suggestions to tackle the evil

Tackling the menace of serial killing requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach involving law enforcement agencies, community engagement, and preventive measures. Here are some suggestions to address this issue:

1. Strengthen law enforcement:

Increase funding for law enforcement agencies to enhance their capacity for investigation, forensic analysis, and technological tools. Establish dedicated task forces or units specializing in serial murder investigations. Promote collaboration and information sharing among local, national, and international law enforcement agencies.

2. Improve intelligence and profiling:

Develop advanced profiling techniques and establish databases to identify patterns, modus operandi, and behavioral traits of serial killers. Invest in research and training programs to enhance the skills of law enforcement personnel in behavioral analysis and crime scene investigation.

3. Enhance community engagement:

Encourage public participation through awareness campaigns, neighborhood watch programs, and anonymous tip lines. Foster trust between law enforcement agencies and communities to facilitate information sharing and early detection of potential threats. Educate the public about personal safety measures and the signs of potential dangerous individuals.

4. Strengthen forensic capabilities:

Allocate resources to improve forensic laboratories, DNA analysis, and other scientific techniques to aid in the identification and conviction of serial killers.

5. Focus on prevention and early intervention:

Enhance mental health services and early intervention programs to identify individuals at risk of developing violent tendencies. Implement programs in schools and communities that promote empathy, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence to prevent the escalation of violence. Provide support and rehabilitation for individuals with a history of violent behavior or those at high risk of engaging in such activities.

6. Strengthen victim support services:

Establish comprehensive victim support programs to assist survivors and families affected by serial killings. Provide counseling, financial aid, and legal support to victims throughout the investigation and legal proceedings.

- 7. Global cooperation and information sharing:** Foster international collaboration among law enforcement agencies to track and apprehend serial killers who operate across borders. Exchange information, best practices, and resources to enhance the effectiveness of investigations.

It is crucial to remember that addressing the menace of serial killing requires a long-term commitment from all stakeholders involved, including law enforcement, communities, mental health professionals and policymakers.

Conclusion

Serial killing is in existence from time immemorial; however it is only recent that the true reasons behind it are discovered. Although there are legislation to deal with the menace but these provisions fall short when it comes to delving into overall analysis of the crime. Punishing the murderer in the same age old manner will not in any way aids in uprooting the evil. It must take into consideration the various other psychological and social factors for finding assertive solution of the problem.

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