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Editor's Note

The articles assembled in this issue collectively reflect a significant moment in the development of contemporary policing scholarship. What distinguishes the volume is not simply the diversity of topics addressed, but the shared analytical disposition that runs through them: an insistence that crime is neither an isolated legal event nor a self-contained behavioural anomaly, but rather a socially embedded process shaped by institutional arrangements, economic structures, cultural norms and psychological dynamics. Such an approach signals an important shift away from narrowly operational perspectives towards a more theoretically informed and empirically grounded understanding of policing within complex governance environments.

One contribution of particular note reconceptualises human trafficking through an economic lens. By tracing its systemic consequences for labour markets, institutional stability and public finance, the analysis situates trafficking within the domain of structural risk rather than episodic criminality. The implication is clear: enforcement metrics centred solely on arrests or prosecutions are analytically insufficient. A more meaningful assessment of policing effectiveness must include the capacity to disrupt illicit financial flows, dismantle organisational infrastructures and reduce long-term systemic harm.

This structural orientation is developed further in the examination of plural policing. The article demonstrates that the provision of security is, in practice, dispersed across a constellation of actors whose authority derives from varying combinations of legality, social recognition and practical necessity. Such arrangements complicate orthodox assumptions regarding the state's exclusive control over legitimate force. They also highlight the extent to which public confidence in safety is shaped by interactions beyond formal police institutions. The analysis therefore speaks simultaneously to theory and practice: it challenges state-centred criminological models while urging policymakers to engage seriously with questions of coordination, accountability and legitimacy across heterogeneous security landscapes.

Technological change forms another central thread. The discussion of digital innovation traces policing's gradual transition from reactive intervention towards anticipatory and intelligence-led approaches. Yet the argument is marked by a welcome analytical restraint. Rather than presenting technology as inherently transformative, the author emphasises organisational capacity, training and institutional culture as decisive variables. In doing so, the piece reminds readers that reform is rarely achieved through tools alone; it depends upon the institutional conditions within which those tools are deployed.

Equally compelling is the attention given to psychological dimensions of policing. By synthesising insights from behavioural science, one article illustrates how trauma, stress and environmental context influence both offending patterns and investigative processes. Its central claim—that psychological competence should be treated as a foundational professional skill rather than an auxiliary specialism—carries considerable implications for recruitment, training and operational doctrine. It also reflects a broader disciplinary movement towards integrating criminological and psychological knowledge in the analysis of justice practices.

The examination of child sexual victimisation provides perhaps the starkest illustration of why such interdisciplinary perspectives matter. The study identifies persistent disjunctions between legal frameworks, procedural realities and victims lived experiences, revealing how restrictive statutory definitions, evidentiary barriers and social stigma interact to suppress reporting and impede justice. Importantly, the analysis situates these failures within wider structural conditions, including poverty, educational marginalisation and entrenched power asymmetries. Its recommendations point not towards incremental reform but towards systemic recalibration grounded in victim-centered principles.

What unites these otherwise diverse contributions is an underlying epistemological commitment: the recognition that crime and policing cannot be adequately understood through a single analytic register. Economic analysis exposes hidden costs; sociological inquiry reveals patterned inequality; psychological research clarifies behavioural mechanisms; legal critique identifies institutional constraints; organizational study illuminates governance complexity. Taken together, they demonstrate that the study of policing must itself be methodologically and conceptually plural if it is to grasp the realities it seeks to explain.

For practitioners and scholars alike, this issue therefore offers more than a set of discrete findings. It provides an intellectual framework for interpreting contemporary transformations in security governance. The future of policing, as these articles collectively suggest, will depend less upon quantitative expansion of enforcement capacity than upon qualitative enhancement of analytical capability, institutional reflexivity and interdisciplinary engagement.

In that sense, the significance of the present volume lies not only in what it reports but in how it reframes. By directing attention to structural harms, distributed authority, technological contingencies, behavioural dynamics and systemic legal limitations, it invites renewed reflection on foundational questions concerning the nature of crime, the boundaries of policing and the metrics by which justice should be judged. These questions remain central to criminological inquiry precisely because they resist simple resolution. The contributions gathered here do not claim to resolve them. They do, however, advance the conversation in ways that are both intellectually rigorous and practically consequential.



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The Economic Impact of Human Trafficking: Hidden Costs and National Consequences

Md Shah Alam, BPM, MBCS¹

Abstract

Human trafficking is not only a grave violation of human rights but also a critical threat to national economies, governance, and public trust. While the human costs of trafficking are well-documented, the economic damage; particularly from money laundering via hundi, loss of foreign exchange, and reduced remittance flows; remains underexplored. This article analyses the systemic financial losses arising from trafficking operations and presents two real-world case studies to illustrate how illicit financial flows undermine national interests. It concludes with a call for integrated responses, including stricter financial monitoring, cross-border cooperation, and inclusive policy-making.

1. Introduction

Human trafficking is widely acknowledged as a transnational organized crime (UNODC, 2020). Yet, its economic consequences often receive less attention than its human rights dimension. In countries like Bangladesh, the trafficking of persons leads not only to human suffering but also to structural damage to national revenue, economic integrity, and international credibility (IOM, 2022). The rise of trafficking networks has created parallel financial systems involving hundi (informal remittance channels), the misuse of legitimate export-import mechanisms, and reinvestment into further criminal activities (IOM, 2019; UNODC, 2020). This article seeks to highlight the hidden economic damage caused by trafficking, emphasizing that it is not merely a human rights issue but a major economic crime (ILO, 2021).

This paper has argued for a shift in perspective: trafficking must be addressed not only as a violation of human rights but as a criminal enterprise rooted in transnational networks and enabled by regulatory gaps and institutional weaknesses. Criminological theories reveal the structural dynamics of trafficking, offering a more comprehensive understanding of its scope and impact

2. Methodology

This paper employs a mixed-methods exploratory design that integrates both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The empirical data and secondary data were collected for this study. Moreover, the methods technics, procedures and principles are used for this research:

- a) **Semi-structured interviews** with law enforcement officials, financial intelligence personnel, and trafficking survivors

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- b) **Quantitative estimation models** to assess foreign exchange loss, tax revenue erosion, and macroeconomic leakage through informal financial systems
- c) **Institutional case analyses** to evaluate the role of recruitment agencies, remittance operators, and border control entities in facilitating or failing to intercept trafficking-related flows
- d) Ethics review and stakeholder mapping have been initiated
- e) Field interview protocols are under design and will be piloted in Dhaka and Chattogram
- f) Economic modeling of case studies using publicly available IOM and UNODC data is scheduled for initial calibration.
- g) Full empirical results were integrated into an updated version of the paper expected by early 2026

3. Clarifying Human Trafficking as Economic Crime

According to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, economic crimes involve illegal acts carried out for financial gain by individuals or organized groups. Human trafficking squarely fits this definition through it's:

- a) Systematic exploitation of labor and mobility to generate revenue
- b) Reliance on underground financial mechanisms such as hundi
- c) Reinvestment of illicit proceeds into parallel criminal markets, including drugs, arms, and additional trafficking ventures

These elements elevate trafficking beyond a human rights violation to a direct threat to national economic governance, financial integrity, and regulatory sovereignty. Recognizing trafficking as an economic crime reshapes the response landscape one that must involve not only social protection but also financial intelligence and institutional accountability.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) define economic crimes as non-violent offenses conducted for financial gain, often involving the manipulation of formal and informal financial systems. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) identifies trafficking in persons as a major predicate offense for money laundering and recommends the integration of trafficking indicators within national anti-money laundering (AML) regimes. The World Bank similarly includes trafficking under economic crimes that destabilize financial governance and development outcomes.

From this perspective, trafficking operates simultaneously as:

- a) A predicate offense, producing illicit profits through forced labor, sexual exploitation, and coercive recruitment;
- b) A financial crime, depending on informal channels such as hundi or trade-based laundering to move and disguise those proceeds;
- c) A form of transnational organized crime, structured through decentralized but coordinated networks exploiting weak regulation and institutional corruption.

In Bangladesh, this conceptualization is supported by national statutes. The Money Laundering Prevention Act (2012, amended 2015) lists human trafficking as a predicate offense, requiring financial institutions to report suspicious transactions. The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act (2012) provide legal tools for criminalization, asset seizure, and victim restitution.

Institutionally, the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) is tasked with monitoring trafficking-linked transactions, while the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), is responsible for investigating trafficking networks. However, gaps remain in operational coordination, data sharing, and the use of financial intelligence in law enforcement. Reframing trafficking as an economic crime with layered financial, legal, and institutional dimensions enables a more strategic response. It calls for harmonized definitions, integrated enforcement mechanisms, and expanded forensic capacity to trace, disrupt, and dismantle trafficking economies at their financial roots.

4. Research and Discussions:

4.1 Victims and Beneficiaries: A Complex Web

Human trafficking thrives on systemic vulnerability and operates through a stratified network of economic exploitation. While victims may come from diverse backgrounds male or female, educated or illiterate; the common thread is their susceptibility to coercion (UNODC, 2020). However, a more analytically useful framing sees the trafficking chain as a criminal enterprise model (Albanese, 2011), where each actor from recruiter to employer extracts profit at different stages of the supply chain.

The criminal enterprise model views organized crime as a business, emphasizing how economic factors profit, market dynamics, and efficiency drive the formation and success of criminal groups, much like legitimate businesses operate to maximize gains and minimize costs within a competitive environment. This perspective analyzes criminal organizations in terms of their economic goals, operational strategies, and how they adapt to market conditions to achieve profitability.

Rather than treating traffickers as monolithic entities, this pyramid reflects the division of labor and financial return common to organized crime structures. The model aligns with enterprise theory, which suggests that illicit networks function with internal logic, cost-benefit calculations, and role specialization. Recruiters and transporters bear operational risks and receive moderate returns, whereas those involved in laundering, reinvestment, or client interface capture the largest shares of illicit profit. Understanding these dynamics allows for more targeted disruption strategies especially against high-value actors in the laundering phase.

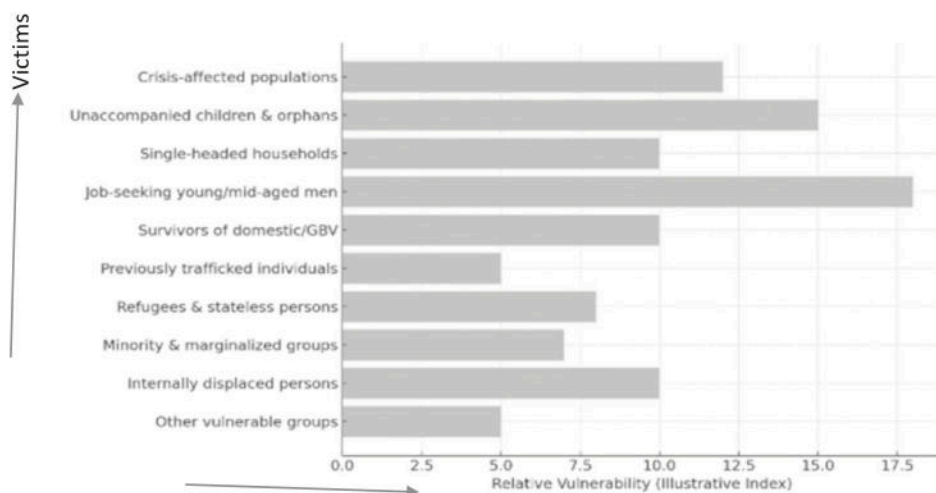


Fig - 1: Victim profile categorization illustrating relative vulnerability among different groups.

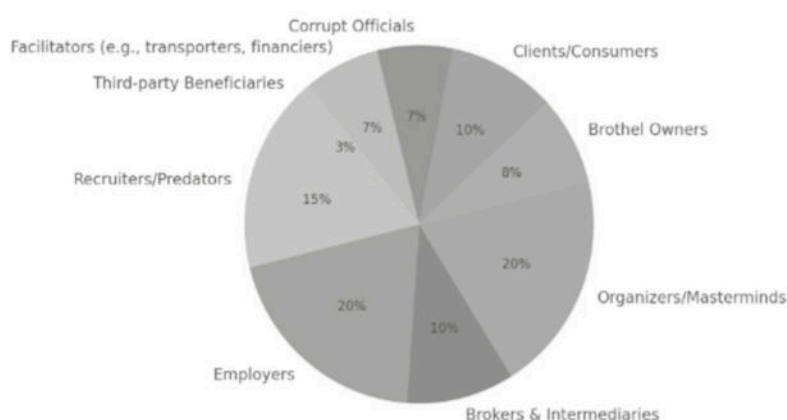


Fig - 2: Trafficking beneficiaries map shows approximate shares of benefits among different actors in the trafficking chain.

4. 2. Losses beyond the Obvious: Economic Impacts

Human trafficking does not benefit the home country economy; rather, it causes serious damage to the economy. Remarkable violations of human rights, reduction of remittances or migrant earnings, strengthening of trafficking groups through illicit income, purchase of harmful goods or services for the country, and tarnishing of the country's reputation abroad these are all severe issues. Yet, even from such a list, it is difficult to fully grasp the types and extent of losses caused by trafficking. Why does human trafficking cause a reduction, not an increase, in remittances or migrant earnings? That is also a significant point that is discussed here.

4.3. Foreign Exchange Drain and Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs)

The income earned by a trafficking victim (if any) rarely returns to the source or the home country through legitimate channels. Almost all of it ends up in the hands of traffickers abroad or their associated hundi (illegal money transfer) operators. In most cases, the trafficker abroad collects foreign currency directly from migrant workers, including trafficking victims, under the guise of a hundi operator irrespective of whether those workers are legal or illegal. Thus, the foreign currency collected abroad stays abroad. How they can payment be made in the home country to the families of those migrant workers or victims?

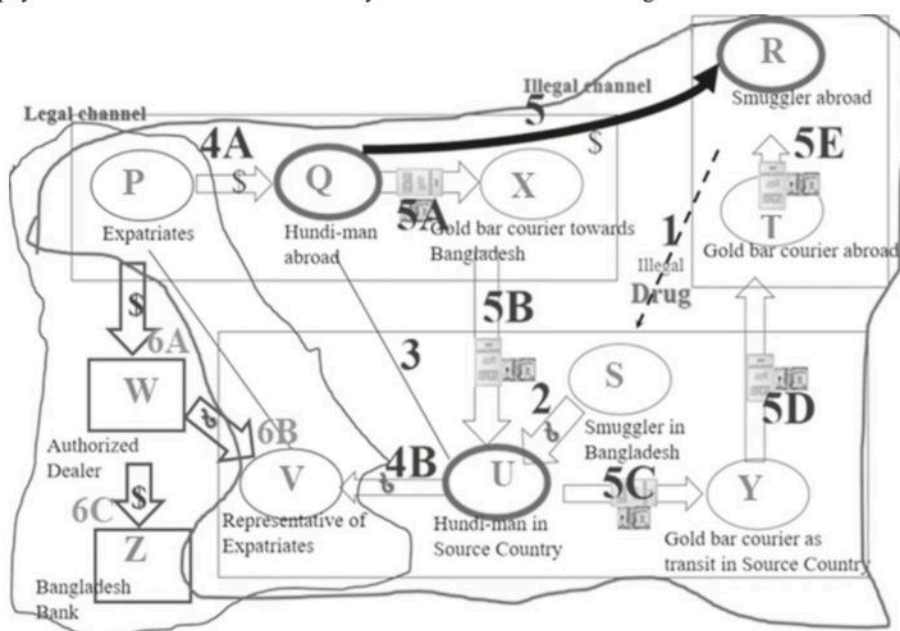


Fig - 3: Foreign exchange drain and illicit financial flows (IFFs)

If the money enters through legitimate channels (Flow 6A in Fig.3), then an authorized dealer (Entity 'W') pays the equivalent local currency (flow 6B). But if the money is collected illegally and remains abroad (Flows 4A and 5), how can anyone in the home country (domestic hundi operator Entity 'U') pay money locally without receiving any money from anyone?

The settlement in the home country usually happens by using local currency obtained from the sale of illegal goods (such as drugs) or illegal services (such as laundering bribes and corruption money abroad, Flows 1 and 2 of Fig. 3).

This process is more difficult than one might imagine. If the trafficker or his hundi-operator abroad (Entity Q) cannot arrange funds in the home country (Flow 4B), they must rely on some sort of illegal trade of goods and services (Flows 1 and 2 in Fig. 3).

Now consider, traffickers in Libya (Entity Q of Fig. 4) collect foreign currency from trafficking victims including some other (Bangladeshi) migrant workers (Entity P) in the Middle East. If there is no one in the Middle East (Entity 'R') to provide illegal goods or services in exchange, then Entity Q is at stake, with no means to pay Entity V in the home country.

The traffickers (Entity Q) often then gather Bangladeshis working in the Middle-East with promises of European jobs. Once the greedy victims from the Middle-Eastern countries are at the traffickers' hands in Libya or Iraq the war-torn countries with low law and order situation, victims are tortured or beaten by them. They then collect ransom money (Fig.4) payable at the home country by their relatives to facilitate hundi payments.

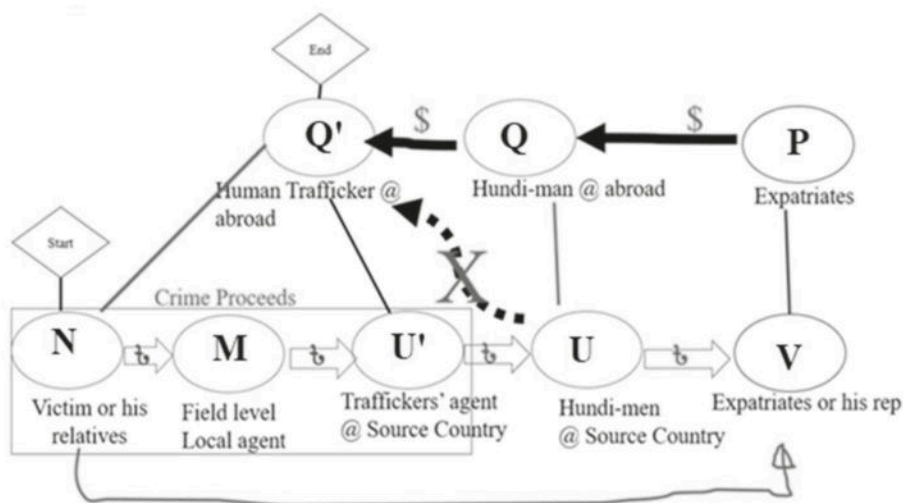


Fig - 4: Human trafficking money flow chart

However, terrorist financing or anti-state violence is often paid through hundi channels, not banking channels. When victims are held abroad and ransom is collected in Bangladesh, the ransom money usually reaches the traffickers abroad through hundi.

The hundi operator in abroad collects foreign currency from migrant workers and pays it to the trafficker's network abroad. In exchange, the domestic hundi operator pays the victim's relatives in Bangladesh with local currency. These phenomena suggest that migrant workers' foreign income abroad is diverted to criminals.

It was revealed that under-invoicing in exports and over-invoicing in imports further contribute to large-scale money laundering. (Jugantor, 2025). Therefore, for corruption, trafficking, drug smuggling, or any transnational crime to function smoothly, the home country (Bangladesh) must have migrant workers (legal or illegal), export items with under-invoicing, or import items with over-invoicing.

Moreover, money gained from bribery and corruption abroad is also laundered through hundi. When media or state machinery claim that "S. Alam laundered BDT 20 trillion abroad," that is inaccurate. In reality, S. Alam did not send a single Bangladeshi 'Taka' or 'poisa' abroad. Because the 'Taka' is not an international currency, it hardly circulates beyond the national boundary of the home country.

It is reported that S. Alam collects valuable foreign currency from Bangladeshi-migrants abroad (say, in Malaysia) and arranges for their relatives of the migrants in Bangladesh to be paid with illicit or corruption money via hundi-operator.

In addition, few people realize this dangerous working format of hundi: unlike authorized dealers in legal remittance channels, the hundi system has no legitimate settlement structure. The hundi-operator must rely on illegal services (bribes, corruption) or illegal goods (drugs, pornography) to settle accounts.

Furthermore, Surveys claim that Bangladesh suffers BDT 1 trillion annually in damages due to drugs (about USD 10 billion, equal to the cost of three Padma Bridges). But using the models in Figure 4 and beyond, it is not possible to settle such huge payments in countries like India, Pakistan, Myanmar, or Afghanistan- the major narcotics-source countries targeting Bangladesh. Why (is it not possible to follow the same working format here)? Because these countries lack adequate migrant income, export remittance, and even import-output to generate such large funds. So what do they do? In limited cases, barter, currency swaps, or direct local-currency settlements are used. But mostly, traffickers or their hundi-representatives buy gold with foreign currency and smuggle it (Flow 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, and 5E in Figure 3) to suppliers' destination (Entity R) mostly through the home country. They, rarely risk carrying or smuggling foreign currency physically from the source country (Entity Q) to destination country (Entity R) through the home country (Entity U, again with Flow 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, and 5E in Figure 3).

Now, if someone buys a gold bar worth BDT 2 million in Dubai and smuggles it into Bangladesh by evading BDT 40,000 in taxes, the loss is not just BDT 40,000. It is BDT 2 million 40 thousand, because neither the gold that has been purchased with scarce foreign currency nor the foreign currency itself ever truly reached the home country.

Thus, when ransom or other illicit income from trafficking is laundered abroad via hundi, three things happen:

- a) Foreign currency earned by legal/illegal migrant workers of the source country does not enter the country but remains abroad (Flow 6A, 6B and 6C of Fig 3). This causes a loss of return on national labor or goods in the global market.
- b) In exchange for the money kept abroad, the source country often receives harmful goods or services like drugs or terrorist financing (Flow 4A, 5, 1, 2 and 4B of Fig 3) not development inputs like vaccines, bridges, or metro consultancy fees.
- c) The money that remains abroad strengthens trafficking groups and anti-national actors (Entity Q and R), while weakening the state's governance and administrative systems.

However, no matter how much trafficking victims earn, their money rarely comes through formal banking channels. Even though we desperately ignore issues of excluding human rights and reputational harm, human trafficking causes significant economic losses to the home country. A survey estimates that only drug-related costs in Bangladesh equal USD 10 billion annually enough to build three Padma Bridges each year. There are no statistics for trafficking-related costs, but the flow of illicit income shows the scale of losses.

Example 1

Around 273,000 Bangladeshi workers were legally sent to Malaysia in 2007. Recruiting agencies, instead of charging the official migration fee of BDT 84,000, collected BDT 200,000–250,000 per worker. They reported that on average BDT 100,000 per worker was spent on illegal payments to concerned Malaysian offices. So, Bangladesh lost about BDT 27.3 billion (about USD 0.5 billion at the time) in one year to one country money that went via hundi, not through banking channels.

Additionally, this money was collected from existing Bangladeshi migrants in Malaysia and used as “fees,” while the extra amounts collected from new migrants in Bangladesh were paid to their relatives. Thus, the funds never entered Bangladesh legally. On top of that, Malaysia later stopped importing Bangladeshi labor for years, citing corruption in the process.

Example 2

It revealed that several trafficking groups lured Bangladeshi workers from the Middle East with promises of European jobs, gathered them in Iran, and extorted an average BDT 600,000 ransom per person. In 2013 alone, 2,000 such workers were rescued and repatriated to Bangladesh. Now, the losses incurred by the home country were:

- a) A total of BDT 1.2 billion (about USD 20 million as per the then exchange rate) was collected from the families of 2,000 workers. Families became poorer, often by selling property or taking loans.
- b) An equivalent amount of foreign currency was collected from some migrants abroad and paid to traffickers, while the ransom collected in Bangladesh was distributed to the relatives of the migrants through hundi. Thus, Bangladesh lost USD 20 million in foreign exchange that could not come through banking channels.
- c) These 2,000 workers lost their existing jobs in the various Middle Eastern countries, meaning Bangladesh lost 2,000 regular overseas jobs.
- d) Bangladesh’s unemployment increased by 2,000.
- e) The country’s reputation suffered both at home and abroad.
- f) Traffickers grew stronger with USD 20 million, expanded their influence, recruited new victims, and sustained their networks.
- g) Many victims, under traffickers’ control, were forced into bonded labor abroad, with their earnings taken by traffickers Bangladesh gained nothing in return. Some victims joined into trafficking gang with a ‘job’ to recruit new victims from the migrants working in the Middle-Eastern countries.

The mechanics of ransom collection via local currency in Bangladesh and corresponding payment in foreign currency abroad thus align with patterns of Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs). According to the Global Financial Integrity framework, such transfers qualify as capital leakage that undermines domestic development and tax recovery. By rerouting money through informal systems like hundi, trafficking enables dual monetary loss:

- a) Capital flight from the formal economy: The money remains abroad and does not return to the legal banking system (Fig. 4).
- b) Missed taxation and financial sector weakening: The country loses both remittance and tax revenue (UNODC, 2020; IOM, 2022).

Moreover, this creates a shadow financial ecosystem that runs parallel to the legal one, feeding the shadow economy (Schneider and Medina, 2018). These operations not only erode trust in legal institutions but also complicate macroeconomic forecasting and remittance dependency policies.

Hence, the misconception that trafficking contributes positively to remittance inflows is not only inaccurate but dangerously misleading (IOM, 2022). Trafficked persons often remit little or nothing through formal channels, and ransom-based payments bypass the formal economy entirely, undermining fiscal tracking and economic planning (UNODC, 2020).

4.4 Reinforcement of Criminal Networks

The reinvestment of trafficked funds into arms, drugs, or further trafficking reflects classic patterns of criminal reinvestment and vertical integration, characteristic of organized transnational criminal networks (Shelley, 2010). These networks increasingly resemble conglomerates diversifying revenue streams, laundering capital, and capturing institutions through corruption. The long-term effect is the consolidation of criminal governance structures within and across borders.

The illicit funds transferred abroad not only bypass formal banking but are often reinvested in drugs, arms, or further trafficking ventures (ILO, 2021). These groups grow financially powerful, undermining both national security and law enforcement (UNODC, 2020; Fig. 4).

Case Study 1: Manpower Export to Malaysia (2007)

In 2007, Bangladesh officially sent 273,000 workers to Malaysia (UNODC, 2020, p. 76). Although the official migration fee was BDT 84,000, most workers paid 200,000–250,000 BDT. Recruiting agencies claimed that an average of 100,000 BDT per worker was spent in destination-country offices to facilitate the migration process (IOM, 2022).

- a) Estimated extra expenditure: $273,000 \text{ workers} \times 100,000 \text{ BDT} = \text{BDT } 2,730 \text{ crore}$ (approx. USD 500 million).
- b) This money never entered Bangladesh's formal financial system; it was transferred through hundi (IOM, 2019).
- c) Consequently, Malaysia suspended manpower intake from Bangladesh due to corruption allegations, causing long-term reputational and economic damage (UNODC, 2020).

Case Study 2: Trafficking Ransom via Iran (2013)

In 2013, over 2,000 skilled Bangladeshi workers from the Middle East were trafficked to Iran with promises of being sent to Europe (IOM, 2022). Instead, they were held hostage, and traffickers collected ransoms averaging BDT 600,000 per victim (UNODC, 2020).

- a) Total ransom paid in Bangladesh: BDT 120 crore (approx. USD 20 million).
- b) Equivalent foreign currency was collected abroad via hundi, causing a parallel foreign exchange loss (IOM, 2019).
- c) The victims never recovered their jobs, causing long-term loss of employment and remittance (ILO, 2021).

- d) Bangladesh's image was tarnished, and 2,000 families fell into deeper poverty (UNODC, 2020).

4.5 Structural Vulnerabilities and Enabling Factors

The financial endurance of human trafficking operations is facilitated by a range of systemic weaknesses within national and transnational regulatory environments. Key among these are deficient financial oversight, ineffective enforcement of anti-money laundering (AML) protocols, and limited digitization in rural financial ecosystems (ILO, 2021). These are not isolated shortcomings but represent what criminological theory terms as criminal opportunity structures environmental and institutional conditions that allow illicit enterprises to flourish (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960).

One critical mechanism is trade-based money laundering (TBML), in which traffickers routinely manipulate export and import documentation. Under-invoicing exports and over-invoicing imports (Fig. 5 and Fig. 6) allow the illicit transfer of value across borders, enabling the concealment and integration of criminal proceeds (UNODC, 2020). Despite its prevalence, this practice is seldom subjected to rigorous legal scrutiny.

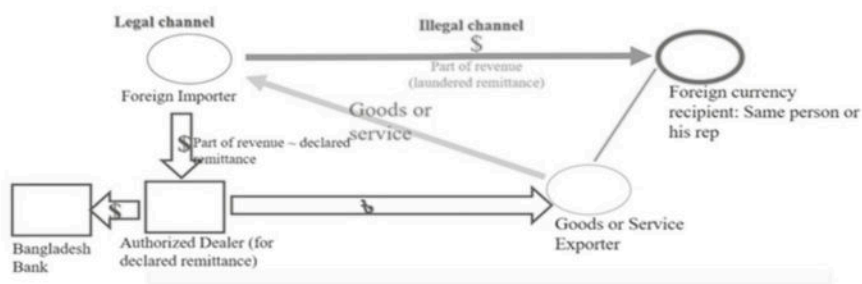


Fig.5: Hundi money flow (How remittance laundered through under-invoice of exported goods or service).

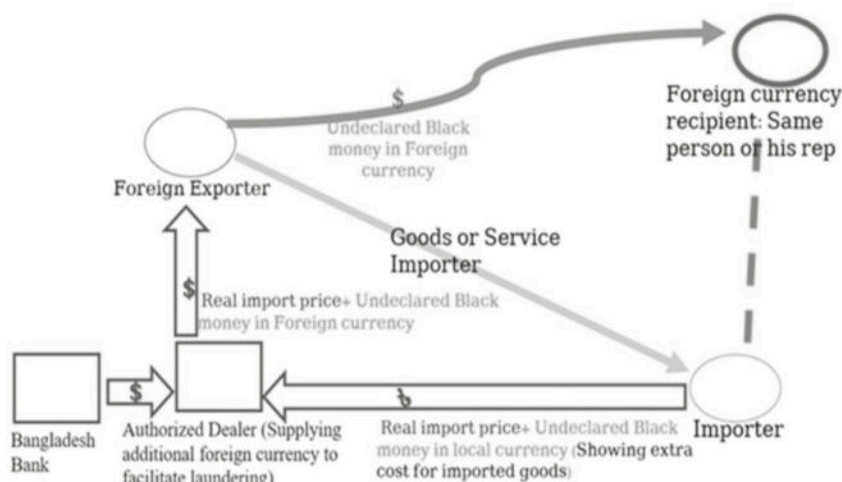


Fig.6: Hundi money flow

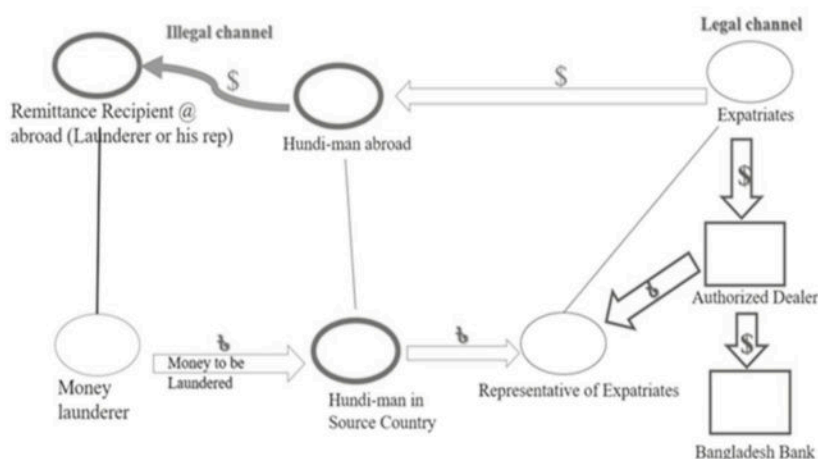


Fig.7: Money laundering (Crime Proceeds)

The Figure-5, Figure-6 and Figure-7 illustrates hundi-money flow, hundi-money flow and money laundering respectively. Moreover, equally concerning is the entrenched corruption among certain actors within the migration industry; particularly within recruitment agencies and border control systems. These actors often serve as facilitators rather than deterrents, enabling the smooth operation of trafficking corridors (IOM, 2019). Furthermore, the prevalence of informal, cash-based transactions in many rural and peri-urban areas inhibits the creation of digital trails. This severely limits the traceability of illicit financial flows, weakening the state's capacity to detect, analyze, and respond to trafficking-related transactions (ILO, 2021).

5. Policy and Law Enforcement Implications

Reframing trafficking through a criminological and economic lens requires systemic adjustments across enforcement and regulatory bodies. Key priorities include:

- a) Establishing specialized financial crime units with clear mandates to investigate trafficking-linked transactions
- b) Embedding robust anti-money laundering (AML) protocols within national anti-trafficking strategies
- c) Facilitating regional intelligence-sharing platforms focused on intercepting illicit remittance flows and dismantling transnational trafficking networks

6. Recommendations

- a) **Criminal Intelligence and Financial Tracking:** Empower anti-trafficking units with advanced tools, training, and legal authority to trace financial flows, including digital forensics and cross-border fund transfers (UNODC, 2020).
- b) **Formalize Remittance Systems:** Expand access to legal remittance channels by lowering transaction costs, incentivizing compliance, and partnering with fintech platforms (IOM, 2022).
- c) **Enhance Interagency Collaboration:** Establish institutional bridges between police, customs, financial intelligence units, and civil society actors to facilitate coordinated investigations and victim-centered interventions (ILO, 2021).
- d) **Community-Level Prevention and Monitoring:** Launch awareness campaigns and participatory monitoring frameworks to identify fraudulent recruitment, detect trafficking patterns early, and build trust in enforcement institutions (UNODC, 2020).
- e) **Strengthen Cross-Border Cooperation:** Develop bilateral and multilateral agreements with destination countries to jointly monitor migration flows, exchange intelligence, and pursue joint enforcement actions against trafficking rings (IOM, 2019).

7. Conclusion

Human trafficking is not simply a humanitarian concern: it constitutes a deeply embedded economic crime with systemic national consequences. Beyond the visible exploitation of individuals, it sustains illicit financial flows, entrenches corruption, and destabilizes legitimate governance and economic development.

To address these challenges, institutional reform, cross-agency intelligence sharing, and forensic auditing of high-risk sectors are imperative. Integrating insights from Illicit Financial Flow (IFF) frameworks, criminological enterprise theory, and shadow economy literature provides a more comprehensive lens to understand trafficking as a financial ecosystem with definable inputs, outputs, and pressure points for disruption.

Furthermore, to respond effectively, anti-trafficking strategies must integrate financial crime investigations, strengthen cross-border intelligence cooperation, and enforce accountability within recruitment and remittance systems.

Economic disruption mechanisms and asset recovery initiatives should be prioritized to dismantle the profit incentives that fuel trafficking. Bangladesh, like many other source and transit countries, faces the dual burden of losing both human capital and financial sovereignty. Tackling trafficking as an economic crime is no longer optional it is a prerequisite for sustainable national development and institutional resilience.

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Psychological Principles in Criminal Interrogation: A Conceptual Review for Law Enforcement

M A Sobhan PPM¹

Abstract

Interrogation is a vital part of investigation. The application of the knowledge of criminal psychology in criminal interrogation will elevate the skills, effectiveness and ethical integrity of investigative phenomena. The Techniques rooted in psychological principles, such as cognitive interviewing, logical, emotional and behavioral analysis, facilitate obtaining precise and right information without coercion or manipulation. More our This approach lessens the risk of false confessions and strengthens the evidentiary value of the interrogation process. By incorporating criminal psychology into interrogation strategies, law enforcement agencies could adopt evidence-based, empathetic, ethical, logical, emotional and legally sound methods to elicit truthful disclosures, advancing justice while respecting human rights. This endeavour focuses on the importance of psychology-informed interrogation training and the necessity for ongoing research to refine methodologies for diverse criminal contexts.

Key words: Criminal psychology, interrogation, suspects, evidence-based, empathetic

Introduction

Criminal psychology is a specialized field of psychology that explores the mental processes, behaviors and motivations of individuals involved in criminal activities. Its application in criminal interrogation has transformed traditional techniques, providing law enforcement with evidence-based methods for obtaining reliable information ethically and effectively. The integration of psychological principles into interrogation practices addresses critical challenges, such as detecting deception, preventing false confessions and tailoring approaches to individual suspects' psychological profiles. Moreover, by criminal psychology is meant that the study of the mindset, behaviors, outlooks, motives, culture, social norms and social patterns of individuals involved in criminal activities. It applies psychological principles to understand criminal actions that assist in profiling and contribute to the rehabilitation of offenders (Howitt, 2018; Bennell, 2019).

The significance of criminal psychology in interrogations does know no bound. It lies in its ability to balance the pursuit of truth with the protection and safeguarding the rights of suspects. This approach put in order with current legal, logical and ethical standards focusing the necessity for pragmatic, humane, emotional and scientifically grounded methods. Furthermore, the knowledge-based interview technique that could be used for memory and cognitive psychology for enhancing the accuracy and amount of information recollected from eyewitnesses and witnesses as well as improving the completeness of eyewitness account rather coercing suspects (Fisher and Geiselman, 1992).

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Additionally, the efforts towards detecting lies and deceit are the scopes and opportunities that provide a framework for understanding deception (Gudjonsson, 2003). It is reported that by adding these sorts of important themes in interrogation processes, like reading psychology and rapport-building with the suspects, deception analysis, the cognitive interview, detecting lies and deceit and ethical practices, are making a substantial endeavor to explore how criminal psychology assists and enhances the interrogation phenomena.

Methodology

The article has made through review of literature from different booklets, books, journals, dailies, magazines, online resources and seminars. Primary and secondary sources have been used to collect data and related information. In addition, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), case studies and observations were made to launch the study. Further more, briefing and discussions with high officials and speeches of high officers of police was also recorded for the study.

Background and History of Criminal Psychology

Criminal psychology often referred to as forensic psychology, that talk about the behaviours, attitudes, motivations and mental activities of suspects, criminals and other individuals connected with criminal processes. Its evolution and transformation are deep-rooted in interdisciplinary research integrating psychology, criminology, victimology and law. The background and history of criminal psychology shine backs changing paradigms in understanding criminal behaviour from moralistic and biological interpretations to contemporary psychological and neuro-scientific approaches. However, criminal psychology has undergone significant transformation over centuries, evolving from speculative theories to a robust evidence-based discipline.

1. Early Philosophical and Theoretical Foundations (Ancient to 18th Century)

Early theories of crime were based on morality and religion, often attributing deviant behaviour to sin or demonic possession. Philosophers like Aristotle and Plato speculated on the connection between behaviour, personality and societal norms.

Cesare Beccaria (1764):

In the book “On Crimes and Punishments”, Beccaria advocated for rational choice theory asserting that criminal behaviour arises from individuals weighing the benefits and consequences of their actions. This marked the beginning of a scientific approach to criminology.

Jeremy Bentham (1789):

Bentham expanded on Beccaria’s work with his “Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation” emphasizing utilitarianism and the deterrence of crime.

2. Biological and Physiological Theories (The 19th Century) Franz Joseph Gall (1796):

Gall introduced phrenology proposing that the shape of a person's skull could predict their propensity for criminal behaviour. Though now discredited, this theory spurred interest in biological factors influencing behaviour.

Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909):

Often referred to as the "father of criminology," Lombroso introduced the concept of atavism in his book "The Criminal Man". He suggested criminals were biologically predisposed due to evolutionary regression. While discredited today, his work highlighted the importance of studying offenders' traits. Furthermore, the 19th century also saw the rise of phrenology and other early attempts to link biology to criminal behaviour.

3. Psychological Foundations (The Early 20th Century)

Hugo Munsterberg (1863–1916):

In the book "On the Witness Stand", Munsterberg applied psychological principles to legal settings, focusing on memory, deception, and witness reliability. This was one of the first works to formally connect psychology and law. His work pioneered forensic psychology.

Sigmund Freud (1910):

Freud's psychoanalytic theories influenced early understandings of unconscious motivations in criminal behaviour. His essay "Criminals from a Sense of Guilt" explored the idea that some criminals commit crimes to satisfy unconscious desires for punishment. In addition, the advancement in psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud and others introduced the idea that unconscious motives could drive criminal behaviour.

4. Emergence of Modern Criminal Psychology/ Behavioral and Cognitive Advances (Mid-20th Century):

The development of behaviourism by psychologists like B. F. Skinner *emphasized* the role of learning and environment in shaping behaviour, including criminality. Theories of deviance expanded to include sociological perspectives, such as Robert K. Merton's strain theory (1938).

Robert K. Merton's strain theory (1938):

Robert K. Merton's strain theory examined societal pressures and crime.

Hans Gross (1906):

Gross published Criminal Psychology that was a seminal text that applied psychological principles to criminal investigation. He emphasized understanding the mind of the criminal to solve crimes more effectively.

John Bowlby (1944):

Bowlby's study "Forty-Four Juvenile Thieves" linked early childhood experiences to delinquency, emphasizing the role of attachment and developmental psychology in understanding criminal behaviour.

5. Development of Behavioral and Cognitive Perspectives (Late 20th Century)

B. F. Skinner (1953):

Skinner's behaviourist theories, particularly operant conditioning, explained how reinforcement and punishment shape criminal behaviour.

Albert Bandura (1973):

In *Aggression: A Social Learning Analysis*, Bandura introduced the social learning theory, explaining how individuals learn aggressive behaviours through observation and imitation.

6. Criminal Profiling and Applied Psychology and Institutionalization of Criminal Psychology (Late 20th Century)

The FBI Behavioral Science Unit:

The FBI's Behavioural Science Unit that formed in 1972 introduced criminal profiling, drawing on psychological insights to understand serial offenders and violent criminals. Books like *Mindhunter* (Douglas and Olshaker, 1995) popularized this work. The establishment of the Behavioural Science Unit by the FBI formalized the use of psychological profiling in criminal investigations.

David Canter (1990):

Canter pioneered investigative psychology, using statistical methods to profile offenders based on crime scene behaviour. His book *Criminal Shadows* explores this approach.

Moreover, psychologists such as Hans Eysenck proposed theories linking personality traits like extraversion and neuroticism to criminal behaviour.

7. Integration of Neuroscience and Psychology (21st Century):

Advances in neuroscience have deepened the understanding of brain structures and their influence on criminal behaviour. Adrian Raine's *The Anatomy of Violence* explores the biological underpinnings of aggression and crime. The field has grown to include topics like offender rehabilitation, crime prevention and the impact of social and cultural factors on criminality.

8. Contemporary Advances

Gisli Gudjonsson (2003):

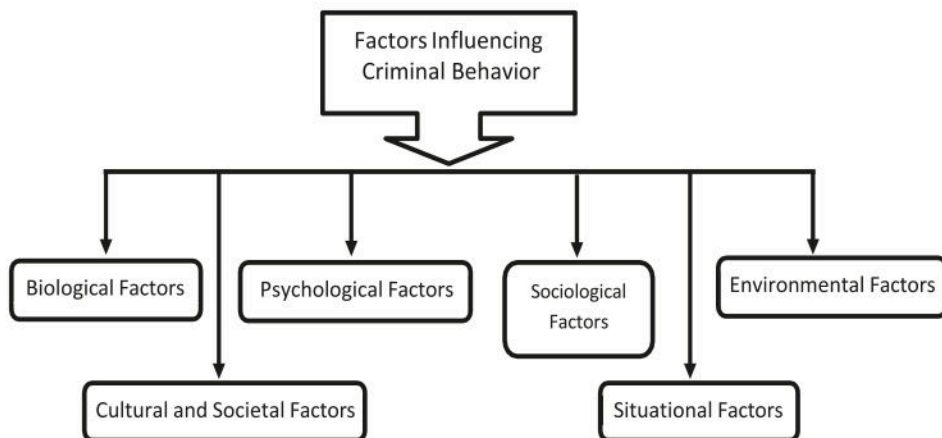
Gudjonsson's work focused on interrogation techniques, false confessions, and the psychological vulnerabilities of suspects. His book *"The Psychology of Interrogations and Confessions"* remains a cornerstone in modern forensic psychology.

Adrian Raine (2013):

Raine's *"The Anatomy of Violence"* integrates neuroscience into criminal psychology exploring the biological roots of violent behaviour.

Factors Influencing Criminal Behavior

Criminal behaviour is influenced by a complex interplay of biological, psychological, sociological, cultural and societal factors, situational and environmental factors. These factors have been extensively studied in criminology and psychology to understand why individuals commit crimes. The detailed exploration of the major factors with references to seminal works, books, and journal articles are given below.



Dia - 1: Factors influencing criminal behavior

1. Biological Factors Genetics and Neurobiology:

The role of genetics and neurobiology as biological factors influencing criminal behaviour has been extensively studied in criminology, psychology and neuroscience. Genetics and neurobiology provide critical insights into the biological underpinnings of criminal behaviour. However, they must be contextualized within environmental, social and psychological frameworks to fully understand criminality. Genetic influences on behaviour suggest that certain inherited traits may increase predisposition to criminality. However, genetics interacts with environmental factors. The main points are family studies, twin studies and specific genes. Nevertheless, biological theories suggest that genetic predispositions and neurological conditions can contribute to criminal tendencies (Raine, 2013). Besides hormonal fluctuations, like high testosterone levels and neurotransmitter imbalances have been linked to aggression (Brunner et al., 1993).

2. Psychological Factors:

Personality Disorders

Certain personality traits such as impulsivity, narcissism, or psychopathy, increase the likelihood of criminal behaviour. As for instances, impulsivity is the tendency to act without thinking. Impulsivity disordered patients are seemed to be normal.

They are very much smart with their talks. For example, they might blurt something out, buy something on a whim, or run across the street without looking. Moreover, narcissism is a self-centered personality style characterized as having an excessive preoccupation with oneself and one's own needs, often at the expense of others. A person with narcissistic traits may have an inflated sense of self-importance, or behave in a way that is intended to receive preferential treatment. In addition, psychopathy is a personality disorder that involves a range of traits and behaviors, including antisocial behavior, lack of empathy, manipulativeness, lack of remorse etc. Psychopathy is more common in men than in women, and is estimated to affect about 1% of the general population. Symptoms are often evident by adolescence, but a diagnosis can only be confirmed after age 18. Some leaders, like Joseph Stalin and Saddam Hussein have exhibited psychopathic traits. Their reigns were marked by fear, oppression and suffering for their people (Hare, 1999).

Childhood Trauma and Abuse

Childhood trauma and abuse refer to the physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological harm experienced by children, often resulting in long-lasting effects on their emotional and psychological well-being. Forms of childhood trauma and abuse include physical abuse, mental abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Adverse childhood experiences significantly impact an individual's psychological development and likelihood of engaging in crime. Children who are experienced trauma exhibiting aggressive behaviour or school dropout (Anda et al., 2006). Because of mental trauma and abuse high rates of anxiety, depression, and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) might be happened (Felitti et al., 1998). Furthermore, due to childhood trauma and abuse the chronic health issues like heart disease or obesity could be found (Shonkoff et al., 2012)

3. Sociological Factors:

Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status (SES) refers to the economic, social and educational standing of an individual or group. It significantly influences criminal behaviour, acting both as a risk factor and a determinant for various forms of criminal activities. Socioeconomic status profoundly influences criminal behaviour through mechanisms such as poverty, inequality, lack of education and neighbourhood effects. Poverty limits access to resources, education, and employment opportunities, leading individuals to engage in crime as a survival strategy or out of frustration. As for example, higher likelihood of violent crimes in economically disadvantaged communities (Sampson and Wilson, 1995).

Peer Influence

Peer influence is a critical social factor that affects individual behaviour, particularly during adolescence. Through direct pressure, modelling or shared norms peers could encourage or deter criminal activities. This influence is heightened when individuals seek social acceptance belong to deviant peer groups or lack strong parental or societal guidance. Additionally, peer influence is a powerful determinant of criminal behaviour particularly among adolescents.

Social Learning Theory suggests that peer groups serve as a platform for learning and imitating behaviours including criminal acts. As for instances, the adolescents exposed to peers who engage in delinquent acts are more likely to adopt similar behaviours (Bandura, 1977).

Over and above that Differential Association Theory advocated that criminal behaviour is learned through interactions with others, especially peers who value crime. An example of it is youth in delinquent groups are exposed to definitions of norms that favour criminal acts (Sutherland and Cressey, 1947).

4. Environmental Factors

Environmental factors significantly shape individual tendencies toward criminal behaviour. These factors include family environment, community characteristics, school environment, and exposure to violence. These factors profoundly influence criminal behaviour, ranging from family dynamics and community characteristics to school settings and exposure to violence or toxins. Addressing these factors requires multifaceted interventions, including community development, school reform and environmental health policies to prevent crime effectively. The following analysis explores the role of these elements in influencing criminal behaviour supported by academic references. By using family environment, community and neighbourhood characteristics, school environment, exposure to violence and environmental toxins and criminal behaviour are trying to explore the role of these elements in influencing criminal behaviour. Farrington (2001) stated that the family is a primary agent of socialization and dysfunction in family settings often correlates with delinquency and criminal behaviour.

In addition, schools are critical settings for social development. Dysfunctional school environments can foster delinquency. As for instances, high dropout rates correlate with higher criminal activity among youths (Hirschi, 1969). Besides, witnessing or experiencing violence in the environment normalizes aggressive behaviour, increasing the likelihood of criminal actions. As for example, children exposed to domestic violence or community violence are more prone to violent offenses (Widom, 1989).

Moreover, exposure to environmental toxins, such as lead, has been linked to aggressive and criminal behaviour. Such as chronic exposure to lead during childhood is associated with neurological impairments that could lead to increased aggression and impulsivity also the areas with high lead levels often reported higher crime rates (Nevin, 2000). Additionally, the high population density, noise and pollution can increase stress and aggression, contributing to crime (Wilson and Kelling, 1982).

Furthermore, family instability, lack of parental supervision and domestic violence are critical predictors of juvenile delinquency (Farrington, 2009).

5. Cultural and Societal Factors

Cultural and societal factors play a significant role in shaping criminal behavior. These factors shape criminal behavior through complex mechanisms. Understanding these influences is vital for developing effective crime prevention strategies tailored to specific societal contexts. Cultural and societal factors comprises of cultural norms and values, societal inequality, media influence, cultural attitudes toward crime, social control and deviance and religion and morality. Moreover, cultural norms define acceptable behaviour in a society.

As for instance, gang cultures often emphasize violence as a means of resolving disputes (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967).

In addition, socioeconomic inequality and marginalization can lead to feelings of alienation and frustration, which may manifest as criminal acts. Strain theory suggests that crime results from the disconnect between societal goals and the means to achieve them. As for example, economic disparity often leads to theft, robbery or other forms of crime as individuals seek alternative means to success (Merton, 1938).

Moreover, weak social controls in a society could lead to higher crime rates. Broken Windows Theory indicated that disorganized and neglected environments foster crime by signalling a lack of social order. As for example, areas with visible signs of neglect tend to have higher rates of petty and serious crime (Wilson and Kelling, 1982). Besides, religious beliefs and moral values could influence individuals' behaviour positively or negatively. Religious and cultural teachings often discourage criminal behaviour. Such as, societies with strong religious influence may exhibit lower crime rates due to adherence to moral codes (Durkheim, 1912).

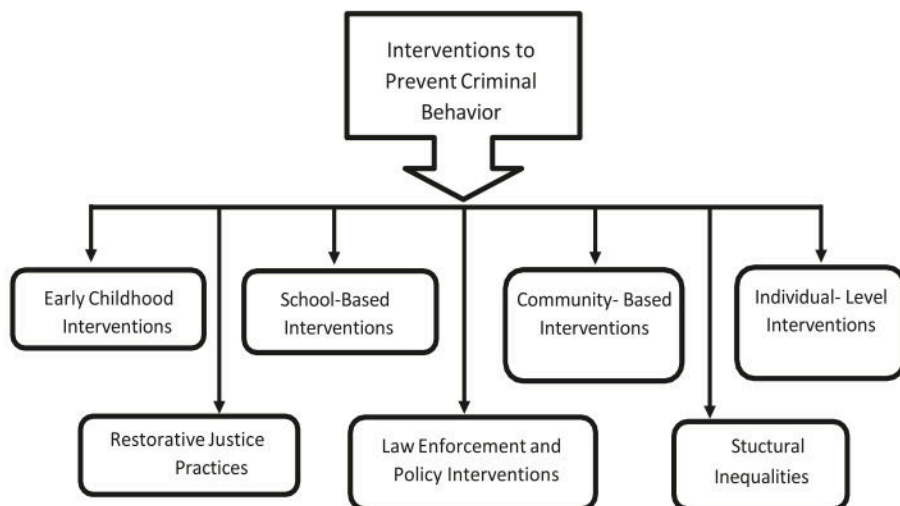
6. Situational Factors

Situational factors influencing criminal behavior focus on environmental, contextual and immediate circumstances that may lead individuals to engage in criminal activity. These factors often involve external pressures, opportunities or provocations that influence behavior regardless of inherent personal traits or long-term motives. Situational factors include opportunities, stress and strain, group dynamics, provocation or immediate triggers, rational choice and routine activities.

Crime often occurs when a motivated offender, a suitable target and the absence of capable guardians converge. The availability of targets e.g., poorly secured property, absence of guardians. Physical and social environments foster anonymity or lack surveillance (Clarke, 1997). Additionally, sudden financial pressures or emotional distress can push individuals toward criminal acts. Situations involving personal disputes or societal strain increase the likelihood of impulsive crimes. Stressful circumstances lead individuals to commit crimes as a coping mechanism (Agnew, 1992).

Interventions to Prevent Criminal Behavior

Preventing criminal behaviour requires a multi-faceted approach that targets underlying risk factors, strengthens protective factors and intervenes at individual, community and systemic levels. Preventing criminal behaviour requires an integrated approach combining early interventions, education, community support, law enforcement strategies and addressing systemic inequities. Evidence-based practices are crucial to developing effective interventions and fostering safer societies. Interventions to prevent criminal behavior involve in early childhood interventions, school-based interventions, community-based interventions, individual-level interventions, restorative justice practices, law enforcement and policy interventions and structural inequalities.



Dia - 2: Interventions to prevent criminal behavior

1. Early Childhood Interventions

Early Childhood and Education Programs bring substantial importance in the development of different faculties of children. Addressing developmental and educational gaps that correlate with delinquency could be beneficiary. Enhancing emotional regulation and social skills through school-based programs should be taken into consideration. Also the early life experiences significantly shape in building future behaviour. Intervening during childhood reduces the likelihood of delinquency and criminal activity. Moreover, initiatives like “Head Start” focus on improving cognitive and social skills among children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Schweinhart et al., 2005).

2. School-Based Interventions

Schools are one of the most significant environments for fostering pro-social behaviour and deterring delinquency. School-based interventions play a vital role in mitigating risk factors associated with criminal behaviour. These are the critical area in crime prevention research, focusing on strategies to mitigate delinquent behaviours among young people. These programs made emphasis on fostering social skills, emotional regulation and behavioural control. The school-based interventions include social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, anti-bullying programs, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for at-risk students, restorative justice practices, life skills training (LST), multi-systemic therapy (MST), school resource officers (SROS) and mentoring programs and comprehensive school-wide interventions.

The objectives of social-emotional learning (SEL) programs are enhancing students' emotional intelligence, self-regulation and interpersonal skills. Moreover, different social-emotional learning programmes have been shown to reduce aggression, improve emotional well-being, and foster pro-social behavior (Durlak et al., 2011).

In addition, the objectives of bullying prevention programs are to reduce bullying and associated antisocial behaviors. Programs such as “Olweus Bullying Prevention Program” reduce school violence and improve peer relationships (Olweus, 1993). Gaffney et al. (2019) showed that the school-based interventions play a vital role in mitigating risk factors associated with criminal behavior. These programmes focus on fostering social skills, emotional regulation, and behavioral control while addressing the underlying causes of delinquent behaviors in children and adolescents.

Moreover, the objectives of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) are to address cognitive distortions and develop better coping mechanisms. Group CBT sessions could be used to tackle aggression and impulsive behavior (Lochman and Wells, 2002). Additionally, the objectives of restorative justice practices are to build accountability and repair relationships rather than punish. The approaches could be used for restorative justice practices are peer mediation, restorative circles and conflict resolution strategies (Wachtel and McCold, 2001). Besides the objectives of life skills training (LST) are to prevent delinquency by teaching personal and social skills like decision-making, conflict resolution and self-control. Botvin and Griffin (2004) found significant reductions in substance abuse and delinquent behaviors.

Furthermore, the objective of multi-systemic therapy (MST) is to address multiple environmental influences, including school, family and peer groups. These could be implemented through individualized treatment plans targeting chronic offenders (Henggeler et al., 1998). Over and above that the objectives of school resource officers and mentoring programs promote positive relationships with law enforcement and provide role models. Gottfredson et al. (2002) emphasized that well-trained SROs could reduce school-based offenses when paired with mentoring initiatives.

In addition, the objectives of “Comprehensive School-Wide Interventions” are to implement a multi-tiered approach combining individual, group, and school-level programs. Farrington and Ttofi (2009) highlighted the efficacy of integrated approaches in reducing youth violence.

3. Community-Based Interventions

Communities play a vital role in shaping individual behaviour and providing support systems to prevent crime. Community-based interventions aim to address criminal behaviour by engaging with individuals, families and communities to tackle root causes, provide support, and foster environments that reduce the likelihood of offending. These programs are often grounded in principles of prevention, rehabilitation and community engagement.

Neighborhood Watch Programs

Neighborhood Watch Programs (NWP) are grassroots community-based initiatives designed to prevent crime and enhance public safety by strengthening cooperation between local residents and law enforcement agencies. Engaging communities in crime prevention through monitoring and reporting suspicious activities improve collective efficacy. They are considered effective in reducing criminal activity by promoting vigilance, community cohesion and timely reporting of suspicious activities. Moreover, Neighborhood Watch Programs represent a scalable and community-driven solution to prevent crime.

Neighborhood Watch Programs involves community involvement, partnership with law enforcement, preventive measures and crime reporting and education. For optimal results, they must be tailored to the specific needs of the community and supported by robust partnerships with law enforcement agencies (Bennett et al., 2008).

Youth Mentorship Programs

Youth mentorship programs are widely recognized as effective interventions to prevent criminal behaviour, particularly among at-risk youth. By nurturing positive relationships with trusted mentors, these programs help to develop essential life skills, increase self-esteem, and provide a supportive environment that steers young people away from delinquent behaviour. Youth mentorship programs provide a strong foundation for reducing criminal behaviour through relationship building and skill development. These programs thrive when supported by community involvement, professional training and evidence-based strategies. The prime features of youth mentorship programs are individual guidance, skill development and positive role models. programs like big brothers big sisters pair at-risk youth with mentors to provide guidance and positive role models (Dubois et al., 2002).

4. Individual-Level Interventions

Individual-level interventions to prevent criminal behavior focus on addressing the specific needs, risks, and characteristics of individuals who are at risk of offending. These programs are typically evidence-based and aim to promote personal development, reduce risk factors, and enhance protective factors. Targeting individuals at risk of criminal behavior could prevent escalation into more serious offenses. The main types of individual-level interventions involve cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), substance abuse treatment, employment and education support, trauma-informed interventions and functional family therapy (FFT).

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT helps individuals recognize and alter harmful thought patterns and behaviors. Moreover, CBT helps the individuals to modify distorted thinking patterns that lead to criminal behaviour. It emphasizes problem-solving, anger management, and impulse control. A meta-analysis by Lipsey et al. (2007) published in "Crime and Justice" found that CBT reduced recidivism by 25-30% among high-risk offenders.

Substance Abuse Treatment

Substance abuse treatment programs addressing addiction-related behaviours could prevent crimes linked to substance use, such as theft or drug-related violence. It is reported that a significant reduction in criminal behaviour among participants was found in residential and outpatient treatment programs. In this context, the programs like 12-Step Recovery and behavioural therapy are effective (Belenko et al., 2005).

Employment and Education Support:

Employment and education support programs could enhance an individual's skills and opportunities reduce economic pressures that may lead to crime. The RAND corporation (2021) highlights that job training programs for formerly incarcerated individuals reduce reoffending rates by 20-30%.

Trauma-Informed Interventions:

In trauma-informed interventions programmes the addressing underlying trauma is performed that often linked to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), could prevent criminal behavior. Research in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (2020) underscores the link between trauma resolution and reduced aggression.

Functional Family Therapy (FFT):

FFT targets youth offenders and their families to improve communication, reduce family conflict and create supportive home environments. Studies in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* (1999) demonstrate that FFT reduces recidivism by up to 60% among juvenile offenders.

5. Restorative Justice Practices

Restorative justice practices aim to repair harm caused by criminal behaviour through inclusive processes involving offenders, victims and the community. Moreover, restorative justice emphasizes on rehabilitating offenders through dialogue and community involvement. By promoting accountability, dialogue and reconciliation, restorative justice reduces recidivism and fosters community cohesion. Restorative justice practices are victim-offender mediation, circle processes and conferencing (Umbreit, 1994).

6. Law Enforcement and Policy Interventions

Effective policing and criminal justice policies are essential for crime prevention. Law enforcement and policy interventions play a critical role in preventing criminal behavior by deterring individuals from committing crimes, ensuring justice and facilitating rehabilitation. These interventions range from proactive crime prevention strategies to reforms within the criminal justice system designed to address underlying causes of crime. By integrating law enforcement efforts with thoughtful policy changes, the potential to prevent criminal activity and promote safer communities is significantly enhanced. The key areas of law enforcement and policy interventions are community policing, problem-oriented policing, hot spot policing, sentencing and correctional reforms, gun control and violence prevention policies and crime prevention through environmental design (Braga et al., 2013;

7. Structural Inequalities

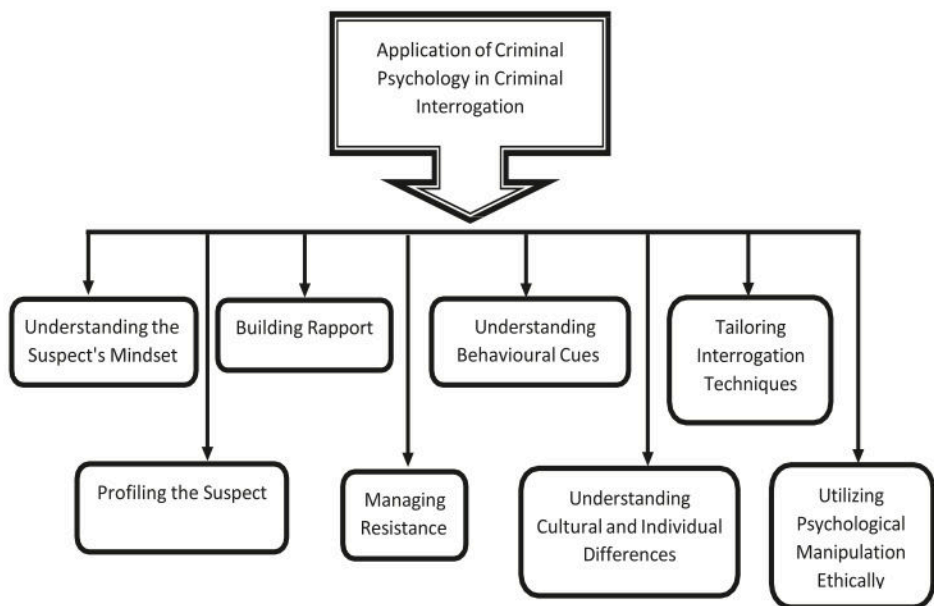
Addressing systemic issues like poverty, discrimination, and lack of education helps to reduce crime at its root. Structural inequalities including racial, economic and educational disparities, contribute significantly to criminal behavior. Addressing these inequalities could prevent crime by addressing root causes such as poverty, lack of access to education, and systemic discrimination. In addition, interventions focus on creating equal opportunities, improving community conditions and reforming policies that disproportionately affect marginalized populations. The main interventions and evidence programmes involve education and employment program, criminal justice reforms, anti-poverty policies and community empowerment (Sampson et al., 2017; Durlauf et al., 2018; Drake et al., 2019; Sampson and Groves, 2016).

How will you apply the knowledge of criminal psychology in criminal interrogation

Application of Criminal Psychology in Criminal Interrogation:

The application of criminal psychology in criminal interrogation made an emphasis on understanding the psychological state, motivations and behavioural patterns of individuals under investigation. Moreover, criminal psychology in criminal interrogation involves the strategic use of psychological principles, behavioural analysis and communication techniques to gather reliable information and confessions from suspects.

By leveraging these insights, law enforcement professionals can enhance the effectiveness of their interrogation techniques while maintaining ethical standards. There is an overview of how criminal psychology is applied in this context which stated below.



Dia - 3: Application of criminal psychology in criminal interrogation

1. Understanding the Suspect's Mindset

Understanding the suspect's mindset during criminal interrogation is crucial for effective communication, building rapport and ensuring ethical practices. It involves assessing psychological factors, motivations and emotional states to inform the interrogation strategy, which could lead to more truthful disclosures. The criminal psychologists analyze a suspect's background, personality and behavior to predict their likely responses during interrogation. In addition, the psychologists assess motives behind criminal actions that could be used to frame questions in a way that resonates with the suspect. Moreover, understanding fears, insecurities and emotional triggers could help in tailoring interrogation strategies. It helps in tailoring interrogation methods that minimize resistance and encourage cooperation.

Techniques such as cognitive interviewing and behavioral analysis are used to assess and adapt to the mental state of suspects. Additionally, recognizing mental states allows interrogators to apply psychological manipulation ethically, using strategies like offering moral justifications or focusing on the suspect's fears or desires. Furthermore, understanding how a suspect's past experiences and current emotional state influence behavior could help interrogators building trust that is key to reducing resistance (Jessica and Richard, 2020).

2. Building Rapport

Building rapport during criminal interrogations is a pivotal strategy that significantly enhances the effectiveness of information gathering. Establishing a positive relationship between the interrogator and the suspect promote an environment conducive to open communication, thereby increasing the likelihood of obtaining accurate and comprehensive information. Over and above that a strong rapport reduces the chances of false confessions and ensures that the information obtained is reliable. Rapport-building in suspect interviews, particularly through the use of empathy, plays a substantial role in obtaining accurate information (Fadia et al., 2011). Moreover, the studies have demonstrated that rapport-building techniques lead to greater cooperation and information sharing from suspects.

3. Understanding Behavioural Cues

Understanding behavioral cues during criminal interrogations is essential for investigators aiming to assess the credibility of the statement of suspects and detect deception. Behavioral cues encompass both verbal and nonverbal indicators that could reveal underlying emotions, intentions and truthfulness. Nonverbal behaviors such as facial expressions, body language, and gestures could provide significant insights during interrogations. For instance, the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) emphasizes the importance of recognizing behavioral anomalies including subtle facial expressions and body movements, to assess a suspect's veracity. Additionally, observing fidgeting or avoiding eye contact could indicate discomfort or deception. The analysis of linguistic markers in a suspect's statements may also aid in detecting deception. Research indicates that deceptive statements may exhibit certain characteristics such as a lack of detail or inconsistencies (Fiona and Lorraine, 2015).

4. Tailoring Interrogation Techniques

Tailoring interrogation techniques to the individual characteristics of a suspect is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness and ethicality of criminal investigations. Customized approaches consider factors such as the suspect's personality, cultural background, and psychological state, thereby facilitating more accurate information gathering and reducing the risk of false confessions. In addition, adapting interrogation strategies to align with a suspect's unique traits could lead to more effective communication and cooperation. For instance, the Reid Technique emphasizes the importance of tailoring interrogation methods based on information gathered during initial interviews to address the specific subject effectively. Besides, by employing interrogation techniques that are appropriate to the individual's background and psychological state helps in maintaining ethical standards and upholding the integrity of the investigative process.

The PEACE (Preparation and Planning, Engage and Explain, Account, Closure, and Evaluation) model, for example, advocates for non-coercive interviewing methods that are adaptable to the interviewee's needs promoting ethical information gathering (Fred et al., 2013).

5. Profiling the Suspect

Criminal psychology aids in constructing psychological profiles based on the suspect's background, personality and motivations. This information helps interrogators to predict responses and tailor their approach. Profiling suspects in criminal interrogations involves analyzing behavioral patterns, psychological traits, and demographic factors to inform investigative strategies. This practice enhances the effectiveness of interrogations by enabling law enforcement to tailor their approaches to the individual characteristics of suspects, thereby improving communication and the likelihood of obtaining accurate information.

Additionally, criminal profiling serves as a valuable tool in narrowing down suspect pools and identifying individuals who might require further investigation. It aids in linking cases with similar characteristics and understanding the motivations behind criminal behavior (Brent, 2011).

6. Managing Resistance

Effectively managing resistance during criminal interrogations plays a substantial role for obtaining accurate information while upholding ethical standards. Resistance could manifest as reluctance to engage, denial or deception and addressing, it requires strategic approaches that encourage cooperation without coercion. Establishing a positive relationship with the suspect can reduce resistance. Techniques that hasten trust and open communication are associated with increased likelihood of obtaining confessions. Employing humane and non-coercive strategies could mitigate resistance. In addition, the PEACE model emphasizes ethical interviewing, which has been shown to be effective in reducing resistance and securing reliable information. Into the bargain, recognizing the psychological aspects of interrogation could inform strategies to manage resistance. Now a day, the techniques like motivational interviewing are being used to reduce resistance and encourage voluntary disclosure. Research indicates that certain interrogation techniques could lead to false confessions, highlighting the importance of ethical practices (Emily et al., 2020).

7. Understanding Cultural and Individual Differences

Understanding cultural and individual differences is crucial in criminal interrogations to ensure effective communication, enhance cooperation and uphold ethical standards. Recognizing these differences allows investigators to tailor their approaches, thereby increasing the likelihood of obtaining accurate and reliable information. Interrogators must be aware of cultural norms and values that influence a suspect's behavior and communication style. Cultural factors could significantly impact the effectiveness of police tactics during interrogations. Moreover, personal characteristics such as personality traits and psychological profiles affect how suspects respond during interrogations.

Understanding these individual differences could help in developing strategies to manage resistance and reduce the risk of false confessions. On top of that being attuned to cultural and individual differences ensures that interrogation practices are respectful and ethical, that is essential for maintaining the integrity of the criminal justice system. Cultural competency is critical in forensic evaluations and criminal cases (Michael, 2019).

8. Utilizing Psychological Manipulation Ethically

Utilizing psychological techniques in criminal interrogations requires a careful balance between effective information gathering and adherence to ethical standards. Ethical considerations are paramount to ensure that the rights and well-being of suspects are protected, and that the integrity of the criminal justice process is maintained. In addition, interrogators must navigate the fine line between employing psychological strategies to elicit information and avoiding manipulative practices that could lead to false confessions or psychological harm. Besides, the American Psychological Association emphasizes the importance of ethical responsibilities during interrogations. Additionally, methods such as building rapport, presenting evidence strategically and employing open-ended questioning are considered ethical approaches that could facilitate truthful disclosures without coercion. Understanding the psychological aspects of interrogation could inform strategies to manage resistance. Over and above that unethical psychological manipulation could lead to legal challenges, including the suppression of confessions and potential civil rights violations. It is crucial for law enforcement professionals to adhere to ethical standards to maintain the legitimacy of the criminal justice system (Steven and Brad, 2008).

9. Challenges and Ethical Considerations

The application of criminal psychology in criminal interrogation presents a range of challenges and ethical considerations. It is important to take in consideration that whether criminal psychology offers valuable tools for interrogators, ethical concerns and potential risks to the reliability of information must be carefully managed to ensure justice is served fairly and humanely. These include the following:

A. Challenges:

Accuracy of Psychological Profiling:

Criminal psychologists may develop profiles based on behavioural patterns, which could lead to assumptions that might not always apply to every individual case. Nevertheless, these are not always accurate. However, criminal profiling could be based on psychological theories but its accuracy is often debated. Additionally, overreliance on profiling could lead to false assumptions or biases which could impact the course of an interrogation (Holmes and Holmes, 2009).

Subjectivity in Psychological Assessment:

Psychological assessments could be subjective, as different psychologists might interpret the same behaviours differently.

Furthermore, this inconsistency could affect the quality of an interrogation, potentially leading to unfair treatment or wrongful conclusions (Gudjonsson, 2003).

Pressure on Suspects:

Interrogations often involve high pressure where suspects might feel threatened, leading to confessions that are not genuine. Interrogators often use psychological tactics such as high pressure, where suspects may feel threatened leading to confessions that are not genuine. In addition, they could create an immense pressure on suspects into giving confessions, but this could result in the violation of rights. Psychological pressure could lead to false confessions, especially in vulnerable individuals. Moreover, the psychological manipulation of suspects to elicit confessions raises concerns about the reliability of information obtained (Kassin and Gudjonsson, 2004).

Emotional Manipulation:

Emotional manipulation during interrogation could lead to the suspect's breakdown or confusion, resulting in invalid or coerced confessions. Additionally, some interrogation techniques might involve using emotional manipulation to break down the suspect's defenses. This raises concerns about the fairness and legality of such methods as well as the psychological impact on the individual (Drizin and Leo, 2004).

B. Ethical Considerations:

Informed Consent:

Ethical interrogations require suspects to be informed of their rights before questioning begins. Informed consent must be obtained to ensure fairness. Moreover, suspects must be informed of their rights before participating in any interrogation including the right to remain silent and the right to legal representation. Failing to ensure informed consent or using coercive tactics violates ethical principles (Wright, 2007).

Avoiding Coercion or Duress:

Psychological tactics should not be used to force confessions or induce false memories. Using coercive tactics, whether psychological or physical, is not only unethical but can lead to unreliable confessions. However, the techniques like sleep deprivation, threats, or manipulating a suspect's mental state to extract a confession raise significant ethical concerns (Leo and Ofshe, 1998).

Confession Reliability:

Psychologically manipulating a suspect into confessing could result in false confessions. This false confession is one of the most serious ethical concerns in criminal psychology. Furthermore, these sorts of confessions might be inadmissible in court or worse, lead to wrongful convictions. It is crucial that interrogators maintain ethical standards to avoid these outcomes (Kassin and Neumann, 1997).

Psychological Harm:

Prolonged or intense psychological manipulation could cause long-term emotional or psychological harm to suspects. Moreover, ethical interrogators must be careful to avoid inflicting undue mental distress (Zimbardo, 2007).

Bias and Stereotyping:

Criminal psychology could sometimes lead to profiling based on race, gender, or other factors which could lead to discrimination. Ethical practice requires that professionals avoid bias and ensure that decisions are based on evidence rather than stereotypes. In addition, profiling and biases could distort an interrogation process. Criminal psychologists and law enforcement officers must avoid racial, gender and socioeconomic stereotypes during investigations (Gabbidon and Peterson, 2009).

In fine, while criminal psychology offers valuable tools for interrogators, ethical concerns and potential risks to the reliability of information must be carefully managed to ensure justice is served fairly and humanely.

Findings and Discussions

A). Findings

1. The Ineffectiveness of Accusatorial and Harsh Interrogation Methods.

Psychological theory and empirical research exhibit that coercive interrogation phenomena fail to secure their expected objectives for the following reasons.

- a). The confrontational techniques enhance resistance rather than promote cooperation. While accused experience about the intimidating that, psychological reactance theory forecasts they would become more established in their opposition for providing information. This resistance displays as active counter-interrogation tactics, lessened disclosure, and increased psychological withdrawal from the interaction.
- b). The coercive interrogation directly impedes memory restoring activities. Cognitive psychology study illustrates that stress and anxiety reduce attentional emphasis and disrupt the neurological mechanisms needed for accurate and detailed recall. The retrieval of extensive, reliable information needs a cognitive state that is fundamentally incompatible with the psychological experience of being coerced.
- c). The accusatorial approaches substantially hamper lie detection capacities. Besides, hard interrogation techniques help to lose the most real indicators of truthfulness and deception.

2. The Empirical Superiority of Rapport-Based Approaches

a). Rapport and Relationship Building

It has been appeared as the foundational component of effective interrogation. Techniques emphasized on establishing positive interpersonal connections, showing genuine interest, and maintaining respectful communication consistently outperformed all other approaches in terms of both cooperation rates and information quality. This finding similar to broader psychological principle.

b). Presentation of Evidence

It was found as a second significant domain while employed in an information-gathering framework. Strategic disclosure of evidence, whenever launched transparently and without deception, expedites suspects to furnish more complete accounts and reduces the possibility of fake clarifications.

c). Cognitive Facilitation,

It has identified as a supplementary domain beyond the original framework, including techniques designed for optimizing the conditions for memory retrieval. These comprise providing cognitive support, permitting uninterrupted narrative accounts, employing memory mnemonics, and reducing sources of distraction or interference. This type of approaches indicate that the interrogation context should facilitate, rather than impede, the complex cognitive activities involved in accurate recall.

3. The Problem of False Confessions and Coercive Influence

A group of researchers reported that some interrogation practices make significant risks of inducing false confessions from novice and innocent. It revealed that wrongful convictions, particularly those later overturned through DNA evidence, has detected specific aspects of interrogation that enhance the probability of innocent persons incriminating themselves. The Reid Technique of interrogation, that includes nine steps designed to get psychological control and gradually elicit confessions, has been matter of particular scrutiny.

4. Memory and Information-Gathering Principles

Psychological studies on memory gives important insights for effective interrogation application. Coercive conditions during encoding, retention, or retrieval could significantly impede memory precision and completeness. Moreover, effective information-gathering interrogations admit that optimal memory recollection requires particular conditions such as reduction of stress, availability of cognitive resources, minimal distraction, and appropriate retrieval cues. Approaches that encourage free recall, avoid interrupting narrative flow, and employ cognitive interview principles offer more reliable, complete and accurate accounts than those based on direct questioning or confrontational challenges.

B). Discussion

1. Decision Making and Confession Psychology

Study exhibits those suspects do confession decisions not exactly on facts but on the basis on psychological perceptions of consequences, social influence, self-interest, and stress. These cognitive and social activities are core for understanding that the individuals give confession even when he/she is innocent (Madon et al., 2024).

2. Interrogation Models: Accusatorial vs. Information-Gathering

Psychological research is divided into two approaches:

a. Accusatorial (e.g., Reid Technique)

The Reid Technique is a widely used psychologically based accusatorial model that are noticed in North America. It presumes guilt early in the process and utilizes structured measures designed to break resistance and elicit a confession by influencing the suspect's view of outcomes.

b. Information-Gathering and Rapport-Based Approaches

The PEACE in the United Kingdom focusses on relationship, open-ended questioning, and making trust rather than confrontation. These are rooted in social psychology and communication research focusing that cooperative information-gathering enhances true confessions while reducing false ones (Vrij, A. et al., 2017).

3. Influence of Stress, Memory, and Suggestibility

It was revealed that psychology shows stress and interrogation context remarkably affect memory retrieval and suggestibility. High stress and pressure could impair accurate memory recollection and enhance confabulation especially when suspects are encouraged to make up gaps in memory under pressure. So, the interrogation strategies that reduce stress and respect cognitive phenomena improve reliability.

4. Credibility Assessment

It has been reported that psychological research emphasis on that deception is not reliably identifiable through non-verbal cues as for instance fidgeting or eye contact. In addition, interrogators must base credibility assessment on context, content, consistency as well as corroboration.

5. False Confessions and Psychological Vulnerabilities

It has been reported that psychological study demonstrates false confessions could come from the interrogation activities itself when coercive methods are applied, especially with novice and innocent individuals.

Conclusion:

The application of criminal psychology in criminal interrogation offers significant benefits but requires careful consideration of both the practical and ethical dimensions. By integrating psychological principles into the interrogation process, law enforcement could improve their understanding of a suspect's behaviour, motivations and mental state leading to more effective and reliable outcomes. However, this application must be approached with caution to avoid ethical pitfalls such as coercion, manipulation and the violation of rights.

In closing, the integration of criminal psychology into criminal interrogation could enhance the perfections of investigations provided that it is done in an ethical, logical, emotional, cognitive and responsible manner. Ultimately, the integration of criminal psychology into interrogation practices not only improves investigative outcomes but also aligns with the principles of justice and fairness. Through combining scientific understanding with ethical, logical, emotional and cognitive interrogation techniques, law enforcement could achieve more reliable results and maintain public trust in the criminal justice system. At last, it could say through balancing psychological insights with respect for human rights and legal standards, law enforcement logical, emotional, cognitive improve the quality of their interrogations and ensure justice is served. Therefore, the image of criminal justice system would be upgraded and the people would get fairness and justice.

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Modern Day Police Stations in Bangladesh: Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract

This study examines the preparedness of the Bangladesh police to establish Modern Day Police Stations, focusing on technological capabilities, operational readiness, and implementation challenges. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 50 police stations nationwide, encompassing 150 ICT-trained officers, community focus groups, and service seekers. Findings reveal that while Bangladesh has initiated digital policing measures; such as the Citizen Information Management System, Online GD, and the 999 Helpline; most stations face infrastructural gaps, outdated IT equipment, insufficient network capacity, and limited specialized training facilities. Key challenges include financial constraints, inadequate interagency coordination, cybersecurity risks, and concerns about public trust. Recommendations emphasize a phased implementation approach with targeted investments in digital infrastructure, comprehensive ICT training, robust cybersecurity measures, and increased public awareness. A structured roadmap is proposed to modernize policing through technology integration, capacity building, and community engagement, enabling a more effective, responsive, and citizen-centric law enforcement system.

Keywords: Modern Day Policing, Bangladesh Police, Digital Infrastructure, ICT Training, Crime Prevention.

1. Introduction

The police are responsible for the well-being of citizens. While technology is expected to enhance automated reasoning and security, humans remain the weakest link in modern ICT societies. As cities become more digitally dense, reliance on these systems grows significantly. The new-age police face challenges in keeping people informed, processing data from sensors/autonomous systems, and adapting to emerging opportunities to reduce incidents (Kowalski, 1993). The nature of crime is becoming increasingly complex as criminals adopt advanced technologies. Cybercrime, online fraud, and technology-enabled offenses are rising rapidly, making crime prevention and investigation more challenging. As a result, law enforcement agencies must adopt equally advanced, data-driven, and innovative strategies to ensure public safety and build sustainable as much as secure communities. This has led to the emergence of modern-day policing, which combines technology, data analytics, and predictive modeling to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of police work. It involves using real-time monitoring, crime pattern analysis, and resource optimization to address criminal activity proactively. Additionally, it promotes collaboration among law enforcement, communities, and stakeholders to develop inclusive, evidence-based crime prevention strategies (Coldren et al., 2014).

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Modern Day policing refers to police authorities applying data-driven approaches (Afzal and Panagiotopoulos, 2020). Modern policing has evolved from being primarily reactive—responding to crimes after they occur—to adopting a proactive, community-centered model that aims to prevent crime, enhance public safety, and foster trust between law enforcement and the public. This approach prioritizes partnerships with community members, utilizes data to inform strategies, and provides a deeper consideration of the social factors that influence criminal behavior (College of Policing, 2025). In *Measuring Performance in a Modern Police Organization*, Malcolm K. Sparrow argues that while foundational work on police performance measurement exists, many contemporary police organizations have yet to internalize its core insights. He advocates for broader performance frameworks that extend beyond traditional crime-reduction metrics, emphasizing risk control and harm reduction in alignment with the organization's mission. Sparrow further critiques the narrow focus of tools like CompStat, urging police executives to adopt more nuanced, multidimensional performance indicators that capture the full scope of policing work (Sparrow, 2015).

It is reported that in the context of Bangladesh, a country with limited police resources, modern policing offers a more efficient approach by supporting alternative reporting methods, such as online and phone reporting, thereby reducing pressure on patrol officers and improving response times. This model allows officers to focus on proactive policing and community engagement. However, it requires investment in training, digital infrastructure, and technical skills. Modern day police stations, equipped with updated technologies and communication systems, enhance real-time decision-making and investigative capabilities, particularly in combating digital and cybercrime. This study aims to explore the prospects and challenges of establishing such stations in Bangladesh, with the goal of promoting more effective, responsive, and community-oriented policing. The rise of cybercrime and digitally-enabled offenses demonstrates new challenges for law enforcement, as these crimes often transcend traditional jurisdictions and national borders. To address these issues, modern police stations are needed to equipped with advanced technology are essential.

It was revealed that, Modern Day Policing is situated within broader debates on police reform and institutional capacity in Global South contexts, where resource constraints, uneven infrastructure, and governance challenges shape the trajectory of reform. Rather than viewing modernization solely as technological upgrading, the study conceptualizes Modern Day Policing as an institutional transformation process that integrates digital infrastructure, human capital development, organizational adaptability, and citizen-oriented governance. The findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of modern policing initiatives in Bangladesh is contingent not only on the availability of technology but also on institutional readiness, interagency coordination, accountability mechanisms, and public trust. This aligns with contemporary policing reform literature that emphasizes capacity-building, service legitimacy, and governance quality over technology-driven determinism. By empirically examining station-level realities, training gaps, and service delivery outcomes, the study contributes to Global South policing debates by highlighting how modernization efforts must be context-sensitive, incremental, and embedded within existing institutional frameworks to be sustainable and effective.

In Bangladesh, there is currently no comprehensive analysis of the readiness and challenges associated with establishing modern day police stations. This study aims to evaluate the police force's current capabilities, identify best practices, and explore obstacles like financial and infrastructural constraints. The findings aim to inform the development of policy and pilot initiatives, enabling the Bangladesh Police to effectively leverage technology for crime prevention and investigation in the digital era.

2. Literature Review

Modern day policing has emerged as a transformative approach in law enforcement, combining technology, data analytics, and predictive modeling to enhance operational efficiency, crime prevention, and public trust (Afzal and Panagiotopoulos, 2020; Ferguson, 2017). Since 1970s, police forces have taken statistical techniques and computer databases to inform strategic decision-making. The introduction of CompStat in the 1990s marked a significant shift towards accountability-driven, data-informed policing (Northrop et al., 1995; Weisburd et al., 2003; Manning, 2008). Contemporary frameworks emphasize three key data streams; directed data (e.g., FIRs, demographics), automated data (e.g., CCTVs, ANPR systems, body-worn cameras), and crowdsourced data (e.g., social media, mobile apps); to enhance situational awareness, resource allocation, and crime prevention (Williams et al., 2013; Levine et al., 2017). Successful applications include AI-powered CCTV, that improves traffic law compliance in Shanghai (Li et al., 2018); sensor analytics in Camden, USA, reducing crime by 40% (Wiig, 2018); and fully automated Smart Police Stations in Dubai, offering 24/7 multilingual services (Institute of ICT Professionals, Ghana, 2019).

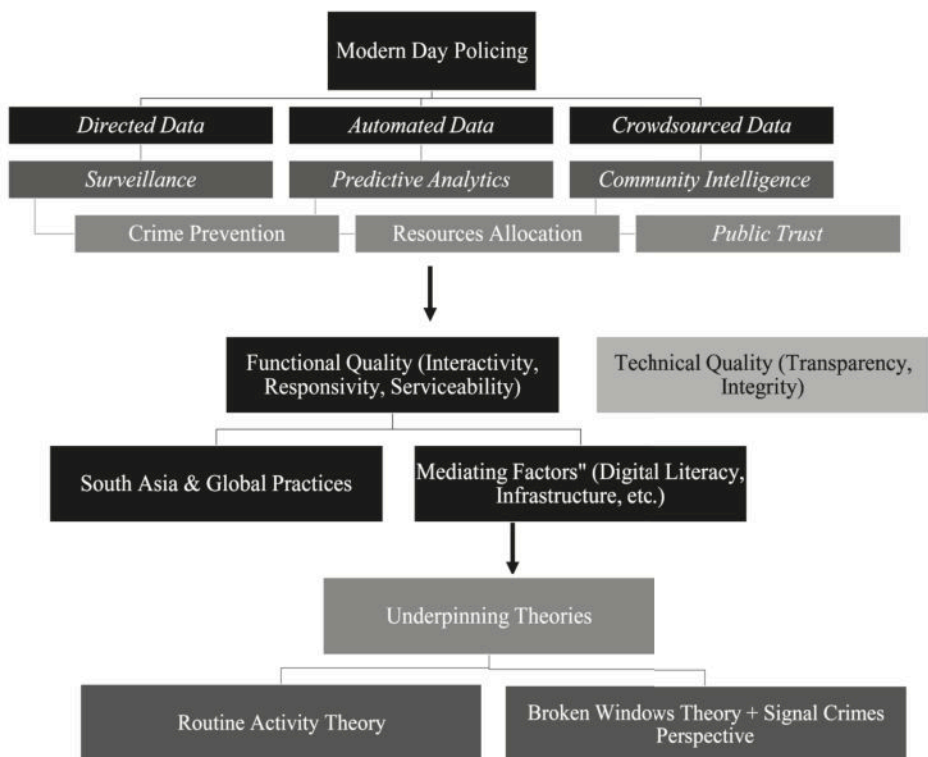


Fig - 1: Theoretical framework of modern day policing

Routine Activity Theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979), focused on crime opportunity structures; Broken Windows Theory (Wilson and Kelling, 1982), emphasized early intervention in disorder; and the Signal Crimes Perspective (Innes et al., 2009; Lowe and Innes, 2012), which links community perceptions to policing priorities. Technological dimensions include surveillance tools, data analytics platforms, interactive e-policing systems, and cyber-forensic capabilities, while service quality in digital policing was measured through interactivity, responsiveness, serviceability (Ahmad and Khalid, 2017; Parasuraman et al., 2005), and transparency, integrity (Van Ryzin, 2011; Huberts, 2018).

Regional experiences in South Asia illustrate both opportunities and constraints. India's Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) improved data sharing but faced rural connectivity gaps (Kumar and Singh, 2017), Sri Lanka's e-police system enhanced First Information Report (FIR) processing despite infrastructural limits (Perera, 2020), and Nepal's digital policing increased reporting but highlighted unequal technology access (Shrestha and Adhikari, 2018). Pakistan's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) integration has streamlined case management in urban areas, yet it remains inconsistent nationally (Shah and Ahmed, 2019). For Bangladesh, initiatives such as the Citizen Information Management System (CIMS), the 999 Helpline, and online GDs have expanded service reach (Daily Sun, 2018; Hossain, 2021), but challenges persist around outdated equipment, poor rural internet coverage, and insufficient ICT training for officers. The research gap is characterized by the absence of a standardized, context-specific definition of Modern Day policing in Bangladesh, the fragmented adoption of digital tools, and a lack of empirical evaluations on their effectiveness in reducing crime and building trust. Critical themes, such as privacy protection, the ethical use of surveillance, crowdsourced data verification, interagency coordination, and citizen-centered service quality, remain underexplored (Patel, 2021; de Graaf and Meijer, 2019). It revealed that Bridging these gaps will require localized frameworks informed by Bangladesh's socio-political realities, infrastructure readiness, and public expectations.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to ensure methodological rigor and contextual depth. A stratified sampling strategy was applied, whereby police stations were first categorized into metropolitan and range (non-metropolitan) strata to capture variations in operational context, infrastructure, and service delivery. Within these strata, 50 police stations were selected using purposive criteria based on geographic coverage, workload, and functional relevance.

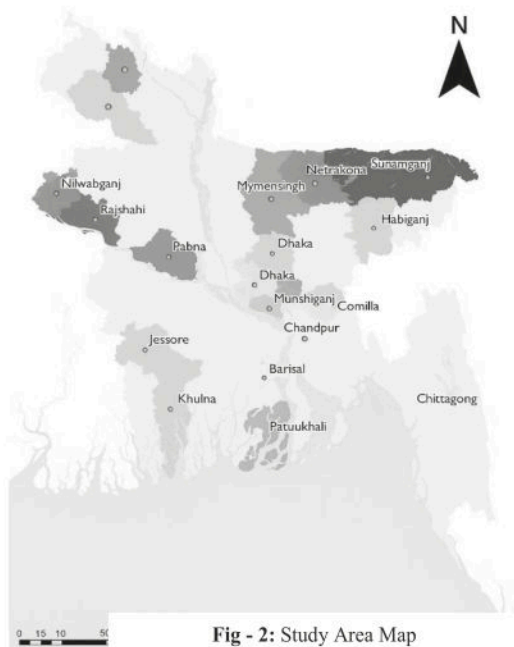


Fig - 2: Study Area Map

Quantitative data were collected through structured interviews with ICT-trained police officers and service seekers, and were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency distributions, percentages, and cross-tabulations to identify patterns and disparities. Qualitative data were generated through key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with police officials, ICT experts, and community members, and were analyzed thematically through manual coding to identify recurring themes, institutional challenges, and contextual explanations. Ethical considerations were duly observed throughout the research process; informed consent was obtained from all participants, anonymity and confidentiality were ensured, and participation was entirely voluntary. The combination of methods and data sources enabled triangulation, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

4. Analysis and Findings:

4.1 Service Provider's Background

Table -1 exhibits the percentage distribution of the service providers' information for metropolitan and range areas. For this research data were collected from both service providers Bangladesh police officers trained in ICT and service seekers from 50 strategically selected police stations covering rural and urban areas. A total of 150 officers (three per station) were interviewed, representing various ranks, service lengths, and educational backgrounds. The surveyed IT police officers reflected a diverse profile in terms of gender, age, education, service length, rank, and tenure. Female representation was relatively low at 5.9%, which is below the national average of 8.69%. Representation was higher in metropolitan areas (11.1%) compared to range areas (3.7%). The majority of officers (51.6%) were aged between 31 and 40 years, with younger officers (18–30 years) being more common in rural areas (30.6%) than in metropolitan areas (22.2%). The mean age was slightly higher in rural areas (35.6 years) than metropolitan areas (34.0 years).

In terms of education, almost three-fifths of officers had attained or were enrolled in bachelor's or master's degrees, with higher educational attainment in metropolitan areas (73.3%) compared to range areas (53.7%). Regarding years of service, the largest share (36.6%) had 10–20 years of experience, followed by 5–10 years (25.5%) and 1–5 years (20.3%). Sub-Inspectors constituted the largest rank group (48.4%), followed by Constables (34.6%) and Assistant Sub-Inspectors (13.1%). Work tenure at the current station showed that over half of the officers (51.0%) had been stationed for less than six months, 12.4% for six months to one year, 11.8% for one to two years, and 24.8% for more than two years. Metropolitan officers tended to have longer postings, while range area officers had comparatively short tenures.

Table - 1: Percentage distribution of the service providers' information

Category	Sub-category	Metropolitan	Range	Overall	N (Total)
Sex Distribution (%)	Female	11.1	3.7	5.9	153
	Male	88.9	96.3	94.1	
Age Status (%)	18–30	22.2	30.6	28.1	153
	31–40	66.7	45.4	51.6	
	41–50	8.9	19.4	16.3	
	51–60	2.2	4.6	3.9	
	Mean Age (Years)	34.0	35.6	35.1	
Educational Status (%)	Secondary Complete	4.4	6.5	5.9	153
	Higher Secondary Incomplete	4.4	3.7	3.9	
	Higher Secondary Complete	17.8	36.1	30.7	
	Bachelor Incomplete	6.7	1.9	3.3	
	Bachelor Complete	20.0	22.2	21.6	
	Master Incomplete	2.2	4.6	3.9	
	Master Complete	44.4	25.0	30.7	
Years of Service (%)	1–5 Years	22.2	19.4	20.3	153
	5–10 Years	26.7	25.0	25.5	
	10–20 Years	44.4	33.3	36.6	
	20–30 Years	4.4	16.7	13.1	
	30+ Years	2.2	5.6	4.6	
Designation/ Rank (%)	Constable	37.8	33.3	34.6	153
	Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI)	15.6	12.0	13.1	
	Sub-Inspector (SI)	42.2	50.9	48.4	
	Inspector (Operation)	2.2	1.9	2.0	
	Inspector (Investigation)	2.2	1.9	2.0	
Work Duration at Present Station (%)	<6 Months	48.9	51.9	51.0	153
	6 Months – 1 Year	4.4	15.7	12.4	
	1–2 Years	11.1	12.0	11.8	
	>2 Years	35.6	20.4	24.8	

4.2 Service Seeker's Background

Table-2 shows the percentage distribution of the service seeker's information for metropolitan and range. The age distribution of service seekers reveals that the 31-40 years age group constitutes the largest percentage, with 37.8% in metropolitan areas and 27.8% in range areas, resulting in an overall proportion of 30.7%. The younger group, aged 18-30 years, consistently makes up about 24% of service seekers in both metropolitan (24.4%) and range areas (24.1%), totaling 24.2% overall.

The 41-50 years group is also significant, comprising 24.4% in metropolitan areas and a slightly higher 29.6% in range areas, with an overall share of 28.1%. Older age groups, particularly those between 51-60 years, are more common in range areas (16.7%) compared to metropolitan areas (11.1%), while those aged 60 and above are a small minority in both regions. The mean age of service seekers is 38.8 years in metropolitan areas and slightly higher at 40.2 years in range areas, with an overall average of 39.8 years. These findings suggest that while most service seekers are young to middle-aged adults, those in range areas tend to be somewhat older on average, possibly reflecting demographic or socio-economic differences between the two locations.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of the service seeker's information

Category	Sub-category	Metropolitan	Range	Overall	N (Total)
Age (%)	18-30	24.4	24.1	24.2	153
	31-40	37.8	27.8	30.7	
	41-50	24.4	29.6	28.1	
	51-60	11.1	16.7	15	
	60+	2.2	1.9	2	
Age (Mean)	Years	38.8	40.2	39.8	
Sex (%)	Male	75.6	76.9	76.5	153
	Female	24.4	23.1	23.5	
Occupation (%)	Agriculture/Farmer	8.9	23.1	19	153
	Auto driver	0	4.6	3.3	
	Business	42.2	23.1	28.8	
	Service	8.9	6.5	7.2	
	CNG driver	0	8.3	5.9	
	Contractor	0	0.9	0.7	
	Day labourer	2.2	0	0.7	
	Garments worker	0	0.9	0.7	
	Housewife	22.2	22.2	22.2	
	Islamic Discussant	0	0.9	0.7	
	Politician	0	0.9	0.7	
	Immigrant	2.2	2.8	2.6	
	Teacher	0	0.9	0.7	
	Student	11.1	3.7	5.9	
	Reporter	0	0.9	0.7	
	Army personnel	2.2	0	0.7	
Education (%)	Primary	15.6	34.3	28.8	153
	Secondary	31.1	42.6	39.2	
	Higher Secondary	35.6	13	19.6	
	More than higher secondary	17.8	10.2	12.4	

4.3 Existing Equipment, Logistics, and Applications/Software of Police Stations

Table - 3 illustrates laptop/computer, UPS, printer, Color printer, scanner, fingerprint scanner for both a metropolitan and range areas. The Survey highlights noteworthy gaps in non-functional IT logistics across police stations, with CCTVs showing the highest non-functionality rate (3.6 on average). Printers, UPS units, and laptops/computers also exhibit non-functionality, with an average of 1.8, 1.3, and 1.2 units, respectively. Range stations generally experience more non-functional IT logistics than metropolitan units, particularly CCTV, UPS, and laptops.

Table 3: Average non-functional unit distribution of IT Logistics

Non-Functional IT Logistics (Average)	Metropolitan	Range	Overall
Laptop/ Computer	1	1.2	1.2
UPS	1	1.5	1.3
Printer	2	1.6	1.8
Color printer	1	-	1
Scanner	1	1.1	1.1
Fingerprint Scanner	-	1	1

Table-4 demonstrates computer specifications like processor, storage system and hard drive. The study on modern day police stations in Bangladesh provides critical insights into the current state of preparedness, existing capabilities, and challenges faced by the Bangladesh Police in implementing this transformation. The findings indicate that while Bangladesh has made noteworthy strides in adopting digital policing initiatives, such as the Citizen Information Management System, Online Police Clearance, and the 999 emergency hotline, several structural and operational gaps persist that must be addressed for the effective deployment of Modern Day Police Stations (Mawby and Yarwood, 2011; Ratcliffe, 2016). Regarding computers, 48.7% of police stations still use outdated processors, such as Pentium and Core i3, with metropolitan areas having a higher proportion (51.8%) compared to range areas (46.8%).

Table - 4: Existing computer specifications for metropolitan and range

Specification for Computer	Metropolitan (%)	Range (%)	Overall (%)
Processor			
Pentium	35.7	13.8	22.0
Pentium dual-core	1.8	5.3	4.0
Pentium-D	5.4	-	2.0
Core i3	8.9	27.7	20.7
Core i5	44.6	47.9	46.7
Core i7	3.6	5.3	4.7
Storage system			
RAM			
2 GB	-	2.1	1.3
4 GB	69.6	54.3	60.0
6 GB	-	1.1	0.7
8 GB	30.4	41.5	37.3
16 GB	-	1.1	0.7
Hard drive			
128 GB	-	7.4	4.7
250 GB	-	8.5	5.3
500 GB	51.8	55.3	54.0
1000 GB	48.2	24.5	33.3
2000 GB	-	3.2	2.0
4000 GB	-	1.1	0.7

Moreover, 61.3% of stations have 4 GB or less RAM, creating a barrier to modern policing technologies. For fingerprint scanners, 84.3% of stations lack them, with usage remaining low in both metropolitan (46.2%) and range areas (63.6%). Qualitative findings from key informant interviews and focus group discussions reinforce these observations. Many police officers expressed concerns over the limited integration of digital tools with existing law enforcement databases. Additionally, while officers receive basic ICT training upon entry into service, the training content and duration are often inadequate to effectively utilize advanced technologies such as AI-based surveillance systems, digital forensic tools, and real-time crime mapping software (Cordner, 2014; Meijer and Wessels, 2019).

Officers require hands-on training in cybercrime prevention, data analytics, and the handling of digital evidence. The survey data on software/application training reveals noteworthy gaps. While the Crime Data Management System (CDMS) is the most common training (74.7%), other systems like the Crime Information Management System (CIMS) (18%), Call Detail Record (CDR) software (28.7%), and Online Police Helpline app (9.3%) show lower training rates. Besides, there is a notable disparity between the high usage of digital services and the proportion of officers receiving training. For example, while 98.6% of officers use the CDMS, only 74.7% have been trained, and only 18% are trained in the Crime Information Management System (CIMS).

Table -5: Percentage distribution of the IT police officers by the type of received training on software/Application (Multiple Response)

Training	Metropolitan (%)	Range (%)	Overall (%)
CDMS	66.7	78.1	74.7
CIMS	17.8	18.1	18.0
SIVS	8.9	3.8	5.3
CDR	31.1	27.6	28.7
Online police clearance	15.6	21.0	19.3
Online police helpline	6.7	10.5	9.3
Online GD system	35.6	48.6	44.7
PIMS	-	2.0	1.4
N	45	105	150

Table -5 exhibits that a good some of officers have been seen taken training about CDMS, CIMS, SIVS, CDR, Online police clearance, Online police helpline, Online GD system, PIMS. The IDI findings reveal that while all police officers receive basic IT training, many fail to recall their skills due to a lack of refresher courses, leading them to seek additional training elsewhere. Short training durations for systems like CDMS, CIMS, and the Online GD system hinder complete understanding, emphasizing the need for regular, detailed refresher training to keep officers up to date.

4.4 Need assessment of the Equipment, Logistics, and Applications/Software of Police Stations:

Table-6 shows that a noteworthy 73.9% of officers believe that the existing IT infrastructure in police stations is inadequate for efficient crime prevention and law enforcement activities. Basic IT (85.3%) and Crime Data Management System (CDMS) training (74.7%) are widely provided, and more in-depth and refresher courses are needed to ensure ongoing proficiency. Training on systems such as the Online GD system (44.7%) and the Call Data Record (CDR) system (28.7%) requires increased focus, as these are vital for digital crime reporting and call data analysis (Manning, 2010).

Table -6: Percentage distribution of the IT police officers by the typology of received training

The existing IT infrastructure in police stations is inadequate (%)	Metropolitan	Range	Overall
Yes	71.5	75	73.9
Type of received training (%)	Metropolitan	Range	Overall
Basic IT training	73.3	90.5	85.3
IT support training (e.g., Comp TIA)	11.1	4.8	6.7
Training on PC/ Server support	6.7	1.9	3.3
Training on LAN/network support	2.2	3.8	3.3
Hardware	100.0	98.1	98.7
CDMS	66.7	78.1	74.7
CIMS	17.8	18.1	18.0
SIVS	8.9	3.8	5.3
CDR	31.1	27.6	28.7
Fingerprint scanning	11.1	6.7	8.0
Online police clearance	15.6	21.0	19.3
Online police helpline apps	6.7	10.5	9.3
Online GD system	35.6	48.6	44.7
PIMS	-	2.0	1.4
Other	2.2	3.0	2.7
N	45	105	150

A major concern echoed across nearly all KIIs was the outdated and insufficient ICT infrastructure in most police stations. Despite ongoing digitization efforts, the actual condition of hardware and software remains rudimentary. Many stations still rely on outdated computers, often equipped with obsolete processors and limited RAM, which hinders their ability to run modern applications smoothly. IT officers and PSC experts noted that basic tools, such as fingerprint scanners, laptops, and reliable backup power systems, were either unavailable or dysfunctional, particularly in remote (rural) stations. One IT officer expressed frustration:

"We still use outdated Pentium processors. It's like running a race in broken shoes. Even if we have software, the machine won't support it."

Based on the analysis, a structured roadmap for setting up Modern Day Police Stations should focus on two key areas: technological infrastructure and capacity development. Firstly, Modern Day Police Stations must be equipped with AI-based facial recognition CCTV systems, centralized crime databases, digital entry record books, and integrated location tracking systems, among other enhancements, to improve operational efficiency. The survey data indicate a strong need for additional technologies to enhance police station efficiency, with 88.9% of officers acknowledging this requirement.

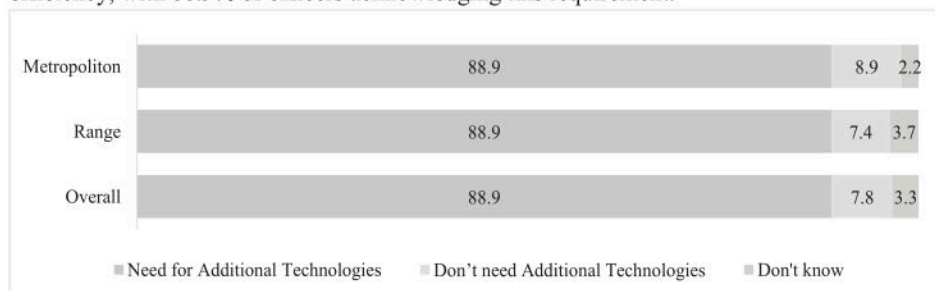


Fig - 3: Percentage distribution of police officers' perceptions of the need for additional technologies

Table -7 illustrates logistics and systems for both metropolitan and range police station upgradation. Moreover, the priority ranking for police station upgradation highlights the Location Tracking System as the top priority (88.2%), followed by Computers (74.5%), Fingerprint Scanners (71.2%), and Laptops (69.9%). Advanced Telecommunications (52.3%) and Centralized Database Access (49.7%) are also high priorities. Never the less, items such as Modern Dayphones (28.1%) and Digital Display Boards (17.0%) rank lower, highlighting that operational needs often take precedence over visitor convenience (Weisburd and Neyroud, 2011; Koper et al., 2015). The implementation of Modern-Day police stations in Bangladesh may face several noteworthy obstacles. For example, establishing a Modern-Day Police station faces several major challenges, including financial constraints that limit the ability to invest in advanced technologies and infrastructure limitations that hinder the effective deployment of ICT systems (Goldsmith, 2015). The inadequate supply of ICT devices and outdated technology further complicate the situation, while cybersecurity risks and data privacy issues pose significant threats to the protection of sensitive information (Cheng and Katz, 2020).

Table - 7: Priority ranking of logistics and systems for police station upgradation

Logistics and Systems	Metropolitan (%)	Range (%)	Overall (%)	Rank
Location tracking system	95.6	85.2	88.2	1 st
Computer (PC)	71.1	75.9	74.5	2 nd
Fingerprint scanner	84.4	65.7	71.2	3 rd
Laptop	73.3	68.5	69.9	4 th
Printer	53.3	56.5	55.6	5 th
Advanced telecommunications (phone, intercom system)	51.1	52.8	52.3	6 th
Centralized database access for citizen and criminal records	40.0	53.7	49.7	7 th
Scanner	37.8	51.9	47.7	8 th
UPS	35.6	51.9	47.1	9 th
AI-based facial recognition CCTV camera	37.8	46.3	43.8	10 th
Modern reception and waiting area	51.1	31.5	37.3	11 th
Digital entry record book for service seekers	24.4	39.8	35.3	12 th
Management System (QMS)/Token dispenser machine	33.3	29.6	30.7	13 th
Modern Dayphone	24.4	29.6	28.1	14 th
Digital access control (key card or biometric entry)	20.0	19.4	19.6	15 th
Digital display board for order and counter information	17.8	16.7	17.0	16 th
N	45	108	153	

However, despite the high usage of these systems (e.g., 98.6% for CDMS and 98.6% for the Online GD system), many officers lack proper refresher training, indicating a critical need for more comprehensive and frequent training to enhance efficiency and usage. Out of 153 surveyed officers, 86.7% of Metropolitan officers and 76.9% of Range officers reported not having refresher courses, resulting in a rate of 79.7% (Table-8). The findings highlight noteworthy gaps in police-specific IT training, particularly in specialized applications (Manning, 2007; Bullock et al., 2010). Furthermore, a training and skill gap exists among personnel, which limits the effective use of modern technologies. Poor maintenance of ICT equipment exacerbates these problems. Poor internet speed and a lack of constant electricity supply also impede the operation of these systems. Finally, resistance to change within the community can slow down the adoption and integration of Modern-Day technologies into daily policing operations (Constabulary, 2019).

The interviews revealed that the lack of specialised training and skilled ICT personnel is one of the most significant barriers to realising the vision of Modern-Day Policing. Officers frequently reported having to operate advanced systems, such as Crime Information Management Systems (CIMS) and Call Detail Record (CDR) tools, without any formal instruction. As one central-level officer noted:

"I had to learn most of the software from colleagues. The training modules are outdated and don't match what we need in the field."

Beyond hardware and training, KIIs uncovered several deep-rooted institutional and operational issues that hamper the successful integration of technology in policing. One recurring issue was the lack of dedicated time and structural support for IT-related activities. Officers are typically overburdened with routine duties such as patrols, arrests, and paperwork, leaving little time for digital case management or software updates. An officer shared:

"There's no dedicated ICT team here. I handle both cybercrime and field duty. It's overwhelming and sometimes even dangerous because I can't focus on either properly."

Table -8: Percentage distribution of the police officers by types of software used (Multiple Responses)

Name of software/Application	Metropolitan	Range	Overall
CDMS	100.0	98.1	98.6
CIMS	41.9	47.6	45.9
CIVS	18.6	16.2	16.9
CDR	46.5	46.7	46.6
Online Police Clearance/Certificate	76.7	66.7	69.6
Online GD	100.0	98.1	98.6
BD Police Helpline	48.8	44.8	45.9
NID/Birth Certificate Identification and Investigation	27.9	36.2	33.8
Passport Verification and Online Immigration	18.6	17.1	17.6
Facebook Page	55.8	67.6	64.2
Others	14.0	21.0	18.9
N	45	108	153

Financial constraints pose a big challenge, as establishing and maintaining these technologically advanced stations require substantial investments in digital infrastructure, surveillance equipment, and data management systems. Infrastructural limitations further complicate the process, with many police stations lacking reliable high-speed internet, modern computing resources, and integrated databases necessary for efficient data-driven policing (Weisburd, 2018).

Secondly, a shortage of trained personnel skilled in using advanced ICT tools hinders effective implementation. Focus group discussions revealed mixed perceptions regarding digital surveillance tools. While community members acknowledged the potential benefits of Modern Day policing in crime prevention, concerns over privacy violations, the possible misuse of surveillance data, and transparency in law enforcement practices were widely expressed (Mann and Ferenbok, 2013; Taylor, 2014).

Thirdly, Interagency Coordination and Policy Implementation: Successful Modern Day policing requires collaboration between the Bangladesh Police, ICT ministries, and private-sector technology providers. However, bureaucratic delays and siloed implementation approaches have slowed progress. A key challenge in implementing Modern Day policing in Bangladesh may be the lack of effective interagency coordination among the Bangladesh Police, ICT ministries, and private-sector technology providers (Goldsmith, 2015; Kjaergaard and Christiansen, 2020).

4.5 Existing Police service conditions based on the service seeker's perception

Table -9 demonstrates existing police service conditions both from metropolitan and range on the basis of service seekers perception. On average, service seekers visited police stations 2.6 times to receive a service, with an average waiting time of 139 minutes. Delays were most often due to service providers being busy with other tasks (58.1%), server issues (53.5%), and insufficient staff (27.9%). Missing documentation (27.9%) and the duty officer's absence (30.2%) were also notable causes. Around 28% of respondents considered the number of service providers inadequate. Most service seekers received their desired service or information from Sub-Inspectors (69.3%), followed by Constables (14.4%) and ASIs (7.8%). Awareness of online or app-based services was high—particularly the 999 Helpline (90.8%), Online GD (87.6%), and Police Clearance (65.4%)—but the proportion who benefited from these services was lower: 40.3% for Online GD, 14.3% for the Hello SB App, and just 7.2% for the 999 Helpline.

Table -9: Existing police service conditions based on the service seeker's perception

Indicator	Metropolitan (%)	Range (%)	Overall (%)
Avg. visits (times)	2.1	2.8	2.6
Avg. wait (min)	123	146	139
Main reasons for waiting			
Duty officer absent	–	43.3	30.2
Long queue	–	10.0	7.0
Insufficient staff	23.1	30.0	27.9
Staff busy	53.8	60.0	58.1
Missing forms/docs	23.1	30.0	27.9
Server issue	38.5	60.0	53.5
Service provider adequacy – Not adequate (%)	23.1	30.0	27.9
Source of service/info			
Constable	15.6	13.9	14.4
ASI	6.7	8.3	7.8
SI	71.1	68.5	69.3
Awareness of online/app services			
999 Helpline	100.0	87.0	90.8
Online GD	95.6	84.3	87.6
Police Clearance	75.6	61.1	65.4
Passport/Immigration (Hello SB)	53.3	42.6	45.8
Benefited from online/app services			
999 Helpline	11.1	5.3	7.2
Online GD	37.2	41.8	40.3
Hello SB App	16.7	13.0	14.3

Participants in all FGDs shared mixed experiences regarding service delivery at police stations. While some individuals appreciated that certain services, such as filing General Diaries (GDs) or seeking basic information, were received without major issues, many reported facing considerable delays. A common experience highlighted was the need to visit the police station multiple times to resolve even minor issues. For example, a participant from Purba Dala, Netrokona, described:

"I had to visit the police station repeatedly to register my complaint. They said the server was down or the system wasn't working. I felt helpless because officers could not do anything without the system, and they also didn't know alternative ways to help us."

4.6 Level of Satisfaction with Existing Police Infrastructure and Service Conditions

Table-10 shows that existing police service conditions for metropolitan and range areas based on the service seekers perception. Survey findings indicate that 47.7% of respondents rated the behavior of duty officers as good, with slightly higher satisfaction in rural areas (49.1%) compared to metropolitan areas (44.4%). Only 16.3% were completely satisfied with their latest service, though 79.7% were fairly satisfied. Around three-fourths (75.2%) viewed police station infrastructure as fair, while 64.7% rated officers' service-providing ability similarly. In terms of online and app-based services, satisfaction varied, with the highest levels for IGP/999 (70%) and the Police Facebook page (61.5%), moderate levels for Online GD (46.3%), and the lowest levels for the Hello SB App (30%). These results indicate generally moderate satisfaction, with notable gaps in service excellence and technology-based service delivery.

Table - 10: Existing police service conditions based on the service seeker's perception

Indicator	Metro (%)	Range (%)	Overall (%)
Duty Officer's behavior – Good	44.4	49.1	47.7
Latest service – Completely satisfied	13.3	17.9	16.3
Latest service – Fairly satisfied	86.7	76.9	79.7
Infrastructure – Fair	75.6	75.2	75.2
Service ability – Fair	57.8	67.6	64.7
Online/App services – Good			
<i>Online/App services types</i>			
IGP/999	40.0	100.0	70.0
Online GD	43.8	47.4	46.3
Police FB Page	50.0	63.6	61.5
Hello SB App	25.0	33.3	30.0

A prominent finding from the FGDs was the low level of awareness among community members about online and app-based police services. Many participants, particularly in rural areas, were unaware of digital services such as the Citizen Information Management System (CIMS), online General Diary (GD) filing, police clearance applications, or emergency helplines like 999. Even those who had heard of these services were unsure how to access them or lacked confidence in their effectiveness. One participant from Mymensingh remarked:

"I heard about filing GD online, but I don't know how to do it. No one ever explained to us. We still have to go to the station and wait for hours."

Participants strongly recommended that the police and relevant authorities undertake public awareness campaigns to inform community members about the availability and use of these services, which would help reduce congestion at police stations for minor issues and improve access to police support.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the Survey findings, the research team has proposed a definition of Modern-Day Policing: "Modern Day policing is a technology-driven, citizen-centric approach that enhances law enforcement, investigative efficiency, and crime control through modern equipment, training, digital services, and proactive community engagement. It emphasizes IT-based service delivery, improved mobility, and faster response times to ensure effective policing". This study on Modern Day Police Stations in Bangladesh highlights significant opportunities to transform law enforcement through digital technology, data analytics, and automated service delivery. However, it also uncovers critical challenges that must be addressed for successful modernization. Key gaps include outdated IT infrastructure, limited network capacity, and inadequate surveillance tools such as biometric systems and AI-driven analytics. While some police stations have basic IT equipment, most lack the capacity for advanced functions, such as predictive policing and comprehensive digital case management.

Furthermore, digital literacy among officers remains insufficient, with many relying on external training, emphasizing the need for structured, ongoing capacity-building within the police force. Cybersecurity emerges as a major concern, as expanding digital systems increase vulnerability to cyberattacks. Strengthening cybersecurity protocols, encryption, and establishing dedicated cybercrime units are vital for safeguarding sensitive data. Public awareness and trust in digital policing services remain low due to limited knowledge and privacy concerns, which could undermine service adoption. Financial and policy constraints further hinder modernization, with significant investments needed to upgrade infrastructure, train personnel, and develop comprehensive policies for coordinated law enforcement efforts.

To overcome these challenges, Bangladesh should prioritize strategic investments in IT infrastructure, develop structured training programs, implement robust cybersecurity measures, and launch public awareness campaigns. A phased rollout of Modern-Day Police Stations starting with pilot locations in metropolitan and rural areas will allow refinement of strategies before wider implementation. Collaboration with international law enforcement bodies can provide valuable insights and best practices. With long-term commitment to innovation, coordination, and capacity building, the Bangladesh Police can establish a more effective, data-driven, and community-oriented policing system capable of meeting modern crime and security challenges. The study proposes a structured approach through short-term, mid-term, and long-term strategies. In the short term (immediate to one year), urgent upgrades are needed in IT logistics and equipment, including modern computer's location tracking systems, fingerprint scanners, printers, and reliable internet connectivity.

Outsourcing specialized IT support and upgrading the central CDMS server are also critical to resolving data entry backlogs. Training programs must be regular and comprehensive, focusing on key systems such as CDMS, CIMS, and CDR, with an emphasis on cybercrime prevention and data analytics. A centralized database to track officer training histories will ensure continuity, even with frequent transfers. Public awareness should be enhanced through multi-platform campaigns that clarify police roles, and emergency call management should be improved by implementing a call-filtering system to optimize police resource allocation. Establishing regular maintenance schedules and dedicated IT support teams is crucial for maintaining equipment functionality. The recruitment and ongoing training of skilled ICT personnel, particularly in the field of cybercrime, must be prioritized to close existing expertise gaps.

Long-term strategies (3 to 5+ years) focus on implementing advanced facility upgrades such as modern reception areas, digital entry record books, QMS/token dispensers, modern telephony systems, digital access control, and display boards to enhance overall station functionality and user experience. Improving interagency coordination by fostering knowledge sharing with international law enforcement, securing sustained government funding, and establishing a collaborative task force involving the Bangladesh Police, ICT ministries, and private-sector partners will streamline modernization efforts. This comprehensive approach aims to modernize policing in Bangladesh by improving infrastructure, enhancing skills, fostering coordination, and building public trust ultimately creating a responsive, data-driven, and technologically empowered police force fit for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

5.1 Study Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study offers comprehensive insights into the readiness of police stations for Modern Day Policing in Bangladesh, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The sample, though nationally representative, may not fully capture variations in highly remote or specialized policing contexts. The analysis relies primarily on descriptive statistics and self-reported perceptions, which may be subject to response bias. Moreover, the cross-sectional design limits assessment of longitudinal change and causal relationships. Future research should adopt longitudinal and comparative approaches to evaluate the sustained impact of modern policing initiatives on crime control, service delivery, and public trust. Further studies should also examine governance dimensions such as accountability, data protection, data simulation, data wining, ethical oversight, and organizational culture to better understand the institutional conditions necessary for effective and sustainable.

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Governing Security without Law: Plural Policing and the Limits of Democratic Accountability in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Over the past three decades, Bangladesh has experienced the rapid expansion of plural policing, involving state agencies, private security providers, community forums, informal justice actors, and hybrid arrangements. Despite its growing role in everyday governance, this landscape remains largely unregulated. Using a qualitative socio-legal and theoretically informed approach, this article analyses the structural dynamics, authority relations, and constitutional implications of plural policing. Drawing on networked policing, assemblage theory, democratic policing, institutionalization theory, and postcolonial criminology, the study reveals a fragmented security ecology marked by informality, blurred public-private boundaries, and socio-economic inequalities. It highlights how private and informal actors perform quasi-policing roles with limited accountability, often diverging from constitutional safeguards. Situating these findings within Bangladesh's colonial legacy and contemporary governance challenges, the article argues for comprehensive legal reform, institutional recognition of non-state actors, and regulatory frameworks to ensure accountability, fairness, and human rights.

Key words: Policing, Security, Governance, democratic policing; hybrid policing, Informal justice.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Rise of Plural Policing: A Global Phenomenon

Over the past four decades, the concept of policing has shifted fundamentally from the idea of a centralised, state-controlled institution to a diffuse governance network incorporating multiple actors. Whereas historically policing was primarily the responsibility of the state, contemporary security provision increasingly involves a mixture of public, private, and civic actors, whose roles intersect and occasionally overlap (Loader, 2000; Jones and Newburn, 2006; Wood and Dupont, 2006). This transformation reflects broader socio-political trends, including the rise of neoliberal governance, the globalisation of capital and risk, the increasing complexity of urbanisation, and the widespread adoption of technological surveillance tools (Shearing and Wood, 2003; Johnston and Shearing, 2003; Baker, 2010). Scholars have highlighted that policing is no longer a singular institutional activity but is instead dispersed across networks and assemblages, encompassing actors ranging from private security firms to community-based organisations, informal justice providers, and hybrid governance structures (Crawford, 2006; O'Neill and Fyfe, 2017; Rogers, 2016).

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In the Global North, plural policing has been formalised through legal recognition, regulatory frameworks, accreditation systems, and structured partnerships. Private security companies are licensed, trained, and subject to oversight, while local authority wardens, transport enforcement bodies, and neighbourhood watch groups operate within clearly defined legal and operational boundaries (Loader and Walker, 2007; Goldsmith, 2005; Dupont, 2004). In these contexts, plural policing reflects deliberate state strategies to enhance capacity, efficiency, and public accountability, underpinned by normative expectations of legality and procedural fairness (Tyler, 2006).

In contrast, in the Global South, plural policing frequently emerges from structural necessity rather than deliberate design. Limited state capacity, rapid urbanisation, underfunded policing institutions, informal economic practices, and socio-political instability compel communities to rely on multiple security providers operating in legal grey zones (Berg and Shearing, 2018; Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011; Baker and Scheye, 2007). These “plural security ecologies” are fluid and contextually adaptive, responding to local gaps in law enforcement presence and shifting socio-political dynamics (Jones, 2014). Such ecologies complicate conventional notions of authority, legitimacy, and accountability, requiring an analytical lens that incorporates network theory, assemblage thinking, and postcolonial critique (O’Neill and Yfe, 2017; Rogers, 2016; Agozino, 2003).

Bangladesh exemplifies the challenges of unregulated plural policing. Rapid industrialisation, urban expansion, and entrenched socio-economic inequalities interact with historically centralised policing structures to produce a security landscape in which non-state actors play a crucial role. Unlike the Global North, where plural policing is formally recognised and regulated, Bangladesh’s legal framework predates its independence and fails to acknowledge or regulate contemporary non-state security actors (Hossain, 2018; Haque, 2012). As such, the country presents a critical case for examining the intersection of historical legal continuity, socio-economic pressures, and governance deficits in shaping plural policing practices.

1.2 The Persistence of Colonial Policing Structures

Bangladesh’s policing system is anchored in two primary colonial-era instruments: the Police Act 1861 and The Police Regulations, Bengal, 1943. Both were designed to enforce colonial control and hierarchical authority, rather than to serve democratic policing principles (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006; Agozino, 2003). The Police Act 1861 was enacted following the Indian Uprising of 1857 to centralise policing under executive authority, institutionalising a paramilitary model emphasising discipline, obedience, and top-down command (Haque, 2012). The PRB 1943 operationalised colonial priorities further by prescribing rigid chains of command, surveillance practices, and authoritarian oversight mechanisms. Neither instrument accounts for the emergence of private security industries, community policing initiatives, hybrid arrangements, or informal justice systems that are now central to Bangladesh’s security landscape.

Despite over seven decades of independence and democratic governance, these colonial frameworks continue to shape policing practice, reflecting what postcolonial scholars describe as legal and institutional continuity that persists despite political change (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006; Agozino, 2003; Santos, 2002).

This persistence contrasts sharply with the Constitution of Bangladesh, which enshrines democratic and participatory governance principles, including equality before the law (Article 27), protection of law (Article 31), the right to life and personal liberty (Article 32), and decentralised governance structures (Articles 59–60) (Hossain, 2018; Haque, 2012). The coexistence of colonial policing statutes and a modern constitutional framework produces both conceptual and operational tensions, particularly in areas where plural policing actors operate outside statutory recognition.

1.3 The Unregulated Plural Policing Landscape of Bangladesh

Over the past three decades, Bangladesh has experienced substantial pluralisation of policing due to rapid urbanisation, industrialisation, and socio-political pressures (Berg and Lamb, 2022). Urban centres, characterised by population growth and infrastructural strain, rely heavily on private security and informal governance mechanisms to fill gaps left by state police. Industrial zones, particularly export processing areas, employ private security to manage high-value assets, while rural communities depend on customary authority structures and informal justice actors (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011; Hossain, 2018). Donor-funded community policing initiatives have also proliferated, creating hybrid arrangements in residential enclaves, commercial complexes, and industrial zones. Socio-political patronage networks further influence the authority and operation of private and informal actors, embedding plural policing within broader political and economic systems (Tankebe and Hills, 2015; Terpstra, 2022).

This multi-layered governance system creates a complex policing ecology in which the formal police, private security providers, community forums, informal justice actors, and hybrid bodies co-exist. Despite this proliferation, the Police Act 1861 and PRB 1943 provide no formal recognition or oversight mechanisms for non-state actors, leaving the system largely unregulated and legally ambiguous (Loader and Walker, 2007; Berg and Shearing, 2018). Consequently, plural policing in Bangladesh often produces uneven access to security and justice, influenced by wealth, location, gender, and political alignment. While it fulfills a functional role, it simultaneously reproduces socio-economic inequalities and undermines constitutional guarantees of due process and equality (Haque, 2012; Hossain, 2018).

1.4 Central Argument

This article argues that Bangladesh's plural policing landscape represents the intersection of historical continuity, contemporary socio-economic pressures, and governance deficits. It cannot be understood merely as a local manifestation of global security trends. Instead, plural policing operates out of necessity but remains legally invisible, producing a fragmented system with uneven accountability and tenuous alignment with constitutional principles (Loader and Walker, 2007; Agozino, 2003; Terpstra, 2022).

By applying the frameworks of networked policing, policing assemblages, democratic policing, and postcolonial criminology, this study examines how plural policing functions in practice and how it could be better regulated and institutionalised.

The analysis highlights the need for comprehensive legislative reform to establish recognition, accountability, and oversight mechanisms, thereby ensuring that plural policing contributes to legitimate, equitable, and democratically accountable security governance (Rogers, 2016; Shearing and Wood, 2003; Crawford, 2006).

2. Conceptual and Contextual Foundations of Plural Policing

2.1 Understanding Plural Policing: Global Perspectives

Plural policing refers to the diversification of policing authority beyond the state, incorporating private, voluntary, and hybrid actors into security governance (Jones and Newburn, 2006; O'Neill and Fyfe, 2017). The literature recognises that while public police remain central, their monopoly on the provision of security is no longer absolute. Private security industries, informal justice actors, and community-based organisations increasingly perform policing functions, producing networks, partnerships, and assemblages through which public safety is managed (Shearing and Wood, 2003; Johnston and Shearing, 2003; Dupont, 2004). This conceptualisation underpins the current study, which uses socio-legal and postcolonial perspectives to interpret how these plural arrangements operate in Bangladesh.

2.2 Plural Policing in the Global North

In the Global North, plural policing is highly regulated. Private security companies are licensed, professionally trained, and accountable to statutory authorities, while community policing initiatives operate under formal institutional mandates (Loader and Walker, 2007; Goldsmith, 2005). Hybrid arrangements, for example in airports, stadiums, and transport systems, are formalised through agreements specifying roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms (Tyler, 2006; Crawford, 2006). Such frameworks promote legitimacy, procedural fairness, and predictable oversight, creating a stable plural policing environment in which the risks of authority abuse are minimised.

2.3 Plural Policing in the Global South

By contrast, plural policing in the Global South emerges from necessity rather than deliberate design. In contexts of weak state capacity, informal authority actors such as elders, religious leaders, and community committees fill governance gaps (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011; Berg and Lamb, 2022). These arrangements are shaped by historical, political, and socio-economic factors, including enduring colonial legal structures, socio-political patronage, and economic inequality (Agozino, 2003; Santos, 2002). Bangladesh exemplifies this pattern, with private security, community policing, informal justice actors, and hybrid arrangements collectively providing critical but unregulated policing functions (Hossain, 2018; Terpstra, 2022).

2.4 Private Security Industries

Private security provision has expanded globally in response to commercialisation of risk, globalisation, and declining state monopolies over policing (Rogers, 2016; Button, 2020).

While these actors are essential to modern security governance, they carry risks, including inconsistent standards, weak accountability, potential abuse, and susceptibility to political or corporate influence. In Bangladesh, the absence of legal recognition or statutory oversight exacerbates these vulnerabilities, highlighting the need for formal regulatory frameworks (Hossain, 2018; Terpstra, 2022).

2.5 Community Policing and Informal Governance

Community policing has been widely promoted as a mechanism for building trust and improving responsiveness (Skogan, 2006). In the Global North, it operates within structured institutional frameworks that guarantee participation, transparency, and accountability. In the Global South, however, community policing is often fragmented, donor-dependent, and influenced by local political or economic actors (Baker, 2008). Bangladesh exemplifies this dynamic, with community policing forums widely present yet operating without statutory authority or sustainable institutional support (Hossain, 2018; Loader and Walker, 2007).

2.6 Informal Justice Systems

Legal pluralism, as conceptualised by Merry (1988), highlights the coexistence of multiple justice systems within a single jurisdiction. Informal justice actors in Bangladesh including customary councils, village elders, and religious adjudicators retain significant legitimacy, accessibility, and social authority. However, these systems also raise concerns regarding discrimination, lack of due process, gendered inequalities, and political manipulation (Berg and Shearing, 2018; Hossain, 2018). These characteristics render informal justice both indispensable and potentially problematic within Bangladesh's plural policing ecology.

2.7 Hybrid Policing and Economic Zones

Hybrid policing describes collaborative arrangements between state and non-state actors, often in complex economic or industrial contexts (Crawford, 2006). In Bangladesh, hybrid policing arrangements are particularly prominent in the garment industry and Export Processing Zones, where public police, private security, and industrial authorities jointly manage security. Despite operational necessity, these arrangements remain legally unregulated, resulting in inconsistent accountability, blurred authority, and variable citizen protections (Berg and Lamb, 2022; Terpstra, 2022).

2.8 Analytical Gaps and Research Direction

Despite extensive international research on plural policing, few studies have examined Bangladesh through a socio-legal and postcolonial lens. Existing literature largely neglects the tension between colonial policing laws and democratic constitutional norms, the unregulated growth of private security, the formal–informal governance continuum, socio-economic inequalities, and hybrid policing in industrial zones (Loader and Walker, 2007; Terpstra, 2022; Agozino, 2003). This article addresses these gaps through a conceptually and theoretically informed approach, integrating networked policing, assemblage theory, democratic policing, institutionalisation theory, and postcolonial criminology to provide a multi-layered analysis of Bangladesh's plural policing landscape.

3. Theoretical Framework

The analysis in this article is explicitly interpretive and theoretically informed, drawing on networked policing, assemblage theory, democratic policing, institutionalisation theory, and postcolonial criminology to guide the critical reading of legal texts, policy documents, and policing practices, and to situate plural policing within Bangladesh's broader historical, constitutional, and governance context. Plural policing in Bangladesh is not a static or formally bounded institution; rather, it is a fluid and adaptive phenomenon shaped by colonial legal inheritances, postcolonial state structures, informal governance practices, and contemporary socio-political pressures. No single theoretical perspective can fully capture this complexity. By combining these complementary frameworks, the study is able to analyse both how plural policing operates in practice and how it can be evaluated against normative and constitutional standards (Loader and Walker, 2007; Jones and Newburn, 2006; Nelken, 2010).

3.1 Networked Policing

Networked policing provides a conceptual lens for understanding policing as an activity distributed across multiple actors and organisations rather than confined to formal state institutions (O'Neill and Fyfe, 2017; Shearing and Wood, 2003). In Bangladesh, networks of security actors including formal police, private security companies, community policing initiatives, local political actors, and informal justice mechanisms emerge largely in response to institutional gaps and resource constraints. These networks are often situational and temporary, shaped by immediate practical needs, political patronage, and social expectations rather than deliberate coordination. Networked policing theory illuminates the interdependence of these actors, highlighting both the potential of collaborative security and the fragility that arises from the lack of formal regulatory structures (Baker, 2010; Buur and Jensen, 2004; Johnston and Shearing, 2003).

3.2 Policing Assemblages

While networked policing highlights patterns of connection, the concept of policing assemblages offers a more flexible and context-sensitive way of understanding how plural policing is assembled in practice. Assemblage thinking rejects static institutional models and instead conceptualises policing as a contingent outcome of shifting relationships among actors, technologies, spatial arrangements, legal norms, and social expectations (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Rogers, 2016; Wood and Shearing, 2007). In Bangladesh, policing roles are frequently improvised: private security personnel may assume quasi-policing functions in industrial zones, community leaders may mediate disputes typically reserved for courts, and informal justice mechanisms may operate alongside formal institutions. Assemblage theory helps explain how plural policing adapts to local conditions while remaining shaped by historical legacies, economic transformations, technological infrastructures, political networks, cultural norms, and socio-economic inequalities. Viewing plural policing through this lens highlights both its adaptive capacity and its inherent instability (Dupont, 2004; Baker and Scheye, 2007).

3.3 Democratic Policing

Democratic policing theory provides a normative framework for evaluating the legitimacy of plural policing. It emphasises that the exercise of policing power must be accountable, procedurally fair, and responsive to public participation (Loader, 2000; Loader and Walker, 2007; Tyler, 2006; Goldsmith, 2005).

In Bangladesh, plural policing actors such as private security guards, community volunteers, and informal adjudicators frequently exercise authority without clear constitutional or statutory oversight. Democratic policing theory allows for the critical assessment of these practices, highlighting the risks of arbitrary authority, weak procedural safeguards, and exclusion of marginalised populations. It provides a benchmark against which plural policing can be evaluated in terms of constitutional and democratic norms (Tankebe, 2009; Haque, 2012).

3.4 Institutionalisation Theory

Institutionalisation theory examines the structural conditions necessary for plural policing to function effectively and predictably. Terpstra (2022) argues that plural policing requires legal recognition, stable organisational frameworks, oversight mechanisms, and shared norms of accountability. In Bangladesh, plural policing has expanded without institutionalisation. Private security services, community policing initiatives, and informal justice institutions operate within a regulatory vacuum, with little clarity regarding authority, obligations, or limits. This absence of institutional foundations reinforces inconsistency, vulnerability to abuse, and inequitable access to security (Baker and Scheye, 2007; Jones and Newburn, 2006).

3.5 Postcolonial Criminology

Postcolonial criminology situates plural policing within the longer history of coercive governance inherited from colonial rule. Scholars argue that many postcolonial states retain policing institutions designed to control subject populations rather than democratic citizens, and that these institutions often persist after independence with minimal reform (Agozino, 2003; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006). In Bangladesh, the continued dominance of the Police Act 1861 and The Police Regulations, Bengal, 1943 has reinforced hierarchical, coercive, and politically influenced policing practices. Postcolonial criminology helps explain the persistence of weak legitimacy, fragile police–community relations, and the proliferation of non-state policing actors outside formal legal recognition. It frames plural policing as a historically conditioned outcome of incomplete institutional transformation rather than an isolated anomaly (Tankebe and Hills, 2015; Hossain, 2018).

By combining these perspectives, this article provides a multi-layered analytical lens that captures both the operational realities and normative deficits of plural policing in Bangladesh. Theory is used actively to interpret legal texts, policy documents, and institutional practices, while also situating these observations within historical, constitutional, and socio-political contexts. This ensures that the analysis moves beyond description toward critical evaluation of plural policing against democratic and constitutional standards.

4. Methodology

This study is grounded in a qualitative and conceptually oriented research design that integrates socio-legal analysis, documentary interpretation, and theoretical synthesis to examine plural policing in Bangladesh. It approaches policing not as a fixed institutional function but as a dispersed and contested form of governance shaped by the interaction of legal frameworks, informal practices, historical continuities, and power relations (Shearing and Wood, 2003; Loader and Walker, 2007).

Such an interpretive orientation is particularly appropriate in contexts where non-state actors exercise significant policing functions beyond formal legal recognition and where systematic empirical data remains limited or fragmented (Baker, 2010; Baker and Scheye, 2007).

The study focuses on how plural policing arrangements are constituted, legitimised, and normalised within Bangladesh's postcolonial legal and governance landscape. A conceptual research strategy is employed to critically engage with key theoretical constructs such as governance plurality, legal invisibility, and accountability while adapting existing frameworks to the socio-historical realities of Bangladesh (Jones and Newburn, 2006; Tankebe and Hills, 2015). This enables the development of a context-sensitive analytical framework rather than a direct transplantation of Global North models.

A core methodological component is socio-legal analysis, which interrogates the relationship between formal legal structures and lived policing practices. By examining colonial-era policing laws alongside constitutional guarantees, the study highlights the structural disjuncture between inherited legal frameworks and contemporary democratic expectations, particularly regarding equality before the law, due process, and the protection of fundamental rights (Merry, 1990; Cotterrell, 2018).

The research relies primarily on documentary sources, including legal instruments, policy documents, NGO reports, media investigations, and academic literature. These materials are analysed through an inductive thematic approach, allowing key patterns such as overlapping authority, weak regulatory oversight, and the persistence of informal justice systems to emerge from the data (Bowen, 2009; Nelken, 2010). A comparative lens further situates Bangladesh within broader global debates, highlighting differences between formally regulated plural policing systems and more informal, necessity-driven arrangements (Loader and Walker, 2007; Jones and Newburn, 2006).

Importantly, the study also engages with ethical considerations inherent in plural policing. The expansion of non-state and informal actors raises concerns regarding accountability deficits, potential abuse of coercive power, and the absence of procedural safeguards. Issues such as discrimination, gendered inequalities, and the marginalisation of vulnerable groups are particularly salient where informal justice mechanisms operate without oversight (Berg and Shearing, 2018; Santos, 2002). Furthermore, the reliance on documentary sources necessitates critical scrutiny of bias, representation, and institutional agendas, as such materials may obscure or normalise problematic practices (Nelken, 2010). The study therefore adopts a reflexive stance, recognising the ethical implications of analysing governance systems where legality and legitimacy are often contested.

While the absence of primary fieldwork and the fragmented nature of data on informal actors present limitations, the chosen methodology provides a theoretically robust and ethically informed framework for analysing the complexities of plural policing in Bangladesh (Baker, 2010; Santos, 2002).

4.1 Conceptual Research Strategy

The research is primarily conceptual in nature, focusing on the development, clarification, and critical evaluation of theoretical constructs relating to plural policing. Conceptual analysis is employed to theorise plural policing within the specific socio-historical and legal context of Bangladesh, to identify the governance characteristics that define its operation, and to examine the phenomenon of legal invisibility that surrounds many non-state policing actors. It also enables an assessment of whether existing plural policing practices align with constitutional principles, democratic accountability, and the rule of law, which are central concerns within critical policing and governance scholarship (Loader and Walker, 2007; Shearing and Johnston, 2010).

While the study draws on established theories of plural policing, nodal governance, and security pluralism, these frameworks are not applied uncritically. Instead, they are reinterpreted through Bangladesh's experience of colonial policing, postcolonial state formation, and contemporary political economy. In doing so, the article contributes to ongoing debates within criminology and socio-legal studies concerning the limits of Global North theories when applied to Global South contexts, particularly where state authority is uneven, legal pluralism is pronounced, and informal governance mechanisms play a central role in everyday security provision (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006; Tankebe and Hills, 2015; Nelken, 2010). This conceptual strategy allows the study to generate an original analytical synthesis rather than a derivative application of existing models.

4.2 Socio-Legal Analysis of Policing and Constitutional Frameworks

A core element of the methodology is socio-legal analysis of Bangladesh's principal policing and constitutional instruments, most notably the Police Act 1861, The Police Regulations, Bengal, 1943, and the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Socio-legal analysis is employed to examine how these legal frameworks operate in practice, how they structure institutional behaviour, and how they interact with broader social and political dynamics. This approach recognises that formal law often lags behind social reality, particularly in postcolonial societies where inherited legal frameworks continue to shape governance long after their original political rationale has eroded (Tamanaha, 2001; Cotterrell, 2018).

Doctrinal analysis of the Police Act 1861 and The Police Regulations, Bengal, 1943 reveals a legal architecture that was designed primarily to secure colonial order rather than to facilitate democratic policing. The continued reliance on these instruments has contributed to a regulatory vacuum in relation to plural policing, as they neither recognise nor regulate the expanding role of non-state security providers, informal justice institutions, or community-based policing arrangements. This pattern reflects broader continuities between colonial modes of rule and contemporary policing practices in South Asia, where coercive authority remains weakly constrained by law (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006; Jones and Newburn, 2006).

Constitutional analysis focuses in particular on Articles 27, 31, and 32, which guarantee equality before the law, due process, and the right to life and personal liberty, as well as Articles 59 and 60, which establish principles of local government and citizen participation.

These constitutional provisions are treated as normative benchmarks against which the legality and legitimacy of plural policing arrangements are assessed. The analysis examines the extent to which unregulated policing actors undermine constitutional guarantees by operating beyond effective oversight, accountability, and procedural safeguards, a concern widely documented in governance and human rights scholarship on Bangladesh (Haque, 2012; Hossain, 2018).

4.3 Documentary Sources and Analytical Scope

In the absence of comprehensive empirical datasets, documentary analysis constitutes a primary source of evidence for this study. Documentary research is particularly well suited to examining governance arrangements in contexts where institutional practices are opaque, politically sensitive, or poorly documented through official statistics (Bowen, 2009; Nelken, 2010). The documents analysed include police manuals and internal administrative guidelines, regulatory instruments governing private security companies, community policing handbooks, reports produced by national and international non-governmental organisations, media investigations into policing practices, policy documents issued by development partners, and peer-reviewed academic literature on policing and justice in South Asia.

These documentary sources are not treated as neutral or authoritative accounts but are analysed critically, with attention to their institutional origins, intended audiences, and normative assumptions. Through cross-referencing legal texts, policy documents, and independent reports, the analysis reconstructs the fragmented landscape of plural policing in Bangladesh and examines how different actors exercise coercive authority within, alongside, or entirely outside formal governance structures (Buur and Jensen, 2004; Baker and Scheye, 2007; Baker, 2010).

4.4 Thematic and Interpretive Analysis

The material derived from legal and documentary sources is analysed using an inductive thematic approach. Rather than imposing predefined analytical categories, themes emerge through repeated and careful engagement with legal texts, institutional practices, and scholarly interpretations. This method allows the analysis to remain responsive to the empirical and normative complexities of the Bangladeshi context while avoiding reductive or overly abstract theorisation (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Merry, 1990).

Several interrelated themes emerge from this process, including the legal invisibility of non-state policing actors, the proliferation and overlap of policing roles performed by state and non-state institutions, the persistence of a hierarchical and coercive policing ethos rooted in colonial governance, and the weakness of accountability mechanisms governing both formal and informal security providers. Additional themes concern the dominance of informal justice institutions in resolving everyday disputes, the reproduction of socio-economic inequalities in access to security and legal protection, and the gendered nature of policing practices, particularly in relation to surveillance, vulnerability, and access to justice, all of which are well documented in critical criminological and socio-legal literature (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006; Tankebe and Hills, 2015).

4.5 Comparative and Contextual Positioning

Finally, the study adopts a comparative analytical framework to situate Bangladesh's experience of plural policing within broader global debates. Comparative insights are drawn from both Global North jurisdictions, where plural policing is often formally recognised and regulated, and Global South contexts, where similar arrangements remain informal and weakly governed. This comparison highlights important differences in regulatory capacity, institutional accountability, and political commitment to democratic policing, while also revealing shared challenges associated with the diffusion of policing authority beyond the state (Jones and Newburn, 2006; Loader and Walker, 2007).

The comparative dimension does not seek to promote policy transfer or to suggest that regulatory models from the Global North can be straightforwardly transplanted into Bangladesh. Instead, it is used to illuminate how historical legacies, particularly colonial legal frameworks, continue to shape contemporary policing structures and constrain reform efforts. By embedding Bangladesh within these broader patterns, the article strengthens its explanatory reach and contributes to critical criminological debates on policing, legality, and governance in postcolonial societies (Nelken, 2010; Santos, 2002).

4.6 Limitations of the Study

While the conceptual qualitative approach adopted in this study enables an in-depth and critically informed interpretation of plural policing as a socio-legal and historical phenomenon, it is important to recognise several limitations inherent in this research design. First, the absence of primary fieldwork constrains the analysis in terms of access to the lived experiences and subjective perspectives of frontline actors and community members. Ethnographic and interview-based studies have underscored the value of capturing the nuances of everyday policing interactions (Skogan, 2006; Tyler, 2006), and without this empirical grounding, the present study relies heavily on documentary sources, legal texts, and secondary analyses. This reliance may, to some extent, limit the capacity to represent firsthand accounts of how plural policing is experienced at the grassroots level, particularly in rural and peri-urban contexts where informal actors are most active (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011).

Second, the documentation of informal policing actors in Bangladesh is uneven, fragmented, and in many cases absent from official records. Informal justice institutions, customary dispute resolution mechanisms, and hybrid governance arrangements often operate outside formal regulatory frameworks, making them difficult to trace through conventional documentary sources (Merry, 1988; Berg and Shearing, 2018). The limited visibility of these actors in archives, policy documents, and published reports challenges researchers to construct a comprehensive picture of the full range of policing practices in the country. As Merry (1988) and Santos (2002) have argued, legal pluralism and informality are intrinsic to postcolonial justice landscapes, yet their opaqueness in documentation presents analytical difficulties in any study grounded in documentary analysis.

Third, Bangladesh exhibits significant diversity in local governance, socio-economic conditions, and security practices across its districts. Urban metropolises such as Dhaka and Chattogram experience different security dynamics compared to rural districts in the northern and southern regions, where customary norms and community authorities may carry greater legitimacy (Hossain, 2018; Haque, 2012).

Documents produced at the national level often smooth over these local variances, and while the present study endeavours to account for contextual differences through a wide review of academic literature, media reports, and policy documents, it is possible that the richness of localised policing cultures exceeds what is captured by document-based analysis alone.

Fourth, community policing initiatives and private security practices in Bangladesh have grown rapidly but unevenly. Donor-funded projects, informal neighbourhood committees, and private security firms each manifest distinct practices, organisational cultures, and local interpretations of authority (Baker and Scheye, 2007; Button, 2020). The current study's focus on policy texts, regulatory frameworks, and secondary literature means that variations in implementation and practice across different sites are inferred rather than empirically verified. As O'Neill and Fyfe (2017) and Jones (2014) suggest, the internal dynamics and operational divergences of policing actors can be highly contingent on local political and social milieus, making generalisation across contexts an interpretive challenge.

Finally, hybrid policing arrangements particularly in export processing zones, industrial complexes, and gated residential enclaves are frequently opaque and not publicly recorded. These arrangements, which may involve intricate collaborations among state police, corporate security, and local committees, often lack transparent documentation and are absent from formal policy records (Crawford, 2006; Terpstra, 2022). The absence of clear public records on hybrid governance practices limits the methodological reach of document analysis, requiring careful inference and triangulation across multiple secondary sources.

Despite these limitations, the chosen methodology remains robust for the purposes of this study. Conceptual qualitative analysis, informed by socio-legal reasoning, networked and assemblage theory, and postcolonial critique, provides a coherent framework for interrogating the legal invisibility, historical continuity, and governance implications of plural policing in Bangladesh (Loader and Walker, 2007; Rogers, 2016; Agozino, 2003). While future research could benefit from empirical fieldwork and comparative case studies, the present approach offers a strong analytical foundation for understanding how plural policing is constructed, regulated, and contested within Bangladesh's evolving security landscape.

5. Findings: The Structure and Dynamics of Plural Policing in Bangladesh

Plural policing in Bangladesh is neither marginal nor supplementary; it constitutes a core dimension of how order is sustained in everyday life across urban centres, rural communities, industrial sites, and institutional settings. While formal law continues to emphasise the centrality of the state police, an array of non-state actors fulfil policing functions, reflecting both governance necessity and legal invisibility. The analysis in this section draws on socio-legal scrutiny of legal texts, policy documents, organisational guidelines, and secondary literature to construct a nuanced picture of how plural policing operates, how authority is constituted outside statutory mandates, and how these practices intersect with constitutional norms and democratic policing principles (Loader and Walker, 2007; Merry, 1998; O'Neill and Fyfe, 2017).

In line with networked policing theory, plural policing in Bangladesh can be understood as a constellation of interdependent but loosely coordinated actors whose authority emerges from relational practices rather than legal delegation (Shearing and Wood, 2003; Jones and Newburn, 2006).

Consistent with assemblage thinking, these actors interact in fluid configurations shaped by historical legacies, socio-economic pressures, institutional gaps, and cultural norms, producing security practices that are contingent, adaptive, and unevenly regulated (Rogers, 2016; Dupont, 2004). From a democratic policing perspective, such plurality raises critical questions about accountability, legitimacy, and equitable access to justice (Loader, 2000; Tyler, 2006). Each of the following subsections elaborates these dynamics in key domains of plural policing.

5.1 Private Security Companies: Expansion Without Regulation

The Private Security Services Act 2006 (PSSA, 2006) was enacted to establish a formal legal framework for regulating, operating, and overseeing commercially run private security providers in Bangladesh, in response to the rapid expansion of private guarding and protection services. However, in the aftermath of its enactment, segments of the private security sector challenged certain provisions of the Act through a writ petition before the High Court. The continued pendency of this litigation has generated prolonged legal uncertainty, constraining effective regulatory implementation and enforcement. In practice, this unresolved legal status has contributed to the emergence of a regulatory vacuum in which private security actors function with limited oversight, illustrating a broader governance dilemma associated with plural policing arrangements operating in the absence of clear statutory authority, coherent regulatory mechanisms, and robust democratic accountability.

The expansion of private security companies in Bangladesh has been both rapid and expansive, reflecting broader socio-economic transformations and governance deficits. Parallel to global trends in the commodification of security (Button, 2020; Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011), Bangladesh has witnessed a marked increase in the demand for private security services, particularly in urban centres such as Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet. This growth corresponds with patterns observed across Global South contexts where limited state policing capacity enables private actors to fill security vacuums (Berg and Shearing, 2018; Baker and Scheye, 2007).

The presence of private security personnel is most visible around high-value assets and sites of dense economic activity, including residential complexes, commercial shopping centres, banks, universities, garment factories, and export processing zones. These actors frequently perform functions that resemble traditional police work, including access control, incident reporting, crowd management, and preliminary restraint of suspects. However, notwithstanding the existence of the PSSA 2006, the ongoing legal contestation and absence of full operationalisation have meant that private security practice remains weakly regulated in effect. Their authority often appears informal and contingent, governed more by administrative arrangements than by fully enforceable statutory mandates. Although the Ministry of Home Affairs administers registration, uniform standards for licensing, training, use of force, and disciplinary accountability remain inconsistently applied (Rogers, 2016; Button, 2020).

From a socio-legal perspective, this regulatory fragility reveals the limitations of colonial-era policing statutes, which neither anticipated nor adequately accommodate the proliferation of non-state security providers (Haque, 2012). The constitutional safeguards enshrined in Articles 27 (equality before the law), 31 (protection of the law), and 32 (right to life and personal liberty) are placed under strain when private security personnel detain individuals or enforce rules without procedural safeguards or oversight comparable to public police duties.

Such conditions resonate with democratic policing concerns regarding legitimacy and accountability when coercive authority is exercised beyond clearly defined legal boundaries (Loader and Walker, 2007; Tyler, 2006).

Moreover, the stratification of security access amplifies socio-economic inequality. Wealthier neighbourhoods and corporate institutions can afford professional private protection, whereas poorer communities remain dependent on overstretched public police or informal mechanisms. This bifurcation reflects broader patterns of differentiated governance in postcolonial cities, where market logics intersect with public order functions, producing uneven distributions of protection and control (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011; Berg and Lamb, 2022).

In theoretical terms, private security in Bangladesh constitutes a networked policing node that is only partially integrated into formal governance structures, operating with significant autonomy and variability. The lack of effective regulatory anchoring impedes standardisation of roles, weakens oversight mechanisms, and intensifies constitutional and democratic legitimacy concerns within Bangladesh's pluralised security landscape.

5.2 Community Policing Forums: Participation Without Power

Community policing in Bangladesh was introduced as part of police reform agendas supported by international development partners in the early 2000s, with the aim of bridging gaps between police and communities, improving trust, enhancing intelligence flows, and preventing low-level conflicts (Skogan, 2006; Baker, 2008). Community policing forums (CPFs) emerged as formalised bodies of volunteers intended to collaborate with police on local safety issues. However, despite their proliferation across thanas and districts, CPFs occupy a paradoxical space that reveals significant normative and operational contradictions.

On the one hand, CPFs can function as bridges between communities and law enforcement, enabling local voices to surface and local disputes to be surfaced and mitigated before escalation. The proximity of CPF members to social networks positions them to observe latent tensions, diffuse minor conflicts, and facilitate communication with formal police (Tyler, 2006; Berg and Shearing, 2018). Their participation aligns with democratic policing ideals that emphasise community involvement in safety governance.

On the other hand, CPFs lack statutory legal status, secure financing, and autonomous institutional capacity. They were established through executive decisions within the Bangladesh Police hierarchy rather than through parliamentary legislation, leaving them vulnerable to discretionary control by local police officers. Their existence thus depends on the goodwill or initiative of individual officers rather than on constitutional recognition of participatory governance mechanisms (Loader and Walker, 2007). This absence of clear authority reflects a broader socio-legal gap, wherein plural policing actors operate without formal entitlements or accountability mechanisms.

The selection process for CPFs further complicates their democratic legitimacy. In many localities, political figures, business elites, or established informal authorities influence membership, transforming CPFs into fora that replicate existing hierarchies rather than empowering marginalised voices. Women, religious minorities, and lower-income residents are disproportionately underrepresented, reinforcing socio-cultural exclusions in a mechanism that is theoretically designed to democratise policing participation (Baker, 2008; Berg and Shearing, 2018).

The activities of CPFs also extend beyond their intended preventive role, with forum members conducting informal patrols, mediating disputes, or advising police on course of action. These functions are performed without statutory authority and raise due process and equal protection concerns under Articles 27, 31, and 32 of the Constitution (Hossain, 2018; Merry, 1998). The absence of a formal legal foundation for CPFs places them in a liminal space between state policing and community participation, illustrating how democratic aspirations in security governance can remain unrealised without enabling legal structures.

5.3 Informal Justice Actors: Authority Rooted in Custom

Informal justice actors, including village councils known as *shomaj*, neighborhood leaders, mosque committees, market associations, and transport union elders, play a central role in regulating social and legal order in rural and peri-urban Bangladesh. These actors derive their authority from cultural legitimacy, social esteem, and community endorsement, positioning them as primary arbiters in everyday disputes that range from family conflicts to property disagreements (Merry, 1998; Goody, 2001).

Such institutions offer accessibility, speed, and cost-effective dispute resolution, making them attractive alternatives to formal police and judicial processes that may be perceived as distant, slow, or intimidating (Nelken, 2010). From a networked policing perspective, informal justice actors constitute a dense web of authority relations that intersect with formal governance structures without formal legal recognition (Shearing and Wood, 2003).

However, the unregulated nature of these bodies raises profound normative questions. Decisions rendered by *shomaj* or similar actors are grounded in local norms and expectations rather than in constitutional guarantees of procedural fairness and equality. Patriarchal norms, local power differentials, and expectations of social harmony often shape outcomes, resulting in discriminatory practices against women, lower-status individuals, and socially marginalised persons. Such practices conflict with constitutional protections enshrined in Articles 27 (equality) and 31 (protection of the law), and they illustrate how informality can entrench rather than ameliorate structural inequities (Merry, 1998; Santos, 2002).

The persistence of informal justice practices illustrates assemblage logic, whereby multiple normative and institutional orders coexist and interact without formal integration. These arrangements persist not merely due to state absence, but because they resonate with cultural expectations, social networks, and normative understandings of justice that pre-date modern legal institutions. Nonetheless, their operational autonomy and absence of procedural safeguards pose significant challenges for aligning local governance practices with democratic norms and constitutional mandates.

5.4 Hybrid Policing in Industrial and Commercial Zones

Hybrid policing in Bangladesh is most evident in industrial and commercial zones, particularly in export processing zones (EPZs) and large garment factories, where state police, private security, industrial authorities, and sometimes local committees collaborate informally to manage security challenges. Such hybrid configurations emerge out of operational necessity rather than statutory authorisation, reflecting both institutional lacunae and economic imperatives in production-oriented settings (Crawford, 2006; Berg and Lamb, 2022).

In these contexts, private security personnel often control access, monitor worker movement, manage internal discipline, and oversee property protection, while industrial management oversees operational compliance and premature dispute resolution. State police are typically called upon only when conflicts escalate into overt criminality or public order disruption. These arrangements are rarely codified in formal agreements, and operational lines of authority are negotiated in practice rather than delineated in legal instruments, a phenomenon that mirrors the fluid, contingent connections identified in assemblage theory (Rogers, 2016; Shearing and Wood, 2003).

Hybrid policing achieves functional benefits by allowing rapid and context-specific responses to incident patterns that might otherwise overwhelm formal police. Nonetheless, the absence of statutory guidance means that hybrid actors frequently bypass constitutional safeguards related to due process, transparency, and accountability. For example, internal disciplinary measures imposed by industrial authorities or private security personnel may not afford workers the procedural protections guaranteed under Articles 31 and 32 of the Constitution. These dynamics are further intensified where labour issues intersect with economic prerogatives, especially in sectors marked by high female participation and organisational hierarchies that already disadvantage certain groups (Berg and Lamb, 2022; Tyler, 2006).

The opacity of hybrid arrangements reveals deep governance challenges. Because these configurations arise informally and are governed by situational power relations, they resist easy categorisation within formal legal frames. From a democratic policing perspective, hybrid policing raises critical questions about the boundaries of state authority, the legitimacy of private ordering, and the protection of basic rights in settings where economic interests and security functions intersect.

5.5 A Fragmented Governance Landscape

The collective picture that emerges from the analysis is one of a plural policing ecosystem that is broad in scope yet fragile in structure. Each actor whether formal, private, community-based, informal, or hybrid makes significant contributions to everyday order, yet none is grounded in comprehensive, coherent, and democratically accountable legal frameworks. This fragmentation resonates with socio-legal critiques of legal pluralism, where multiple normative orders coexist without formal harmonisation, producing legal uncertainty and uneven protection of rights (Merry, 1998; Santos, 2002; Nelken, 2010).

The persistence of colonial policing laws alongside modern constitutional commitments illustrates a deeper institutional paradox: a democratic state committed to equality, due process, and decentralised governance yet constrained by archaic legal frameworks and governance deficits. The expansion of plural policing without corresponding legal recognition or oversight challenges democratic policing principles of legitimacy, accountability, and public participation (Loader and Walker, 2007; Tyler, 2006). The result is a governance landscape characterised by fragmented authority, blurred boundaries, and uneven standards an ecology that is responsive in practice but uncertain and contested in normative terms.

These findings set the stage for the discussion in Section 6, where the implications for constitutional reform, democratic policing, and security governance are examined in greater depth.

6. Discussion

The plural policing landscape of Bangladesh, as revealed in this study, exemplifies the intersection of historical continuity, socio-economic pressures, and institutional deficits. The findings indicate a system in which the formal legal architecture, inherited from colonial regimes, remains largely ill-suited to contemporary realities, compelling the emergence of multiple non-state actors who fill functional gaps in governance. The analysis, guided by an interpretive, conceptually grounded methodology, demonstrates that plural policing in Bangladesh is both indispensable and simultaneously fraught with risks to legality, equality, and constitutional governance (O'Neill and Fyfe, 2017; Berg and Shearing, 2018).

The study's reliance on documentary evidence and socio-legal texts allowed for a critical reading of the interplay between law, policy, and practice. This approach aligns closely with the theoretical framework, particularly networked policing theory, which elucidates the relational dynamics between formal and non-formal actors (Shearing and Wood, 2003). In Bangladesh, these networks are primarily ad hoc, emerging out of necessity rather than deliberate design. Private security firms, community policing forums, informal justice actors, and hybrid industrial arrangements interact in ways that are context-dependent, situationally negotiated, and often contingent upon personal or political relationships rather than codified standards (Rogers, 2016; Button, 2020). This lack of formal scaffolding differentiates Bangladeshi plural policing from well-institutionalised networked policing in Western jurisdictions, where legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms underpin collaborative arrangements (Crawford, 2006; Loader and Walker, 2007).

Assemblage theory provides a complementary lens to understand the emergent and adaptive nature of plural policing. The study illustrates that security is not delivered solely through hierarchical structures but through contingent assemblages of actors, norms, and technologies. For instance, in Export Processing Zones (EPZs), security responsibilities are distributed among private guards, factory managers, local committees, and public police officers in a manner that is responsive to production pressures, industrial safety concerns, and labour unrest. These arrangements are not static; they shift according to political influence, industrial disputes, or changing managerial priorities (Berg and Lamb, 2022). Similarly, in rural settings, shomaj councils, mosques, and local elders constitute informal governance assemblages that resolve disputes and enforce social norms. While effective in mediating conflicts and maintaining local order, these assemblages are inherently fluid and operate outside the bounds of codified law, producing systemic uncertainty regarding rights and due process (Merry, 1998; Hossain, 2018).

Democratic policing theory foregrounds the normative tensions generated by these practices (Loader, 2000; Loader and Walker, 2007). In theory, policing should reflect accountability, procedural fairness, and community participation. In Bangladesh, however, plural policing often undermines these ideals. Private security personnel exercise coercive authority with minimal oversight, raising questions about adherence to Articles 31 and 32 of the Constitution, which guarantee protection under law and personal liberty. Community policing forums, while participatory in form, are subject to local political capture, have limited operational autonomy, and often marginalise women, minorities, and the economically disadvantaged. Informal justice actors, while culturally legitimate, frequently deliver outcomes shaped by patriarchy, hierarchy, and social expediency rather than constitutional rights (Tankebe, 2009; Berg and Shearing, 2018).

Hybrid policing arrangements in industrial zones, by prioritising efficiency over due process, highlight the conflict between commercial imperatives and legal obligations (Button, 2020).

Institutionalisation theory underscores the structural fragility inherent in such unregulated plural policing (Terpstra, 2022). The absence of codified roles, oversight mechanisms, or statutory recognition leaves the system dependent on informal understandings and interpersonal networks. Such conditions perpetuate inconsistency, reduce accountability, and limit the state's capacity to enforce constitutional principles. Institutionalisation, therefore, is not merely a bureaucratic ideal but a prerequisite for integrating plural policing into a predictable and rights-respecting governance framework. Without this, plural actors operate in a legal vacuum, producing uneven enforcement of justice and variable protection of rights across socio-economic and geographic divides (Rogers, 2016; Hossain, 2018).

Postcolonial criminology provides a critical historical lens to situate these dynamics. The Police Act 1861 and The Police Regulations, Bengal, 1943 were designed to enforce centralised, coercive control over colonial subjects, emphasising obedience over accountability (Agozino, 2003; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006). Their endurance has left a policing culture ill-equipped to integrate plural actors into formal governance or to prioritise democratic accountability. Consequently, non-state actors operate in spaces that the law fails to regulate effectively, effectively institutionalising informality by default (Haque, 2012). The postcolonial lens reveals that the persistence of colonial legal frameworks is not merely historical inertia; it actively shapes contemporary institutional capacity, legitimising informal and hybrid forms of policing while undermining constitutionalism.

The findings indicate that plural policing produces both functional utility and normative concern. It allows communities to manage disputes, maintain industrial productivity, and supplement under-resourced state policing. Yet it simultaneously generates rights vulnerabilities, socio-economic stratification, and governance inconsistencies. For example, wealthier urban enclaves access professional private security and technology-enabled surveillance, while rural and low-income communities depend on informal justice systems with minimal procedural safeguards. Industrial workers are subject to hybrid policing arrangements that prioritise operational efficiency over constitutional protections, disproportionately affecting female and vulnerable employees. The interplay between necessity and informality thus produces an unevenly distributed security environment (Berg and Lamb, 2022; Merry, 1998).

Critically, this study demonstrates that the normative and structural weaknesses of Bangladesh's plural policing system are not accidental but are rooted in historical, institutional, and socio-economic realities. The interpretive methodology, guided by theoretical frameworks, highlights that reforming plural policing cannot rely solely on the expansion of state capacity or the imposition of regulatory frameworks. Instead, reform must be contextually sensitive, recognising the adaptive utility of plural actors while ensuring their integration into a rights-respecting, accountable, and democratically legitimate system. This requires a multi-pronged approach: repealing colonial-era statutes, legislatively recognising plural actors, establishing clear accountability mechanisms, and creating institutional structures capable of sustaining legal and procedural standards across diverse contexts (Loader and Walker, 2007; Terpstra, 2022).

This study highlights the necessity for police leadership in Bangladesh to recognise plural policing not as a temporary or informal anomaly, but as a persistent and structurally embedded feature of contemporary security governance.

The findings indicate that senior police leaders can draw upon this understanding to strengthen strategic coordination with private security providers, community-based policing initiatives, and hybrid security arrangements, while remaining anchored in constitutional mandates, rule-of-law principles, and institutional accountability. For training and professional development institutions, the analysis underscores the importance of systematically integrating themes of plural policing, democratic oversight, and regulatory governance into leadership and command-level curricula. At the policy and governance level, the study provides a conceptual foundation for legislative reform, the formulation of professional standards, and the design of institutional frameworks capable of aligning multi-actor policing practices with constitutional norms, democratic accountability, and sustained public trust.

7. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that plural policing in Bangladesh represents a complex, multi-layered phenomenon shaped by historical legacies, socio-economic pressures, and institutional gaps. The findings reveal a policing landscape where authority is dispersed across private security companies, community policing forums, informal justice actors, and hybrid industrial arrangements, operating in largely unregulated spaces. These actors collectively sustain public order and contribute to dispute resolution, yet they often function outside statutory oversight, producing inconsistency, inequality, and potential rights violations.

The analysis shows that Bangladesh's policing system cannot be understood merely as an extension of global security trends. Instead, it reflects a confluence of colonial legal continuity, rapid urbanisation, industrial expansion, and governance deficits. The Police Act 1861 and The Police Regulations, Bengal, 1943 remain central to policing culture, embedding centralised, hierarchical, and coercive norms incompatible with contemporary expectations of accountability, transparency, and democratic legitimacy (Agozino, 2003; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006; Haque, 2012). The disjunction between constitutional guarantees such as equality before the law (Art. 27), protection of law (Art. 31), and decentralised governance (Arts. 59–60) and the operational reality of plural policing creates structural tensions that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including women, low-income communities, and industrial workers.

Applying networked policing and assemblage theory has clarified that these plural actors operate through interdependent and adaptive arrangements, forming *de facto* security networks that are indispensable for everyday governance yet precarious due to their legal invisibility (O'Neill and Fyfe, 2017; Rogers, 2016). Democratic policing principles further underscore that the legitimacy of such networks depends on accountability, procedural fairness, and public participation elements largely absent in Bangladesh's unregulated plural policing ecosystem (Loader and Walker, 2007). Institutionalisation theory highlights the urgent need to embed plural policing within coherent legal and organisational frameworks, ensuring predictable, rights-respecting, and equitable policing outcomes (Terpstra, 2022). Finally, a postcolonial criminological lens situates these dynamics within a broader historical trajectory, showing how colonial statutes continue to constrain reform, legitimise informality, and perpetuate centralised authority (Agozino, 2003; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006).

In sum, plural policing in Bangladesh embodies both resilience and risk. It addresses real security needs, mitigates state incapacity, and maintains social order. Yet, without regulatory oversight, legal recognition, and institutional support, it perpetuates inequalities, undermines constitutional rights, and challenges democratic accountability. The path forward requires targeted, contextually sensitive reform that acknowledges the functional utility of plural actors while embedding them within a governance framework that is transparent, accountable, and constitutionally compliant.

7.2 Policy Recommendations

To reconcile plural policing with constitutional principles, democratic norms, and public accountability, the following policy recommendations are proposed:

1. **Modernise Policing Legislation:** The Police Act 1861 and PRB 1943 must be repealed or comprehensively reformed. New legislation should recognise the plural reality of policing, defining the roles, responsibilities, and limits of state police, private security actors, community policing forums, and hybrid arrangements. Statutory clarity would provide a legal basis for oversight, accountability, and citizen protection.
2. **Regulate Private Security Companies:** Private security firms should be licensed, trained, and accredited under a regulatory authority. The law should stipulate minimum professional standards, limits on the use of force, reporting obligations, and disciplinary processes. A national registry of security personnel would enhance accountability and reduce informal or excessive exercise of authority (Button, 2020; Berg and Shearing, 2018).
3. **Institutionalise Community Policing Forums:** CPFs should be formally recognised under local governance statutes, with defined roles, funding mechanisms, and accountability structures. Their composition should ensure gender, socio-economic, and minority representation, and their activities should be monitored to prevent partisan co-optation (Skogan, 2006; Baker, 2008).
4. **Integrate Informal Justice into a Legal Framework:** Informal justice actors, such as shomaj councils, should be recognised as dispute-resolution mechanisms while being required to comply with constitutional safeguards. Training, monitoring, and formal oversight could help align local dispute resolution practices with human rights norms, particularly in areas affecting women and marginalised groups (Merry, 1998; Hossain, 2018).
5. **Clarify Hybrid Policing in Industrial and Commercial Zones:** Hybrid policing arrangements should be formalised through agreements that delineate responsibilities among public police, private security, industrial authorities, and local committees. Regulatory mechanisms should ensure adherence to labour laws, occupational safety standards, and due process while maintaining operational efficiency (Berg and Lamb, 2022; Crawford, 2006).
6. **Establish Oversight Mechanisms:** A central oversight body should be created to monitor all plural policing actors, investigate complaints, and enforce compliance with legal standards. Such a body would provide coordination across sectors and prevent ad hoc governance, reducing the risk of abuse and legal uncertainty (Loader and Walker, 2007; Terpstra, 2022).

7. Invest in Training and Capacity Building: Both state and non-state actors should receive ongoing training in human rights, conflict resolution, procedural justice, and constitutional law. Training programmes should be tailored to the diverse contexts of urban, industrial, and rural policing to ensure practical relevance and operational efficacy.
8. Promote Public Awareness and Accountability: Citizens should be informed about the roles, rights, and responsibilities of plural policing actors. Mechanisms for reporting misconduct, accessing remedies, and participating in decision-making would strengthen procedural legitimacy and public trust (O'Neill and Fyfe, 2017; Berg and Shearing, 2018).

These recommendations are designed to be practical, implementable, and contextually grounded, recognising both the necessity and the risks of plural policing in Bangladesh. By embedding plural actors within a transparent, accountable, and legally recognised framework, the state can harness their functional benefits while mitigating risks to constitutional rights, equality, and democratic governance.

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The Situation of Child Rape Victim and their Causes, Consequences and Legal protection in Bangladesh: An Analysis

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Abstract:

Children are the wonderful flowers of this planet. Now Child rape is regarded as the vital and persistent human rights violation in Bangladesh, exposing deep structural weaknesses within the legal and criminal justice systems. Despite the existence of stringent statutory provisions, reporting rates remain low and conviction rates continue to be alarmingly poor. This article examines the causes, consequences, and legal protections relating to child rape victims in Bangladesh through a doctrinal legal analysis supported by secondary sources. It critically reviews the Penal Code, 1860, the Nari o Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain, 2000, and relevant judicial guidelines, alongside institutional mechanisms such as courts, police, and One-Stop Crisis Centres. The study finds that narrow legal definitions, procedural barriers, evidentiary practices that undermine victim dignity, and weak implementation mechanisms collectively deny effective justice to child victims. The article argues that legal reform alone is insufficient without institutional accountability, victim-sensitive procedures, and effective witness protection. This is an endeavor to explore the targeted legal, procedural, and institutional reforms aimed at strengthening victim protection and improving access to justice in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Child rape, legal protection, criminal justice, Bangladesh, victims' rights, sexual violence.

1. Introduction

Child rape in Bangladesh is a growing concern. Many victims do not seek justice due to procedural complexity (Ain o Salish Kendra, 2021). The increasing prevalence of child rape victims in Bangladesh, one of the most dedicated instances of physical assault against children, child rape victims have unexpectedly attracted national attention. The legislative process has made several attempts to solve this issue by establishing stringent laws. However, these laws have not been effective in discouraging crime and have earned harsh criticism for how they were applied. The majority of child victims of sexual assault in Bangladesh don't seek justice because of the confusing judicial system there. In addition to these challenges to the law, discrimination based on gender has been the social norm in patriarchal societies because women consistently experience oppression, abuse, and harassment. With all of those variables in mind, the objective of this essay is to critically examine the present legal framework for child rape victims in Bangladesh in order to discover any flaws that make it impossible to execute full justice for the victims. Gender-based discrimination rooted in patriarchal norms further exacerbates the problem (UNICEF, 2020).

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Child rape is a pervasive issue in Bangladesh. The problem is deeply rooted in a combination of societal, legal and systemic factors that create an environment where victims struggle to find justice and perpetrators frequently enjoy impunity. Patriarchal philosophies and societal norms significantly contribute to the prevalence of child rape in Bangladesh. These norms often lead to the stigmatization of rape victims, making it extraordinarily difficult for them to come forward and seek justice. Moreover, rape myth is a great problem in south Asian countries. Despite the existence of laws that mandate severe punishments for child rape, these crimes have not been satisfactorily prevented. The legal framework itself has been criticized for its inadequacies. Statistical data indicates an increase in reported child rape cases, but this does not accurately reflect the actual number of crimes committed due to widespread underreporting. The reasons for this underreporting are multifaceted, including the stigma associated with rape, fear of reprisal, and a lack of trust in the justice system.

Child rape in Bangladesh is a pervasive and systemic problem, with thousands of cases reported annually, though the actual numbers are believed to be significantly higher due to underreporting (UNICEF, 2020; Ain o Salish Kendra, 2019). This issue is deeply rooted in societal norms, patriarchal philosophies, and systemic failures within the justice system (World Health Organization, 2017). In Bangladesh, Sexual harassment of children is not as prevalent in the headlines. It doesn't surprise us anymore since it has become a routine occurrence. The occurrence of rape against children merely represents an additional unmemorable story among the continuous sea of miserable news. It is a fact that, on an average, three youngsters were raped every day in the throughout country in 2019 wasn't enough to create much of a stir. Rape is a problem around-the-world that affects every nation and their culture. It affects individuals in different ways and happens in a variety of circumstances. Sexual exploitation occurs everywhere, including houses, workplaces, jails, places of worship, health care facilities, and institutionalized settings-as well as during times of conflict and warfare. It has an awful effects on the victims psychological and physical well-being, causing them to struggle with trauma, injuries, and difficulties affecting their sexual and reproductive wellness, as well as hopelessness, nervousness, and suicidal thoughts. The study would additionally address important societal issues that can obstruct full justice.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a doctrinal legal research methodology, focusing on the analysis of existing laws, judicial guidelines, policy documents, and scholarly literature relevant to child rape and victim protection in Bangladesh. The research is primarily based on secondary sources, including statutory instruments such as the Penal Code, 1860, and the Nari o Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain, 2000, reported court decisions, government reports, publications by international organizations, and peer-reviewed academic works. The doctrinal approach is used to examine both the substantive legal framework and its procedural application in practice, particularly in relation to investigation, prosecution, and trial of child rape cases. The study also draws upon observational insights and informal discussions reported in existing literature to contextualize institutional practices within the criminal justice system. Furthermore, the analysis is thematic in nature, identifying recurring legal and institutional gaps that impede justice for child rape victims. Given the sensitive nature of the subject, the study relies exclusively on publicly available sources and does not involve direct engagement with victims.

3. Legal Framework and Legal Analysis:

Penal Code, 1860: The Penal Code, 1860, continues to serve as a foundational statute governing rape offences in Bangladesh. Section 375 defines rape primarily in terms of penile-vaginal penetration and restricts legal recognition to female victims, thereby excluding male, transgender, hijra, and intersex children from statutory protection. This narrow definition fails to reflect contemporary understandings of sexual violence and significantly limits access to justice for many victims.

Additionally, the marital rape exception under Section 375, which excludes sexual intercourse by a husband with his wife above a specified age from the definition of rape, remains a deeply problematic provision. Its continued existence undermines the principle of bodily autonomy and is incompatible with international human rights standards relating to child protection (The Penal Code, 1860).

Evidentiary practices under the Evidence Act, 1872, particularly provisions allowing inquiry into the sexual character of the victim, further exacerbate victim re-traumatization. Such provisions discourage reporting and contribute to a culture of victim-blaming within the criminal justice process (The Evidence Act, 1872).

Nari o Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain, 2000

The Nari o Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain, 2000 constitutes the principal special legislation addressing sexual violence against women and children in Bangladesh. The Act provides for severe punishments, including life imprisonment and, in certain circumstances, the death penalty. While the Act represents a strong punitive framework, its effectiveness is undermined by persistent implementation failures.

The law places significant emphasis on punishment but offers limited procedural safeguards for victims, particularly in relation to psychological support, witness protection, and speedy trial. Delays in investigation and prosecution, coupled with inadequate victim support services, often result in withdrawal of complaints or hostile testimony.

Besides, the Act's focus on severity of punishment has not translated into deterrence, as reflected in persistently low conviction rates. This suggests that the institutional capacity, rather than legislative harshness, remains the primary challenge (Nari O Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain 2000 as amended 2003, 2020).

Judicial guidelines and institutional practice

Judicial directives issued by the Supreme Court of Bangladesh—such as guidelines on recording victim testimony by female magistrates and conducting in-camera trials—represent important steps toward victim-sensitive justice. However, the absence of effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms has resulted in inconsistent compliance.

In practice, victims frequently encounter hostile questioning, prolonged proceedings, and inadequate protection from intimidation. These procedural deficiencies weaken trust in the justice system and contribute to widespread underreporting of child rape cases (Supreme Court of Bangladesh, 2011).

Critical assessment

The existing legal framework in Bangladesh demonstrates a disconnect between law and practice. While statutes prescribe severe penalties, procedural weaknesses, outdated definitions, and institutional failures continue to deny effective justice to child rape victims. Legal reform must therefore be accompanied by procedural safeguards, capacity-building for law enforcement and judiciary, and the introduction of comprehensive victim and witness protection legislation (Jahan, 2020).

4. Findings and Discussions:

The analysis reveals that child rape in Bangladesh cannot be understood as an isolated criminal act. The causes, consequences, and legal responses to child rape are deeply interconnected, and their interaction explains the persistence of the crime despite the existence of severe statutory punishments (Jahan, 2020).

A primary finding of this study is that structural vulnerability plays a decisive role in exposing children to sexual violence. Poverty, child labour, homelessness, and school dropout create conditions in which children remain outside from formal support of protection and supervision. These vulnerabilities are not merely social in nature; they directly intersect with legal and institutional failure. Children engaged in informal labour or living without stable guardianship rarely access police protection, legal aid, or social services. As a result, the law remains formally present but substantively absent in the everyday lives of the most at-risk children (Rahman, 2026).

A second major theme concerns power asymmetry and relational trust. The study finds that perpetrators are frequently acquaintances, employers, relatives, or authority figures who exploit their position of trust. This form of abuse thrives in contexts where reporting mechanisms are weak and where families fear social stigma or retaliation. Legal institutions fail to adequately address this reality because investigative procedures often prioritize evidentiary formalism over victim protection. The absence of witness protection and the prevalence of hostile questioning discourage disclosure, reinforcing silence and impunity (UNICEF, 2020).

The third analytical dimension relates to patriarchal norms and victim-blaming practices, which shape both social attitudes and legal processes. Social stigma surrounding sexual violence against children-particularly girls-translates into reluctance to report offences and into compromised legal outcomes. This stigma is reproduced within the justice system through evidentiary practices that scrutinize the victim's character, behaviour, or perceived morality. The persistence of such practices reflects a deeper institutional failure to internalize child rights and trauma-informed justice, thereby undermining the very objectives of criminal law (Nazmi, 2020).

The consequences of child rape further expose the inadequacy of existing legal responses. The study finds that victims suffer long-term physical, psychological, educational, and social harm, yet the justice system remains largely punitive rather than restorative. Legal processes focus on punishment without ensuring rehabilitation, psychological support, or reintegration for victims. Institutional mechanisms such as One-Stop Crisis Centers, while conceptually sound, remain underutilized due to limited awareness, staffing constraints, and weak coordination with law enforcement and courts (Shuha et.al; 2025).

A critical finding of this study is the disconnect between legal severity and institutional effectiveness. Bangladesh's legal framework prescribes harsh penalties for child rape, including life imprisonment and capital punishment in extreme cases. However, these punitive measures have failed to deter crime because enforcement is inconsistent, investigations are often delayed or compromised, and trials are protracted. The low conviction rate thus reflects not legal insufficiency but systemic dysfunction across policing, Prosecution, and adjudication (Nazmi, 2020).

It is reported that legal responses to child rape remain reactive rather than preventive. While laws address offences after they occur, limited attention is given to early intervention, risk identification, and child protection mechanisms at the community level. This failure allows structural vulnerabilities such as poverty, child labour, and lack of education-to persist unchallenged, perpetuating cycles of abuse.

5. Limitations and Ethical Considerations

This study is limited by its exclusive reliance on secondary sources, including statutes, judicial guidelines, official reports, and relevant academic literature. As a result, it does not incorporate empirical fieldwork, primary data collection, or direct engagement with victims or survivors, and the analysis is therefore, confined to legal, doctrinal, and institutional dimensions rather than lived experiences. Future research may address this limitation by adopting empirical, interdisciplinary, and survivor-centered methodologies to enrich understanding of the social and experiential aspects of the issue (Smith, 2025).

Given the sensitive nature of child rape and sexual violence, the study has been conducted with strict adherence to ethical responsibility. It deliberately avoids sensationalism and ensures a respectful, rights-based approach throughout. No identifying information relating to victims or specific cases is disclosed, and all references are presented in a manner that safeguards dignity, confidentiality, and privacy. In this way, the study seeks to contribute meaningfully to legal and policy reform while upholding ethical standards appropriate to research involving vulnerable populations (World Health Organization, 2011; UNICEF, 2015).

6. Policy Recommendations

Addressing child rape in Bangladesh requires a coordinated reform agenda that moves beyond punitive legislation toward systemic, victim-centered justice. The following policy recommendations could be taken.

a) Legal and legislative reform

The definition of rape under the Penal Code, 1860 should be comprehensively revised to reflect contemporary understandings of sexual violence, ensuring protection for all children irrespective of gender or identity. The marital rape exception, particularly where minors are concerned, should be repealed in line with constitutional guarantees and international child protection norms. Provisions of the Evidence Act, 1872 that permit inquiry into a victim's sexual character should be abolished to prevent traumatization and victim-blaming during trial (Penal Code, 1860, Evidence Act, 1872, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989).

b) Victim and witness protection

Bangladesh has better enact a standalone Victim and Witness Protection Act providing legal safeguards against intimidation, retaliation, and social harassment. This framework should include confidentiality of identity, relocation where necessary, psychological support, and legal aid from the earliest stage of reporting through post-trial recovery (Penal Code, 1860; Evidence Act, 1872).

C) Procedural and institutional reform

Investigative and prosecutorial procedures must be standardized and strictly enforced to ensure child-friendly and trauma-informed handling of cases. Mandatory training on child psychology, gender sensitivity, and ethical investigation should be institutionalized for police officers, prosecutors, and judges. Clear accountability mechanisms should be introduced to monitor compliance with judicial guidelines, including in-camera trials and recording of testimony by designated officers (ECOSOC Res. 2005/20), adopted 2005.

D) Strengthening support services

One-Stop Crisis Centers and police victim support units should be strengthened through increased budgetary allocation, trained personnel, and nationwide coverage. Public awareness campaigns should be undertaken to ensure that victims and families are informed of available services and legal entitlements (Shuha, 2025).

e) Governance and oversight

An independent oversight mechanism should be established to review investigation quality, trial delays, and conviction outcomes in child rape cases. Regular publication of anonymized data on reporting, prosecution, and conviction rates would enhance transparency and policy accountability (Save the Children, 2018).

f) Preventive and social policy measures

Long-term prevention requires addressing structural vulnerabilities such as child labor, school dropout, homelessness, and poverty. Child protection policies must therefore be integrated into education, social welfare, and community policing strategies, with particular emphasis on early detection and intervention (UNICEF. 2019).

7. Conclusion:

From the above discussion it is clear that the situation of child exploitation in Bangladesh is terrible. Abuses of kids must stop and the judges, law enforcement officials, and parents and guardians of children must be made aware of the elements of the Bangladeshi legislation that have the purpose of safeguarding them. Each person ought to refrain from abusing the children since this will have adverse psychological effects on the kids in the long run and will make them bad contributors to society.

It has been found that child rape in Bangladesh is sustained by a convergence of social marginalization, institutional inertia, and outdated legal practices. Addressing any one dimension in isolation is unlikely to produce meaningful change. Instead, effective prevention and justice require an integrated approach that links social protection policies with legal reform, victim-sensitive procedures, and institutional accountability. The persistence of child rape thus reflects not a lack of law, but a failure of governance, implementation, and ethical commitment within the justice system. So, it is urgent to stop these perverted activities altogether.

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