CAN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY HELP IN UNDERSTANDING CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR: AN ANALYSIS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN CRIME

Harnita Prasad, LLM (Business Law), School of Excellence in Law,
The Tamilnadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University.

ABSTRACT

In India crime remains a significant social and legal concern. The changing patterns and increasing complexity of criminal activities have created serious challenges for individuals, institutions and law enforcement agencies. These developments highlight the need to understand not only the nature of crime but also the psychological factors that may influence criminal behaviour. Forensic psychology applies psychological knowledge and principles to the legal and criminal justice system and provides a framework for examining the behaviour and psychological characteristics of individuals involved in criminal activities. Against this background, this paper asks Can forensic psychology help in understanding criminal behaviour? The study examines the relationship between psychological factors such as personality, emotions, cognitive processes, childhood experiences, mental disorders and behavioural patterns and their possible influence on criminal conduct. It further explores the role of forensic psychology in understanding offenders, psychological assessment, criminal investigation and rehabilitation. The paper adopts a doctrinal and qualitative approach, relying on secondary sources including academic literature, psychological research, legal materials, case law and relevant institutional reports. The study also examines the limitations of attributing criminal behaviour solely to psychological factors, recognising that crime may result from the interaction of psychological, social and environmental influences. The paper argues that forensic psychology can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of criminal behaviour when applied through scientifically informed assessment and multidisciplinary approaches. It is expected that the study will highlight the significance of integrating psychological perspectives into criminal justice while maintaining appropriate ethical and professional safeguards. The research ultimately seeks to demonstrate how forensic psychology can contribute to improved understanding, assessment and rehabilitation of individuals involved in criminal behaviour.

Keywords: Forensic Psychology, Criminal Behaviour, Psychological Factors, Criminal Justice, Psychological Assessment.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Crime is one of the major social and legal challenges faced by societies across the world. It affects individuals, families, communities and institutions, creating consequences that extend beyond the immediate victim and the offender. Although criminal law identifies prohibited conduct and prescribes legal consequences, understanding why an individual commits a crime requires a broader examination of human behaviour. Questions concerning the motivations behind criminal conduct, the influence of childhood experiences, the role of emotions and personality, and the impact of social surroundings have remained important areas of inquiry within criminology and psychology. Consequently, the study of criminal behaviour cannot be restricted to the identification of an offence or the determination of legal liability; it must also consider the psychological and environmental circumstances that may contribute to the development of such behaviour.

The relationship between human behaviour and crime has been examined through several schools of criminological thought. Cesare Beccaria, in his influential work On Crimes and Punishments (1764), emphasised rationality, proportional punishment and the importance of preventing crime through a fair and effective legal system. His approach encouraged the examination of human decision-making in relation to criminal conduct. Subsequently, the positivist tradition associated with Cesare Lombroso attempted to explain criminality through characteristics of the individual, although many of Lombroso's specific biological claims have been rejected or criticised by modern scientific scholarship. These historical approaches demonstrate the continuing search for explanations of crime, while also highlighting the need for theories to be evaluated through reliable evidence rather than unsupported assumptions.

Psychological approaches offer another perspective by examining the mental processes, personality characteristics, emotional responses and developmental experiences that may influence criminal behaviour. In Criminal Behavior: A Psychological Approach, Curt R. Bartol and Anne M. Bartol examine criminal conduct through psychological explanations while recognising the relevance of social, economic and environmental influences. Their work illustrates the importance of studying criminal behaviour as a complex phenomenon rather than attributing it to a single cause

Meaning and Scope of Forensic Psychology

Forensic psychology refers broadly to the application of psychological knowledge and methods to legal questions and the administration of justice. It connects psychological research with matters arising in criminal investigations, court proceedings, offender assessment, correctional institutions and rehabilitation. As explained in Curt R. Bartol and Anne M. Bartol's Introduction to Forensic Psychology: Research and Application, the field involves several areas in which psychological knowledge can inform the civil and criminal justice systems. Within criminal justice, forensic psychology may assist in examining an individual's behavioural patterns, assessing relevant psychological characteristics, understanding the circumstances surrounding an offence and identifying appropriate rehabilitative interventions. It may also contribute to the evaluation of eyewitness testimony, the study of memory and suggestibility, and the understanding of how stress, perception and cognitive processes affect the reliability of information obtained during investigations. However, forensic psychology must be distinguished from the assumption that psychologists can determine guilt merely by analysing a person's behaviour. Psychological assessment does not automatically establish whether an accused person committed an offence, and behavioural observations alone cannot reliably reveal criminal intent. Questions of guilt and criminal responsibility must be determined according to applicable law and admissible evidence. The contribution of forensic psychology is therefore complementary: it can provide scientifically informed insights into relevant psychological questions without replacing legal standards or judicial decision-making.

Psychological Factors Influencing Criminal Behaviour

Criminal behaviour may be associated with a combination of psychological, developmental, biological, social and situational influences. Among the psychological factors studied in criminology are personality characteristics, impulsivity, emotional regulation, cognitive distortions, aggression, decision-making and the ability to consider the consequences of one's actions. For example, an individual who has difficulty controlling impulses may react aggressively during a confrontation without adequately considering the consequences. Similarly, a person who repeatedly justifies violence as an acceptable means of resolving disputes may develop patterns of thinking that facilitate aggressive conduct. Such examples illustrate possible psychological mechanisms; they do not establish that impulsivity or particular beliefs inevitably result in crime. Many individuals who experience emotional

difficulties or display impulsive tendencies never engage in criminal activity.

Albert Bandura's social learning perspective provides another important explanation of behavioural development. In his book Social Learning Theory (1977), Bandura explained how individuals can acquire behaviours through observation, imitation and the consequences experienced by themselves or others. Applied cautiously to criminal behaviour, this perspective suggests that repeated exposure to aggression, violence or unlawful conduct may influence how an individual learns to respond to conflict. Nevertheless, observed behaviour is not automatically imitated, and personal choices, social support and other protective influences remain important. Developmental experiences may also influence behaviour. Childhood neglect, abuse, exposure to domestic violence, unstable caregiving and repeated experiences of humiliation or rejection may affect emotional development and interpersonal relationships. In some circumstances, these experiences may contribute to difficulties in managing anger, establishing trust or responding constructively to conflict. However, childhood adversity must not be treated as a direct or inevitable cause of criminality. Many individuals who experience serious childhood hardships do not engage in offending, demonstrating the importance of resilience, supportive relationships and individual circumstances. Mental health conditions require particular care in this discussion. Certain psychological symptoms may be relevant when assessing an individual's behaviour or mental state in a particular case. Nevertheless, the presence of a mental disorder does not, by itself, indicate that a person is dangerous or likely to commit a crime. Criminal behaviour cannot be explained simply by associating mental illness with violence. A scientifically responsible approach must distinguish between clinical diagnosis, individual risk assessment and the legal determination of criminal responsibility.

Social and Environmental Influences on Criminal Behaviour

Although psychological factors are central to this research, criminal conduct must also be examined within its social and environmental context. Family relationships, peer groups, educational opportunities, economic insecurity, neighbourhood conditions, exposure to violence and access to social support may influence behavioural development and the circumstances in which offending occurs.

Edwin H. Sutherland's Principles of Criminology developed the theory of differential association, which explains criminal behaviour in relation to interactions through which individuals learn definitions favourable or unfavourable to violating the law.[3] This approach

directs attention towards the influence of social relationships rather than treating criminality exclusively as an individual psychological problem.

Robert K. Merton's strain theory examined how a disjunction between culturally emphasised goals and legitimate opportunities to achieve them may contribute to different forms of adaptation, including some forms of deviant behaviour.[4] This perspective does not suggest that poverty or disadvantage automatically produces crime. Instead, it highlights how social structures, perceived opportunities and individual responses may interact in shaping conduct.

The environment may also affect the expression of psychological tendencies. Consider two individuals who experience significant frustration. One may have access to supportive family members, counselling, education and constructive ways of resolving conflict. The other may experience persistent violence, social isolation, harmful peer influence and limited access to support. Their responses may differ because the circumstances surrounding them differ. This illustration demonstrates why criminal behaviour should be studied through an interaction of individual characteristics and environmental conditions rather than through a single explanatory theory.

The effects of criminal behaviour are equally complex. Victims may experience physical injuries, psychological trauma, financial loss and a reduced sense of security. Families may suffer emotional distress, while communities may experience fear and declining trust in institutions. Offenders may face imprisonment, social stigma, disrupted family relationships and difficulties in securing employment after release. These consequences demonstrate the importance of not only investigating crime and determining responsibility but also considering victim support, prevention and offender rehabilitation.

Role of Forensic Psychology in Criminal Investigation and Rehabilitation

Forensic psychology can contribute to the criminal justice process by providing psychological assessment, assisting with the interpretation of relevant behavioural information and supporting evidence-based rehabilitation. Psychological knowledge may help professionals understand the relationship between an individual's emotional regulation, thinking patterns, developmental history and conduct in particular circumstances. Behavioural analysis and offender profiling may also assist investigations by generating hypotheses about an unknown offender. However, a profile is not proof of identity, and investigative conclusions must be

tested against independently obtained evidence. Overreliance on profiling can create confirmation bias, encourage investigators to focus prematurely on a particular suspect and risk overlooking alternative explanations.

Forensic psychology also has relevance within correctional settings. Individual assessment may help identify needs associated with anger management, substance misuse, trauma, interpersonal difficulties or other factors relevant to rehabilitation. Appropriate psychological interventions may support behavioural change and reintegration into society. Rehabilitation, however, requires individualised assessment, qualified professionals and continuing evaluation rather than the assumption that a single intervention will be effective for every offender.

Within the Indian criminal justice framework, psychological evidence and expert opinion must operate alongside the applicable rules of evidence and criminal procedure. The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, provides the statutory framework for the admissibility and consideration of evidence, including expert opinions under Section 39. The weight given to a particular psychological opinion depends on the question being examined, the qualifications of the expert, the reliability of the methods employed and the evidence available in the case. Psychological interpretation must therefore remain distinct from the judicial determination of guilt.

Significance and Focus of the Present Study

The significance of the present research lies in examining how forensic psychology can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of criminal behaviour. Rather than assuming that crime results from a single psychological characteristic or disorder, the study considers the possible interaction of personality, emotional regulation, cognitive processes, childhood experiences, mental health and environmental influences. The central question is whether forensic psychology can provide meaningful insights into criminal conduct while acknowledging the limitations of psychological explanations. The study examines its potential relevance to offender assessment, criminal investigation and rehabilitation, with particular attention to the Indian criminal justice framework. It also considers the ethical and scientific safeguards necessary to prevent unsupported profiling, discriminatory labelling and the misuse of psychological evidence. Ultimately, the study approaches criminal behaviour as a multifaceted phenomenon that requires legal, psychological and social perspectives. It seeks to demonstrate that forensic psychology may contribute to understanding the circumstances and

behavioural processes associated with crime, provided that its conclusions are based on reliable evidence, interpreted within context and applied with appropriate professional and ethical safeguards.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the psychological factors influencing criminal behaviour.
2. To analyse the relationship between psychological, social and environmental factors in criminal behaviour.
3. To evaluate the role of forensic psychology in criminal investigation and offender assessment.
4. To assess the contribution of forensic psychology to offender rehabilitation and crime prevention

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mehak Sikand and Jayasankara Reddy K. — Psychological Underpinnings of Criminal Behaviour (2017) The authors review psychological factors that may contribute to criminal behaviour, including personality, psychiatric conditions, intelligence, emotional characteristics and self-control. They explain that these factors may interact rather than operate independently. The study highlights the complexity of understanding criminal conduct. It directly supports the present research on psychological influences on crime. **Callie H. Burt — Self-Control and Crime: Beyond Gottfredson and Hirschi's Theory (2020)** Burt critically examines the relationship between self-control and criminal behaviour. The article explains that self-control can vary according to individual characteristics, situations and environmental circumstances. It challenges the assumption that self-control alone can explain criminality. The study supports a broader understanding of psychological and contextual influences on offending. **Travis C. Pratt and Francis T. Cullen — The Empirical Status of Gottfredson and Hirschi's General Theory of Crime: A Meta-Analysis (2000)** The authors analyse existing empirical studies to assess the relationship between self-control and crime. Their findings indicate that low self-control is an important predictor of criminal and related behaviours. However, they also identify limitations in treating self-control as a complete explanation of crime. The research demonstrates the importance of evaluating psychological theories against empirical

evidence. **Formation of Self-Control: Gottfredson and Hirschi's General Theory of Crime and Beyond — Research article (2011)** This review examines research concerning the development of self-control and its relationship with criminal behaviour. It identifies family experiences, education, biological influences and social circumstances as relevant factors. The findings suggest that self-control develops through a more complex process than some traditional theories propose. The article is useful for examining developmental and environmental influences on offending. **Michael R. Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi — A General Theory of Crime (1990)** The authors propose that low self-control is an important factor in explaining criminal behaviour. They associate low self-control with impulsivity, preference for immediate gratification and insufficient consideration of long-term consequences. Their theory emphasises the importance of early socialisation and parental supervision. It provides a foundational framework for analysing self-control as a psychological factor associated with crime. **Albert Bandura — Social Learning Theory (1977)** Bandura explains how individuals acquire behaviours through observation, imitation and social interaction. His theory suggests that behaviour may be influenced by the actions of role models and the consequences those actions produce. Applied to criminology, the theory helps explain how exposure to aggression or unlawful conduct may influence behavioural development. It supports the examination of family and peer environments in understanding criminal behaviour. **Edwin H. Sutherland — Principles of Criminology,** Sutherland's theory of differential association explains that criminal behaviour can be learned through interaction with others. Individuals may acquire attitudes, techniques and justifications that favour violations of the law. His approach emphasises the influence of social relationships on criminal conduct. It demonstrates why psychological explanations should also consider peer groups and social environments. **Robert K. Merton — Social Theory and Social Structure,** Merton's strain theory examines the relationship between socially valued goals and access to legitimate opportunities. He argues that tensions between these elements can contribute to different forms of deviant adaptation. His work highlights the influence of social structures and unequal opportunities on behaviour. It provides a sociological perspective for examining how environmental pressures may interact with individual psychological factors. **Curt R. Bartol and Anne M. Bartol — Criminal Behaviour: A Psychological Approach,** The authors examine criminal behaviour through psychological theories and research. Their work considers personality, cognition, development and other individual characteristics alongside social and environmental influences. It demonstrates that criminal behaviour is complex and cannot be explained adequately by a single factor. The book provides a central theoretical foundation for

the present study. **Curt R. Bartol and Anne M. Bartol — Introduction to Forensic Psychology: Research and Application,** This book examines how psychological knowledge is applied within legal and criminal justice settings. It discusses investigative psychology, psychological assessment, eyewitness testimony and correctional practices. The authors demonstrate how psychological research can contribute to understanding legal issues and offender behaviour. It is directly relevant to assessing the role of forensic psychology in criminal investigation and rehabilitation. **Adrian Raine — The Anatomy of Violence: The Biological Roots of Crime,** Raine examines research concerning the possible biological and neurological correlates of violent and antisocial behaviour. The book discusses brain functioning, genetics and the interaction between biological and environmental influences. It presents evidence suggesting that biological characteristics may be relevant to understanding certain behavioural outcomes. It also supports a multidisciplinary approach rather than an exclusively psychological explanation of crime. **Philip Zimbardo — The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil,** Zimbardo examines how situational pressures, group dynamics and institutional environments can influence human behaviour. His work explores how ordinary individuals may act differently under particular social circumstances. It highlights the importance of examining the environment in which behaviour occurs. The book contributes to understanding how situational influences may interact with individual psychological characteristics. **Hervey Cleckley — The Mask of Sanity,** Cleckley examines the clinical characteristics historically associated with psychopathy. His work influenced later research on personality characteristics, interpersonal behaviour and emotional responses. It provides historical context for the study of psychopathy within clinical and forensic settings. However, psychopathic traits should not be treated as proof that an individual is criminal or violent. **Robert D. Hare — Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths Among Us,** Hare discusses psychopathy and characteristics such as manipulative behaviour, lack of empathy and limited remorse. His work draws on clinical observations and research concerning psychopathic traits. It contributes to understanding the assessment of personality characteristics in forensic contexts. The book is relevant to this study, while recognising that psychopathy and criminal behaviour are not interchangeable concepts. **James Q. Wilson and Richard J. Herrnstein — Crime and Human Nature,** The authors examine criminal behaviour through biological, psychological and social perspectives. They discuss how individual characteristics, decision-making and environmental conditions may influence offending. Their approach considers multiple factors rather than relying on a single explanation of crime. The book supports the present research's examination of the interaction between

psychological and environmental influences.

RSEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a doctrinal research methodology with a qualitative and analytical approach. It is based on secondary sources and examines the role of forensic psychology in understanding criminal behaviour and its possible application within the criminal justice system. The sources considered for the study include academic books, published research articles, criminological theories and relevant statutory materials. The literature is examined to identify psychological factors associated with criminal behaviour and to understand how these factors interact with social and environmental circumstances. The study analyses the contribution of psychological knowledge to criminal investigation, offender assessment and rehabilitation. It also considers the limitations of psychological explanations, including the risk of unsupported profiling, the possibility of biased interpretation and the danger of associating mental health conditions with criminality without sufficient evidence. Relevant Indian legal provisions are considered to understand the place of expert opinion within the legal framework. The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, is particularly relevant to the consideration of expert opinions on matters requiring specialised knowledge. The research does not involve interviews, questionnaires, experiments or surveys conducted by the researcher. Accordingly, the findings are based on the interpretation of the selected secondary literature and legal materials rather than on newly collected primary data. The study is analytical in nature and does not claim to establish a direct causal relationship between any single psychological factor and criminal behaviour.

ANALYSIS

- **Psychological Factors and Criminal Behaviour**

The literature reviewed indicates that psychological factors such as impulsivity, self-control, emotional regulation and patterns of thinking may be relevant to understanding criminal behaviour. Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory places particular emphasis on self-control, while Burt's review highlights the importance of considering situational and contextual influences. Together, these works demonstrate that psychological characteristics may be relevant without necessarily providing a complete explanation of offending. The findings from the literature suggest that individual characteristics should be interpreted in context. Impulsivity, for

example, may affect decision-making in some situations, but it does not mean that every impulsive individual will engage in crime. Similarly, emotional difficulties cannot independently establish criminal intent or responsibility.

- **Social and Environmental Influences**

The literature also highlights the relevance of social relationships and environmental conditions. Bandura's social learning perspective explains how behaviour may be influenced by observation and social experience, while Sutherland's differential association theory focuses on the learning of criminal attitudes and behaviour through interaction with others. Merton's work adds a broader social perspective by examining the relationship between social goals and legitimate opportunities. These theories demonstrate that criminal behaviour should not be understood as the result of individual psychology alone. Family relationships, peer groups, social experiences and environmental conditions may interact with personal characteristics and influence how individuals respond to different situations.

- **Role of Forensic Psychology**

The literature on forensic psychology indicates that psychological knowledge may assist professionals in examining relevant behavioural information and conducting assessments when specialised expertise is required. It may also contribute to the understanding of eyewitness memory, investigative interviewing and rehabilitation needs. However, the contribution of forensic psychology must remain within appropriate limits. A psychological profile cannot conclusively identify an offender, and an assessment cannot independently establish guilt. The reliability of an opinion depends on the methods used, the qualifications of the professional, the quality of the information available and the legal question being considered.

- **Thematic Distribution of the Literature Reviewed**

For the purpose of organising the review, the 15 sources discussed above have been grouped according to their primary themes. The categories reflect the main emphasis assigned to each source for this study. They do not represent the proportion of criminal behaviour caused by any factor or the results of an empirical investigation.

Main theme	Number of sources	Percentage
Psychological and personality perspectives	**5**	**33.3%**
Self-control theories	**4**	**26.7%**
Social learning and sociological perspectives	**3**	**20.0%**
Biological and situational perspectives	**2**	**13.3%**
Integrated criminological perspectives	**1**	**6.7%**
Total	**15**	**100%**

Figure 1: Thematic Distribution of the Literature Reviewed

The classification shows that psychological and personality perspectives form the largest category within the selected literature, followed by self-control theories. Social learning and sociological explanations also form a substantial part of the review, while biological, situational and integrated perspectives provide additional viewpoints.

This classification demonstrates the multidisciplinary nature of the literature selected for the study. It must not be interpreted as evidence that psychological factors account for a particular percentage of crime. The percentages describe only how the reviewed sources have been grouped for analytical purposes.

DISCUSSION

Forensic psychology plays an important role in understanding criminal behaviour by examining the psychological factors that may influence an individual's involvement in criminal activities. It provides insights into personality, emotional development, cognitive processes, behavioural patterns and the influence of environmental experiences. The study of these factors helps explain why individuals may respond differently to similar circumstances and why criminal behaviour cannot be attributed to a single cause. The analysis of existing literature indicates that psychological factors such as impulsivity, aggression, emotional instability, childhood trauma and certain patterns of thinking may be associated with criminal behaviour. However, the presence of these factors does not necessarily mean that an individual will commit a crime. Criminal behaviour is complex and may result from the interaction of psychological, biological, social and environmental influences. Forensic psychology also

contributes to criminal investigations through behavioural assessment, investigative interviewing and the examination of offender behaviour. Psychological assessments may assist professionals in understanding an individual's mental state, behavioural characteristics and rehabilitation needs. Nevertheless offender profiling must be treated as an investigative aid rather than conclusive evidence of guilt. A psychological assessment cannot independently establish that a particular person committed an offence. From a legal perspective forensic psychology may assist courts when psychological expertise is relevant to an issue requiring expert assessment. In India the admissibility and evidentiary value of expert opinions depend on the applicable law and the circumstances of each case. Psychological opinions must be evaluated alongside other admissible evidence and cannot replace the court's independent assessment of the facts. The study also highlights the importance of ethical considerations in the application of forensic psychology. Psychological assessments must be conducted by appropriately qualified professionals using reliable methods. Improper assessments, unsupported profiling and the misinterpretation of psychological characteristics may lead to prejudice, discrimination or wrongful suspicion. Therefore forensic psychology can contribute significantly to understanding criminal behaviour but its effectiveness depends on scientific reliability, professional competence, ethical safeguards and appropriate integration with the criminal justice system.

SUGGESTION

Forensic psychology should be given greater importance in the Indian criminal justice system to improve the understanding of criminal behaviour and support effective crime prevention. Law enforcement officers, legal practitioners and other criminal justice professionals should receive appropriate training in forensic psychology to understand the psychological factors that may influence criminal conduct. Such training can help professionals interpret behavioural patterns more carefully and recognise the limitations of psychological assessments. Furthermore, greater emphasis should be placed on scientific research into the psychological factors associated with criminal behaviour in the Indian context. Research institutions and academic organisations should encourage studies examining the relationship between childhood experiences, emotional development, personality characteristics, social surroundings and criminal conduct. This would help develop a more comprehensive understanding of criminal behaviour while taking into account the social and cultural diversity of Indian society. The use of forensic psychological assessments and offender profiling should

be guided by scientific reliability and professional standards. Psychological assessments should be conducted by appropriately qualified professionals using suitable methods. Offender profiling should be used only as an investigative aid and should not be treated as conclusive evidence of guilt. Investigators and courts must carefully evaluate psychological opinions alongside other relevant evidence to prevent errors and unjustified suspicion. It is also important to strengthen cooperation between psychologists, criminologists, medical professionals, investigators and legal practitioners. An interdisciplinary approach can help provide a more comprehensive understanding of criminal behaviour and improve the quality of criminal investigations. At the same time, appropriate safeguards must be established to protect the privacy, dignity and legal rights of individuals undergoing psychological assessment. Psychological characteristics or mental health conditions should not be used as the sole basis for labelling a person as a potential offender. Finally greater attention should be given to rehabilitation and the prevention of repeated offending. Where appropriate psychological assessments may help identify the needs of offenders and guide suitable counselling, treatment and rehabilitation programmes. Such measures should be implemented in accordance with applicable law and professional standards. By promoting scientific research, professional training, ethical assessment and rehabilitation, forensic psychology can contribute to a more effective, fair and humane criminal justice system in India.

LIMITATION

The present study has certain limitations as it adopts a doctrinal research methodology and relies primarily on secondary sources, including books, research articles, legal provisions and judicial decisions. It does not involve primary data collection through interviews or surveys. Criminal behaviour is influenced by various psychological, biological, social and environmental factors, making it difficult to identify a single cause of crime. Furthermore, forensic psychological assessments and offender profiling have limitations and cannot independently establish criminal responsibility. The study primarily focuses on the Indian criminal justice system and does not examine every international perspective on forensic psychology.

CONCLUSION

Forensic psychology provides a valuable perspective for understanding criminal behaviour by examining the psychological processes, emotional experiences, personality characteristics and

behavioural patterns that may influence an individual's actions. The present doctrinal study demonstrates that understanding crime requires more than examining the offence itself; it also requires careful consideration of the individual and the circumstances in which the behaviour occurred. Psychological factors may contribute to the development of criminal behaviour, but they should not be considered isolated or inevitable causes of crime. The interaction of individual characteristics with family conditions, social experiences and environmental influences must also be recognised. Consequently, no single psychological theory can adequately explain every form of criminal conduct. The study further establishes that forensic psychology can support criminal investigations, psychological assessments, expert evaluation and rehabilitation. However, its application must be guided by scientific reliability, professional competence and respect for individual rights. Psychological profiling should never substitute for reliable evidence, and psychological characteristics alone cannot establish criminal responsibility. In the Indian context, greater awareness of forensic psychology, improved professional training, ethical assessment practices and effective cooperation between legal and psychological professionals may strengthen its contribution to criminal justice. At the same time, appropriate safeguards are necessary to prevent prejudice, unsupported conclusions and the misuse of psychological information. In conclusion, forensic psychology can help in understanding criminal behaviour by providing scientifically informed explanations of psychological influences and supporting appropriate investigative and rehabilitative practices. Its greatest value lies not in predicting criminality with certainty, but in contributing to a more informed, evidence-based and humane approach to criminal justice.

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