Psychological profiling in criminal investigation criminology essay

The human being is intertwined with emotions and thoughts which is manifested in the form of behaviour. He judges the situation in a contextual frame of mind. Therefore every individual will have a unique way to respond to the situation. As a human tendency every individual has an intention to know as to what does other person thinks of him and vice- versa. When we meet one person, based on the reference to situation and context we try to form an opinion of the individual. Profiling is delving interference upon the available information, witness and evidences. Profiling is done by each and every individual and in each and every situation but with different perspective. Profiling is a technique which is used in our everyday life.

Profiling is an advanced investigative tool while its effectiveness is still under a lot of scientific scrutiny. An Indian would shake his head from left to right in an affirmative gesture or expression, while a Caucasian by doing so would indicate a denial gesture or expression; while an owl in the Middle East is looked upon as a bad omen, while in the west it symbolizes wisdom, and so on…

It is accepted that the evolution of human racial and physical features generate from their inherited behaviour due to a specific environment and way of adaptation. Let's take for instance an African negroid thick lips evolved due to an adapting process to help preserve moisture, an aborigine of Australia or Papua New Guinea developed thick eye browse to protect his eyes from sun rays, a Bedouin desert folk did so with a larger or longer nose to help him breath better in desert climate, and women living in hot and humid terrains tend to have a larger buttocks to preserve body fat etc…

Profiling for the law enforcement and criminal justice systems invoves psychological assessment of the offender. The assessment contains socio-demographic information viz. age, gender, marital status, education, occupation and the social and psychological attributes of the offender.

It is one of the important technique through which a forensic expert can help the investigator to find the root cause of the crime. The forensic expert through his psychological acumen examines the crime scene, police record, statements of witness, medical records and corroborates them with the subject's psychological test findings and other procedure (such as ANS and DNS based procedures) to prepare a forensic profile.

The definition of profiling is :

Profiling is a method of identifying the perpetrator of a crime based on an analysis of the nature of the offense and the manner in which it was committed. Various aspects of the criminal's personality makeup are determined from his or her choice of actions before, during, and after the crime. This information is combined with other pertinent details and physical evidence, and then compared with the characteristics of known personality types and mental abnormalities to develop a practical working description of the offender.

-FBI's Howard Teten (who has been called the " grandfather" of profiling)

It provides specific information about the offender to the investigating agency regarding the crime and his involvement in the crime. In early days

although profiling was done informally; with the invasion of different test and techniques, profiling has become more scientific and precise.

Profiling goes back in history to the middle ages, and Scotland Yard took it a step further, while Sherlock Holmes character made it even more popular, then there is the CSI series of late filling the rest of the empty cup of the thirsty TV shows viewers.

Freudian theory of profiling:

Freud's psychoanalysis has emphasized on the human's basic instinct: sex and aggression and how does it influence an individual's mental state. Freud has also doctrine faulty upbringing of the child leads to mental illness / neurotic personality. Research studies says that the children who have unhealthy childhood are more prone to crime. Dr. Thomas Bond, a police surgeon was invited by the investigating agencies to study the case of the killer, Jack- The Ripper, who had claimed to kill five prostitutes in Whitechapel, London 1888. He applied the Freudian principles to the given case. Based on the limited information and evidence, Thomas Bond believed that the offender must be of physical strength, great coolness and daring. The offender was a middle aged, inoffensive and quiet man. He must be neatly and respectably dressed. The offender must be in habit of wearing cloak or overcoat or he could hardly have escaped notice in the streets if the blood on his hands or clothes are visible. This attempt of profiling made a noteworthy contribution in the field of forensic science. Thereafter, John Douglas has done 12 pages of profiling of this case but it has not resulted into identification of the criminal. The profiling done by John Douglas was based on available medical reports, crime scene photographs and police

investigative reports, which probably does not give the detail evidences compared to today's investigative style. (Mailonline, Sadie, white locks, 20/4/2011) This effort placed profiling on the center stage of investigation.

Walter Langer, an American psychoanalyst did the profiling of Hitler on the request of Gen. William J. Donovan. Walter has not personally interviewed Hitler but he had interviewed the associates of Hitler and Investigating agencies. He analysis inferred that Hitler's personality was an evidence of mixed and divided psyche. He said that the Hitler was probably " a neurotic psychopath bordering on schizophrenia" in to two at the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) divided Hitler's profiling into five general sections:-

How the Hitler viewed himself

How German people viewed him

Hos his associates viewed him

Psychoanalysis and reconstruction

His likely future behavior

Langer's profile indicated that mostly Hitler will commit suicide.

Being Psychiatrist, Dr. James Brussel, heavily relied upon the psychoanalytical theory. Prior to this case, Dr. Brussel during his army service has cured many patients . He was given the case wherein the bomber was placing the series of explosive packages. Within 16 years he had planted bombs in main cinemas and telephone boxes. On the basis of

the letter written to Con Edison (the electricity company in New York) he profiled the offender as unmarried, foreign, self educated, in his 50's, living in Connecticut, paranoid. Based on this profiling, the police was able to arrest George Metesky in January 1957, a foreign born Roman Catholic. Late Brussel was asked to do profiling of the case of 13 sexual homicides between 1962 to 1964., to which he opined that all the 13 crimes are done by one offender. After several months; Albert DeSalvo was arrested who later confessed about the crime, although it was not proved. Brussel applied his Freudian analysis on the case and he portrayed the picture of the probable culprit.

The Profile

Profile

Basis of profiling

Bomber is a male

With few exceptions, bombers have been always male

Letter mentioning Con Edison

The bomber had a grudge against Con Edison and was likely a former employee

Bomber was a textbook paranoid.

The bomber believed that Con Edison and the public at large conspired against him.

Bomber was middle-aged probably around 50

Paranoia generally peaks around age 35 and the bomber had been active for 16 years.

Paranoids tend to set high standards for themselves so as not open themselves to unwanted criticism.

Bomber was neat, meticulous and skilled at his work , carefully constructed bombs, neat lettering, careful planning of the bombs indicated his neatness

Foreign or spent the majority of his time with foreign people

Bomber wrote in stilted, formal language bereft of any contemporary slang. He utilized phrases like " dastardly deeds" that sounded as if out of Victorian fiction

The bomber had at least a high school education but probably no college.

The stilted language of the letters and skilled construction of the bombs spoke of self-education. The excellent handwriting indicated at least some formal schooling.

The bomber was a Slav and probably Roman Catholic

Culturally speaking, Eastern and Central Europeans most often employ bombs as weapons. Most Slavs are Catholic.

The bomber lived in Connecticut

The letters had been mailed from Westchester Country (a location in between Connecticut and New York) and Connecticut was home to large communities of Eastern and Central Europeans.

The bomber suffered from an Oedipal Complex

The phallic construction of the bombs; the strange (and breast-like) W's in the bomber's otherwise perfect handwriting and the strange slashing and penetration of the movie theatres seats.

IP (Interpersonal) Approach to Profiling:

Prof. David Canter, psychologist, London, UK was invited by Scotland Yard to solve the case of " Railway Rapist". According to David Canter, the offender was of late twenties, small stature, reserved, married but no children and lives in the small down of Northwest London, which matched. Based on his profiling, the police was able to nab John Duffy in 1988. He was found guilty.

Although David has observed that the investigating agencies are often reluctant to change and opt for newer techniques to catch the criminals. He has extensively used IP methodology for profiling. According to him, psychology has a direct relationship with crime, as it is perceived as interpersonal transaction between the criminal's action, social context and personality trait. He has postulated five approaches for profiling.

Interpersonal Coherence:

A criminal chooses his victim based on his special characteristics. For eg: there is some anecdotal evidence that serial killers only attack those of the same ethnicity as themselves in United states (Canter, 1989). The profiler

will be able to establish the relationship between the victim and the offender and the probable conversation at the time of the crime.

Significance of time and place:

The offender generally picks up the victim from the place which is more familiar to him. He would possibly select the victim from his nearby location as he will feel completely in control of the environment and the victim.

Criminal Characteristics:

By observing and analysing the crime scene, the offender will be able to give the picture about the characteristics of the offender namely, his physical qualities, his appearance, his apparel, mental make up, mood and psychopathology, if any. Douglas & Olshaker (1995) have stated that " We set about to organise and classify serious crimes by their behavioural characteristics and explain them like mentioned in Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) of Psychiatry. The serial offenders will tend to operate within an area where they feel comfortable (e. g., close to their own homes) and has many similarities to the independently developed field of geographical

profiling (Holmes & Holmes, 1996).

Criminal Career:

The offender although cautious of his move in the next crime, his particular style of killing will not be different. The peculiarity of committing the crime will vary from offender although not always the type of crime. Although he might do more refined crime but his methodology of crime will not have bigger change. His style of killing will help in trapping the offender.

Forensic awareness:

Often the serial killer is aware of clearing the evidence from the place of the offence. The rapist is much likely to clean the undergarments of the victim or force her to comb her pubic hair so that the evidence is not available. This type of steps clearly gives an indication of the offender being aware of the police/ forensic investigation.

Vi-CAP (Violent Criminal Apprehension Program):

Robert Ressler served in US Army and thereafter joined FBI, Behavioural Science Unit (BSU) in 1970 and retired in 1990. In his span of twenty years he has given his significant contribution in psychological profiling of violent offenders. He has drawn the psychological profiles of violent offenders who typically select victims at random, such as rapist and serial killer. He has interviewed 36 serial killers to study the background and motive of serial killer.

He has set up Vi-CAP (Violent Criminal Apprehension Program) which collects the data base of the suspects of unsolved crimes. He has written books on Serial murder like I have lived in the Monster: Inside the mind of the worlds most notorious serial killer, " Crime Classification Manual: A Standard System for Investigating and Classifying Violent Crime,. He has done psychological profiling of Jeffery Dahmer and Richard Chase.

Robert Ressler et. al (1988) has given six steps for profiling:

Profiling Inputs:

The physical documents like investigation documents, crime scene details, photographs, autopsy report, post mortem report are studied as a part of the first step toward profiling. These are the basic and preliminary requirements to sketch the criminal.

Decision Process Model:

In this stage, the offender's intention, motive, risk factor of the victim/ offender is assessed and evaluated. The offender has done planning or it is just a spree killing. How much time the offender has taken to commit the crime as well as the offender's selection for committing a crime says a lot about the criminal. The analysis will also give the clue whether the crime was homicide or not.

Profiling process:

This is the heart of the profiling. The profiler steps into the shoes of the victim as well as the offender and thereby reconstructs the crime scene. It determines whether the crime was an organised or disorganised. By reconstructing, the overall impression about the crime i. e how did the offender behaved, what could have happened between the victim and offender, how the victim was selected and so on. Common characteristics like type of wound, position of the body observed at the crime scene helps in determining the type of offender

Criminal Profile:

Depending upon the inputs available , the profiler based on his experience and knowledge constructs the profile. Profiler will include the general

appearance, probable age, gender, religion, interpersonal history, his relation with the victim, socio-economic background, educational and occupational history, his motive behind selection of the victim and his reason for the M. O used for the crime. The profiler also proposes the strategies to catch the offender and also the interrogation methods.

Investigation:

Based on the submission of the profile given, the investigating agency starts to look out for the criminal. In due course of investigation, if officer finds more information, he forwards to the profiler for a more relevant data. The profiling is said to be successful only when the criminal is caught and confesses about the crime.

Apprehension:

When the criminal is caught is the profile and profiling process are evaluated so that a more acumen profile in other crimes.

John Douglas worked in FBI from 1970 to 1995. He started his career as sniper and then became hostage negotiator. He taught hostage negotiation and applied criminal psychology at FBI academy. He has extensively worked with the most notable violent criminals and sex offenders. His skill was to examine their habits and thereby predict their moves. He has been instrumental in identifying famously known " The Green Killer". He gave some of the most interesting insight about the motive, mind and operation of the killer. He has done high profile cases like Case of Jon Bonet, Ramsay murder, The West Mermphis three. He has " Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit" and more..

Roy Hazelwood is the pioneer in profiling of sexual predators. He joined FBI in 1971. He has done lot of sex crime cases related to sexual sadist, their victims and their mode of offence. According to his theory, there is no cure for pedophilia or sexual sadist. Presently, he is consultant to FBI agents and law enforcement agencies to trap the sexually oriented murderers. He felt fantasy is a fascinating area which is extremely relevant and gives better understanding about offender. His first case " Harvay Glatman" the Lonely Heart Killer inspired him to work in the area of profiling. Thereafter, he was worked on " Gerard John Screefar" who was involved in autoerotic practices and had done 29 murders.

In 1980, Roy and John Douglas wrote an article which distinguished crime in two broad categories i. e Organised and Disorganised crime.

CSA (Crime Scene Approach):

Earlier FBI was the agency who has used psychological profiling in investigation and has gained popularity. The renowned profiler like John Douglas and Robert Ressesler also wrote several books on profiling and their professional experience in the field of investigation.

According to Holmes & Holmes (1996) provided Crime Scene Approach (CSA) which was broadly based on crime scene and crime. IT focused more on the physical evidence available at the place of the offence and its relation to the crime. The two types of offenders involved in the crime are

The disorganised asocial offender

The organised Nonsocial offender

The Disorganised offender:

The disorganized offender is depicted as someone who is below average intelligence, manifesting some kind of psychiatric illness, not having the capacity to maintain interpersonal relationship apart from his immediate family members, sexually incompetent. He would act more impulsive and usually act with whatever available weapon and thereby leave it at the crime scene.

He will be more authoritative with the victim. He overpowers victim is killed with brutality (FBI, blitz attack, Douglas & Olshaker, 1995) The offender dehumanize the victim and sexually assaulted, mutilatied the face, genitals and breast is commonly observed. The dead body is left at the crime scene rather than disposing anywhere else. (Holmes& Holmes 1996, Ressler, Burgess & Douglas 1988, Ressler & Shachtman, 1992)

While the organized offender although well educated but is under achiever and failure in occupational life. He is socially well settled, will probably have family life but oftenly manifest antsocial or psychopathic personality. The crime scene will depict the ability to depict the ability to organize and execute the plan. The offender often has his own weapon and carries with him after committing the crime.

The victim targeted is mostly female who is raped by threat/restraints. The killing performance is done as per the offender's fantasies, usually in slow, painful manner. The body of the victim is carefully disposed off.

Inductive and Deductive Profiling

Brent Turvey has done his graduuation in Forensic psychology and has given his contribution in the area of forensic science, criminal profiling, victimology and crime reconstruction. He is a court qualified profiler. He has given the theory of Inductive and Deductive profiling and Behavioural Evidence Analysis

Inductive Profiling:

It assesses and evaluates the similar characteristics of the crime committed by different criminal. It studies the common personality trait of the criminals involved in a similar kind of crime. The inductive profiling is based on the theoretical and experiemental study of the criminal behavior. It identifies the signs and symptoms of criminal behavior and puts together as a comprehensive profile. The inductive profile is the product of statistical or comparative analysis and results in education generalization, hence the use of the term of " inductive".(Criminal profiling: An introduction to Behaviural Evidence Analysis, Brent Turvey, 2006, pg 26). The characteristics of the criminal is reasoned, correlated and thereby statistical inferred. The profile focus on the psychological trait, the modus operandi, victimology and other crime scene characteristics which an evenly seen in the crime. The inductive profiling does not need specialized forensic knowledge, education or training in the study of criminal behavior.

Thus profiling is based upon the information delved from past history, media and sometimes from the criminals. It does need the formal knowledge of psychology, sociology, criminology and psychiatry. Inductive profiling is effective only and only when there is some similarities between the crime.

Deductive Profiling:

The knowledge and application of psychology, sociology, criminology and psychiatry plays a vital role in deductive profiling. The profiler has to construct the mental picture based on the crime scene and the available physical evidence, as physical evidence also sometimes the gives the clue for non-physical evidence. (love, hate, jealousy..) The deductive profiling is process oriented wherein the investigator will review the crime scene, analytical thinking and logistics to come to behavior analysis evidence. (BEA)

More emphasis is given on the study and analysis of post mortem report, forensic report and victomology. This profiling is time consuming because it has to look at the various factors in one particular crime and thereby give profile of a criminal and the mentality/ psycho pathology of the unknown killer. It analysis the behavior manifested at the time of the crime, the physical and behavioural evidence pattern related to the crime.

Compared to inductive, deductive profiling is time consuming as it evaluates the unknown criminal from different angles, although the combination of inductive and deductive profiling will give an accurate profile of the criminal. The deductive criminal profile includes the following : ".(Criminal profiling: An introduction to Behaviural Evidence Analysis, Brent Turvey, 2006, pg 41).

Behavioural Evidence Analysis (BEA)

Equivocal Forensic Analysis:

It includes detail understanding of crime scene, post-mortem report, interview with accused/witness/ victim/suspects and other related in the crime, and the background of the victim

Victomology:

It studies as to why a particular victim is chosen for the crime, how was he related to the crime and when did the crime happened. A lot of it depend upon the selection of victim by the offender.

Crimes Scene characteristics :

The scene of offence implies about the relation between the offender and the victim. It gives the clue whether any interaction took place, what were the circumstances under which the crime has occurred

Offender Characteristics:

What was the personality of the offender. It determines the offenddrs's physical characteristics and marital status at the time of committing a crime. It helps in deciding the personality traits like physical built-up.

Geographical Profiling:

This technique is given by Criminologist; Kim Rossno, which evaluates the location of connected serial crimes to determine the most probable area of offender's residence. It is most effective when a series of crime is committed. It determines the most likely location of a criminal's residence based upon the geographic location of crime sites by mapping crime and analyzing patterns at crime scene. Geographical profiling is generally useful in the serial crimes (Murder, rape, arson, bombing), predatory crime (child abduction, sexual homicide) and Multiple location crimes (credit card usage, property crimes)

Geographical profiling is based on RAT (Routine Activity Theory) which studies what makes criminal motivated to do a crime at a particular place. It addresses the geographical importance at the time of committing a crime. RAT is based upon three components: 1) Motivated offender 2) Suitable victim and 3) the absence of capable guardian. Canter (2003) used Dragnet a computerized system which gives the probability of the location of crime where the criminal is likely to commit the crime. Canter and Larkin (1993) gave circle theory of enviornmetal range which states that the criminals are likely to live in the vicinity of the victim as the victim is easily and quickly approachable. A circle is drawn that encompasses all the linked crime which will establish the criminal's location. Rossomo (2000) suggested that the criminals are often in the neighborhood of the victim. According to a study (2005) Snook et al, in 63% of the cases the killer lived within the radius of 6 miles from the place of offence. It further found that the young offenders tend to travel less while the people with higher I. Qs travelled farther.

Limitation:

Profiling although an impressive investigative tool has not resulted any criminal in an actual arrest (V. Gerberth, personal communication, Feb 6, 1995) It does not solve the crime but it provides better understanding of the case. Profiling requires understanding of human behavior, background of extensive criminal investigative experience together with proper academic and forensic training. It is important to know that not all the crimes are suitable for profiling. Crimes which needs psychological, social, cultural and psychopathological assessment are appropriate for profiling viz. serial killer, serial rapist, serial arsons, child molestation (Hazelwood & Burgess, 1995)

Cases involving destruction of property, assault/ murder during the robbery are generally not suitable for profiling. Drug induced crime does not reveal the true personality of the criminal, hence the profiling is not suitable.

Conclusion:

Though profiling is considered as an ineffective tool for drawing conclusions, it has been used in every field. It is an effort to evaluate and understand the human behavior on different occasions and in given situations. When we review the literature on profiling, the ineffective tool of profiling has been used time and again all over the world in different situations and efforts are made to draw conclusions. Over a period of time, it has evolved as an art when blend with scientific principles can prove to be an effective tool for investigating and understanding human behavior on different occasions. Here the author has made an attempt to review the literature with reference to crime investigation.