CHAPTER-I

FEMALE CRIMINALITY : GLOBAL REVIEW
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Crime is considered as an inevitable and inbuilt phenomenon in every society. Absolute abolition or eradication of crime from any society is not possible. As long as humanbeings are there, as long as existence of society and human action-reaction-interaction is there, incidence of crime is bound to occur. World known criminologist Prof. Frank Tannenbaum of the Columbia University has pointed out this realism about crime. "Crime is eternal—as eternal as society, so far as we know, human fallibility has manifested itself in all types and forms of human organizations." 1

The views of great sociologist Emile Durkheim too support this actuality. "Crime is present not only in the majority of societies of one particular species but in all societies of all types. There is

no society that is not confronted with problem of criminality."

However, there are some countries, which because of their ideological misconception plead that in the communist societies crime does not exist at all. But it is not true, as stated by Durkheim and even there is no evidence for this. There is one possibility, that the crime rate of communist societies could be low than that of the capitalist democracies and other military-ruled states.

Contemporary criminologists Sir Leon Radzinowicz, and King have presented their opinion about this as:

Soviet Russia and other socialist countries find themselves in a cul-de-sac, constructed from their own ideology and promises. They have adopted the line

that communism will destroy the roots of crime. Yet crime continues.

Noted Indian sociologist Dr. T.K.N. Unnithan too shares the same view-point. He opines that "Criminality is a phenomenon that is universal and 'normal' in all societies." Another senior Indian criminologist Dr. S. K. Shukla also subscribes to the same thought, "Due to the incorrigible wickedness of men, crime becomes normal and a society exempt from it is utterly impossible."

Thus there can not be any disagreement about the ever-lasting nature of crime in any given society. And as incidence of crime is harmful to any given society; it ultimately designate the

4. Unnithan T.K.N., Foreword in Ahuja Ram's "Female Offenders In India", Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut (India), 1969, p. v.
crime as a social problem. Like natural calamities as cyclone, drought and earthquake, crime is a societal calamity. The Only difference is that it is a man made calamity. Therefore, crime or calamity becomes a problem os serious concern, at least to keep it in control, to all sociologists in general and criminologists in particular.

As the very nature of criminological studies is inter-disciplinary and multi-dimensional, it needs different kinds of approaches to understand the true nature and crime causation. That’s why, criminology has attracted number of scientists from different disciplines like law, sociology, psychology, medicine, political science and social work. In effect, more and more studies are being conducted, in result giving newer and newer dimensions to criminological studies all over the world. Criminologist like Donald Cressey in his observation pointed out that, "The field of criminology has been changing at an accelerating rate in the past decade."  

"Due to this accelerating rate of research in the recent three-four decades, specialized intra-disciplinary study areas are tackled by researchers like Juvenile Delinquency, White Collar Crime, Political crime, Corporate Crime, Organised Crime, Urban, rural Crime. The new study areas are the fruits of the research works of the criminologist of first half of the 20th century. During this early phase of scientific study, crime was studied with geographical, economical, sociological, medical, legal, biological, psychological and penological aspects and perspectives. The great amount of knowledge generation by these studies have opened new avenues of research in criminology. However, understanding crime and its causation is not still satisfactory and hence more and more studies are needed to trace out the complexities of criminal behaviour. Noted contemporary criminologist Walter C. Reckless has also stressed such need:

For many years to come the study of criminology will need a type of monograph which can supplement the broader coverage of study, such as the present one covering crime in certain villages or back country (not criminal
tribes), crime around bazaar, white-collar crime, family feuds and crime, political demonstrations and crime.  

Among such new and neglected areas is the female criminality.

**Cognizance of Female Criminality as a concept**

The second half of the 20th century in India, has witnessed a great amount of awareness & self esteem, or self-respect in women folk. It is a result of renaissance of feminist movements & equal opportunities made available by the democratic system, during the post-independence period. Renowned women’s study specialist in India, Promilla Kapur has mentioned the same changing status of women in changing Indian society:

In the last fifty years or so, India has witnessed profound changes in almost every aspect of her life ...

... One of the major consequences of

varied process of change operating in the country has been the emancipation of women from their tradition-bound ethos. In free India women have been entering salaried remunerative occupations and professions in increasing number.*

Thus the women's role is changing and the males and society in general are accepting them in their new role. But this change has also created some role-conflicting situations in Indian society. Kuntal Agrawal in her paper presented in the XIth world congress of sociology has pinpointed this under-current of social reality:

Changes in the status of women in the Indian family resulting from women's education and employment are examined, utilizing interview, data from college and university teachers and 10 female M. Doctors residing in Uttar Pradesh. The hypothesis that, women's role are changing rapidly, but their social status less rapidly, is confirmed. A trend toward ideological acceptance of

equality of their sexes in apparent, but has not yet been manifested in women's having equal control over family resources.³

At the end, educated women are facing role-conflicting situations and on the other, uneducated women in unorganised sectors are denied all types of fruits of modernity, democracy and social welfare. Mr. J.P. Atray has revealed this in these words:

As a class, they have come to occupy a secondary position in all walks of life, individual expectations not withstanding. They are abused, misused and exploited for male pleasure, for satisfying male ego and for the advancement of individual and even national and international interest.⁴


This grave situation of rural and poor urban women too has created discomfort and unrest among them. Thus the changing situation and work patterns have emerged with new tensions, social participation and behaviour patterns. In view of this, different aspects of women were taken up for scientific investigations. These women's studies have surfaced the distinct characters of women in male-dominated societies. The female personality, their psyche, behaviour, role and contribution and their sufferings and plights were thoroughly investigated. Among these different aspects of female behaviour, female criminality constitutes a pivotal but neglected part.

Study Of Female Criminality:

Female Criminality - a peculiar behaviour of female population is generally found un-noticed or under-noticed by society, scientists and people. The female criminal behaviour has failed to attract attention of society and scientists. This negligence is noticed by the criminologists from time to time.

One of the earlier and an outstanding contributors in female criminological research is Prof. Otto Pollak. In his famous work titled as 'The Criminality of Women' he has identified the
reasons for the lack of scientific attention to the problem of female criminality:

The criminality of women is neglected field of research. Our mental picture of the criminal is that of a male violator of law, and criminological research seems to have been largely under the spell of this cultural stereotype. The lack of scientific attention to the problems presented by women offenders is probably due to the ever recurrent observation that considerably smaller number of women come into contact with law enforcing agencies than do men.

Other authors of 1950's like H.E. Barnes and N.K. Teeters too have stated the scant research in the study of female criminality Ms. Helen Richardson, author of an important

investigation about female juvenile delinquency is more critical about negligence towards the problem of female criminality. She opines that:

When the subject of delinquency hits headlines, the discussion rarely has much reference to women and girls. When it does the usual commentators remain uneasily silent. This happens too in the lecture hall, whether the audience is academic, professional or lay. Reticence and even avoidance of the subject of female delinquency extended to police, to male magistrate and even to many psychiatric clinic, except where women are in charge.  

Hence considering female criminality as a new important area of criminological study, some researchers turned to make inquires in this area during 1970’s and 1980’s. The female criminality studies remained few in number, even during above mentioned contemporary two decades. Giving the

reasons for this scant attention Adler Freda and Adler Herbert have expressed their views "It is just because female offences did not threaten social functioning that the entire field of female deviancy has been neglected by criminologists research." Instead of the reason of 'threatening to social functioning' as Adlers feel, a feminist critique of female criminality. Ms. Carol Smart sees, the 'male-oriented bias' as the reason for less amount of female criminality studies:

Our knowledge of the nature of female criminality is still in its infancy. In comparison with the massive documentation on all aspects of male delinquency and criminality the amount of work carried out in the area of women and crime is extremely limited...

... It seems likely therefore that the overwhelming neglect of female criminality is directly related to the

law status of female offenders as a pressing social problem.

Even the recent work by Allison Morris, "Women, Crime and Criminal Justice" held the male-oriented academic studies for ignoring the female criminality research. "It is not uncommon for criminological text books, even critical reviews, to contain nothing at all on women (see, for example, Taylor, Walton and Young, 1973). It goes without saying that it text do not cover women, courses do not either...

... Criminology, then, like most academic discipline (spender, 1981), has been concerned with the activites and interests of men." However, the scenario has changed to some noticeable extent in 1980's in all prominent nations. In 1980, American society of criminology devoted its as many as twelve sessions for female criminality. So Prof.


Warren Marquerite Q. says "Things are changing, however the study of women and crime is an active topic in criminology today."

Even Morris Allison staunch critic of ignoring tendency towards female criminality admits that, "In 1981, I (Ms. Morris Allison) been little research in criminology on women. That is no longer the case. Recent years have seen a tremendous growth in the literature on women as offenders, defendants, prisoners and criminal justice professionals, especially in the United States." Thus growing interest and investigations on women offenders is the phenomenon of first half of the decade of 1980's.

John Hogan has stated three main issues dealt by the female


Criminologists have observed that a large volume of research already accumulated. This research focuses primarily on three issues:

1) The extent to which men are more criminal in their behaviour than women:

II) Whether this gap is narrowing, and

III) The comparability of the criminal behaviour patterns of men and women. Various sources of data have been used to explore these issues."

The above discussion proves a need for more investigations in female criminality. It is particularly, more essential in the developing countries like India, because as the process of development goes on, such societies change in all spheres of human life.

**Definition of Female Crime**

The concept of crime is defined by different authors in different ways with different perspectives. At the same time it must be remembered that it is very difficult to define 'crime' in an 'acceptable to all' form. "There can never be a satisfactory definition of crime."

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It is true that the crime is the complex phenomenon. The legally sanctioned concept refers the acts which are considered as against the law or these are the acts of law breaking. But only act of breaking the law is not sufficient, such act should be noticed by the law protecting authorities like police and moreover, such law protecting authorities should take legally defined actions againsts law breakers. Then and then only an act of law-breaking becomes legally defined crime or what we call 'reported crime'.

A person breaking the law, could be a male or female. If such person is a male, he becomes male offender or criminal; and if such person is a female then she becomes a female criminal and her crime becomes a female crime. So there is no special definition of female crime as such. The term female crime only indicates that a person committing crime is a female by sex. Here only, sex differentiation is considered to classify the crime or criminal. Delos H. Kelly has stressed the need of three conditions for deviant behaviour becoming a public fact:

...1) Some deviant category ( e.g. Mores and laws ) must exist;
2) a person must be viewed as violating the category; and

3) some one must attempt to enforce the violation of the category.

If the individual demanding enforcement is successful in his or her efforts to label the violator, the social deviant has been created.

However, only legalistic definition is incomplete, as significance of crime as a social and psychological phenomenon is not described properly. Thus legal definition fails to unearth the sociological and psychological behind the act of crime.

For the present study the researcher finds the legal approach is useful for defining the female crime, as the study made here is of the legally defined female criminals.

**Types of female criminals**

The classification of the crimes and criminals is considered as an important step in understanding and correction of crimes. Some of the

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criminologists have developed criminal types or crime types to understand the genesis of criminal behaviour. Many authors of criminology have attempted in classifying criminals with different perspective and view-points.

**Sex - specific and sex - related offences**

Ms. Carol Smart (1976) in her brilliant feminist criticism of the female criminality arrived at some specific crimes of women, as well as some female - dominant offences within the frame of legally defined crimes and criminals; which is very interesting. Ms. Smart puts her typology in these words:

... In general the numbers of women offenders rarely exceed men, but some of the offences included in the official statistics actually exclude the members of one sex by legal definition, thereby creating some wholly 'female' or 'male' offences. I will refer to this category of offences by the term 'sex - specific crimes' and will differentiate them from those offences which may be committed by either sex, but which in practice are more common to one sex than the other. These latter offences
I [Ms. Smart] will refer to as "sex-related crimes."

1) Sex-specific offences

Though the legal system as the law is, in principle, held to be applicable to all regardless of sex, race, class and other distinctions, Ms. Smart has identified sex-specific offences of females like infanticide, which is an offence that only women can commit. As only women are committing these specific kind of offences, these offences are termed as 'sex-specific offences'.

2) Sex-related offences

According to Ms. Smart these offences are those crimes which may be committed by either sex; but which in practice appear to be committed more by one sex than the other. Citing the example of shoplifting, she observes the shoplifting is also an offence which according to official statistics, is usually committed more frequently by women than men, women involved in shoplifting far exceed the numbers of women involved in any other type of

crime, which makes shoplifting quite unique in terms of female offences. For giving justification for her observation Ms. Smart further state that, "The involvement of women and girls in shoplifting and their choice of stolen goods would seem to be closely related to the gender role of women in industrial societies like UK and the USA. Women are predominantly shoppers for household items and food and the techniques of shoplifting, unlike the techniques which might be required for other offences such as car theft or burglary, are as available to them as to all shoppers."  

Another example cited by Ms. Smart of 'sex-related offences' is about the female juvenile Delinquency. In her opinion, female juvenile delinquency appears to be mainly sexual while male juvenile delinquency is apparently non-sexual but more aggressive and assertive.

In this study attempt would be made to find out whether there is an existence of sex-specific and sex-related female offences in Indian female criminality. Also analysis of the female

criminality would be done by classifying female criminals and crimes in categories of property crimes/criminals, violent crimes/criminals against morality and illicit trafficking and drug related crimes/criminals and other patterns and types.

**Nature and Extent of Female Criminality**

The understanding of the nature and extent of female criminality is an essential element for the proper insight development, about this peculiar kind of female behaviour. One can not develop global, national or intra-national perspective without knowing the under-currents of such behaviour. This could only be achieved by way of knowing the exact nature, extent and characteristics of that particular behaviour. But unfortunately, the literature and documentation on the female criminality is very limited as compared to male criminal records. Thus the review attempts are inevitable, about the nature and extent of the female criminality, for reaching at the roots of this social problem.

Information regarding global trends in female criminality assists us in understanding the international situation and the status of female criminality. Here an attempt is made to present all
available information about criminality trends in the countries of different continents as well as the national trends i.e. the Indian situation.

**FEMALE CRIMINALITY: A WORLD REVIEW**

Each and every nation and its society is different, the socio-cultural background, tradition is different, the economic system and political order is different and its people’s quality of life, educational level are different. This diversity and variation is reflected in the nature and patterns of crime. Veteran Contemporary Criminologist Elmer Johnson observes:

Crime is one of the classes of social deviance that go with changes in the qualities of the population, the working of social institutions, the level of economic development and the rate of urban growth.

**UN’s World Crime Survey:**

The United Nation’s Economic and Social Council has an expert committee on 'Crime

prevention and Control' for providing recommendations and assessment regarding alarming crime problem. World crime survey is one of the such activities undertaken by the committee. This survey (WCS) was presented in the form of the report by the secretary general to the General Assembly on Crime Prevention and Control (A/32/199) of September 22, 1977.

The analysis of the international trends in the female criminality recorded first time on such a mass scale, states startling facets of female criminal behaviour. Female criminality is only about 10 percent as high as male criminality for the world as a whole. The figures are little lower for developing countries and a little higher for developed countries. But the trends are startling:

... Female criminality is rising 30 percent faster than male criminality in the developing countries and 50 percent faster in developed countries. It appears, therefore, that as developing countries become more developed, their share of the female crime rate may also increase. This change has considerable implications for policy
makers. Since unchecked development seems to be correlated with an increase in criminality, women in developing countries are doubly vulnerable as potential offenders, being a specially developing group in a developing national setting.

Female Criminality in USA:

After seeing the worldwide situation, now we will discuss the female criminality rates of some prominent developed and developing countries. As more research is done in this research area in USA and UK, more literature is published from these countries. In USA the nature and extent of female criminality is changing. "In the united states, arrest rates of women have increased in virtually every crime category since 1960. Arrests of women for violent crimes have nearly tripled, while the increases in arrests for property crimes have been even more substantial. The largest increases are for larceny (arrests rose from 32.25 per 1,00,000 in 1960 to 230.39 in 1978) and for fraud and

embezzlement (from 8.29 to 102.36 per 100,000). Large increases have also occurred in arrests for forgery (the rate per 100,000 has quadrupled), burglary (the rate has increased fivefold), armed robbery, and receiving/possessing stolen property.  

This survey implicitly indicates the growing extent of female criminality in U.S.A. John Hagan (1985) has summarized Rita Simon’s Work (1975), which has had greatest influence in this research area. Hagan’s summation reads like this:

Rita Simon, whose work (e.g. 1975) ... offers covergence theory in which patterns of criminality for women increasingly resemble those for men. For example she has analyzed arrest statistics for a forty year period (1932-1972) and concluded that:

1. The proportion of all persons arrested in 1972 who were women was greater than was the case one, two or three decades earlier;

2. The increase was greater for serious offences than for other kinds of offences; and

3. The increase in female arrest rates among the serious offences was caused almost entirely by women's greater participation in property offences. From the latter findings Simon predicts that, 'If present rates in these crimes persist, approximately equal numbers of men and women will be arrested for fraud and embezzlement by the 1980's and for forgery and counterfeiting the proportions should be equal by the 2010's. The prediction made for embezzlement and fraud can be extended to larceny as well.'

In U.S. even in the violent crimes which are still considered as a monopoly of masculine males, women's participation has increased in

noticeable amount during the last two decades. Although the male's violent crimes like aggravated assault, and homicide, have also increased during this period, we can not neglect the violent turn of so-called soft type feminine criminality:

In the 1960's and 1970's, there was concern about increases in women's crime and changes in its nature. It was suggested by some (Adler, 1975) that a new breed of violent female criminal was emerging...

...Darryl Steffensmeier and his colleagues examined the criminal statistics over various periods of time in three major articles (1978, 1979 and 1981). In relation to violent crime, they concluded that offences involving violence by women did increase, but that the male level of violence was increasing
at a broadly similar pace and violence was still predominantly a man’s crime. The findings were similar with respect to property crimes. Property crimes by women increased, but only in larceny/theft and fraud/embezzlement was the pace faster than property crimes by men. Thus we can definitely make a statement that, U.S.A is fast growing as being one of the highly rated female criminality nations.

**Female Criminality in U.K. :**

The other prominent industrialized nation with high rate of female criminality is United Kingdom. According to Nancy Wilson’s study, "In the United Kingdom, there have been absolute increases

in the number of females convicted of many property crimes—burglary, robbery, theft, handling stolen goods, and fraud. The highest percentages of females convictions are for theft (20% female in 1971) and fraud (15 percent female in 1971).”

The recently published work of Morris Allison (1987) titled as “Women, Crime, and Criminal Justice” describes the situation of female criminality in England:

However, if we look at the number of persons found guilty or cautioned per 100,000 population, this has increased for all agegroups in England and Wales over the past 20 years and the rate of the increase is higher for women than for men. ...Overall, the rate of known offending for men has almost doubled over this period; for women it has more than doubled. However, there are considerable differences between the sexes in the rate

of increase within different age groups...

... The concern was not just about increases in women's crime. It was about the changes in the nature of the crimes committed by women. If we take recorded offences of 'Violence against the person' for example, the number committed by women increased by 58 percent between 1975 and 1985; the comparable figure for men was 29 40 percent.

**Table No. 1.1**

**Number Of Persons Found Guilty At All Courts Or Cautioned For Indictable Offences,**

**Per 1,000,000 Population In U.K.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All ages</th>
<th>10-14</th>
<th>14-17</th>
<th>All ages</th>
<th>10-14</th>
<th>14-17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1,262</td>
<td>2,741</td>
<td>4,481</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>2,072</td>
<td>3,522</td>
<td>7,861</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>1,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>2,297</td>
<td>3,231</td>
<td>8,128</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>1,048</td>
<td>2,018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source : Moriss Allison, 1987 Table No.2.5, reformulated)

Above statistical information sufficiently proves the growing female crime rate and amount in U.K. over last three decades.

**Female Criminality in Canada:**

"Canada, another developed nation too, does have same trend like that of USA and U.K. It is also note-worthy that Canada has a similar cultural background as USA and UK have. "In Canada, however, since 1960, changes similar to those in the United States have occurred. There the percent female among those charged with offences increased from 7 percent in 1960 to 14 percent in 1969."

**Female Criminality in Mexico:**

According to survey of contemporary developments in Criminology of Mexico made by Antonio S. Galindo; "Of one hundred reported offences, ninety two are perpetrated by males, or 12.5 males for each female offender. Of those persons convicted of a crime and sentenced, 93

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percent are male, or 14.8 male, per female offender."

**FEMALE CRIMINALITY IN DENMARK:**

The statistical review of crimes in Denmark is taken by Prebon Wolf. In his review he points out that: "In a random sample of 3,032 men and 606 women twentyone years of age or older in 1953-54, Wolf Etal (1958) found 569 men (18.8 percent) and 14 women (2.3 percent) registered by the police. The number of women was too small to warrant further statistical analysis."

**Female Criminality in Federal Republic of Germany:**

The statistics given by kaiser Gunther, about the female criminality in FRG reads that "Through the crime registers, we can trace the number of persons convicted of a felony for the first time by the age of twenty four years, one-third of the total male population has been punished by a court at least once. Among women of the same age,


the corresponding figure is only 4.1 percent.

**Female Criminality in Hungary:**

While reporting on the contemporary developments in Criminology of Hungary, Katalin Gonczol has mentioned about the female criminality. "The proportions of women among offenders is rather modest, only 11 to 13 percent of the perpetrators have been women in recent years."

**Some Multi-Nations studies:**

Nanci K. Wilson (1983) in her excellent paper titled 'An International perspective on Women and Criminality' published in the book "International Handbook of contemporary Developments in Criminology" reviews different multi-nations studies of the female criminality. Her important observations are as follows:

1. Outside of North America, very few nations evidence a clearcut trend toward


increasing female participation in crime...

2. Alder (1970-75) ... cities, Western Europe and Australia as areas with high degree of a rising female crime rate...

3. Simon (1963-70) ... similarly found no evidence of an increasing female Crime rate, for in fewer than seven of the twenty four countries studied was there such an increase...

4. Bowker (1950-55-60-65 and 1972 in an ambitious undertaking attempted to measure the effect of three variables—social - education equality, economic equality, and SES (socio-economic status) development—upon the female crime rate in thirty countries for the years 1950, 1955, 1960, 1965 and 1972. Bowker maintains that the female proportion of murders is 'declining rather than increasing worldwide', and that, while women commit a larger proportion of larcenies, these rates are not rising significantly...

5. Simon and Sharma conducted
provocative inquiry in which they compared female crime rate changes in Japan, Israel, and the United States.

a) In U.S. over the 20 years period overall female crime rate increased as did the female property crime rate.

b) In Israel, during the same period there has been a fluctuating overall female property crime rate.

c) In Japan, the proportion of females arrested for violent crime has remained stable; however the percentage of all those arrested for property crime who were female rose from 9 to 23 percent in the twenty years study period."

With the help of above discussion and statistical data and research studies, we can reach to the following conclusions:

1. Only in some developed nations like U.S.A. UK, Australia, Canada female criminality is increasing and changing its nature, So seriousness is high.

2. In other developing countries and socialistic countries the female crime rate is not increasing, but arrests are increasing, as arrests of male are also increasing. However, overall rise in female criminality is 30 percent faster than that of male criminality in developing countries as observed by world crime survey, UN, 1977 (World Crime Survey, UN, The Report of the Secretary General, Assembly on "Crime Prevention and Control", No. A/32/199/1977.)

3) The incidence of female criminality is low in comparison with male criminality. However in the first half of 21st century it may lead in to serious problem, as a reflection of changing world and women.

NATURE AND EXTENT OF FEMALE CRIMINALITY IN INDIA:

The status of women in Indian society is secondary. They live in an environment which is controlled by socio-religious systems which provide moral support for their supression and their deprivation of their equal rights. J.P. Atray has appropriately described this situation, "So weak is the position of woman in the society that she has come to be treated more or less as on inanimate possession which can be kept or thrown away, treasured or destroyed, cared for or neglected and even sold or betrothed away at the will or whim of its possessor."
In the society her status is merely a slave status. The women are valuable if they work and work without any demand or argument.

Women are neglected and ill-treated in society. Surprisingly, their criminality too, remained neglected by administrators and academicians. Alike common women, fate of criminal women is distressing.

Recently published well-researched literature on women offenders in India is the 'Report of the National Expert committee on women prisoners' appointed by Govt. of India's Ministry of Human Resource Developement's Dept. of women and child Developement, under chairmanship of Justice Krishna Iyer [Retired Judge, Supreme Court] and with prominent criminologists and women's study specialists like Prof. Dr. Sudha Kaldate, L.J. Arora, Ms. Sheela Barse, Ms. Sanobar, Sekhar and others, has specifically made a special mention:

20. Criminologically too, she [Female] is less threatening and interest-provoking.

Deviance in the male is not only more visible but it is also so much more dangerous and dramatic. Traditionally, moreover, the dividing lines in the crime-coping approaches and mechanisms have been adult and juvenile, rather than male and female. There is consequently no distinct and long standing institutional propensity or capability for separated analysis and tackling of male and female offenders. An intrinsic factor contributing to neglect of women in custody or offender women is the apathy generic to various disciplines to take up women separately as a subject of specialised enquiry.

However, though limited in number; in the last two decades, some scholars in India, undertook this task of examining the nature and characteristics of female criminality. Their pioneering works have made significant contribution to the female criminality research in India. Noted

sociologist Prof. T.K.N. Unnithan has implicitly stated the importance of the investigations in female criminality, though their share in criminal behaviour is very small and negligible:

However, Socially, female offences are considered more serious in comparison to the same offences committed by the males. Why this differentiation from the society's point of view? There are very sound sociological reasons. This differentiation depends upon the position which the women occupies in society. The pivotal role that the woman plays, as a mother, as a wife, and as a central figure in the family, i.e., in the basic unit of social organisation, is recognised by all societies implicitly or explicitly. Central position makes female offences more dysfunctional than male offences because the former will have greater consequences on the social structure than the latter. The recognition of the importance of the woman's role in society is reflected in the degree of resentment that results
towards the criminal behaviour of the woman.

Therefore, though the crime rate of female criminality is negligible and small, scientific enquiries are essential. In spite of this, Indian sociologists and criminologists in general, have not given the required academic attention to this social problem. For instance, Dr. G.R. Madan's (1983) two volumes of 'Indian social problems'—the volume number one of third edition deals with social disorganization, and there are two parts in the book which cover comprehensively 'crime and delinquency' and 'social vices'. But there is not even a few lines of discussion on female criminality. Only in 'social vices' section, there is very good and rich chapter on prostitution, (Madan G.R. 1983 ). Even in some of the western authors books on criminology, the female criminality is completely neglected. Another example is of Baldev Raj Nayar's research publication 'violence and crime in India' (1975), there can not be disagrement about the quality of this writing, but here also female criminality is

neglected. (Nayar Baldev Raj, 1975), In such a situation, the contribution of the few criminologists and sociologists in the area of the female criminality research, appears like a milestone. In this grim situation, there is an exception as back as in 1950’s. Ms.Perin C Kerawalla’s Ph.D. thesis published as "A study in Indian Crime" (1959), do discuss the sex-differentiation in the crime of Bombay state. It is noteworthy here that Ms. Kerawalla is a woman. Does the criticism of the feminist criminologists like smart (1976) holds that, "...the overwhelming lack of interest in female criminality displayed by established criminologists and devianacy theorists."

Dr. Perin C. Kerawalla's study of 1950's:

Ms. Kerawalla's doctoral thesis of Bombay University "Nature and volume of crime in Bombay state" (1956) is published in the book form with the title "A study in Indian crime" with forward of noted criminologist water. C. Reckless, in 1959. Her study has made many comparative observations about male-female criminality. Many female criminality researchers have not taken, even note of this one of the earliest examination of female criminality. Some of the important observations of Dr. Kerawalla are summarized here:

"... Crime in India is essentially a male phenomenon. For every twenty-seven male prisoners, received in Indian prisons only one female prisoner was to be had, it is, The lower categoric risks, as Reckless would term it, than women are, may be seen from the following ratios:

Ratio of men to women (1951 census) 18:17, Ratio of male to female prisoners (1951) 27:1, Ratio of male to female prisoners (1949) 37:1. A very significant fact about the ratio is noted when only punishments for a period
exceeding 1 year (excluding death) are considered. Against nearly 34,473 men may be contrasted 335 women, i.e. a distribution of the order of 102 men:1 woman. In other words, not only does Indian society turn out twenty-seven times as many males as female criminals, but the male of the species has much greater responsibility for the bigger crimes deserving higher prison terms. The above statement in more aggregative terms leaves out one important consideration, however, in the more sparse categories it is noted that the proportion of females is found to be much closer to the males. Alternatively, the woman criminal who gets her punishment for the more serious type of crime, usually against person, is not as rare among women prisoners as either women prisoners are in the national population of women, or all women prisoners with sentences exceeding one year are in relation to the total number of women prisoners.

Table 1.2

Prison Admissions in India
1951

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term of sentence</th>
<th>No. of Men</th>
<th>No. of women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 1 month</td>
<td>1,58,339</td>
<td>7,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 1-6 months</td>
<td>1,33,954</td>
<td>4,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 6-12 months</td>
<td>35,047</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 1 year-5 years</td>
<td>25,901</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above five years-10 years</td>
<td>4,621</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transportation beyond seas

I) Life                    | 2524       | 57           |
II) For a term             | 56         | 2            |

(Source: statistical Abstract, India-1951-52, p.p. 251-252, reproduced from Kerawalla Peric c; 1959, Table No.3, Chapter II p.23.)

Dr. Ms. Kerawalla’s research work also interpreted the nature of female criminality in the then state of Bombay.

She has derived an age structure, she has also compared age-groupwise female criminals and female population. She has also studied as composition of female convicts of Bombay state over a period covering pre-independence from 1928 up to post-independence period 1955. Both the tables are taken here for understanding the changing nature of female convicts during 1950’s.
Table 1.3
Age structure of female convicts and female in general population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Female Convicts percent</th>
<th>Females in the general population percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>6.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-30</td>
<td>41.88</td>
<td>21.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>32.04</td>
<td>12.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>23.84</td>
<td>14.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 60</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Jail Administrative Report 1955 p.74, and census of India 1951 paper No.3, Age tables p.78, Reformulted from Kerwalla Perin.c., 1959, table No.2, Chapter 4, page 53.)

Table 1.3 clearly illustrates that, more than 40 percent share of total female convicts is of young age group 19 to 30. Then comes middle age group (31-40) with more than 32 percent contribution to the total number of female convicts. Table 1.3 clearly indicates that in both these age-groups i.e. 19 to 30 and 31 to 40 female’s share in general population is 21.13 percent and 12.76 percent. Thus the female criminality contribution of these age-group is more than two-fold than that of its share in general female population.
Table 1.4
Age composition of female convicts
Bombay State
1928-1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>1928 percent</th>
<th>1938 percent</th>
<th>1948 percent</th>
<th>1952 percent</th>
<th>1955 percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-21</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>8.17</td>
<td>15.84</td>
<td>14.29</td>
<td>8.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-30</td>
<td>42.01</td>
<td>43.60</td>
<td>37.04</td>
<td>53.42</td>
<td>33.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>25.82</td>
<td>26.43</td>
<td>22.84</td>
<td>21.02</td>
<td>32.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>15.99</td>
<td>21.25</td>
<td>16.23</td>
<td>7.48</td>
<td>23.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 60</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Jail Administrative Report - reproduced from Kerawalla Perin. C; 1959, chapter 4, Table 4,p.56)

Kerawalla observes that: "In the smaller category of female convicts the facts are differently emphasised, although taken together ages 19 to 40 account for as large a proportion as was the case with the males. The year to year patterns are also more irregular."

Table No. 1.4 clearly points out two things. **Firstly there are fluctuations in contribution of female convicts in different age groups during**

1928-1955 period. Secondly, majority of female convicts belong to young age-groups, 22 to 30 and 31 to 40.

Dr. Ram Ahuja’s Contribution of 1960’s:

The noted criminologist in India Dr. Ram Ahuja has attracted the attention of number of scholars towards female criminality. His empirical study of female offenders in India is first of its kind of India. He himself has stated the impact of his work. “In India, interest in the study of crime by women gathered momentum soon after the empirical study undrtaken by this author in 1966-68 (Ahuja, 1969), Pointed out a new conceptual framework.”

Dr. Ahuja studied 90 female convicts of the state of Rajasthan. He studied two types of female offenders. 1. Offenders imprisoned in jails 2. Offenders released on probation. Dr. Ahuja’s major findidings are as follows:

We [Dr. Ahuja and his team] found that large number of crimes committed by women are due to their maladjustments in the

42. Ahuja Ram, "Female Crime : New Theoretcal Presepective", in Devasia Leelamma and Devasia V.V. (eds.), “Female Criminals and Female Victims : An Indian Perspective”, Dattsons Publishers, Nagpur (India), 1989, p. 41.
families of procreation. These maladjustments are to a great extent the result of woman’s marriage at an age at which she does not know the significance and the complexity of the marital roles expected of her . . .

... Besides this finding, the other principal findings which emerged from this study are:

1. Of the total crimes committed, about half involved the physical harm to some individual; one-sixth involved economic harm, one-ninth involved moral aberrance and one-seventh were minor offences.

2. The total number of offences was dominated by the number of murders and within this total, in three-fourths of cases, the victim was the primary kin in the family of procreation.

3. Of the non-murderer prisoners, a very small percent were serving a long term sentence. Out of 17 such cases in the sample, only 23.5 percent were serving sentences of three years or more.
4. The bulk of the offenders belong to the younger age group. 66 percent of the sample studied were under 35 years of age while the mean age of the offenders was 30.47 and median 28.2 years...

5. Incidence of crime is low in low castes but high in low economic classes, In 77.50 percent cases, the family income of the offender was less than Rs. 200 permonth. In less than 29.0 percent of cases, the offenders husbands were white collar workers. Lastly, 87.72 percent of the offenders (caste Hindus) belonged to either to high castes (43.86 %) or to intermediate castes (43.86 %).

6. The absence or lesser number of children does not increase the crime.

7. Female crime is not a rural affair. Urban areas produce more female offenders than rural areas.

8. Mostly the offences committed are emotional. In less than one-fifth of the cases, they were premeditated. Similarly, 98.75 percent of the offenders were first offenders. Only one offender in the
sample had three previous convictions.

**Studies of 1970's**

After knowing the contribution of some of the earlier studies, in female criminality in India, we will take an overview of the studies done during the decade of 1970's. During this decade, the amount of research has found increased than earlier research. Ms. Rekha Saxena (November 1986) of Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, in her unpublished doctoral thesis titled as "Women Offender: A Study of Socio-Cultural And Economic Dynamics.", taken a comprehensive review of female criminality research in India during this decade:

Sanyal (1974) undertook a study on women convicts of Lucknow. The study was conducted on 25 women convicts of "Nari Bandi Niketan" among whom were convicted for murder and were undergoing the imprisonment of lifers. The author, with the help of interview schedule, research test and observation, as the tools of the study, has dealt with the personality characteristics of the criminals.

The author observed with the help

of statistical information that the nature of grave crimes, such as murder, was relatively high among married women. The author arrived at the conclusion that, the inmates were found to be maladjusted in marital life and relations.

Sohni (1974), with the help of available research, has analysed the descriptive account of statistical figures in Maharashtra, during the period 1961-1965. The study has shown that during this period, the cumulative number of undertrials—both male and female, who were admitted to the prison was much more than the number of convicts. According to Sohani, statistics from the central of Bureau of correctional services (1973) has indicated that there was a 1.2 percent increase in the males as compared to 46 percent increase in the female convict population between 1961 and 1965. This trend of analysis suggested the consistency of the rise in female criminality.
Geetha Adinarayanan (1975) studied 100 women prisoners in Tamilnadu in comparison with 100 women non-prisoners. In a socio-physiological study, the author aimed at finding out the significant differences for those women who are sent to prison for the crime, they have committed and a random sample of those women who came from the same socio-economic background but have never been convicted of any crimes. While studying different kind of women prisoners, she found that women prisoners score significantly low in standard progressive matrices, compared with the male non-prisoners. Further, she found women prisoners to be more extraverted, more neurotic and more psychotic than non-prisoners...

Adwanis (1978) study was a combined effort to study male as well as female offenders. The female prisoners were selected from Jaipur Central Jail. The author found that family is the most important factor contributing to criminal
behaviour in the life of female offenders, while it is not so in the case of male offenders...

A study of Bharot and Mishra (1978) has focused on the extent and nature of criminality amongst women in India. While doing a sample survey of 641 women convicts from different parts of India, their study has provided information on the socio-economic background of the criminals. They concluded that criminality amongst women has increased in recent years and that women have been found to be involved even in heinous crimes like murder, murderous assault, dacoity and robbery. It has been further suggested that in the years to come, the criminality of women is likely to go up.

With more education and more opportunities of life outside home, women have high risk factor of getting involved in deviance as in case of youth

and children exposed to multi faceted adventurous life situations. Thus female criminality is going to be ever increasingly important research area.

Studies of 1980's

In the recently ended decade of 1980's it is found that more and more investigators are attracted towards the study of female criminality. The contributions made during this decade has definitely created sufficient amount of literature, to develop theoretical basis of female criminality in developing societies like India.

Work of M.A. Anasari (1981), who is presently Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) of the state of Rajasthan, has published his study 'Women Criminality and Rehabilitation' in Hindi (Mahila Aparadhikta Avm Punarsthapana).

He studied as many as 38 women offenders of Mahila Bandi Sudhar Gruh of Central Jail Jaipur (Rajasthan) with help of schedule. Some of his findings can be summarized as follows:

1) 84.22 percent offenders were serving life imprisonment, only 5.26 percent were serving short imprisonment of period 6 months to 1 years. Naturally 84.22 percent prisoners were found involved in
serious and violent offences of murder, assault or participation in assault.

2. 47.70 percent of offenders have murdered their husband or child. (equal proportion 23.70 percent of each type).
18.41 offenders have murdered their close relatives, other than husband. This clearly indicates that most of the victims of female offenders are their own family members, that is family problem of maladjustment in the cause of offence.

3. It is noticed that most of the women have used one or the other weapon for committing offence.

4. Half of the women offender were belonging to the young age-group of 20 to 30. The women offenders in the age-group of 30-35 were 15.79 percent. Thus majority of offenders were (65.79 percent) were falling between the age span of 20 to 35 years.

5. The caste-composition of women indicate no evidence for co-relation of caste with offences. 50 percent women offenders were belonging to the schedule
castes and schedule tribes (34.21 percent + 15.80 percent )

In caste Hindus 50 percent offenders were belonging to the upper castes like Brahmin, Rajput, Vaishya, Jat : 76 percent offenders were Hindu and 15.79 percent were muslims and 7.89 percent were Shikh.

6. All offenders were married and 76.32 percent were domesile of rural area.

S. Sanyal and Agarwal Vimala (1981) have studied 69 women convicts of Nari Bandi Niketan of Lucknow (Uttra pradesh). This study is related with self-esteem, attitudes, guilt and emotions of insecurity of female offenders. The study is made with integrated approach, and found that, "Thus in nutshell, it may be said that the variables such as the emotional traits, self-esteem, and attitude of a female convict are greatly related to each other. Besides, the physical atmosphere of the institution interacts with the psychological process leading to

45. Ansari M.A., "Women अधिकारीता and Rehabilitation (Hindi Book "Mahila Aparadhikata Avm Punarvasan"), Panchashil Prakashan, Jaipur (Rajasthan), 1981,pp. 5 to 16.
the outcome of the prevailing emotions, self-esteem and attitudes of a convict inside the penal world."

Singh Arvinder (1981) has studied 'Personality aspects of female prisoners belonging to female prison of Panjab, Maryana and U.P. In this study 75 female prisoners convicted of murder and equal number of female prisoners convicted of other petty crimes were studied. Comparison of murderers and other offenders revealed significant differences between the two groups, Singh observed that, "Thus the female murderers emerge as a less extraverted group who has higher psychoticism and neuroticism scores, as compared to the other offenders."

In shastras (1981) study of 186 female offenders of Maharashtra State of India, has found that socio-cultural and economic causes, might be responsible for their criminality. "Rani (1981;83) has indicated today women are also taking part in all types of crimes, including the ones which involve physical power and use of strong weapons.


While analysing the female property offences in particular, in Andhra Pradesh, Rani (1981) found that majority of them have indulged in petty thefts and house-breaking...

Rani (1983) in her analysis of the homicides by female came to the conclusion that, in general, the women murderers were either deprived of care of their parents or husbands and in-laws or a combination of both."

Basu Moitrayee (1985) in her unpublished study sponsored by Govt of India’s Ministry of social welfare titled as “Effects of Imprisonment and Nature of Prisonaization of Different Categories of Female Inmates Housed in Male-Community Prison- A psycho-social Approach”, studied 82 I.P.C charged male offenders, 49 in victim group and 27 in stray women group. She found that:

1. Effects of prison in general and prisonization in specific on the female inmates in jail are transcribed into their habits, behaviours and outlooks.

The nature and extent of change depend considerably on the (a) basic specialization background of the individuals, (b) the criminal antecedents which are responsible for the inmates, coming to prison, and (c) the specific roles ascribed to the inmates in jail.

Sharma Shridhar (1985) studied 228 female convicts for murder of the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and analysed 10 variables/items like age, marital status, education etc. He found that, "It was observed that of the 228 female convicted for murder between March 1981 to March 1983, and currently undergoing imprisonment 168 of them were married, 20 were literates and most of the murder committed was by women in their third decade closely followed by women in their fourth decade. Only 6 of the 228 were identifiable as mass murderers, the rest having committed only one murder in their life time."


Mishra Saraswati (1985) has investigated the aspect of 'Rehabilitation of Women Prisoners.' In her study she observed that, "... There is a wide gap between the Government's rehabilitation programmes and their implementation on one hand and the needs and expectation of the female convicts on the other. For bridging this gap enhancement and extention of rehabilitation services to the female convicts are very much required."

Dr. Ghosh Shubhra (1986) has made micro-level Psychological study of inmates of Nari Bandi Niketan of Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh). She has studied 69 female offenders with psycho-analytical tests to assess anxiety insecurity, guilt, self esteem, attitude towards institutional programmes. After detailed discussions she concluded that:

Thus in nut shell, it may be said that the variables such as emotional traits self-esteem and attitude of a female convict are greatly related to each other. Besides, the physical atmosphere of the institution interacts with the psychological process, leading to the

outcome of the prevailing emotions, self-esteem and attitudes of a convict inside the penal world.

Saxena Rekha (1986) has investigated in her important work economic as well as social and cultural variables working behind the acts of female criminality in India. She has studied 200 offenders by their caste, religion, education, and offence-wise as victim involved offences and non-victim offences. She observed that, "At the same time, there is a greater need to study female criminals at present because the place and role of women in the Indian society has undergone changes during the last two decades leading to a greater participation in the criminal activities by them."

Two Important Reports of 80's

During the decade of 1980's two important reports related to female criminality have been


brought out by Govt. of India. Both the reports have made valued research and thought contribution in the field of criminology in general and female criminality in particular.

First such report is the "Report of The All India Commitee on Jail Reforms-1980-83" published in two volumes and published by Govt. of India's Ministry of Home Affairs. While studying Indian jails in general, the committee, has also examined the status of female prisoners, facilities to them, need of research in this area, rehabilitation of released female offenders. The Jail Reform Committee suggested to form an independent body on national level to deal with the problems of female offenders. (Report of the All India Committee on Jail Reforms-1980-83). As discussed and cited earlier, the 'Report of the National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners' published by Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India in 1986-87 is an important indepth documentation, which deals and discusses the situation and remedies of the female prisoners in

India. (Report of the National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners 1986-87).

Devasia Leelamma and Devasia V.V. (1989) have edited a volume of research papers giving current perspective in female criminality and female victims with an Indian viewpoint. In this volume prominent Indian criminologists like S.P. Srivastava, Ram Ahuja, B.K. Nagla, Sukumar Bose and Kamal Mukherji, K.P. Krishna, Sushila Rati, Madhu Sharma, Sudha Kaldete, Samarendra Mohanty and S.K. Bhattacharya, have contributed their research papers covering wide variety and facets of female criminality in India. This volume gives overall picture of nature and extent of female criminality in India.


Female Criminality in India
Some Statistical Indicators

For understanding the statistical nature and extent of female criminality in India, the researcher has taken an overview of arrested persons record, published in "Crime in India - Bureau of Police Research and development; Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India. This overview is of one decade i.e. 1971-1980, and it is yearwise.

The researcher was interested in taking such overview of last two decades i.e. 1961 - 1970 and 1971-1980, but female crimes were not found reported in 'crime in India' reports, published during the decade 1961 to 1970. Only from 1970 an independent record of female arrests under IPC from cognizable offences were published in 'Crime in India'. Therefore, this overview is limited only to this decade- 1971-1980.

### Table No. 4.5

**Female Criminality in India**

**1971 - 1980**

*(Persons arrested under IPC)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9,75,253</td>
<td>11,92,966</td>
<td>12,42,502</td>
<td>14,74,217</td>
<td>14,25,086</td>
<td>14,17,076</td>
<td>15,38,515</td>
<td>18,25,940</td>
<td>18,22,577</td>
<td>19,49,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognizable</td>
<td>9,58,950</td>
<td>11,65,319</td>
<td>12,11,825</td>
<td>14,48,451</td>
<td>13,96,343</td>
<td>13,92,289</td>
<td>15,09,915</td>
<td>17,95,462</td>
<td>17,90,620</td>
<td>19,02,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Crimes</td>
<td>16,303</td>
<td>27,647</td>
<td>30,677</td>
<td>25,766</td>
<td>26,743</td>
<td>24,787</td>
<td>26,600</td>
<td>30,478</td>
<td>31,952</td>
<td>47,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Crimes</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male-Female Ratio</td>
<td>59:1</td>
<td>42:1</td>
<td>40:1</td>
<td>56:1</td>
<td>49:1</td>
<td>56:1</td>
<td>52:1</td>
<td>59:1</td>
<td>56:1</td>
<td>40:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table No.1.5 is formulated with the help of yearwise reports of 'Crime In India' 1971-1980. The table implicitly indicates that the actual number of female arrests under IPC for cognizable offences has risen from 16,303 in 1971 to 47,258 in 1980. The number of female arrests has tripled up to 1980. However the table no. 1.5 also indicates that there are fluctuations even in the number of arrests during this decade. There is no consistency in the increase or the decrease of the numbers of female arrested. For example the number of female arrested have decreased from 30,677 in 1973 to 25,766 in 1974. Same is the case of 1975 (28,743) to 1976 (24,787). Even if, we see the percentage of the female arrests during this decade, we found that, the percentage of female arrests was as high as 2.5 in year 1973 and as low as 1.67 in year 1971. Thus, there are also fluctuations in the percentage of female criminality. The male female ratio also, shows the same kind of ups and downs. It’s range is between 59:1 in 1971 to 40:1 in 1973 and 1980.

Therefore by observing these statistical trends in India, we can reach to three definite propositions.
1. Actual number of female arrests has gone up during the decade of 1971-1980.

2. However, there is no definite trend of increase or decrease in female arrests, i.e. there are fluctuations in female criminality.

3. These fluctuations in India support the same trend in developing countries that is there is no consistent rise or fall in female criminality over a number of years.

Lastly, let us have a statistical information regarding female criminality in India latest available. Report of the National Committee on women prisoners (1987) has given this picture:

68. Viewed quantitatively, women's criminality does constitute only a fraction of total criminality. As proportion of total arrests for offences under Indian Penal Code (IPC), women are observed to account for between 2.3 percent. In 1981 the most recent year for which published data are available, a total of 20.1 lakh persons were arrested 19.7 lakh were men and 44 thousand were women (2.2 percent). Their ratio in prison population is similar. As on 31
December 1980, women constituted 2.6 percent (4,073 out of 159,692) of the total prisoner population which grew to 3.4 percent (3268 out of 107,398) at the end of 1985. [Data for 1985 are provisional. They refer to 31/12/1985 and were obtained from Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi. They do not include figures for Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi.]

Thus in this chapter researcher has taken an overview of problem, nature and extent of female criminality.