CHAPTER-II

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Research is knowledge-generating process. It unearths the realities of human beings and nature. It attempts to reach at the true nature of truth. Thus research is a truth-seeking excercise. It is a tool to know our universe by scientific methods. "Research, simply put, is an endeavour to discover intellectual and practical answers to problems through the application of scientific methods to the knowable universe." Therefore, research has become an essential activity of our social life. World-known research methodologist Goode and Hatt have described this situation as:

This is civilization in which decisions are increasingly based upon scientific fact, and those who cannot understand how the facts are reached will be unable to separate fact from speculation and wish.


This kind of research or scientific work is of vital importance when we want to understand the nature, characteristics and solutions of our growing social problems. The present study is such an attempt to understand the nature and character of female criminality in India.

There are some studies in the research area of female criminality. However, they are not enough to project the complexities and depth of this growing social problem. So more and more investigations in this research area are warranted. Such need is stressed by Indian criminologist Dr. Samarendra Mohanty:

The situation, therefore, demands that research on women and crime in India must shed off its traditional moorings and more on to some sensitive areas which refer to crimes by and against women from a wider perspective of structural and functional factors determining the status of women in Indian society.

Also Ms. Madhu Sharma of Indian Institute of public Administration, New Delhi, expected the need of more research work in this area:

This study of crime and women is comparatively a new subject of study. There is a large scope for further exploration in this field.

Therefore, the present researcher has undertaken this particular research work for finding out the exact characteristics of female criminality in India.

**Objectives of the study:**

This investigation was undertaken with the following objectives:

I. To trace out the factors responsible for female criminality in India.

II. To identify the socio-economic problems of female criminals in India.

III. To find out the characteristics and patterns of female criminality in India and their comparison with western societies.

IV. To test feasibility of the different "female criminality" theories and models.
V. To suggest definite measures to prevent female criminality and to rehabilitate female criminals in India.

Hypotheses:

Hypothesis is considered as a key to solve any research problem. Hence hypotheses were put forth for testing. On the basis of the survey of literature done by the researcher, following hypotheses were put forth for this study.

I. Female criminals in India have distinct characteristics than that of male criminals.
II. Developing societies like India have distinct female crime patterns compared to those in developed western societies.
III. Incidence of female criminality is predominant among those women who have poor inner containment due to low socio-economic status.
IV. Female criminality in India has co-relation peculiar socio-religious status of women, in Indian society in general and family in particular.
Research Design:

As this study attempts to find out the characteristics of female criminality in India, the "Descriptive Research Design" was found suitable. "To portray accurately the characteristics of a particular situation or group or individual (with or without specific initial hypotheses about the nature of these characteristics) studies having this purpose are known as Descriptive Studies." Thus for fulfilment of study objectives, the Descriptive Research Design is proved to be useful and hence it was employed.

Utility of this particular research design in criminology has been recognised by authors like Brantingham Paul and Patricia:

As empirical scientists, criminologists have been concerned about describing the characteristics of criminal events in terms of temporal and locational patterns, the offender's techniques, the victims' characteristics, and

the like.

Considering the applicability of Descriptive Design, it was adopted for this research work.

**Data Collection:**

Data collection work is most important ingredient of any research. Because without such facts one cannot reach to any theoretical propositions. As theory is meaningful relationship between facts. "To the scientist theory refers to the relationship between facts."

Thus facts or data play vital role in any research process. There are two main sources of data collection work in social science research. One is "documentary data" and other one is "field data". "The two main sources of data in social science research come from the inner world of library and the outside world of living people. We


may label these two main sources simply, the "Paper and People."

For this particular research both the documentary (paper) and field (people) data have been tackled and used.

**Multiple Source Information:**

In recent years, for criminological investigations more than one data sources are utilised. This data collection strategy is known as 'Multiple Source Information'. In some circumstances, it is possible to use several different sources of information to address a specific criminological research problem. When such a strategy is possible, it should be adopted as the preferred procedure.

Considering the importance of "Multiple Source Data", the same strategy is utilized in this research work.

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Primary and Secondary Data:

The primary data is considered as the data gathered at first hand and the secondary data is one, which are got at second hand. Citing the example of census report, Wilkinson and Bhandarkar have explicitly stated that:

But the census data are regarded as "primary" data since the commissioner is a single entity collecting and analysing the information gathered at first hand by field workers under his charge.

However, the research work based on this census report would be a secondary data. Therefore, personal letters, contracts, census of population, tape recording and films, personal diary, autobiography, report on institutional visits are regarded as primary data sources. The category of secondary data includes historical study using actual documents, statistical research based on census data, research using diaries and autobiographies etc.

Primary data:

The primary data used for this research is the data collection work done through the interview schedule. Instead of questionnaire interview schedule was used, because there was strong possibility of illiteracy on the part of respondents, i.e. female criminals. Ms. Ghosh Shubhra has rightly stated the usefulness of schedule or questionnaire technique:

Questionnaires and interview-schedule represent the most common method of data collection in social research. In a schedule each item is judged in the context of its relatedness to the central problem. Besides, the items to be incorporated in the schedule have to be arranged in such a way as to make the entire schedule or questionnaire an integrated whole.

As the study aims to discuss sociological aspects of female criminality in India, it became imperative to collect data from individual female offenders. The required data was about their

social, economic, familial background, interpersonal relationship with family members, their mental make-up, environment etc. Therefore, the tool of the interview schedule was selected for collecting deep-rooted information about the real conditions of female convicts. The schedule was cautiously prepared. It included, in all 74 items covering various sociological aspects of female criminals. Prominent items among them are about personal informations regarding age, caste, religion, education, information regarding marital status like marriage age, dowry practice, selection of husband, marital life, number of children, information seeking items about their health, status, economic condition highlighting items like their income source, economic dependance, then their family background, items like parents occupation, educational level, addiction, habits, treatment from parents to female offenders and items regarding their criminal behaviour like motive of offence, modus operandi, arrest, after-release problems, were included in the schedule, so as to derive maximum possible sociological data. Thus the in-depth interviews were conducted.
The researcher obtained permission of the Inspector General of Prison, Govt. of Maharashtra, Pune, in the year 1986, for interviewing the female convicts of female jail of "Yeravda Central Jail", Pune. The superintendent of Yeravda Central Jail was kind enough to give the researcher every possible co-operation, guidance and help in the interview work. All available 50 female prison inmates were interviewed during the month of May-June 1986. For each female prisoner, nearly three hours time was spent. Thus to complete all the interviews, two months period was devoted. Interviewing female offenders was a very hard task as they were not used to such kind of experience. To make them vocal and responsive, I had to establish rapport with them by probing sympathetically.

**Interview Experiences:**

As stated earlier it is really a most difficult job to dig out required information from the female criminals. Particularly when a male investigator interviews them, it becomes even more tough task. Ram Ahuja, the first Indian criminologist, who studied female criminality had
same experiences:

It is to be recognised, however, that a woman may have some 'secret' thoughts which she will under no circumstances reveal to anyone else if she can help it; she may have thoughts which she cannot admit to herself, and may have thought which she does not express because they are so vague and ill-informed that she cannot put them into words.

But fortunately, I myself being a woman, was able to reach out and have a heart-to-heart dialogue. However, only being woman was not enough as the researcher has found that even physical appearance of the investigator i.e. costume, hairstyle etc. do affect on the responses. So humanly treatment and soft-polite dialogue is essential while gathering data. The first day's experience is worth-noting here. On the first day, the female prisoners interviewed, were not open and frank. They thought that the researcher may be a Government-Police officer, and hence they were responding with

12. Ahuja Ram, "Female Offenders In India", Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut(India), 1969, p.16.
suspicious attitude. But through informal dialogue with respondents the researcher was able to establish intimate relations for generating openness among female prisoners.

In the first week, the researcher has to make repeated requests to female prisoners for interview but from the second week, they started giving interviews on their own, without even sending a message or call. Even though if you create a good responsive environment, it is not sufficient. Because female criminals may hide some information. For example, in one case, the female prisoner was a murderer. During the dialogue of the first hour, she told that she had not committed the murder and she had been trapped by her in-laws. But after one hour of heart-to-heart dialogue and emotional sympathies shown by the researcher, she changed her mind, and from that moment she started giving the true version of her criminal act, with confession of crime and the whole situation which lead her to commit it.

**Other Data Sources:**

A. Other important data source utilized for this study is the statistical information published in the "Crime in India" reports of Bureau of
Police Research And Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India. The researcher has collected female criminality statistics in the form of number of female arrests under Indian penal code from 1971-1980. "Crime In India" report is published year-wise and as it is a first hand data collected by the home ministry, hence it is an important data source. Yet, another data source in the report form is utilized in this study and that is "Annual Administration Report of Prisons" in the "Maharashtra State". From these reports the statistics regarding female prison in the state of Maharashtra (India) was taken for analysis.

These reports were used to trace out the original trends in female criminality, if any.

Content Analysis:

One more data source employed for this study is data derived through the technique of content analysis. In recent years this technique is often used by the researchers of social sciences, even in criminological research this technique is being utilized by some of the authors. Therefore,
considering the usefulness of this comparatively new data collection technique, it was employed in the research.

News Papers are regarded as one of the main sources of "crime-events informants" to public at large." The amount and prominence of space devoted to crime stories in the newspapers and the amount of conversation based on them present a bewildering picture in most societies. Because they play up crime, it is likely that newspapers are important in making us a crime-centered culture. 13

Therefore, it is found worthwhile to investigate the patterns of female crime, that appear in the form of news in the popular Indian newspapers. So clippings of news-items regarding female crimes were taken from the prominent English and Marathi language newspapers like Times of India, Maharashtra Times, Marathwada and Lokmat during October to December 1985. These clippings of news-items were classified as well as their content was analyzed to identify, trends of female criminality, as appeared in the newspapers of

India. Thus, for this research the technique of content analysis was used.

**Secondary Data:**


The researcher had an opportunity to read the valuable and rare books on female criminality. The basic books like "Lombroso Ceasar", "The Female Offender", (1895), and Pollok Otto's "The Criminality of Women" (1950) were made available to the researcher by the Principal, Jailor's Training College, Yeravda, Pune from the college Library.

**Data Analysis:**

For the purpose of data analysis coding paper was used and the entire data were coded and hand processed. In the case of statistical data, available through "Crime in India" reports,
computer was used for tabulation, percentages and other analysis. For the content analysis of the news-items on female criminality classification of crime patterns was made manually.

**Concepts**: 

Concepts are known as the language of science. Hence proper coceptualization is essential for every research. In this study various concepts are used. The meanings of some important concepts, as used by the researcher are as follows:

1. **Crime**:

   Lawyer-Sociologist Paul Tappan's definition of crime with legalistic approach is accepted for this study. "Crime is an intentional action in violation of the criminal law...committed without defence or excuse, and penalized by the state". Thus in Indian context crime is intentional action, which is violation of Indian law (IPC) and is penalized according to provisions in Indian jurisprudence.

4. Female Crime:
Bush crime committed by a person, who is a female by sex is considered here, as "Female Crime" legally.

3. Female Offender:
A person female by sex, who violates the law by her act, and is being arrested, convicted or prisonized for committment of that offence.

4. Female Criminality:
It is the ratio or rate of female crimes in total criminality of any given society, at a given specific crime.

5. Male-female ratio:
The male-female ratio is the ratio of, males to females.

6. Offences against Property:
The property offences are the crimes committed with the motive of money or property (i.e. theft, robbery, dacoity, shoplifting etc.)

7. Crime against person:
Crime against person is the crime committed with the motive of physical attack or assault.

8. Crime against Morality:
A criminal act which is against morality and is also a violation of law.
9. **Violent Offences:**

Violent offence is serious offence which causes physical injury or loss of life. It also includes some other kind of violent acts (i.e. arson and riots, rape, murder)

10. **Sex-Specific offence:**

It is an offence that woman only can commit. As women only are committing these specific kind of offences, these are termed as "Sex-specific offences" by Carol Smart (1976) (i.e. Infanticide)

11. **Sex-related offence:**

These are the offences or crimes which may be committed by either sex, but which in practice appear to have committed more and often by one sex than other (i.e. shoplifting—more committed by female offenders)

12. **Female-Dowry offence:**

There are crimes, such as burning, poisoning, beating unto death, instigating for suicide, which are done by women independently or in group (as one of the participants) and with the motive of earning money easily from the parents of victim woman in the form of ornaments, articles or cash as "bride-price" at the time of marriage, or even after marriage, on important religious functions and
occasions in the family. Women involved are generally in-laws, kins and those who have higher status than the victim woman in the family.

13. **Female Prisoner:**

Female offender, who has been imprisoned by the law for committing a crime.

14. **Female-dowry Suicide:**

Female-dowry suicide is a peculiar Indian crime, committed by a married woman, because of torture and ill-treatment by the husband and his other family members for obtaining easy money in the form of dowry to be brought from her parents.

15. **Female Convict:**

A female criminal, who has been sentenced by the court of law, for committing a legally defined crime.

16. **Modus-Operandi:**

A particular method of committing a criminal act. Females have specific role and sex-related tendencies which provoke them to use specific tactics, gestures, and behaviour patterns. These may be described as cheating, silently torturing and harassing, food poisoning and skillful picking, shoplifting.
17. **Multiple-Source data :**

Data collected with the help of various type of sources, insted of using a single source data.

18. **Crime-news-item :**

A single news published in the newspapers regarding the crime-event or act.

19. **News-items clippings :**

A collection of clippings of different news-items published in newspapers continuously for a specific period of time.

**Limitations of study :**

Lastly, before concluding this chapter the researcher must mention the limitations of the study.

The researcher has interviewed all available female prisoners of female jail of Yeravda (Pune). However, I am aware that this sample selected for interviewing is not a representative, as the respondents of a single jail can not be considered as representatives of female criminals in various parts of India. Secondly, conclusions are valid upto specific extent as in this study only legally defined and officially apprehended cases of female criminality are studied. With all its limitations, this research work is one of the very
few attempts made for the exploration of female criminality in India.