CHAPTER - 7

CASE STUDIES

In this chapter an attempt has been made in presenting qualitative information to supplement and support the data gathered through various tools and techniques like, observation, interviews, scales etc. Young (1977) defines case study as a “comprehensive study of a social unit- be that unit a person, a group, a social institution or a community” He further explains that, “A case study seeks to determine social processes, it reveals that complexity of factors and indicates their sequences and inter-relationships. Statistical studies, on the other hand, deal with relatively few factors, but are able to provide scope by indicating extent, frequency, trends and degree of association”.

Good and Hatt (1954) maintain that a case study is a “way of organizing social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied. Expressed somewhat differently, it is an approach which views any social unit as a whole”. Thus to achieve greater insights about women’s criminal behaviour, qualitative data has been added for the research study.

CASE - 1 (MURDER OF DAUGHTER-IN-LAW)

I. Social Background and Relationship

“P” is a Garasia woman of 65 years age. She is illiterate and hails from a village in Surendranagar district of Gujarat. She is the eldest of the three brothers and sister. Her both the parents were illiterate and had a low economic status. She was brought up by her mother as her father died early. In
her childhood, she worked with her mother in "bandhn" work on sarees and cloths. She got married at the age of 20 years and had a happy married life. Her husband has a small piece of land and a house, showing low economic status. She has seven sons and one daughter. Three sons got married and the daughter who is also in prison, serving life terms is married and having two young sons. Her daughter was twelve years old when the crime was committed i.e. 12 years before.

2. **Personality Factors**

"P" was fast in action and did not think much before any action. She was quite old, when got convicted after twelve years of committing the crime. She felt helpless and repented that because of the death of the daughter-in-law, whole family got disturbed. But she was not feeling any guilt as she feels she has not done any offence and it was an accident.

3. **Situation of Offence/ Law Violation**

The marriage of the son took place in 1982 and the offence was committed in 1984. The daughter-in-law spent most of the two years in her parent's place and spent only few months in her in-law's place, as she complained to her parents of physical and mental torture by her in-laws for giving less dowry. On 14th May 1984, the daughter-in-law was burnt to death very early morning at 5:00 am and was cremated without informing her parents.

4. **Legal Responses and Criminal Reactions**

The session court on 27th Sept 84 acquitted all the accused on the ground that it was a suicidal death and not murder, as there is no written document presented in the court by the petitioner that the in-laws were asking for dowry. Thus based on the oral description, the court could not impose punishment on them and all the seventeen accused for the murder were acquitted by the session court.

Aggrieved by the decision, the petitioner filed an appeal in the High Court against the order. The High Court found that on 14th May 1984, when
the daughter-in-law was burning in the kitchen, the five accused were standing outside on the verandah and did not make any effort to save the daughter-in-law. Before the day break, without informing any body, they cremated her decomposed body. They spread the rumors that early morning at 5 o'clock while preparing the tea, the stove burst and she died due to the accident. 

Terming the session court’s decision as unjustified, the High Court division bench as said that all the five accused had murdered the daughter-in-law at late night and then the body was set on fire to make a show of accidental death and her remnants disposed before dawn, indicating clearly they were involved. Gujarat High Court sentenced five persons of the family, i.e. father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law and 2 brother-in-laws to life imprisonment for murdering a bride, who failed to meet their dowry demands. They were sentenced to seven years of rigorous imprisonment to run concurrently with the sentence imposed on them.

When researcher tried to understand “P”’s reactions to her criminality, she told that she was sleeping and did not know anything about the incident. The neighbours informed her about the smoke coming out from the kitchen. She completely denied her role in it and repented for all that happened to the family.

5. Analysis and Observation

In this case it shows that, the family is having very low socio-economic status, with a large number of children are the reasons for getting more dowry from the daughter-in-laws' family. The family members are hostile and aggressive and at that spur of the moment in their anger did not think about the consequences of the murder of their daughter in law. The husband of the victim was not present and had gone out of the village so he was not involved in the crime.
CASE – 2 (POSSESSION OF ILLICIT DRUG)

1. Social Background and Relationship.

"U" is 35 years old, coming from Mistry community. She is having primary level of education. She was born in Ahmedabad but the place of crime was Nadiad. She was working as a labourer in building construction. According to her, she was also getting *dakshina* from a temple in Nadiad. Her total income per month was Rs 1000. Her parents died at an early age. Father was working in a mill and having low socio-economic status. She was having 1 brother and 3 sisters. Her husband is illiterate, repairs plastic bucket and having very low socio-economic status. He is having a bad habit of gambling and sold out house, utensils etc for this purpose. "U" was having uncongenial home and often had quarrel with her husband due to poverty and bad habit of gambling. She often left home and roamed around here and there, mostly in temple. Her in-laws were staying in Agra and she never went there to stay with them. She is also not having any relation with her own family members and nobody comes to the jail to visit her. Her husband also did not keep any relation with her after she was arrested and she feels he has deceived her. She is not having any issue and now totally alone. She has not informed any body about her arrest and conviction.

From her marital history it was found that, husband was not earning and due to bad habits always asking for money. He was cruel towards her and sometimes both physically and verbally abused her. He had a difficult temperament and demanded more work from her. The in-laws were also indifferent towards her.

2. Personality Factors

"U" was active in the prison and was involved in activities like cutting vegetables, washing clothes of other inmates who could afford to pay her. She took part in singing *bhajans*. She was social and kept good relations with other fellow inmates. She was repenting for her conviction. "U" felt that, she will
have difficult time in living when she will be released. She was quite careful in talking about her personal life.

3. **Situation of Offence / Law Violation**

According to her, she was sitting in the premises of a temple in Nadiad along with her husband, who is from Agra and few women friends from Delhi having socio-economic problems like her. So, offence was committed in a group, but as the packet of ganja was lying beside her, she was caught by the police. Her husband and others ran away from there.

4. **Legal Response and Criminal Reactions**

"U" was convicted for 5 years rigorous imprisonment. She has already spent 3 years in the prison. She is suffering from Asthma in the Jail. She feels the ganja did not belong to her but somebody kept it beside her and she was caught for nothing. She has adjusted well in the prison and gave suggestions for vocational training, job and said that education should be provided for the reformation of the female offenders.

5. **Analysis and Observation**

It shows that "U" is coming from a broken home, having acute socio-economic problem in both the families of orientation and procreation. She was having an unhappy married life, with lots of physical and mental torture from her husband. The researcher feels that "U" was involved in a gang operating from Delhi on drug trafficking. As she was suffering from poor socio-economic condition, this must have forced her into such company. Her husband was also involved in the same profession, which he took up may be to satisfy the requirements of his habit of gambling.

**CASE – 3 (ILLICIT DRUG SELLING)**

1. **Social Background and Relationship**

"H" is a Muslim woman, from Vora community. She is 40 years old and illiterate. She is having two brothers and five sisters and she was the second child of the family. Father was having secondary education, by
profession he was a truck driver and earned Rs 2000 per month Mother was illiterate. Monthly income of the father was too less for a big family and thus having a low economic status.

She was married to a tempo driver secondary educated and earning was very less like Rs 500 – Rs 700 per month. She is having one son and three daughters and lived in Nadiad town.

“H” was running a tea lari and earning Rs 30 – 40 per day. Her husband was alcoholic and had a bad habit of gambling. She was married at an early age. Her husband started showing disinterest in home and children and started staying away from home for days. As a result, she had to shoulder all the responsibilities of the family alone. There was always quarrel with her husband. Sometimes he used to be cruel and abuse her verbally and beat her severely. Her husband was also involved in selling Charas and at present convicted in the jail for ten years. Though having in different relation with her mother-in-law, the children are now living with her, as both the parents are in jail.

2. Personality Factors

“H” was very bold and open. She was not at all feeling any guilt of the act. She does not bother whether people have prejudice towards her or not. She was ready to face the society after release. Before taking any action, she does think over the matter. She is active and social. To attain goals, she is ready to take dangerous ways. She was indifferent to religious and moral values. She is aggressive and frustrated.

3. Situation of Offence / Law Violation

When husband was arrested and convicted for drug trafficking, she was facing serious economic pressure. Marriage of her daughter was a burden for her. Thus she took up drug trafficking to support her family. She used to bring Charas from Ahmedabad and sell at home in Nadiad. According to her she also got protection from the local police personnels, who were knowing about her act. But unfortunately she was caught by Kheda police.
4. Legal Response and Criminal Reactions

"H" was convicted for 10 years for Violating Narcotic Act. She has already served 10 months in the prison. She was not repenting for the crime as it was knowingly committed, but repents for getting arrested. She is worried for her children as both the parents are in prison. In the jail, she participates in vegetable cutting, grains cleaning, sweeping and watering the plants in the jail premises. After release, she will carry on with her tea lari.

5. Analysis and Observation

In this case, it is very clear that the socio-economic condition of the family has forced her to take up this profession. She is not ashamed of her crime, because she feels she was fulfilling the needs of her family. She has lost faith in God and was indifferent about religion. She was very much frustrated as before her husband was a problem for her and now she is in Jail and the family got disrupted.

CASE – 4 (MURDER OF HUSBAND)

1. Social Background and Relationship

"M" is 35 years old and belongs to Bhil tribe and comes from a tribal area but settled in Baroda City. She is illiterate, having 2 brothers and 2 sisters. She is second in sibling order. Both father and mother were illiterate and worked as a farm labourer. Both the parents died early thus "M" was from a broken family. Her husband was a cycle rickshaw puller, illiterate and having low economic status. They had one son and a daughter. She had uncongenial home conditions, as the husband used to beat her after drinking. She worked as a housemaid and earned monthly Rs 150 -200. Her in-laws were indifferent towards her.

She had an unhappy marital life, as daily her husband used to drink, and after coming back home used to quarrel with her and beat her everyday. Her daughter is married and at present her son is staying with her sister.
2. **Personality Factors**

“M” was not having any guilt feeling, because she said that she has not committed the crime. She was frustrated with everyday’s fight and socio-economic pressure. She was ready to leave her husband. She got well adjusted in prison with her fellow inmates.

3. **Situation of Offence / Law violation**

According to her, as her husband daily used to drink and fight, so she left the house with her son to her sister’s place. That day also he drank a lot and burnt himself. She feels that he has committed suicide and gave her name in his dying declaration. Based on this, she was convicted for the crime.

4. **Legal Response & Criminal Reactions**

“M” was given life imprisonment for killing her husband. She has already spent 5 years in the prison. She was much disturbed for her son and feels that because of her husband’s bad habit, the whole family got disturbed and the children are suffering for this.

5. **Analysis and Observation**

In this case, the family has migrated from their tribal village to the city in search of earning for their livelihood. The family was also undergoing sufferings due to socio-economic problems. The husband, being alcoholic, had difficult temperament and used to physically and verbally abuse “M”. It is difficult to judge whether she has left the house after burning her husband or before the crime was committed. She went away to her sister’s place. Frustration might have played a vital role in this case whether it is suicide or murder.

**CASE – 5 (ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING)**

1. **Social background and Relationship**

“K” is 40 years old, coming from Agarwal caste of Uttar Pradesh. She was born in Mathura, but the offence was committed in Bhavnagar, Gujarat. Her husband is staying in Benaras. She is a Commerce graduate. Her father
was a school teacher and having middle class economic status. Her mother was also having primary education. She is having two brothers and three sisters and she was fifth in order. Her father died at an early age.

Her husband is having a cloth shop in Benaras. He is having primary education and economic status of husband is middle. "K" is having three sons and two daughters, and one of the son got married while she was in prison. She could not attend the marriage. The relatives were told that she is sick and admitted in hospital. She had a congenial home condition and there was no dispute with her husband. Both the spouse and in-laws treated her well and had cordial relationships, but reactions of her family members were indifferent, when they came to know about her arrest and conviction.

2. **Personality Factors**

   It was found that "K" was active and dominant. She likes to work according to her own will. She is also social and extrovert. She showed some symptoms of aggression for her present condition. Though she agreed of having high moral values but in practice she failed to show this.

3. **Situation of Offence / Law Violation**

   From Benaras she came to Bhavnagar with a male companion to a friend's house, with the purpose of starting an agency of Kayamchurna Police raided the house at night and found drug in the suitcase of her companion. The man ran away from the police custody. "K" was arrested for violating the Narcotic Act. She left Benaras without informing about it to her husband. It seems she was having some kind of relationship with her neighbour, who was involved in a gang, trafficking drugs.

4. **Legal Response and Criminal’s Reactions**

   "K" was convicted for 6 years of imprisonment. This included 2 years of fine, which she could not pay. She was arrested under NDPS i.e. Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. She has spent 3 years in the prison. For about an year she did not inform her husband about her where about. Afterwards when he was informed, he did not visit her for an year. She is
ashamed of her act and feels that she as a woman got labeled, but as many people do not know about her stay in jail, so she will have less problem to face the society when she will be released.

5. Analysis and Observation

Researcher found that, there is a strained relationship between “K” and her husband. It seems that her husband was against her mixing with these people and thus did not come to visit her in the prison, though now he and his son come to visit her in jail. Greed for more money must have forced her to develop relations with such people. Still now she has relation with one of the gang members, who regularly comes to visit her and is also corresponding for her release. Her husband is not making any effort to release her. Though well educated and coming from a good, middle class family but influence of bad company must have put her in such a situation, that now it is difficult for her to come out from this. She has denied to accept the crime and blamed her partner for the same, saying that she is punished because he has run away. Her attitude towards her husband shows that she was involved in a wrong doing and thus avoided informing her husband when she left for a long distance place.

CASE – 6 (BOOT LEGGING)

1. Social background and Relationship

“S” belongs to Chhara community, a criminal tribe in Gujarat. She is 50 years old and studied up to 10 standard. She is coming from a big family having four brothers and three sisters. Her place of residence is Ahmedabad. She is having liquor business and earning Rs 2000 per month. Her both the parents are illiterate and working as a low paid labourer. Her father died at an early age. Her husband is also illiterate and not earning as he is not keeping well. She is having one son, who is handicapped and two daughters. One of the daughter is married and having a child but she along with her child is
staying with her mother because her husband does not accept her. 

2. Personality Factors

She was open and frank. She knows she is engaged in anti-social 
activities, but financial constraints forced her to take to liquor business to feed 
her families. She feels guilty about her activity but then she is helpless.

3. Situation of Offence / Law Violation

For selling of liquor, one evening the police raided her house and she 
was arrested. To overcome economic stress, she had to do this liquor trade. 
She was also caught before but released on bail. This time as it is more that 
once, she has been warned by the Police, they did not grant her bail and 
detained her.

4. Legal Response and Criminal Reactions

"S" has been booked under the Prevention of Anti-Social Activities 
Act for bootlegging. She has been detained for one year in judicial custody 
and has, so far, spent 2 months in the prison. She is trying to adjust in the 
prison with other inmates. As PASA detainee, she does not have to do any 
work in the prison and passes her time by gossiping and seeing TV. All the 
women criminals detained under PASA, know each other, so they sit together 
in the jail premises and gossip. She also gets food from outside hotel and does 
not take jail food. Her son comes to visit her. She also openly said that as there 
is no other way to earn or alternate source of income, she will have to continue 
with the same trade.

5. Analysis and Observation

The socio-economic condition of "S" has forced her to selling of 
liquor, because it had a ready market and promised high returns with little 
effort. Moreover in Chhara community, this profession and lifestyle is well 
accepted as a sub-culture. She does not bother of the label. She has learned 
bootlegging from her neighbours, who are also in bootlegging.
Thus poverty, sick and jobless husband, a handicapped son and a daughter with a small child thrown out by her husband, all these social problems created a situation for her, where she needs to feed her children and this was the most easy way of earning for an uneducated, unskilled woman. This also is not going to be easy now as police is going to keep a watch on her, once she gets released from the prison.

CASE – 7 (MURDER OF HUSBAND)

1. Social Background and Relationships

“S” is 60 years old, illiterate and belonging to the Rajput Community. She is the eldest daughter of the family, having 2 more brothers and one sister. She is from Nadiad district. She is having her own land where she herself takes care and earns her livelihood. She is having 1 son and 2 daughters. All of them are married and settled in their own house. Her husband is illiterate and prepares liquor as his business, having middle class economic status. Her both the parents were illiterate and having poor economic condition. Her father was not working and was drinking all the time.

She had uncongenial home condition after marriage as husband was an alcoholic. He had a difficult temperament and used to verbally abuse her. Even her in-laws were indifferent towards her.

2. Personality Factors

She is active in the prison and seems to be dominant and having leadership qualities. She is liked by her co-inmates and jail staff, because she is quite social, she is extrovert and having high moral values.

3. Situation of Offence / Law Violation

Elder brother of her husband filed a case against her for killing her husband. After killing, the body was hidden and it was not traceable. She did not accept the crime committed by her. Saying she did not see his body after he was murdered. The offence was committed in accomplice with her neighbour.
4. Legal Response and Criminal Reactions

“S” has been given life imprisonment, of which she has spent 10 years in the jail. Her neighbours and daughter were also arrested but released on bail, later on they were acquitted. She feels due to the death of her husband, family got affected. Her son’s wife stopped all the relations and went back to her parents. After spending 10 years in jail, she got involved in the jail activities, where she is doing the duty of a watchman and supervising the work of others. She got adjusted in the routine work and has cordial relationship with everybody in the jail.

5. Analysis and Observation

“S” seems to have poor socio-economic condition during her childhood. Later on, after her marriage, she had marital conflict with her husband. May be daily conflict with her husband and maltreatment by him provoked her in killing her husband. Her sufferings from childhood till late age must have created strain, causing frustration, which must have been the cause of her crime. Her father was also a chronic alcoholic and the same situation she found after her marriage. So to overcome the social stress, she might have committed the crime.

CASE – 8 (MURDER OF DAUGHTER-IN-LAW)

1. Social Background and Relationship

“K” is belonging to the Koli community. She is 60 years old, illiterate and 2nd child of the family. She is having one brother and 3 sisters and coming from Bhavnagar, a city in Saurashtra. She was working as a housemaid and earning Rs 150 per month. Her parents were illiterate, father working as a mill worker, having low economic status. Father died at an early age. Her husband is also an illiterate, mill worker, having low economic status. She has 4 sons. Only the first son is married. She had a congenial home condition, cordial and affectionate relations with both spouse and her in-laws.
2. **Personality Factors**

"K" seems to be dominant and likes things to be done as per her wish. She realised and feels guilty as tears were in her eyes when she talked about her criminal act. She is extrovert, emotional and likes to work alone. The crime was committed alone by her which means she is a very strong headed person.

3. **Situation of Offence / Law Violation**

The marriage of her son took place 3 - 4 months ago. Previous night of the murder, the daughter-in-law came from her father's place. Daughter-in-law was making preparation for separate kitchen by collecting all the cooking ingredients. This might have enraged her. As next morning the bride got burnt and died. Kerosene was used for burning the bride.

4. **Legal Response and Criminal Reactions**

"K" has been convicted for life imprisonment for 5 years. She was on bail and then after conviction she has spent 5 years in the jail. She keeps herself busy by cleaning the grains and cutting the vegetables. She uses her leisure time by singing *Bhajans* and praying to God. Husband is not keeping well so son and her *Jethani* come to see her in jail. Son got remarried as ten years passed since the offence was committed. She has also got adjusted to her co-inmates and counting days to go back to her family and take care of her grand children.

5. **Analysis and Observation**

The family was quite happy before the marriage took place. Everything went wrong after the marriage of the son. It seems both the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law were not getting along well. The daughter-in-law visited her parent's house where she must have been guided to separate the kitchen. So after coming back, immediately she started separating the kitchen, which "K" could not tolerate. One thing to be noted here is that, all these years "K" was the only female in the house, taking care of all the household activities. When another female member came to the family, it became difficult for her to share...
with each other, especially "K" thought that her son had been taken away from her by separating him from the family. This must have led to regular quarrels with the new bride. To avoid all these, the new bride must have thought to separate the kitchen and get rid of all the problems. This went beyond the tolerance limit of "K" and thus it provoked her to commit the offence.

CASE - 9 (MURDER OF NEIGHBOUR)

1. Social Background and Relationship

"B" is belonging to Vasava tribal community. She is illiterate, 38 years old and the eldest of 5 children. She was a construction labourer, getting Rs 20/25 per day and residing in Bharuch. Parents were also illiterate, father was selling Kerocene, having very low socio-economic condition. Her both the parents died early and she had to take the responsibility of her younger brothers and sister. Her husband was doing the work of a mason and earned Rs 20/25 per day. He was also illiterate and had poor socio-economic condition. She is having 2 sons and 1 daughter, who is married. Her husband used to leave home and run away with another woman at night. He was not helping her with any monetary assistance too. At present her husband deserted her since last 5 years.

2. Personality Factors

"B" was under going lot of stress and strain. She had a big family of eight members to look after. The burden of her brothers and sister and her own 3 children. Spouse's involvement with another woman made her feel neglected and depressed. She is God fearing and feels guilty about what has happened. When under pressure, she is unable to control herself. She gets tense and nervous.

3. Situation of Offence / Law Violation

Before committing the offence, she had severe fight with her neighbour, for their children. In the evening the neighbour who is a female 296
got burnt at her home “B” and her brother were suspected for killing her and got arrested

4. Legal Response and Criminal Reaction.

“B” and her brother both got life imprisonment and serving rigorous imprisonment in the jail. She has spent 3 years in the jail. She is facing difficulties in adjusting with the jail routine and food. Participating in cutting vegetables and cleaning grains. She feels because of the fight the woman killed herself in her own home. She prays to god for forgiveness. She is worried for her 2 small sons. Just for a fight, her whole family got disturbed. Her sons and son-in-law are coming to the jail to visit her. After she will be released, she will work as before and take care of the family.

5. Analysis and Observation

The case shows that she has undergone lot of stress and frustration in her life, due to social and economic pressure. Rejection by her husband was a shame for her. The marital conflict gave her unhappiness in her life. Thus her fight with the neighbour, due to their children, might have led to a loss of mental balance and the heated exchange between them caused the crime.

CASE – 10 (MURDER OF MATERNAL AUNT)

1. Social Background and Relationship:

“M” is 28 years old, coming from Maratha family and settled in Ahmedabad. She has studied till 6th Std and is the second child of the family. She is having one brother and four sisters. Her mother is illiterate and father is having primary education. Father is a mill worker and earning well, to have middle class economic condition. Her husband is secondarily educated but is jobless. He is alcoholic and physically and verbally abuse her. Over demanding work from her. She is also having strained relations with her in-laws and regularly has clashes with in-laws and husband. The cruelty of husband and in-laws forced her to leave husband’s house and stay with her parents. She was not having any issue.
2. Personality Factors

"M" is very young, especially when the crime was committed, she was about 18 years old. She is active, and dominant, she is strongly built. She is having good leadership quality, as she is working as a Jail Watchman and supervises the work of others. Though she is young, she is able to control others. Her feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem led to an aggressive behaviour.

3. Situation of Offence/Law Violation

"M" was living with her parents due to marital conflict with her husband and in-laws. Her maternal uncle (mama), who is younger brother of her mother and his wife were also staying with them in the next room to their house. It seems Aunt and her mother were not getting along and having quarrel everyday. At night her maternal Aunt got burnt and died. "M" and her mother got arrested for the crime as their names were given by her aunt in her dying declaration.

4. Legal Response and Criminal Reactions

Both mother and the daughter have been convicted for life imprisonment. "M" has already served 8 years of rigorous imprisonment. She says she was sleeping at the time of the incident, and has been trapped into it. In-laws will not accept her anymore and she will have to stay with her parents. She is well adjusted in the prison and has cordial relations with co-inmates. She is also working in the prison with responsibility.

5. Analysis and Observation

"M" was passing through social stress, because of her husband who was not working but having the habit of drinking. At the same time, he was cruel to his wife and used to physically and mentally torture her. When she came to her parent's house to live, there must have been some problem between her mother and her maternal aunt. It is not clear how much she supported her mother in this, whether she took part in burning her aunt along with her mother or not. As she denied having any involvement and was...
sleeping at the time when the incident took place. She is undergoing the Jail term because her name was taken by the victim in the dying declaration. She was already in lot of strain and stress and this has added more to her mental stress.

The following cases give an insight to understand as how stressful situations in the family cause maladjustment and results into deviant behaviour. Another thing which can be noted from these case studies is that a woman has been committing a crime to overcome social or economic pressure which is the result of loss of self control or acting impassively. She must have been under constant strain, which made her either to murder her near ones or get into illicit liquor or drug business.