CHAPTER - 3

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sociologists, Psychologists and criminologists have concentrated their professional research studies on male criminal for many years. The reasons may be because female criminals are simply less numerous than their male counterparts. Women crime is assumed to be less serious than criminality among men and the preponderance of male theorists in the field. Since most social scientists are male, it is not surprising that they have usually studied other males. Moreover, what little work has been done suffers from bias and stereotypes about women. Studies came a long way from unscientific studies to scientific studies and were presented through thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis.

This chapter presents a review of studies which were undertaken by researchers both in India and abroad on the multifarious aspects of women criminality. The chapter has been divided into various sections like:

1. Nature and Extent on women criminality
2. Social Background of women criminals
3. Factors leading to women criminality
4. Social Roles of women
5. Physiological causes
6. Psychological causes
7. Economic causes
8. Social causes
9. Correctional Institutions
Within the past decade professional interest in female criminality has greatly increased along with interest in the general topic of women. However, there has been a small group of writings specifically concerned with women and crime in India. They are mainly, Ahuja (1969, 1970, 1996), Bhanot and Mishra (1978), Sharma (1965), Shastri (1975), Sivanandam (1974), Sohani (1975), Singh (1981), Rani (1980, 1981, 1983), Nagla (1982), Rao, Prasad, Sanyal and Agarwal, Ramadevi, Mohan and Singh, et al (all in 1982), Trivedi and Krishna (1983) etc.

1. Nature And Extent Of Women Criminality

Women criminality is socially viewed as more serious and is reportedly on the increase. In recent years in India, a few studies have been conducted on female criminality in general, like the studies conducted by Ahuja (1969, 1970, 1996), Bhanot and Mishra (1978), Nagla (1982) etc. Some studies focussed murder in particular like in the studies of Singh (1981, 1983), Trivedi and Krishna (1983), Sharma (1985) etc. In the case of female specific crimes like, abortion, assault, infanticide, molestation, prostitution, rape etc. is more than in general crimes like, theft, murder, cheating etc.

Kawale (1982) in his study of female offenders, found that the offences committed by women were pick-pocketing, dacoity with arms, theft and forcible theft. These offences were committed either singly or in combination with other. They belonged to such communities, where they operated equally with men to commit crimes mostly involving force and trickery. In committing crimes like sale of illicit liquor, gambling, prostitution and dacoity the women were helped actively by their men folk.

Regarding the place for committing crimes, Wolfgang (1958), observed that most of the homicides committed by women took place within home and kitchen.

Rani (1983) also found that women committed murders either in bedroom, kitchen, or in the backyard of the house. The analysis reveals that while
committing murders women concentrate mostly on persons who lived closer to them. This was supported by the review findings of Pollak (1950), Smith (1962), Smart (1976) and empirical findings of Wolfgang (1958), West (1965) and in India, Ahuja (1970) and Rani (1983).

As regards the nature of assistance given by the accomplices, it was found by Ram (1983) that the accomplices assisted women at different phases of offence. The accomplices include both men and women. Rani also found that women adopt either same method or various methods differently in taking away the life of their victims of any age group, whether the victim is physically stronger or weaker than the women criminals.

Pollak (1950) also found that, many times, women made use of their kinship associations and roles in putting away the life of victims.

Ghosh (1986), found that murder was the most violent offence for which 95.65% have been apprehended in Nari Bandi Niketan, Lucknow, than other offences.

Saxena (1994) found in her study that 89.5% of the respondents were convicted for offences like murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, thefts, cheating etc, and only a small percentage of the respondents 10.5% committed the non-victim offences. In 73.2% cases, the offenders used weapons such as axes, swords etc for murdering the victim. Forth-fifth of the victims, that is, 86.2% were members of the respondents’ family of procreation, which indicates that this family is much significant in the life of a woman. In her study, she found that most of the women committed serious crimes and that too against the person. It was further found that 53.5% cases, assumed the role of accomplices and 83.2% played the main culprit’s role.

The official statistics of crime substantiate the comparatively low rates of feminine criminality or the trend of female participation in cognizable offences under the Indian Penal Code of 1995.
According to Rao (1982), low criminality among women can be ascribed to their physical inequality or to the general preferential treatment in the criminal justice system itself.

Nagla (1982) observed that, in the last decade the proportion of female arrests among total number of persons has increased rapidly. However, the compound annual rate of growth among female offenders is increasing at the rate of 10% as compared nine percent that of male. The crime pattern among women varies from place to place and time to time.

Ahuja (1996) made a study of 325 female offenders, which showed that 63% offenders were convicted for murder, 14% for theft. Five percent for excise offences, four percent for kidnapping, four percent for vagrancy, three percent for causing hurt, two percent for immorality, one percent for attempt to commit suicide and four percent for other offences. In 77% cases, the victim was the member of the offender's family, in five percent cases, had kinship relationship with the criminal, in nine percent cases, victim was her neighbour. In eight percent cases, was the member of her village community and in less than one percent cases, was a complete stranger. This shows that in 99% cases, the female offender had primary relationship with the victim. Of the 77% cases in which the victim was the member of respondent's family of procreation and only in 78% cases, was a member of the family of orientation, which shows that family life after marriage plays a very crucial role in women's criminality.

Nagla (1991) in his study conducted in Haryana found that majority of the female offenders were convicted for murder, maximum crime incidence took place at offender's or victim's house, that is, 68.66%, 33.33% offenders poured kerosene and set fire for the killing the victims, 37.03% females committed crime alone whereas 55.5% took help of others.

Ahuja (1996) also found that, 20.4% belonged to the frustrated type, 28.6% to the emotional type, 13.2% to revengeful type, 27.5% to the accidental type and 10.3% to the misled type of women criminals.
Sharma (1993) in terms of nature of crime found 73% females were convicted for very serious crimes like murder (59%) and bride burning (14%). Five percent for drug trafficking, three percent for dacoity and three percent abatement to suicide.

The fact that the victim being usually a kin or a close associate of the offender in crimes of murder was also discovered by Bullock (1955) in his study of urban homicides in Texas, by Svalastoga (1956) in his study of 172 Danish cases and by Sutherland (1950) in his study of 324 murders by females. Wolfgang (1958), however, had found such relationships only in 23 13% cases in his study of 588 homicides in Philadelphia. In about fourth-fifth cases, husband-wife relationship proved quite an important factor in the causation of murder. This proves that family maladjustment as the main cause of female criminality.

Rita Simon (1975) analysed various dimensions of female criminality like extent and types of crimes committed and their treatment by court and prison officials. However, she did not study the issue of etiology of female crime. According to her, increase in female crime is due to expanding occupational opportunities for women.

Pollak's study (1950) found that women would shoplift rather than commit armed robbery, they would use poison rather than use a weapon, they would kill a family member than a stranger. The woman, according to Pollak, was more likely to be the instigator than the actor. She was likely to be behind a male, urging and enticing him into criminal action. Pollak attributed this deceit to biological and social factors. He did identify women as an oppressed class. He believed that the women were trained from birth to hide such natural processes as menstruation, sexual desire and frustration.

Gluecks (1934) studied five hundred delinquent women in Massachusetts. The major problem involved in the criminality and delinquency of women and girls were, their lack of control of their sexual impulses. More
than 80% of these women committed acts of sexual or personal immorality and only 12.4% committed anti-social, illegal acts that did not involve sex or immorality. 68% had venereal disease before they were twenty one, 42% had the habit of drinking, 54% had illegitimate pregnancies, 68% had eight years of schooling or less and 72% were of dull intelligence or less.

2. Social Background Of Women Criminals:

The demographic and socio-economic variables in relation to the women prisoners have been analyzed by many researchers to identify whether there is a profile, in terms of social background or demographic and socio-economic status, that can be typically associated with this group of women criminals.

Ahuja (1969), Kawale (1982), Rani (1983) etc found that women criminals were in the age group of 20 to 40 years. Therefore, this is the problem of young women. Mostly they were married and mentally immature to cope up with the expectations of their husbands and in-laws. This results in maladjustments between them and their family members and sometimes force them to indulge in deviant behaviour. Ahuja (1969) observed that the incidence of crime was low in low castes, while Rani (1983) found that a slightly more than 50% women criminals belonged to backward castes. However, it revealed that the incidence of crime is high in low economic classes (Ahuja, 1969) and higher in low social and economic class (Kawale, 1982). Rani (1983) found that more than 50% female criminals were dependent whose household members' income was Rs 100/- to Rs 150/-, while the other less than 50% independent earners, earned an income of below Rs 100/- per month. Prasad (1982) found that more than 90% female offenders came from Rs 50/- to Rs 200/- income group (low income). Thus a majority of the households were living with great difficulty on their meagre incomes. Most of the studies (Ahuja, 1969, Rani, 1983 etc) revealed that urban areas provide more female...
offenders than rural areas. Prasad (1982) pointed that illiterate women tend to commit crime. This was supported in the studies of Ahuja (1969), as he found in his study, 79% female criminals were illiterate. His study also showed that 76% offenders were married. The five variables which he used in his study, that is, Marital status, Age, Income, Education and Residence found in analysing that the role of family maladjustment is caused by early marriage, poverty and illiteracy in women's crime. His study pointed out that 85.7% offenders belonged to the families whose monthly income was less than Rs.300/-.

Misra and Gautam (1982) revealed that the female criminality increased as the level of education decreased and vice versa. Thus it may be said that women criminals are generally younger in age, married, illiterate and also come from low economic classes. This reflects women's nature (adjustment), need (economic and social condition) and situation (environmental) for the explanation of crime and criminality.

Ghosh (1986) found that 34.9% of inmates lie in the age range of 31 to 40 years, while 30.4% of criminals fall in the age group of 21 to 30 years, 17.4% of convicts are in the age group of 41 to 50 years and 13% that of 51 to 60 years. Regarding marital status, it showed that 97.1% are married. Majority, that is, 76.81% belonged to backward caste and scheduled caste. She found crime rate is higher in rural areas than in urban areas, which is in contrast to the studies of Ahuja (1969), Rani (1983) and others.

Sohoni (1989) from her sample of 120 women criminals found that 60% of the sample came from the age group of 22 to 41 years, while those below 22 years and above 41 years accounted for 20% each. 93.33% were married and sample include more persons of depressed or backward caste. The association of crime with urban living was also found.

Mathew (1992) in her study conducted in Kerala found that, majority of the women criminals were married. But among the women caught for immoral activities, as high as 60.71% are living as separated, 55% were deserted women.
among the offenders, who have to suffer the malady of quarrels among parents. Majority of the women (50.95%) reported that they are coming from urban areas, 85.71% are from lower income group, that is, less than Rs 1000/- per month. Majority of the offenders (51.42%) belong to Hindu backward community. Majority of the women, that is, 56.36% charged for theft belong to Hindu backward community. In terms of level of education, majority of the offenders, that is, 52.14% are found to have only primary education.

Nagla [1991] revealed that 60% female offenders belong to the age-group of 30 to 50 years. The study showed that a large number of female offenders are young and adult at the time of committing crimes, which means, the interpersonal relations in the family after marriage create adjustment problems for women and sometimes force them to indulge in deviant behaviour. Most of the female criminals, that is, 62.96% were married, 3.72% were divorced and 33.32% were widow, who had frustration in their life because of family problems, 70.36% were from rural areas, that is, female crime in Haryana is a rural phenomenon, whereas Rani (1981) in her study in Andhra Pradesh views that urban centres produce at a greater number of female offenders than those of rural areas. A high proportion, that is, 22.22% belonged to Hindu Scheduled Castes and 11.11% belonged to Backward Castes. Regarding educational background of the convicts, a large number of female criminals, that is, 88.88% were illiterate and 51.88% were engaged in agriculture. The study also pointed that 51.85% offenders had Rs 400/- as monthly income of the family.

Sharma (1993) studied 36 female offenders in Tihar Jail, Delhi and Borstal Jail, Hissar (Haryana). Of these, 39% were below 25 years of age, 39% belonged to the age group of 26 to 43 years, 16% belonged to the age group of 44 to 53 years and 6% were of 53 and more years. Further, 78% were illiterate, 78% were married, 56% were from the rural areas and 83% had monthly income of less than Rs 2000/-. 
Nirmala Adwaru (1978) found out that age appears to be closely related to the frequency and type of crime committed by female prisoners at Central Jail, Jaipur. It revealed that the crime rate was highest during the young age, that is, among female prisoners it was highest in the age of 16 to 20 years, that is, in the age group in which they were comparatively less grown up physically. The highest rate of offenders (65.07%) was of married women and the lowest rate (0.73%) of crime was found to be among deserted and divorced persons. The highest number of crimes was in the lower income group of female offenders.

Saxena (1994) found that, nearly half of the offenders, that is, 49.0% belonged to middle age group of 31 to 50 years. The age pattern further revealed that little more than one third of the offenders, 37.0% were in the younger age group of 16 to 30 years. It revealed that 72.5% were married, 60.05 participated in different economic activities, 79.5% were illiterate and 65.5% belonged to rural areas. A very high percentage of women offenders belonged to economically lower class.

A study conducted by Manuel Lopez-Rey (1970) among female offenders in England and Wales, it was found that for females, the greatest contribution to crime is made by the 21-30 age group followed by the 14-17 age group in the Magistrate's Courts and the 17-21 age group in the Sessions Courts.

West (1963) observed from the study conducted among habitual prisoners that, there was an association between family background and age at onset of crime. The worse the home background, the earlier the onset of crime.

In 1970, Gibbons observed from a study on delinquents, on official cases of female law breaking that the girls are frequently from lower income backgrounds and situations of social inadequacy.

Bingham's (1923) intensive study of 500 cases on the determinants of sex delinquency in adolescent girls found that, 19% of 300 girls, sex
delinquents had one or more delinquent sibs. Parallel findings have been made by Beane (1931), Lumpkin (1931), Bagot Lpps (1941), Merrill (1947), the Gluecks (1930, 1950), Epps (1951) and Ferguson (1952).

John Cowie and followers (1968) observed from their study conducted among Magdalen girls found that these girls suffered educational deprivation, their families tended to be unduly large, the home was more often than not 'broken' and delinquency was common in the sibship.

Watterberg and Saunders (1954) found a high proportion of broken homes among female than male juvenile offenders, 56% of the boys but only 41% of the girls came from intact families. Defects of interpersonal relations, especially conflicts within the family, play a larger role in the causing delinquency in girls than boys.

Elizabeth Windschuttle (1981) found that women who live in restrictive, more anonymous urban environments, who are more independent of the male protectors but more dependent on the labour market and thus more subject to the vagaries of the industrial economy, are more likely to turn to crime. According to her finding, women's crime was greater in the urban areas than rural areas. Women's crime also accounted for a much higher proportion of the total crime in the city than in the countryside.

Weinberg (1973) studied 67 institutionalized female delinquents, 107 institutionalized male delinquents and 74 non-delinquent female school children (all between 11 and 16 years of age) in Accra, Ghana. Half of the parents of the female delinquents were divorced or separated, compared with 29% of the female non-delinquents and 34% of the male delinquents.

3. Factors Leading To Women Criminality

Various studies conducted on women criminals, throw some light on different factors like biological, psychological, sociological and economic, which contribute to the criminal offences of the individual. Society tends to
view the problems of female criminality with greater concern and anxiety. Crimes by women are supposed as more dysfunctional than the crimes by men, because the former will have greater disastrous consequences on the social structure than the later. Crimes by women in India are a little studied phenomenon and the study of the causes and factors leading to women criminality is a question of vital criminological significance.

Misra and Gautam (1982) assume that the problem of female criminality originates from the rapid transformations of the society from past tradition to modernity. This process of transformation creates a changed new situation which are demanding on the individual for quick and proper adjustment. It calls for the reorientation and change of values in their day to day social interactions. The discrepancies between the cultural goals and the institutional means prescribed by the social structure to achieve it. The gap between the two creates frustration and aggression among the individuals in cultural situations which lead to the deviant behaviour. The contention strengthens the empirical findings of Rani (1983) and the theoretical interpretation of Cohen (1970) and Merton (1938).

Family Maladjustment

Prasad (1982) found in his study that all the female offenders were highly frustrated in their conjugal life and sexual relations.

Mathew (1992) found that uncongenial home background for the women and the influences of these when combined with broken marital bonds has paved the way for the offensive behaviour of the women.

Sohoni (1989) found that marital conflict was due to poverty, drunkenness and infidelity in respondent herself or in her husband. In fact, when combined for respondent and spouses, both drunkenness and infidelity came out stronger than poverty as factors leading to marital conflict.
Ahuja's (1996) study of female offenders is a starting point for the
discussion looking into situational and environmental variables compelling
women to commit crime. Most of the crime committed by women are due to
stressful family situation, marital mal-adjustment, disharmonious and often
conflict-prone relationship with husband. It is clear that mal-adjustment in
interpersonal relationships within the family is one of the most important causes
of criminality amongst women. Ahuja's hypothesis of "family maladjustments"
or "role conflict in family" was supported by Sharma, Rani Bilimoria, Mishra
and Gautam, Eswar Shariff and Sekar, Sanyal and Agarwal and Neera Sohony.

Rani Bilimoria (1983) studied 120 female convicts in Andhra Pradesh,
also supports the findings of Ahuja, by explaining crime in terms of unhealthy
marital and family relations and family maladjustment as the main cause of
female crime. In her study, more than 70% cases, domestic factors played an
important role in disposing of women to entertain attitudes of victims,
provocation, lover's/friends instigation played a major direct role in pulling out
such criminal proneness.

Eswar Shariff and Sekar (1982) studied female inmates of Remand
Home in Bangalore and pointed out defective family environment (pathological
family patterns), faulty discipline by parents, broken homes, parental rejection
etc. as causes of deviant behaviour.

**Broken Homes**

Mishra and Gautam (1982) too in their study have pointed out that
female criminality is largely due to broken homes and crisis of changing social
values. Rani in her analysis of case histories showed that in 33 out of 35 cases,
women were deprived of love of their parents, or husbands and inlaws, or a
combination of both, adding to this an incessant ill-treatment by the members of
their family of procreation, their attitude to divorce or desert their husbands
and various other unhappy incidents in their life had strengthened frustration.
leading to various deviant acts (like establishing illicit contacts with other persons) and aggressive acts (like committing murder) on their part.

Datesman and Scarpitti (1975) found in their studies that there is a relationship between female delinquency and broken homes. Wilkinson (1974) also concluded that the higher incidence of broken homes among female delinquents, irrespective of the types of offences, has shown their greater involvement in offences such as ungovernability, running away and promiscuity.

**Family Influences**

Mathew (1992) found that large families are found to be very much associated to the criminal tendencies. As 97.30% of offenders from very large families, in the sample experience uncongenial home atmosphere. Science, the size of the family of women offenders increased the degree of uncongeniality, also increased and this phenomena influenced their women towards deviant life. In her study, 90.91% of the women who committed theft has reported to be having uncongenial atmosphere at home. Thus prevalence of high degree of uncongeniality at home is found to be one of the major channels of influences leading females to the commitment of crime. Majority (66.67%) of the offenders complained of poverty as the contributing factor to uncongeniality at home. Majority (62.04%) of the offenders from the above group has criminal relatives and 18.52% women have criminal career among the parents. A large part (69.81%) of the women admitted that it is their close relatives who cooperated with them to do the crime.

Sohoni (1989) revealed in her study that family size has little relevance to the type of offence. The findings also suggest that negative nurturing by parents was not overly experienced by any offence category in particular, although positive nurturing was more evident in murder and to some extent, in theft than in miscellaneous crimes.
Mohon and Singh (1982) found that murderers often victimize friends, family members, close relatives or neighbours, under the peak of emotional stress to resolve conflict through extreme and uncontrollable aggression. Their criminal behaviour speaks of their mal-adjustment. The t-test results between the scores of male and females victimiser group revealed that females are significantly less adjusted on both emotionally and marital relations. In the sphere of home relations poorer adjustment trends of the female are observed also. In the Indian cultural set-up females tend to undergo a lot of stress specially in the post-marital period.

Prasad and Krishna (1982) have revealed that the major areas of their (female criminals) conflicts are -

- Husband having the habits like drinking, gambling, drug addiction
- Lack of interest in the family and love
- A forced marriage.
- Illegal connection with in-laws and other due to sexual incompatibility and husband's maladjustment
- Jealousy due to husband's illegal connection with other women
- Low income and excessive expenditure
- Conflicts over sex.
- Sexual jealousy and jealousy over property

Saxena (1994) found that 49.5% belonged to poor housing and living condition. Over crowding was prevalent in more than half of the families, giving tensions and conflicts, resulted in aggressive behaviour of women. A higher percentage of women (85.5%) had come from broken homes. It was also found that the presence of step-parents increased the possibility of women's involvement in aggressive behaviour, that is, 64.3%. As many as 46.5% felt that they were rejected by the parents and 26% felt that they were brought up under strict discipline, thus feeling of rejection. A large number of offenders (40.3%) reported to have indifferent relations with siblings, while...
17.7% experienced conflicting relationships with their siblings. Majority of the offenders experience the home environment as uncongenial and uncomfortable which included unhappy marital relations between parents, presence of frequent quarrels between parents and separation of parents either temporarily or permanently.

**Relationships**

Kathryn’s (1973) research into the characteristics of women prisoners indicated that severe pathological problems were often present. In many cases, their lives have been based on rejection and exploitation by men and by inability to form lasting positive relationships.

An interesting experimental study was carried out by Ruth Morris (1964) on the relational problems among female delinquents. Since the life of the female is so much involved with personal relations, it was assumed that girls would be more likely than boys to suffer under relational problems. Three predictions were made that delinquent girls would be, of all four groups, most likely to come from broken homes, to come from homes with many family tensions and to be at a disadvantage in personal attractiveness and grooming. Morris concluded that her results strongly support the view that girls are particularly susceptible to relational problems.

Peggy C Giordano’s (1978) research on the social context in which females participate in delinquent acts shows that interaction with males, particularly in a non-romantic way, simply affords the most suitable environment in which girls will learn about as well as actually engage in delinquent acts.

**Values**

Singh, A. K.; Singh, S. K. and Singh, S. B. (1998) studied values among females convicted for different types of crimes committed in Bihar. They found...
that female criminals were fairly high in their value patterns. The female property criminals rated themselves desirably in terms of their value patterns, but on the whole, it revealed that, criminals as a group, possessed low social, economic, moral, religious value compared to the non criminals.

4. Social Roles Of Women

Studies of female criminality have so far ascribed the differential facets of anti-social behaviour in the two sexes to their "restrictive social roles", which have been institutionalized and perpetuated through continuance of the old myths of the fair sex's vulnerability, physical weakness and need for protection. The status of women in India has been laid down by ancient discriminatory laws, religious sanction and tradition. In Indian society, the lower social status and the underprivileged positions of women have certainly contributed to the liberal provisions relating to the arrest, bail and custody of female offenders. Even in sentencing, there is a greater degree of lenience. Although the existing criminal laws do not prohibit the imposition of capital punishment on women, in practice, no women has been executed in the country since 1944, indicating that capital punishment has been virtually abolished in the case of women at least.

However, the female offenders can be better understood on the basis of her social roles as has been determined by her constitutional differences, her psychological differences and her social position all of which are inter-related. A woman's role is of a home-maker dependent upon her husband. A married woman spends most of her life in devotion and service to her husband and family. Sometimes in order to get her wishes satisfied and to achieve her goals, out of frustration, women get involved in crimes. Thus when women cannot control their anger, they give up their traditional role and express themselves by getting into criminality.
Nagla (1982) attributed to differences in the social roles ascribed to women and men by most culture. The role of wife, lover or girlfriend is important to a woman. Many female offenders engage in prostitution and property offences to earn money to support the drug habit or to get rid of debts of husband and lovers. When couples are involved in robberies, the women is usually the girlfriend or wife of the male robber. The criminal activity of women is influenced by the requirements of the men to whom they are emotionally attached. But today, the pattern of role behaviour is changing, so also the pattern of crime among women.

Ruth Hartley (1960) conducted a survey into the attitude of working women on their jobs and found that, they perceived their work "as an extension of the nurturant, mothering role" and that 'they were working to improve the welfare of their families and this was seen as in concert with, rather than in conflict with, the wife-mother role'.

Davis and Olsen (1965) surveyed a group of college girls to ascertain their attitude to the female sex role. Results clearly indicated that the subjects took the conventional view. They considered the woman's primary role as being in the home, over 87% of the girls in the study ranking "home and family" as top priority.

Douvan and Adelson (1966), found in their attitudinal study of adolescents that girls listed marriage, home and family as their major long term aims.

Mabel Elliot (1952) a female criminologist, presented a review of theories on female crime, including sex role formulation to account for low rates of crime among women. She also discussed a number of socio-demographic characteristics of women offenders in the United States.

Case studies on female crime made by Jenkins (1949), Parker (1965), Franklin (1967), Edith de Rham (1969) and Sparrow (1970) accepted as fact Pollok's assumption that women commit many more crimes for which they are
never arrested than do men and that the legitimate and traditional roles women perform in society provide excellent cover for the most devious types of crimes. In each of these case history studies, the woman as nurse, lover, companion, secretary or wife carefully and slowly poisons to death the person with whose life she has been entrusted. These studies strive to dramatize Pollak's basic assumption that women are no more endowed with morality and decency than are men, but the roles they perform in society assume goodness, charity and morality and it is those roles that serve as useful masks for hiding criminal activities. When a man commits a crime, it is more likely to be a public act than when a woman does.

These studies produced a consistent picture of women's perceptions of their sex role, the traditional view that their life should revolve around homemaking and the pursuance of successful family relationships. These studies were, however, equally consistent in their failure to comment on the nature of the social conditioning necessary to produce such a homogeneous display of attitude.

5. Physiological Causes

Menstruation and Crime.

Negative associations with menstruation and criminal behaviour have a long history. Singh (1980) concludes in the study that premenstruum is the most stressful period for women and about 53% of the sufferers committed their crimes at the time of these symptoms. The adverse effect of menstruation was greatest among sufferers of pre-menstrual tension which is defined as mood changes, headaches, tiredness and bloatedness during premenstruum. Premenstrual tension was present among 50% of the 95 prisoners. It was more common among those sentenced for offences of violence such as murder, attempt to murder, causing grievous hurt etc. The symptoms themselves may be responsible for certain crimes e.g. irritability and loss of temper may lead to
violence and assault, lethargy may lead to child neglect and depression to suicide. Various other studies have highlighted the adverse effects of premenstrual tensions on women's behaviour.

Devi and Rao (1972) found 60% of the suicide were committed by women in the premenstruum.

Singh and Singh (1979) found that 61.6% murders were committed during the premenstruum. Thus Singh's (1982) study also fully co-relate these earlier things.

Nagla (1991) in his study found that 78.56% women committed crime who had irregular period of oestrus than those of regular (21.42%). Moreover, 62.94% female committed crime when they were in menopause. 14.8% each pre and post menstruation cycle and 74% were pregnant.

In the early studies of Lombroso and Ferrero (1895) also linked menstruation to women's criminal behaviour. Cooke (1945), quotes the findings that 84% of violent crime by women in Paris was committed just before or during menstruation. Gibbens and Prince (1962), claimed that in their sample of shoplifters the offence usually took place just before menstruation. Marsh (1981) stated that 80% of all female crime occurs paramenstrually.

Writers like Freud (1924) and Pollak (1961) attributed the underlying reason to revenge, menstruation was said to remind women of their inferior status.

Dalton (1961) presented data on a sample of female prisoners. 156 of those interviewed had committed their offences during the previous 28 days. Nearly half of all the crimes were committed by the women during menstruation or in the premenstruum. According to Dalton (1969), premenstrual tension often drives the women to war with world, since it is also accompanied by irritability, lethargy, depression and water retention and these symptoms make women more ill-tempered, impatient, violent and emotionally deranged. These symptoms themselves may be responsible for certain crimes e.g. irritability and loss of temper may lead to violence and assault, lethargy...
may lead to child neglect and depression to suicide. Dalton also reported that pre-menstrual tension to be the cause of habitual crimes.

Epps (1962) interviewed 200 women in Holloway prison soon after their admission. Fourteen percent admitted to PMT (pre-menstrual tension) symptoms. These were feelings of irritability, depression or tension. Less than half of them had committed their offences during the paramenstruum.

Parlee (1982) studied a small sample of women and found that the women experienced increase in anxiety, irritability, depression and tension in the pre-menstrual phase.

**Heredity.**

As regards excess of energy or physical development that may lead to delinquency, the same can be inherited. Though crime is not transmitted by heredity, certain peculiarities and characteristics that are constituent factors in the causation of crime can be inherited. An irritable temper is a vital factor in the causation of crime. Sethna (1980) in his study found that, environmental conditions can make the child follow the same crime or crimes as her parent, which she learns by imitation.

Sethna (1980) also reports from his studies on offenders that, ocular ailments, nose and throat obstructions, ear troubles, speech defects, enuresis, phimosis, physical irritations, headaches, excessive physical strength, menstrual disorders, ailments of adolescence and other physical ailments and under-nourishment are contributing to the condition of anti-social behaviour and crime among females in society.

**Physical Characteristics and Female Offences.**

Mathew (1992) found in her studies that the female offenders, (84.52%) are of normal appearance in bodily features. There are 14.05% of women offenders who are abnormal and a very few, i.e., 1.43% women are monstrous in appearance. Most of the prostitutes, i.e., 95.79% in the sample are...
of quite normal appearance. Among the offenders with abnormal appearance, the largest, i.e., 32.20% of them are found to have committed homicide, murder, infanticide, attempted suicide, murder, etc. About one-fourth, i.e., 27.27% of the thieves are of abnormal appearance. In the case of women with monstrous appearance, 66.66%, i.e., majority are found to commit homicide and murder. A major part, i.e., 83.33% of women charged for homicide, murder, infanticide, attempted suicide and murder are mentally handicapped. Among the women charged for theft, 66.67% are physically handicapped. Thus, physical disabilities are found to be closely related to offensive behaviour among the females. This study reveals that women with unusual physical features are more prone to offensive behaviour.

Lombroso and Ferrero (1920) compared criminal women, found in prisons for women and the courts, to non-criminal women. They recorded comparisons of physical features such as cranial capacities, facial anomalies, facial angles, and brain weights. It was believed that criminal women could be categorized by their physical features. For instance, prostitutes were said to have heavy lower jaws, large nasal spines, simple cranial sutures, deep frontal sinuses, and wormian bones. All criminal women could be identified by the higher percentage of physical abnormalities or atavistic qualities they possessed. Criminal women were believed to be deficient in moral sensibilities, to have unstable characters, and to possess excessive vanity, irritability, desire for revenge and sexuality.

Dobash et al. (1986) emphasized on the ugly and masculine characteristics of the female criminal. They described the criminal woman as "masculine, unsexed, ugly, abnormal women".

6. Psychological Causes:

Sanyal and Agarwal (1982) studied a sample of 69 female convicts and found that about 75% criminals had a feeling of insecurity and 80% had a
feeling of low self-esteem. Inmates with longer length of stay in prisons have revealed lower self-esteem in comparison with those inmates with shorter length of stay. High guilt feeling is evident in 30-43% of the inmates only. Negative self-esteem is found more in the convicts who belonged to low social and economic strata and class. It has been observed that the low self-esteem not only makes the convict self-critical and non-conformist, but also it creates unhealthy interpersonal behaviour.

Belle and Akran (1970) while studying the anti-social and pro-social offenders tried to study the guilt feeling in them. The findings revealed that the pro-social groups have greater sense of guilt about anti-social activity than anti-social group.

Paripurnanand Varma (1972) conducted a study on crime and delinquency found that there are four factors which predispose delinquent acting out:

a) Guilt, b) Lowered self-esteem, c) Anger, d) Inability to establish meaningful mature personal relationships.

Ghosh (1986) in her study made an attempt to observe association between anxiety and insecurity among female convicts. She found out of a population of 69, 73.91% inmates are highly insecure, while 26.09% suffer from less insecurity. On the other hand 92.75% have high anxiety in them and 7.25% in comparison have less anxiety. A relationship between insecurity and guilt was also studied, which revealed that, in the total population 30.43% are those categorized as suffering from high guilt and 69.57% of them are less guilty. Moreover, 73.91% in this population, are those who feel highly insecure and 26.09% experience less insecurity in them.

Mental Illness And Crime.

Female offenders are, according to the statistics, less numerous than male offenders and so it is assumed that there must be "something" with them.
Goodman and Price (1967), Gibbens (1971), D’Orban (1971), Eysenck and Eysenck (1973), Worth (1981) pointed to high rates of psychiatric abnormality among women in prisons. Gibbens (1971) found in the 1967 Holloway Survey, that almost half of the women were suffering from some form of psychiatric disorder and that a quarter had previously been admitted to psychiatric hospitals.

Eysenck and Eysenck (1973) studied 264 female prisoners and found them to be characterized by high psychotism, high neurotism and high extraversion scores.

Turner and Tofler (1986) in a recent survey of psychiatric disorder among female prisoners at Holloway prison found that, from a random sample of 708 women, 18% had a history of psychiatric disturbance.

Singh (1986) compared 100 female delinquents with 100 female non-delinquents matched in term of socio-economic status, age and urban versus rural place of residence, he found that delinquents had higher scores on extraversion and neuroticism than did the non-delinquents.

Rehman and Hussain (1984) studying female criminals in Bangladesh, found them to have much higher psychotism and neuroticism scores than controls, those engaged in prostitution, fraud, kidnapping and possession of illegal arms also had high extraversion scores. Murderers were significantly introverted.

Sharma (1987) found that criminal women as compared to their counterparts were more reserved, emotionally unstable, weaker super ego, tough minded, suspicious, apprehensive, self-sufficient and less integrated.

7. Economic Causes

Financial difficulties have been one of the direct contributing causes for the acts of female crime. This factor is very common in a country like India, which hardly needs any detailed explanation. Financial factors give rise to
different situations of stress and stress compelling the individuals to commit different types of deviant behaviour

Mathew (1992) found in her study, that majority that is, 72.30% of the women offenders are coming from poor homes and have problem of poverty at home. The analysis reveals that the intensity of poverty among female offenders is greater and this trend decreases with the increasing level of income of her sample.

Nagla (1991) in his study points out that, 15 female offenders were involved in financial matter. Of these 15 cases, 40% had disputes over agricultural land and related property and 40% had other financial matters, besides 20% had financial crisis for want of dowry.

Saxena (1994) found that due to poor economic condition, the family were under severe pressure to support the family. Hence, certain conditions and consequences of poverty such as economic insecurity, unemployment, under-nourishment, denial of basic necessities and lack of recreation motivated these women near to anti-social behaviour. Her study showed that 79.3% were in the income group of below Rs.1000/-, which might have caused acute stresses and strains leading to a social behaviour.

Adler (1975) found that, where the economic disparity between men and women decreases, there has been a corresponding increase in rates of female criminality.

Klein (1973) in her study rejected economic causes as a possibility, denying it’s importance in criminal activity with as much certainty in close agreement to Lombroso, Freud, Davis, Pollak and most other writers.

Kellor (1900) found that many women criminals came from the ranks of domestic service, inadequate salaries spurred women to steal, as they were unskilled, they were unable to do anything else. Thus domestic service was an easy route to prostitution.
Pantazis and Gordon (1997) in their study, explored the extent and nature of female criminality in a relatively minor offense in Great Britain: television license evasion. By 1994, 64% of the prosecutions for these offenses involved women. Data were obtained from agency records. The growth in poverty over the past two decades, women’s domestic routines, and the long-term increase in female-headed households account for the growing involvement of women in this offense. Poverty and financial hardship have forced more women, particularly single mothers, to break the law, because they are unable to afford the annual license fees. Recommended solutions are offered for alleviating the burden of these fees on poor households and decriminalizing sanctions.

Boritch (1997) explored issues related to female crime and criminal justice in Canada. Women remain a small minority of those charged with criminal offenses in Canada, although their numbers are increasing. The typical woman incarcerated in Canada is socially and economically disadvantaged, and is in custody for minor crimes. Imprisonment contributes to women’s crimes by exacerbating their economic and social problems. Suggestions have made to devote greater attention to redressing women’s deprived economic and social conditions and re-evaluating laws that criminalize women.

Chesney-Lind (1997) found that, the personal troubles experienced by girls create and facilitate their crimes, eliminate other choices and eventually result in crimes by women. These troubles include childhood victimization, as well as problems engendered by being raised in poverty. Thus, pathways into crime and violence are shaped by the experiences of the girls on the margin of impoverished communities. As adults, women have been disproportionately penalized by harsh sentences associated with the war on drugs, which has produced vast increases in the number of women in prison.
8. **Social Causes**

Various case histories reveal that the domestic causes include such as ill treatment by family members or lovers, unfaithful husband, unhappy marriage and unhappy family relations.

Nagla (1991) found that 40.7% respondents were compelled to take criminal acts because of their marital mal-adjustment and one was divorced who felt deserted all the time. Moreover, 29.6% female had illicit relations with other persons than their husbands whereas husbands of nine women criminals had illicit relations with other females. Thus breach of faith of both (husband-wife) to each other is also the main cause of offences. Furthermore, out of 16 offences which resulted from social causes other than domestic causes, 14.8% female committed offences due to instigation from intimate friend such as lovers, 11.11% due to dowry, 3.7% in self defence, 14.8% in fear of social contempt and 14.8% were provoked by the kinsmen. This shows that social causes are also important factors giving rise to criminal behaviour.

Punekar and Rao (1967) found in their study conducted among the prostitutes in Bombay, that the unscrupulous guardians or the superstitious mothers in the absence of the fathers, were perhaps responsible for the dedication of many of the girls towards offences.

Mathew (1992) found that tempting situation, compulsion or persuasion by others, etc are also significant to the problem of female offences. Chronic alcoholism of the family members diverted 68.75% towards deviant habits and consequently to punishments for theft. Majority of the offenders, that is, 60% in this study are unable to adjust themselves to their varying conditions to troubled home environments. Neglect and indifferent behaviour of parents is another issue for many. Nearly 45% of the female offenders from very large families are found to experience neglect from parents and other family members.
Saxena (1994) found that women offenders had stressful relations with their husbands. Their marital life had undergone severe conflicting situations involving oppression, cruelty, rejection and humiliation. Husband’s adultery, his illicit affairs with other women, immoral behaviour of husbands contributed significantly in motivating married women to resort to crimes of murderous violence. Majority of the women offenders convicted for homicidal activities, were poorly adjusted in the family settings.

Elliott and Voss (1974) found out from their researches that troubled parent-child relationships are more often reflected in female than in male delinquency, but that school factors are more directly linked than parental rejection to adolescent law violation.

Dae, H. Chang (1976) found out from his study on criminals, a cross-cultural perspective, that much crime and delinquency is derived from broken home, residence within disorganised areas such as slums, uneducated parents, hostility towards their children, unsuitable recreational facilities, undesirable playmates, poor educational systems, transiency and corrupt politicians dominating the community. He also found that inconsistent parental discipline as influence of family on children has also been suggested as related to crime.

9. Correctional Institutions

The aim of the correctional institution is the restoration of the offender back to the law-abiding nature.

Mathew (1992) found in her study that 79.52% offenders admitted that their experience in the institutional life have influenced in not retaining in the offensive career. Only one fifth, that is 20.48% of the whole women admitted that they are still retained in the offensive career. It was found that the younger women in the sample are more influenced by the correctional service towards improvement than older women. 99.44% of the unmarried women admitted that institutional life has corrected their criminal behaviour to a great extent.
very few women, that is, 9.76% complained that they suffered exploitations at the correctional institutions. Among these, physical torture and hard labour are the major complaints. Institutional authorities or officers are generally considerate towards the women offenders. The poor women in the sample thought that their personal problems are reduced after their incarceration. A good majority (77.14%) among the offenders do not support after care services as a means of improving their career after release. It was found that 89.17% of women aged 30 years and above are having this view. Among the women who do support after care services as good, 33.33% do not like to go back to their homes under the fear of either no admission to their homes or because they (17.17%) do not have any home at all. Regarding the nature of behaviour of women inside the institutions, 80% of authorities/officers admitted that female offenders behave well inside the institution. Only a very few (11.11%) of the authorities complained of uncontrollable behaviour of female offenders. Majority, that is, 86.36% of the officers admitted that female inmates behaved well. Majority, that is, 73.33% of the jail authorities opined that the institutional services rendered to the females are quite effective in the improvement of their career.

Ghosh (1986) found majority of the female convicts have expressed favourable attitude towards the convict officer, while the inmates have a negative attitude towards the warder. Convicts have favourable attitude towards the authorities except for the warders whom they dislike. Convicts do perceive the society negatively, though a considerable number of inmates still perceive the members of the free community favourably. The convicts described the society to be bad and cruel, but at the same time, a group of convicts feel that there are members in this free community who are yet sympathetic to them and can forgive them for their offences. This group of convicts may see some chances of their rehabilitation in the free community once again, but the larger portion of the convicts believe that, it would be
extremely difficult for them to regain the former recognition from the free community once again Maximum of the respondents' attitude towards education, is highly favourable. A large proportion of the inmates believe it to be a good method to earn their livelihood. A majority of the inmates have given a favourable attitude towards the vocational skills, while the inmates have an ambivalent attitude towards the institutional programmes. A majority of the inmates possess positive opinion about jail environment, a large number of inmates also have a negative opinion about it. Very few inmates have expressed extremely favourable opinion towards the environment. Though maximum number of respondents have given positive responses towards recreational programme, but a considerable number of the population have given negative opinion towards recreational programme. While studying the attitude of the inmates towards the fulfillment of their primary needs, that is, food, clothing, medical treatment etc., it was found that majority of the inmates have positive response. Ghosh also found that, the inmates with a longer confinement inside the prison need not have positive attitude towards the institutional programme.

Sohoni (1989) found that prison life appeared to be harsh for 48% of the sample. While assessing prison life in comparison to their life outside, it revealed that a majority, that is, 59.16% found that prison life was worse, 17.5% felt that it was the same as life outside and 15% felt prison life was better, 62.5% stated that they were not satisfied with their life in prison. 93 respondents found prison life being difficult to adjust. A total of 35% believed that the employment skill gained in prison would enable them to obtain work or be self-employed, while 55.83% did not reply. Only 16 of the 36 respondents availing of educational facilities believed that education would help them to improve their lot on release. Only 22 respondents agreed that prison moral instruction helped them to adjust to life in prison, whereas 62 respondents did not believe it was helpful and 36 respondents did not reply. Respondents appreciated the prison staff but most of the respondents disliked the prison.
Two-fifths of the sample were convinced of the correctional value of prison services. It was also found that 75% had no interaction with fellow inmates and only 10.83% had made friendships in prison.

Saxena (1994) found that a significant number, that is, 70% of respondents were long termers and had already spent a few years in the prison and hence were partially influenced by the process of prisonization. Most of the respondents, that is 52% had been receiving visitors too. While ascertaining the opinion of inmates towards prison officials, it was found that offenders convicted for the offences of transgression and vice offences were more aggressive in their attitude towards prison officials. Those inmates who were imprisoned for offences of aggression, expressed submissive attitudes. Those who were harboring aggressive attitudes towards prison officials were short termers. A large number of transgressors, that is 63.2% and the vice offenders, that is 52.4% expressed hostile opinions towards other inmates. One third of the aggressors maintained good relations with co-inmates. About 70% of the convicts were extremely critical of the judicial system.

Vernon Fox (1972) could bring out from his researches on the major facets of correction services that first termers without any previous institutional experience adjust better in prison than those with previous institutionalization. First termers are more easily intimidated by other inmates and correctional officers and are more cautious and apprehensive of their behaviour and records.

Sagarin (1973) and others found that one of the biggest problems facing the offender after she is released is lack of community acceptance.

In the 1977 Federal Survey, administrators of women's institutions were asked their views concerning the special needs of women prisoners. Their comments indicate the range and the depth of the problem. The inmates' special role in society is home making, she needs a home-like setting, even in prison (this is why women inmates turn to homosexuality). She needs stronger ties to institutions. About one-third of the women in institutions are enrolled in
some type of vocational or academic programme. However, these vocational “rehabilitative” programmes are often geared to the stereotyped female tasks such as sewing, food service and laundry.

Burkhardt (1977) reports on women in prison says that only a handful of women prisoners throughout the country are trained to be such things as dental assistants, etc. Being “need of a household” is a big problem for many women inmates. Women inmates are unmotivated, they need more counseling and positive social involvement, they need to acquire problem-solving skills. Women inmates have low self-esteem because of social stigmas. Women have difficulty dealing with institutionalization. They need to learn to be self-sufficient. They seek more medical help often. The women have few skills and have employability problems.

Laura Crites (1976) studied women criminals, but she made no important contribution in any respect except pointing out that women criminals are neglected and are given discriminatory treatment in prisons.

Dodd and Hunter (1992), analysing the National Prison Survey data, show that 47% of women prisoners compared with 32% of males had dependent children living with them when they were imprisoned. The children of women in prison were far more likely to be looked after by other relatives or to be in the care of foster parents.

Peelo et al. (1992) found that women are more at risk than men of losing stable accommodation while in prison, since they are more likely to have been the sole carers for dependent children and less likely to have left a partner behind who can be depended upon to pay the rent.

Wheeler (1961), studied 237 prisoners in a close-custody prison in the United States and found that the degree of prisonisation varies with the length of time served.

Wolfgang (1961), found that (a) young prisoners (below 35 years) adjust less than the middle-aged prisoners, (b) felons adjust less than
misdemeanors. (c) short-termers (imprisoned for less than six months and between six months and two years) indicate high conformity to jail norms than long-termers (imprisoned for more than two years) and (d) marital status has no effect on prisonisation.

Women in the criminal justice system

Farmington and Morris (1983), Eaton (1986) found in their studies of sentencing of adults, in fact suggest either that women and men are treated more or less equally when factors such as offence seriousness and previous convictions are taken into account.

Moxon (1988) found in the study of Crown Courts, that women do benefit from leniency. Women were much more likely than men to be recommended for probation and less likely to be recommended for community service, a form of community penalty which does not entail any expectation of "help" with the offender's personal problems.

Dunng and Roth (1996) compared the imprisonment of women in Germany and U K. Imprisonment involves greater deprivation for women than men. Female prisoners do not receive the same work and educational opportunities as men and surveillance of women is often closer. Many female inmates do not need to be incarcerated. Suggestions have been made for a new structure for women's imprisonment to be adopted that involves minimizing security measures and loosening of controls.

Thus the following reviews of the studies on various variables are necessary in understanding the conceptual framework for psycho-socio-cultural research as well as helps in preparing strategies for treatment, correction, reformation and rehabilitation of women criminals. Studies in women criminals in India are more sociological and demographic in nature than psycho-social or action-based evaluative studies. Most of these variables presented, have been examined in the present study.
Though social work professionals evaluate the interventions and skills used by them in order to show their effectiveness and significant contributions, not much work have been done in this direction in India. Some of the social work institutions involved in teaching, training and practicing have taken up research studies on various aspects of women criminality. These are the Faculties and Colleges of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Delhi School of Social Work. But these studies have not been presented by the researcher in this section. Most of the research studies conducted in India are by the sociologists and criminologist and thus do not focus much on social work perspectives.