

# A Study on Feminist Criminology

**Dr. Alka Patil**

Assistant Professor, Department of Law, University of Mumbai.

## Abstract

In almost every part of the world, women are considered as care givers. Women manage their homes, family and children. Women are homemakers and more uninvolved. The belief that women can inflict atrocities was beyond the imagination of criminologists and most areas of criminal science banished women from its examinations. Over the years, in every religious society, women have always been considered as physically and mentally inferior and unproductive to men. This trend might have reduced in the early 21st century due to the advent of media, women commissions, NGOs, human rights organizations, etc but we find reports of widespread violence against the creators of life, particularly in the backward and developing nations.

This paper focuses on the situation of female criminality in the recent times. It is designed to highlight the causes and consequences of criminality amongst women and potential solutions to prevent such acts.

**Keywords:** Ancient Situation, Current, Laws and Order, Conclusion

## Introduction

Criminology – Criminology is a study of a crime, the criminal behavior and the criminal justice system associated with it. Criminology is the scientific study of the causes, correction, and prevention of crime and those who commit it.

Feminist Criminology- Feminist criminology focuses on women offenders, women victims, and women in the criminal justice system in order to understand the causes, trends, and results of female criminality. It includes the role of sex and sexism in sentencing and imprisonment, the role of victimization in women's lives, and the increase in the number of incarcerated women despite declining crime rates.

Feminist criminology developed as a school in criminology because the major criminology theories were for men. It is a study mainly that focuses on women offenders, women victims and the impact of female criminality in society. Feminist criminology includes how women are ignored and stereotyped in criminology. Women committing murder, robbery, theft, and dacoity are easily escaped by the laws protecting them. Women committing the crime are generally stereotyped as mentally unstable. Claire M. Renzetti is the first person who brought the concept of feminist criminology where the author mentions the development of criminology and examines the diversity of feminism.

Generally, crimes committed by women differ from male criminality. The difference can be seen in the nature of the crime, and its' consequences, combined with the method, crime weapon, and choice of victim. It is difficult to overlook the fact that crimes committed by women have a more emotional characteristic than those committed by men.

## Objective of the Study

- To find out the causes of female criminality.

- To know socio-economic and other factors of female criminality
- To prescribe solutions to curb female criminality

### **Reasons and Causes for Criminality amongst Women**

Women's participation in crime has been majorly associated with a large amount of indifference compared to men, in criminology. Motivation of criminality among women is mostly because of the social conditions that they face. There are possibilities that the criminality can be installed in a women's mind genetically. The character of a criminal is put in a women's brain by social exposure right from a young age which also results in behaviour development.

Most of the families do not provide a woman with support, respect or acceptance in the decisions where she chooses to be self-dependent, such scenarios are leading women to rebel by giving them a platform where they are more likely to deviate or commit a crime. The social environment contributes a lot to the making of women criminals, especially in a patriarchal society. Despite a guarantee from the constitution of India of equal rights and privileges, a woman's fate cannot be changed. Even after equal involvement and excellent performance in her education and her workplace, she does not get the credit and respect she deserves. The problem manifolds when despite being capable enough, she has to obey the orders of a man of lesser ability, her own opinion is brutally crushed and overheard. She is subjected to victimization just because she is a woman. Phoolan Devi, the bandit queen is a classic example of how a victim turns into a victimizer.

Further, the marital status of a woman might have a significant role in making the decision to be a part of criminal activity. Unmarried women tend to get more regular work as compared to the married ones. Corporations often consciously decide to employ married men over married women as they want to cut the burden of paid maternity leave thereby contributing to the ever-present discrimination against women in workplaces. This discrimination, in a twisted fashion, provides women an opportunity to get involved in crime, as they are already being discriminated against at the workplace.

Further acknowledging the presence of commercial sex in Indian society, it is not explicitly illegal as there are no laws that punish a sex worker. However, some activities related to commercial sex such as soliciting, running brothels, trafficking and pimping are punishable under The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, (1956). Due to lack of awareness, women lack basic legal rights, healthcare and support from the government and society, they end up being victimised and their safety goes for a toss. Eventually, the women who have been forced into it do not get a way out. Once they survive and climb up the ladder, they act as brothel owners or drug peddlers and get involved in other illegal activities. Due to the frustration from emotional, mental and physical abuse these women tend to suppress others in order to protect themselves from being suppressed and hence end up victimising others.

Battered Women Syndrome is another state of affairs which not recognized under the Indian Judicial System. It is a psychological condition that can develop when a person experiences abuse for a long time in a relationship. Abuse can be sexual, physical, or psychological aggression in nature. Due to the repeated abuse, women start suffering from learned helplessness. Threat to further violence also stops them to share their concerns to someone else. This concept of Battered Women Syndrome has not been placed in Indian Judiciary to explain the reasonableness of a woman's actions in self-defence against the abuser.

Society provides close supervision and social restrictions on girls. Girls are trained to be passive, domesticated, non-violent, gentle and are made to learn more of nurture-related jobs than getting

involved in fighting or using a weapon. On a contrary, boys are nurtured to be aggressive and involved in activities that project masculinity. Hence, when girls grow up, they do not get involved in combats where they have to get involved in physical fights or in crimes where they have to threaten someone with their physical strength. They get more involved in petty thefts, poisoning or the crime which take less of masculine work.

Freda Adler (*Sisters in crime: The rise of the new female criminal*, 1975) has attributed prostitution, drug addiction and female juvenile delinquents to the liberation movement of women and a way how women project assertiveness. She contends that educated girls and women are more willing than ever to challenge the traditional restrictions and social roles. Bajpai and Bajpai (2000), talk about the frustration and helplessness a woman experiences due to the lack of support and discrimination she has to face every day in her life. In this fight for their rights, the clash is unavoidable.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, what needs to be analysed in the social environment of a woman, who is in conflict with law is - their upbringing, sexual socialisation, their roles in their respective families, their personal relations with their in-laws and their career preferences. Society plays a major part in a woman's life span, whether or not a woman turns into an offender highly depends on what kind of life she is living and what options does she have if she wants to change it? The irony here is that these options are very often not of her own choice but are presented by the society.

Finally, both sexes are equally responsible for criminal activity. Criminals' motivations will always be a mystery, but it seems sense that they would be different for males and girls. This is because the majority of published works focus on males before being adapted to females, but this is not always the case.

Since men and women engage in criminal activity at various times and in different ways, they should have distinct motivations for breaking the law. Women have a lower recidivism rate than men, suggesting that this is due to either a desire to maintain a certain lifestyle or the fear of having their children taken away and placed in foster care. Thus, criminologists deduce that there must be a substantial difference between the motivations of males and females for criminal behaviour.

### **Bibliography**

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