

## Psycho-Social Factors Influencing Criminal Behaviour

\*<sup>1</sup> Sujeeet Kumar

\*<sup>1</sup> Researcher, Department of Psychology, Patna College, Patna University, Patna, Bihar, India.

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### Abstract

An attempt was made to compare the criminal and non-criminal respondent in terms of some psychological factors. The psychological factors were shyness, anxiety, aggression and stress. The social factors are social support, SES, family pathology and substance/alcohol addiction. For the purpose 100 subjects (50 criminals and 50 non-criminals) constituted sample. Akhtar's Shyness Scale, Sinha's Manifest Anxiety Scale, Singh's MAS, SPSSI, Social Support Scale by Asthana and Verma and Family Pathology Scale by shyness, anxiety, aggression and stress were used to measure shyness, anxiety, aggression, stress, social support and family pathology respectively. Besides these a PDS was used to seek the necessary information about criminal and non-criminal subjects including their SES and addict behaviour. The subjects were interviewed and administered the scales as per their convenience and obtained data were analysed using chi-square test. The significant chi-square revealed the fact that criminals were found with higher degree of shyness, anxiety, aggression and stress respectively. Further, criminals were found with having poor social support, poor SES, pathological family relationship and habitual substance user/alcoholics. So, it is concluded that psycho-social factors under investigation are significant contributor to criminal behaviour.

**Keywords:** Criminal, Non-criminal, criminal behaviour, aggression, stress, anxiety.

### Introduction

Criminal or antisocial behaviour refers to a number of behaviours that are immoral, illegal or both and do harm to other persons and society. Antisocial behaviour often involves aggression and violence. The term antisocial behaviour is sometimes confusing because it refers to behaviour both by persons whose behaviour is not due to mental disorder and by persons who have never received an adequate Neuro-psychiatric work-up to determine the presence or absence of a mental disorder. The violence of antisocial behaviour must be differentiated from violence due to psychiatric disorders defined by DSM-IV. Physical violence is associated with a number of psychiatric disorders and varies in severity, frequency and nature, depending on the psychopathology of the specific disorder and the environmental context of the specific incident. For some psychiatric disorders violent behaviour is part of the diagnostic criteria listed in DSM-IV, such as intermittent explosive disorder, antisocial personality disorder, borderline personality disorder and conduct disorder. In other psychiatric disorders violence may not be among the diagnostic criteria but may emerge as part of the expression of the disorder. Among these disorders are substance-related

disorders, cognitive disorders, schizophrenia, psychotic disorders and bipolar disorders.

Various studies have been conducted abroad relating to the criminal/antisocial behaviour. (Longato *et al.*, 2002; Lynam *et al.*, 2007 [2]; Melody J. R., 1996; Resster *et al.* 1986; Swaty *et al.* 1998), but without the inclusion of psycho-social variables. Further, criminal behaviours have not been studies in relation to psychological as well sociological factors under study. This justifies under taking of the present study.

### Objectives

1. To make a comparison between criminal and non-criminal respondents in terms of shyness, anxiety, aggression and stress respectively.
2. To examine the influence of social support, SES, family pathology and drug abuse/alcohol-abuse on criminal behaviour.

### Method

#### Design

The proposed study comprised of psychological factors (shyness, anxiety, aggression & Stress) and social factors

(social support, SES, family pathology and substance/drug addiction) as independent variables. The independent groups consists of distinct subjects, so between group design would be preferred.

### Sample

The sample comprised of 50 criminals and 50 non-criminals. Criminals were selected from Central Jail of Patna who have been imprisoned for their criminal activities/ Non-criminals were normal people also do not characterized any of the reported criminal behaviour/ anti-social behaviour. They were

of the age group of 25 to 45 years of age. Other than the research condition they were matched so far as practicable.

### Tool

1. PIB/PI was used to seek the necessary personal profile of the respondents.
2. Akhtar's Shyness Scale
3. Sinha's Manifest Anxiety Scale
4. Singh's Manifest Aggression Scale
5. SPSSI was used to measure stress of the respondents.
6. Social Support Scale by Asthana and Verma
7. Family Pathology Scale

### Results

**Table 1:** Chi-square showing the influence of psychological factors (shyness, anxiety, aggression and stress) an criminal behaviour.

Variables	Groups	Criminal (N=50)	Non-Criminal (N=50)	$\chi^2$	d.f	p
Shyness	High	70% (N=35)	32% (N=16)	24.75	1	<.01
	Low	30% (N=15)	68% (N=34)			
Anxiety	High	72% (N=36)	33% (N=16)	30.73	1	<.01
	Low	28% (N=14)	67% (N=34)			
Aggression	High	71% (N=36)	31% (N=15)	32.32	1	<.01
	Low	29% (N=14)	69% (N=35)			
Stress	High	74% (N=37)	35% (N=17)	30.73	1	<.01
	Low	26% (N=13)	65% (N=33)			

The results displayed by table-01 clearly revealed the significant influence of psychological factors on criminal behaviour. Criminals and non-criminals differed significantly in terms of shyness ( $\chi^2 = 24.75$ ), anxiety ( $\chi^2 = 30.73$ ), aggression ( $\chi^2 = 32.32$ ) and stress ( $\chi^2 = 30.73$ ). More than 70% (N = 35), 72% (N = 36), 71% (N = 36) and 74% (N = 37) of criminals manifested higher degree of shyness, anxiety,

aggression and stress whereas only 32% (N = 16); 33% (N=16); 31% (N = 15) and 35% (N = 17) of non-criminals manifested high shyness, anxiety, aggression and stress respectively. The findings might be interpreted on the ground that criminal behaviour is accompanied with higher degree of negative thrills, frustration, and depression including shyness, anxiety, aggression and stress.

**Table 2:** Chi-square showing the influence of social factors (social support, SES, family pathology, substance/drug addiction) on criminal behaviour.

Variables	Groups	Criminal (N=50)	Non-Criminal (N=50)	$\chi^2$	d.f	P
Social Support	High	30% (N=15)	60% (N=30)	18.37	1	<.01
	Low	70% (N=35)	40% (N=20)			
SES	High	29% (N=14)	67% (N=33)	29.17	1	<.01
	Low	71% (N = 36)	33% (N=17)			
Family Pathology	High	69% (N = 35)	31% (N=15)	28.28	1	<.01
	Low	31% (N = 15)	69% (N=35)			
Substance/Drug Addiction	D.A.	70% (N = 35)	32% (N=16)	15.84	1	<.01
	D.Non.A.	30% (N=15)	68% (N=34)			

The results displayed by table-02 clearly revealed that criminal behaviour is also influenced significantly by social support ( $\chi^2=18.737$ ), SES ( $\chi^2=29.17$ ), family pathology ( $\chi^2 = 28.28$ ) and drug/alcohol addiction ( $\chi^2 = 15.84$ ) respectively. It is clear than the table that only 30% (N = 15), 29% (N=14), 69% (N = 35), 70% (N = 35) of criminals manifested high social support, high SES, high family pathology and drug addicts respectively. On the other hand more than 60% (N = 30), 67% (N = 33) 31% (N = 15), 32% (N = 16) of their non-criminal counterpart belong to this group. Thus hypothesis no.

(2) Is retained. The findings might be interpreted on the ground that low social support, poor SES, family pathology and drug addiction all are significant contributor to criminal Behaviour.

### Conclusion

1. Higher degree of shyness, anxiety, aggression and stress all contribute significantly to criminal behaviour.
2. Poor social support, low SES, family pathology and drug addiction all contribute significantly to criminal behaviour.

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