



## The female offenders and their interpersonal relations in the family

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### Abstract:

*The problems of maladjustment in interpersonal relations function in several manners as a deciding factor in the behavior pattern of females. The ideal path of normative life or deviance in case of womanhood is always a function of the quality of interpersonal relations which the females experience in the family before and after marriage. The imbalance in interpersonal relations in the family makes the females sensitive to many problems. A marriage or family operates as a group in much the same manner as other social groups. The interlocking of the roles amongst family member deeply affects the females and creates adjustment problems for them and sometime forces them to indulge in different types of deviant activities. The interpersonal relations in marriage and family relations have many facets. Within the scope of present study, an attempt has been made to throw light on the influence of varying condition of interpersonal relations in the family including the women's marital maladjustment and stressful situation on the pattern of offensive behavior developed in them.*

### KEYWORDS

Relations, Family, Interpersonal Relations

### INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable fact that modern societies are facing many acute problems and commission of offences by females in the society is one of them. An offence committed by females is a by-product of overall change in socio-cultural and economic scenario of the country. The alienation caused by urbanization and industrialization has shattered the very foundation of a well organized family life. The dynamic development has made this basis of social control shaky. The age old traditional laws, customs and value systems of society are undergoing perplexed transformation. This process finally leads to the deviations in individual's behavior. Common participation of the family members on community occasion is declining. Individuals, on the contrary to established norms are more interested to cooperate with groups outside the home. Thus the growing intensity of superficial relations among the family members ultimately destabilized the development of cordial relationships. The woman as the uniting force of the family in the role of wife-mother has almost ceased to function effectively. The defective relationship in the family generates stress and

strain on the part of the family members and begets tendencies towards socially maladaptive character formation. In such an environment female members also easily get attracted towards deviant activities. Generally, the status of women in a society is evaluated by way of comparative judgment of rights and freedom enjoyed by both man and women in that society. Social status of women depends greatly on the stability and the feeling of society in their life. The traditional sentiment of dependence has imposed serious

handicaps on the personality of Indian womanhood. Influence of culture has exerted strong influence over womenfolk in their freedom of activity and personality development. The usual imbalance between the opportunities in life and the need around women always make them sensitive to many problems. In such a situation, so far as women are concerned, it is the condition of her interpersonal relation in the family that has been

found to be regulating her or persuading her to the future course of action. Hence, the condition of interpersonal relation in the family of women is many a time found to be significant factor in her life. Among the problems of women in general and the problems of deviance in particular, strain in interpersonal relation in the family of women deserves special attention. Generally, unhappy and stressful conjugal life is taken as evidence of marital maladjustment. Marital maladjustment occurs due to family conflict. Family conflict specially refers to a situation where there is a discrepancy between the role expectations and role behaviour of the family members in relation to one another. The marital adjustment which prominently involves the interaction of two persons, the husband and wife is-a complex problem. The basic assumption in marital adjustment is that the personality characteristics and past behavior of the mates control his/her future activities. Marital maladjustment and the consequent disruption of family manifest a crisis of deviation from expectations. Family life of such significance for all persons is of even greater importance to women. Marriage is a way of life that involves a sharing of life, friends, property, income, attitudes, goals, ideals and ambitions. The disorganization process in marriage takes the form of a more or less continuous conflict in attitude that strains the ties holding the couple together. Generally, it is supposed that marital happiness and stability are greater in marriage relationships characterized by affection, mutual dependence and compatibility and shared satisfactions. On the other hand, it is believed that marital unhappiness and instability are more common where there is indifference, hostility, dissatisfaction, mutual independence and incompatibility. Marital role relationship may be predominantly joint, that is, they may involve many shared or similar activities carried out by husband and wife together or they may be segregated, that is, they may involve many independent activities carried out by husband and wife separately. Happiness and stability appear to be influenced more by the total social system of which the husband- wife relationship is a part than by the marital relationship alone. It is generally observed that most important variables associated with offences committed by females are the social institutions like family, marital status, income, education and their influence exert pressure on the female offenders to commit crime. Ruth Morris(1964) carried out an interesting experimental study on the relational problems among delinquents. Since the life of the female is so much involved with personal relations, it was postulated that girls would be more likely than boys to suffer under relational problems. Three predictions were made that delinquent girls would be, of all 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 problem.

Ahuja, Ram(1969) deals with the phenomenon of female crime in India inspired by the fact that study of female offenders has generally been overlooked in India. He found that high proportion of female crime is due to maladjustment in interpersonal relationship in conjugal life.

Adwani, N.H.(1978) studied the attributes of criminality and observed that female's marital maladjustment at a younger age was noted to be a compelling factor in female offenders. He concluded that married women committed more crime in comparison to unmarried.

Mathew, Asha(1992) in her study on women and crime observed that family is the most influencing social institution on female offenders. The combined influence of marital relationship and inherited criminal tendencies is a serious problem faced by female offenders as reflected in the study.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Keeping in view the above study the problem identified was “ The Female offenders and their interpersonal relations in the family”

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The conjugal relationship between husband and wife is the central bond uniting the family in our society. When this bond is broken, the family is broken. In the modern family the most difficult problem is that of the mutual adjustment of husband and wife. A major problem faced by modern family is an increase in the number of broken marriages. In many cases marriage has been reduced to a mere social contract. The tie of marriage is the basis of family. As a result of conflict between

husband and wife and parents and children, psychological security is being continually diminished due to which mutual trust is decreasing and the family organization is being shattered. Generally females are considered as home maker according to Indian tradition. So, if they face the problem of marital maladjustment it would affect the role expectation of females in Indian situation which may cause great harm to the future generation. The magnitude of the problem of interpersonal relation in the family and marital maladjustment as the contributory factors of crime committed by female offenders is very high and it is the need of the hour to study this problem very seriously and extensively to prevent further deterioration of the peaceful situation in the family as well as in the society. So, the present study has been viewed as very significant.

**OBJECTIVES**

The present study was designed to identify the problem of marital adjustment of the female offenders and their interpersonal relation and treatment they received from their parents and husbands and the status of their parental home atmosphere and atmosphere in husband's family. The study was conducted with the following objectives in view:

1. To study the marital adjustment of the female offenders.
2. To study the security-insecurity feeling of female offenders
3. To study the parental treatment and parental home atmosphere experienced by the female offenders
4. To study type of treatment received from husband and atmosphere experienced at husband's home by female offenders.

**METHODOLOGY**

In the present study normative survey method was employed

**SAMPLE DESIGN AND SIZE**

The population from which sample has been drawn in the study consist of both official and non-official female criminals. Those female criminals are treated as officials whose crimes have been established by the court and who have been sentenced to jail term. The female ex-criminals who have been rehabilitated in different female rehabilitation centres, like State Home for Women, after undergoing imprisonment are also treated as official criminals in the present study. Non- official criminals are those whose criminal activities are not yet been confirmed by the court. The under trial criminals kept in confinement for trial in district jails are also treated as non-official criminals. Those under trial criminals who confessed their crime during the course of interview, had also been included in the sample of the study, even though their crime had not yet been confirmed by the court. The study was conducted on 76 female offenders of eleven district jails and one State Home for Women in Assam by applying the Normative Survey Method. The study

4

was conducted on convicted whose cases are confirmed by the court and sentenced to undergo a long term imprisonment in different district jails in Assam. The study was also conducted on those under trials who have confessed their crime during interview, though their involvement in crime was not yet been confirmed by the court. The investigator used the convenience sampling design as the volume of the universe of the present study could not be estimated easily.

Table No.-1

**Number of female offenders (convict/under trial/custody) interviewed**

Sl. No.	Name of the District jails/ Rehabilitation centre/ District Jail	Convict	Under trial/ Custody	Total
1	Barpeta Nari Sadan	8	-	8
2	District Jail, Dibrugarh	4	12	16
3	District Jail, Dhubri	1	1	2
4	District Jail, Goalpara	1	1	2
5	District Jail, Guwahati	3	9	12

6	District Jail, Jorhat	3	4	7
7	District Jail, Karimganj	4	2	6
8	District Jail, Mangaldoi	-	4	4
9	District Jail, North Lakhimpur	2	3	5
10	District Jail, Nagaon	2	2	4
11	District Jail, Silchar	2	1	3
12	State Home for Women	-	7	7
Total		30	46	76

### TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

Two pre-coded Inventories i.e., Marital Adjustment Inventory constructed and standardized by Dr. Jaiprakash and Indian Adaption of Maslow's Security-Insecurity Feeling Inventory constructed and standardized by Smt. Tasneem Naqvi were used with slight modification moulding to the design of the study for the purpose of collecting data. One Interview Schedule prepared by the investigator according to the design of the study was also used.

#### Delimitation of the study

Conducting research on offenders is not an easy task due to the complexity in human behaviour. It is very difficult to collect first hand data about offences and intra individual differences in feeling, drives, motivation and over all personality structure of the offenders. However, to

understand interpersonal relation in the family of female offenders, the influencing role of socio economic, educational and cultural factors in the causation of crime may be possible. Generally, to meet and interview the criminals who have not yet been arrested was not feasible. Therefore, only the convicted prisoners, under trial jail inmates (who confessed the crime) in district jails and ex-criminals of State Home for Women were included in the sample for in-depth study. The study was conducted with above mentioned limitations and constraints. So, generalization on the basis of the study, therefore, was made keeping these limitations in view.

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The simple percentage method was used for the analysis of data. The data collected are presented in the form of percentage distribution in the following tables with a description of each table.

**Table No-2**

Data showing level of marital adjustment/maladjustment of female offenders interviewed

Range of scores	Interpretation of types of marital adjustment/maladjustment	No. and percentage of female offenders experiencing different types of marital adjustment/maladjustment	
		Absolute	Percentage (%)
23-30	Highly adjusted	2	3.33
18-22	Adjusted	1	1.67
15-17	Average	5	8.33
12-14	Maladjusted	4	6.67
8-11	Severely Maladjusted	48	80.00
Total		60	100

From the Table-2 it can be observed that a majority (80%) of the female offenders have been found to be severely maladjusted in their marital life. 6.67% are found to be maladjusted. Only 3.33% and 1.67% are found to be highly adjusted and adjusted respectively. The above data reveals that high proportion of married female offenders has faced the problem of maladjustment in their conjugal life.

Range of scores	Interpretation of level of security-insecurity feeling	No. and percentage of female offenders having different levels of security-insecurity feeling	
		Absolute	Percentage (%)
42-47	Very secure	1	1.32
40-41	Secure	3	3.95
31-39	Tendency to be secure	2	2.63
26-30	Average	3	3.95
24-25	Tendency to be insecure	5	6.58
17-23	Insecure	44	57.89
12-16	Very insecure	18	23.68
Total		76	100

From Table No.3 it can be observed that maximum number of female offenders have suffered from the feeling of insecurity in their life. Majority (57.89 %) of the female offenders has been identified as insecure and 23.68% have been identified as Very insecure persons. Only 1.32% and 3.95 % female offenders have been found to belong to Very secure and secure category respectively. The data reveals that the female offenders have experienced acute insecurity in their life.

**Table No.-4**

Behaviour of parents and marital status of female offenders

Marital Status	No. and percentage of female offenders with different marital status who have experienced different types of parental treatment					
	Very affectionate	Moderate	Strict	Cruel	Indifferent	Total
Unmarried	1(6.67) (20)	2(13.33) (18.18)	2(13.13) (50)	1(6.67) (50)	9(60) (16.67)	15(100) (19.74)
Married (Stay with husband)	2(4.76) (40)	3(7.14) (27.27)	2(4.76) (50)	1 (2.38) ( 50 )	34(80.95 ) ( 62.96 )	42 (100) (55.26)
Separated	2 (22.22 ) (40 )	4(44.44 ) (36.36 )	--	--	3(33.33) (5.56 )	9 (100) (11.48)
Divorced	--	2 (50) (18.18)	--	--	2 (50) (3.70)	4(100) (5.26)
Deserted	--	--	--	--	4 (100) (7.41)	4(100) (5.26)
Widowed	--	--	--	--	1(100) (1.85 )	1(100) (1.32)
Unwed mother	--	--	--	--	1(100) (1.85)	1(100) (1.32)
Total	5(100) (6.58)	11(100) (14.47)	4(100) (5.26)	2(100) (2.63)	54(100) (71.05)	76(100)

Number within parenthesis indicates percentage

Source: Interview Schedule

From Table No. 4 it can be observed that a group (22.22 percent) of respondent who are separated from their wedlock have experienced affectionate treatment from their parents. The next group (6.67 percent) of respondents, who are unmarried, also enjoyed affectionate treatment from their parents. A part (4.76 percent) of married women also has similar experience of affectionate treatment from their parents. Table No. 4 shows that out of 42 female offenders those who stay

with their husbands, a majority of 34, that is, 80.95 percent of the married female offenders have received indifferent treatment from their parents. Again out of 76 samples of female offenders, 71.05 percent have experienced indifferent treatment from their parents, 2.63 percent received cruel treatment and 5.26 percent have experienced strict treatment from their parents. Only 6.58 percent and 14.47 percent have received very affectionate and moderate behaviour respectively.

**The female offenders and their interpersonal relations in the family**



**Table No.-5**

Data showing different types of parental treatment received by female offenders

Pattern of behaviour	No. of female offenders experiencing different types of parental behaviour	
	Absolute	Percentage(%)
Very affectionate	5	6.58
Moderate	11	14.47
Strict	4	5.26
Cruel	2	2.63
Indifferent	54	71.05
Total	76	100

The Table No.- 5 reveals that 71.05 % female offenders experienced indifferent parental behaviour during their childhood , 2.63% experienced cruel parental treatment, 14.47% experienced moderate treatment, 5.26% experienced strict behaviour and only 6.58% female offenders experienced affectionate parental treatment towards them during their childhood. So, from this empirical study it can be observed that majority of the female offenders (71.05%) have experienced indifferent attitude from their parents.

**Table No.-6**

Marital status of female offenders and the type of parent's home atmosphere

Marital status	No. and percentage of female offenders with different marital status having different types of parental home atmosphere		
	Congenial	Uncongenial	Total
Unmarried	4(26.67) (16)	11(73.33) (21.57)	15(100) (19.74)
Married (stay with husband)	17(40.48) (68)	25(59.52) (49.02)	42(100) (55.26)
Separated	3(33.33) (12)	6(66.67) (11.76)	9(100) (11.84)
Divorced	---	4(100) (7.84)	4(100) (5.26)
Deserted	---	4(100) (7.84)	4(100) (7.84)
Widowed	1(100) (1.32)	---	1(100) (1.32)
Unwed mother	---	1(100) (1.96)	1(100) (1.32)
Total	25(100) (32.89)	51(100) (67.11)	76(100)

Number within parenthesis indicates percentage

Source: Interview Schedule

**The female offenders and their interpersonal relations in the family**



From the Table No.- 6 it can be observed that 73.33% unmarried, 59.52% married (stay with husband), 66.67% separated, 100%divorced, 100% deserted and 100% unwed mother experienced uncongenial atmosphere at parent's home. Altogether 51 out of 76, i.e., 67.11% female offenders experienced uncongenial atmosphere at parent's home. It indicates that the uncongenial parental home atmosphere plays contributory role in stimulating criminal propensity amongst female offenders.

Table No.- 7  
Behaviour of husband and marital status of female offenders

Marital status	No. and percentage of female offenders with different marital status experiencing different types of behaviour from husbands				
	Extremely well	Well	Cruel	Indifferent	Total
Married (Stay with husband)	2(4.76) (100)	5(11.90) (100)	13(30.95) (54.17)	22(52.38) (75.86)	42(100) (70)
Separated	--	--	6(66.67) (25)	3(33.33) (10.34)	9(100)
Divorced	--	--	2(50) (8.33)	2(50) (6.90)	4(100) (6.67)
Deserted	--	--	3(75) (12.5)	1(25) (3.45)	4(100) (6.67)
Widowed	--	--	--	1(100) (3.45)	1(100) (1.67)
Total	2(100) (3.33)	5(100) (8.33)	24(100) (40)	29(100) (48.33)	60(100)

The Table No. 7 reveals that from the sample of 76 female offenders, 60 offenders were married. Out of this sample, a majority (52.38 percent) of married (stay with husband) offenders experienced the indifferent behaviour from their husbands. 30.95 percent married offenders received cruel treatment from their husbands; only 4.76 percent and 11.90 percent received extremely well and well behaviour from their husband respectively. All the offenders from separated, divorced, deserted and widowed group received cruel and indifferent behaviour from their husbands.



The female offenders and their interpersonal relations in the family



Table No.-8

Data showing type treatment experienced by the female offenders from their husbands

Type of treatment	No. of female offenders experiencing different types of treatment from their husbands	
	Absolute	Percentage(%)
Extremely well	2	3.33
Well	5	8.33
Indifferent	29	48.33
Cruel	24	40.00
Total	60	100

The Table No.-8 reveals that 48.33 % married female offenders have experienced indifferent treatment from their husbands. 40% of them have experienced cruel treatment from their husband. Thus the table shows that a large number of female offenders have experienced indifferent and cruel treatment from their husbands in conjugal life. It indicates that most of the (48.33%) female offender's interpersonal relation with their husbands was not good.

Table No.-9

Marital status of female offenders and husbands home atmosphere

Marital status	No. and percentage of female offenders with different marital status having different types of home atmosphere in husband's family		
	Congenial	Uncongenial	Total
Married (Stay with husband)	2(4.76) (100)	40(95.23) (68.97)	42(100) (70)
Separated	---	9(100) (15.52)	9(100) (15)
Divorced	---	4(100) (6.90)	4(100) (6.67)
Deserted	---	4(100) (6.90)	4(100) (6.67)
Widowed	---	1(100) (1.72)	1(100) (1.67)
Total	2(100) (3.33)	58(100) (96.67)	60(100)

Number within parenthesis indicates percentage

Source: Interview Schedule

The Table No.-9 shows that 58 out of 60 i.e., 96.67% of female offenders have experienced uncongenial atmosphere in their husband's home. Amongst these, as high as 68.95 % of the female offenders who belong to the married (stay with husband) category have experienced uncongenial atmosphere in husband's home. Only 3.33% female offenders experienced congenial atmosphere in husband's family. So, it indicates that uncongenial home atmosphere in husbands family is one of the contributory factors of crime committed by female offenders.

#### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- (1) Uncongenial parental home atmosphere contributes in the causation of crime committed by female offenders.
- (2) As high as 67.11% females offenders have experienced uncongenial atmosphere at parent's home.
- (3) As high as 96.67% of female offenders have experienced uncongenial home atmosphere in husband's family
- (5) The study reveals that 80% of the female offenders have been found to be the victim of acute marital maladjustment.
- (6) Defects of interpersonal relations, especially conflicts within family members, play a major role in the commission of crimes by female offenders.
- (7) Marital status of the female offenders studied reveals that 55.26% married women (stay with husband) were found to be involved in different types of criminal activities. Married women commit more crimes in comparison to unmarried, widowed, deserted and the divorced women.
- (8) Most of the female offenders studied have the feeling of insecurity. A majority 57.89% of the female offenders in the present study are found to have suffered from acute feeling of insecurity. Only 1.32% and 3.95% female offenders have been found to belong to very secure and insecure group respectively.
- (9) 48.33 % married female offenders have experienced indifferent treatment from their husbands. 40% of them have experienced cruel treatment from their husband.
- (10) 71.05 % female offenders experienced indifferent parental behaviour during their childhood and 2.63% of them experienced cruel parental treatment.

#### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In the present study it has been observed that due to defective family relationship many females developed inclinations towards crime The family is regarded as the major primary agent which is supposed to carry out the task of socialization. So, factors or conditions conducive to crime must be eliminated from the family environment in order to prevent females from committing crime. It has been identified that broken home condition, quarrelsome atmosphere, defective interpersonal relation in the family, cruel behaviour shown by husband to wife leading to marital maladjustment, cruel and unaffectionate behaviour shown by parents to their wards are the

contributory factors of crime committed by female offenders. So, the preventive measures are to be formulated keeping view the unfavourable or undesirable family conditions. Extensive work can be done to dispense scientific information about marital and family relations as a preventive measure of crime. The individual's conception of her role in marriage is important in determining its relative success or failure. Husband and wife came into marriage with a system of self-other patterns which they have developed in their earlier experience, notably in their parental families. They attempt to carry over these roles into their married life and in the process may generate family tensions. To prevent development of criminality in individuals in such a situation, national and local organizations interested in family relationships can render great service. The National; Council of Family Relation organized in 1938 in USA is best known national private organization which has been working on that line. In India also such type of National Council of Family Relation or National Institute of Family Relations and Improvement can be organized to create healthy atmosphere in the family with the ultimate objective of preventing development of criminal propensity in the individual member of the family. Association of marriage counseling can also be organized to help people to reduce their marital maladjustment and thus to prevent criminal tendency from growing in their mind. Initiative can also be taken to introduce courses in family relationship in the institutions dealing with higher education to impart knowledge regarding better family life. It has been found in the present study that emotionally broken family is one of the dominant factors of causation of crime committed by females. Family disorganization has affected the behaviour pattern of many individuals very badly. The control exercised by the family over

the individuals previously is now reducing. In many cases the natural relations between husband and wife, parents and children are devoid of love, many members are prone to criminal activities. Due to these, sex crimes are increasing. One major cause of adultery, abortion, miscarriage, prostitution is the undesirable domestic conditions. To prevent the females from becoming a criminal the undesirable domestic conditions can be rectified by strengthening the economic base of the family. Arrangement can be made to revive the strong control of family over its members by imparting education and other civic training and by strengthening the community health, education and welfare facilities, which are to interact with

local family unit. In either case, the change must be made in the environment in which the individual family exists, because criminal behaviour is the product of the environment in which it occurs. To improve this situation marital and family guidance clinic will have to call into play and correlate the expert and social case workers, clergymen, teachers, community health and recreation workers to participate, under professional guidance. These clinics ought not only to deal with marriage and family difficulties as they arise, but more important to anticipate and try to prevent such problem from increasing, by conscious educational campaign.

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