PSYCHOPATHOLOGY BEHIND CRIME: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AGGRESSION, CRIMINAL THINKING, STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION ACROSS GENDER AMONG CONVICTS OF HOMICIDAL MURDER

Soheli Datta [Assistant Professor and Clinical Psychologist] and
Silvia Dutta [Psychologist], Department of Applied Psychology,
University of Calcutta, W.B., India

Background: Sutherland and Cressey (1965) state that “Criminology is the body of knowledge regarding crime as a social phenomenon. It includes within its scope the process of making laws, of breaking laws and of reacting towards breaking of laws”. Crime is the violation of the rules and regulations enforced by the society from time to time for which definite punishment is prescribed by law. In every society, members are expected to act according to established societal norms and rules. But when an individual finds it difficult to satisfy his needs and desires in socially accepted manner, he tries to find an alternative, criminality, to meet out his desires and needs. In India, criminality of women has long been neglected because of traditional belief that women are law abiding and are less crime prone.

As per NCRB report, in 2016, in states/UTs, a total of 48,31,515 cognizable crimes comprising 29,75,711 Indian Penal Code crimes and 18,55,804 Special & Local Laws crimes were reported, showing an increase of 2.6% over 2015 (47,10,676 cases).

In metropolitan cities, a total of 8,08,637 cognizable crimes comprising 5,13,635 Indian Penal Code crimes and 2,95,002 Special & Local Laws crimes were reported in 19 metropolitan cities during 2016, showing an increase of 6.5% over 2015 (7,58,970 cases).

Result and Discussion: Significant differences have been found between males and females on dimensions of entitlement (women tend to display more communal traits than men and tend to behave in ways that emphasis connections with others (Eagly & Crowley, 1986)), justification and criminal rationalization (male group justified their act more than their female counterpart), power orientation (males have more inclination towards having and exerting power in comparison), cold heartedness (males have lesser understanding for another person’s suffering and they feel less sorry for that), physical and verbal aggression (males show such physical and verbal behavior to threat or harm someone or something than females), hostility (males show more unfriendliness and don’t like or agree with something than female), anticipated discrimination and overcoming stigma (females most often predict maladaptive behaviour (Livingston and Boyd 2010) but could be protective for certain people as well, males in the present study (Major and Eccleston 2005)

Dimensions	Groups	Mean	SD	t values
Entitlement	Males	18.38	5.29	2.353*
	Females	16.24	3.66	
Justification	Males	19.76	5.13	2.793**
	Females	17.24	3.79	
Power Orientation	Males	22.10	5.51	2.183*
	Females	19.64	5.76	
Cold Heartedness	Males	13.94	5.30	2.327*
	Females	11.62	4.65	
Criminal Rationalization	Males	25.46	3.93	4.188**
	Females	22.00	4.32	
Personal Irresponsibility	Males	20.32	4.51	0.915
	Females	19.54	4.01	
Physical Aggression	Males	27.82	8.84	3.030**
	Females	22.46	8.85	
Verbal Aggression	Males	19.02	4.25	2.062*
	Females	17.22	4.48	
Anger	Males	22.64	6.49	1.047
	Females	21.22	7.06	
Hostility	Males	28.62	6.29	2.372*
	Females	25.08	8.47	
Patient Experienced Discrimination	Males	22.40	11.36	-1.39
	Females	25.58	11.52	
Anticipated Discrimination	Males	5.52	2.43	1.12**
	Females	6.20	3.51	
Overcoming Stigma	Males	2.44	1.38	-2.38**
	Females	1.88	0.92	
Positive treatment due to the mental illness	Males	7.58	2.29	1.85
	Females	6.76	2.11	

Method

Sample: 100 individuals who have been convicted in charge of committing homicidal murder were selected. Among them, 50 were females and 50 were male.

Tools Used: Criminal Thinking Scale (Knight and colleagues Flynn, 2006), Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire (Buss and Perry, 1992) and Discrimination and Stigma Scale (Thorncroft, 2009).

Statistical Analysis: Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and independent samples t test.

Mean and SD on Dimensions of Criminal Thinking

Mean and SD on Dimensions of Aggression

Mean and SD on Dimensions of Stigma and Discrimination