PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS OF CRIMINALS AND MENTALLY-ILL-CRIMINALS

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SUMMARY

Sixty male criminals selected randomly from the Central Prison of Madras and twenty mentally ill criminals from the Institute of Mental Health, Madras, were administered E.P.Q. and compared with sixty normals. The results show that criminals scored significantly high on extroversion, psychoticism and neuroticism. The mentally ill criminals scored significantly on psychoticism compared to normals. Criminals and mentally ill criminals do not differ significantly on any of the scales of E.P.Q.

The causative factor of crime is extremely complicated and hence each crime and the criminal has to be studied individually so far it relates to his origin and background. Behaviour of an individual at any moment is the outcome of the circumstances, personality of the individual and external factors. The environmental pressures, emotions, frustrations of motives decide the action and direct the behaviour—normal or criminal. It is probable that certain personality characteristics might differentiate criminals from normals. Hence, it is not always true that a crime is entirely the result of either the situation and at the same time it is not the outcome of the individual's personality only (Singh, 1973). However, some personality factors have been associated with the criminal behaviour. The study of personality of criminals would help us understand the criminals and manage them appropriately.

Eysenck (1970) views that antisocial behaviour is the consequence of poor condi-
tionality which is characteristic of extroversion and the criminals have high neuroticism or emotionality. Criminals, first offenders and recidivists have been found to score significantly high on extroversion than normals. Trasler (1962) concludes that distribution of criminals on the introversion-extroversion scale of the whole group of convicted offenders was slightly skewed in the extroverted direction and that the prison population as a whole would show a mean extroversion score rather higher than that of non-criminals. Most of the studies on the personality of criminals have found criminals scoring high on psychoticism, neuroticism and extroversion (Singh, 1973; Wilson and Maclean, 1974; Shanmugham, 1975; Mohan and Singh, 1979). As far as neuroticism is concerned some studies report that criminals do not score higher when compared with normal control (Singh, 1981). In this present study an attempt has been made to study the personality of the individuals who committed crime against person.

The aim of this study is to investigate the personality dimensions of criminals, mentally ill criminals and to compare them with the normal control. This is part of the major project undertaken to study the psychiatric and psychological aspects of the prisoners undergoing sentence for crime against person.

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MATERIAL AND METHOD

Sample:
The criminals were taken from the Madras Central Prison who were undergoing sentence due to crime against person. Habitual offenders and those involved in multiple crimes were excluded. Criminals who were between 20 to 50 years and imprisoned for less than five years and those who studied up to 5 standard and above were taken for this study. Using these criteria we had 240 criminals. Out of this list every fourth person was taken for the present investigation. The mean age of the group is 33.30 yrs. They belong to low or middle income group, most of them have from rural areas and others from semirural and urban areas. The criminals from rural areas were agriculturists and labourers; those from urban areas were mostly industrial workers, businessmen and officials.

The second group comprises 25 mentally ill criminals taken from the Institute of Mental Health, Madras who were admitted for psychiatric management as they had mental disorder at the time of committing the crime (offence against person) or who had mental breakdown while undergoing sentence. Total stay was not exceeding a period of 5 years of imprisonment and hospitalisation. These individuals were diagnosed to be suffering from functional psychosis by two qualified psychiatrists of the Institute of Mental Health. There were 18 schizophrenics and 7 depressives. The co-operative patients were administered the E.P.Q. as soon as they were admitted and those in the acute phase had their test when they became co-operative. Their age ranged from 20 to 50 years, mean age being 39.70 years. Most of them hailed from rural areas and belonged to low or middle income group. There were agriculturists, workers in different occupations, some involved in business and others were officials.

The third group comprises sixty normal individuals taken from rural as well as urban population to match age (range 20 to 50 years—Mean age 36.64 yrs.) and education (5th Standard to School final level). These people were randomly taken from rural population engaged in agriculture and business, as well as from urban industrial workers and those involved in business to match the criminal population. These individual did not have criminal history or psychiatric disturbance.

Test Used: E. P. Q. (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1975) Tamil Translation was used for these groups individually explaining doubts whenever raised.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results and Discussion: Mean age of criminal group is 37.3 years, mentally ill criminals is 39.7 yrs. and normals is 36.5 yrs. The educational status range from 5th class to SSLC. Monthly income range from Rs. 100 to 1000. The results of the study are given in table.

Table shows that the criminals and mentally ill criminals have high psychoticism (p<.001) which is highly significant. The criminals and mentally ill criminals do not differ in their scores on psychoticism scale. The neuroticism score of criminals and normal differ significantly, the criminals have high neuroticism (p<0.05). Regarding extroversion the criminals have scored higher than the normal control group (p<0.05). Though the Neuroticism scores of criminals and mentally ill criminals do not differ statistically, the mentally ill criminals have scored comparatively less than the criminals. These results are in agreement with the previous studies. The mentally-ill criminals and criminals do not differ on the personality dimensions i.e., extroversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. This means they have similar characteristics of personality. These results are in agreement with the conclusion of Eysenck and Eysenck (1975) that the psychotics and criminals score highly on P
Table

| Scales | Criminals (G. A.) (N=60) | Mentally ill Criminals (Gr. B.) (N=25) | Normals (Gr. C) (N=60) | Significance between |
|--------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| P      | 8.9±3.8                 | 9.3±4.4                                | 4.8±5.5                | A Vs. C p<.001      |
| E      | 10.4±3.9                | 11.1±4.5                               | 4.8±2.3                | B Vs. C p<0.001     |
| N      | 12.3±5.0                | 8.5±5.0                                | 8.9±5.4                | A Vs. B N.S.        |
| L Mean | 16.0±4.3                | 15.1±2.2                               | 15.1±4.2               |                     |

Scale than neurotics and normals. The psychotics have lower score on N scale than neurotics which shows trend towards introversion. The criminals have comparatively high score on P, E and N than normals. It is in agreement with the view that prisoners as a whole differ in their personality make up from non-criminals (Eysenck, 1970 and Trasler, 1962). Eysenck and Eysenck (1973) also found that female prisoners also score high on psychoticism, introversion and extroversion and neuroticism scales than female controls. The present study confirms the earlier studies that criminals have high psychoticism, neuroticism and extroversion than normals (Eysenck, 1970; Wilson and Maclean, 1974; Singh, 1973; Singh, 1979, 1980 and Shanmugham, 1975). The criminals are impulsive and the psychoticism factor will indicate isolated, troublesome, unsocialised individuals who disregard rules and social norms. They lack conformity with the values of the society in which they live and socialisation has been defective in them (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1975). Eysenck and Eysenck (1976) consider that there is a close connection between psychoses and criminality which is obviously seen in this study that the criminals and mentally ill criminals do not differ on these personality dimensions. The criminals as a group are more extroverted having high emotionality and psychoticism compared to normal controls.

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PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS OF CRIMINALS

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