

**An investigation into the relationship between suppression  
of certain personality information and delinquent  
behaviour among the the school children**

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Men are usually reluctant to disclose personal data to others because being known to others may expose one to the risk of criticism, social rejection and degradation. Experimental evidences show that there are wide differences in a person's readiness to disclose various kinds of personal data to various persons. Moreover, certain forms of personality maladjustment induce unwillingness to set up intimate and confiding relationship with others.

Jourard (2) has observed that "accurate portrayal of the self to others was an identifying criterion of healthy personality, while neurosis is related to inability to know one's 'real self', and to make it known to others".

The objective of this study is to observe in what way the delinquent school children differ from the non-delinquent ones so far as the suppression of certain personal and family information is concerned.

*Subjects*

The subjects were 294 school children reading in 4 boys' and 2 girls' schools at Calcutta. Of these 190 were boys, 140 were girls. Most of them were within the age range 12 to 14.

### *Instrument used*

Two questionnaires were used in this study :

- (I) A biographical questionnaire which was to be filled in by the subjects. It consisted of twenty items. Of these, eight were in connection with study habits, seven were just personal information i.e., name, age, sex etc., and the remaining five involved socio-economic status. A copy of the questionnaire is presented at the end.
- (II) The second questionnaire consisted of ten questions related to the behaviour of the students in the school. This was to be filled in by the teacher for each of the selected subjects. There was a remark column where the teacher was to write a few lines about the student in general. A copy of this questionnaire is also presented at the end.

### *Procedure*

The subjects were first divided into two groups (i) delinquent and (ii) non- delinquent on the basis of the information supplied by the teachers about the behaviour of the students in the schools. The numbers of delinquent boys and girls among 294 subjects are presented in Table-1.

**Table 1**  
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS OF DELINQUENTS AND NON-  
DELINQUENTS

	Boys	Girls	Total
Delinquent	30	48	78
Non-delinquent	163	56	216
Total	190	104	294

It may be noted that the proportion of boys identified as delinquent by their teachers was .16 whereas that for the girls this was

.46. These two proportions were significantly different\*. This may be due to the fact that the behaviour is not acceptable to the society in case of girls and hence identified as delinquent by their teachers. It may be further remembered that the same questionnaire was used for both the groups which may cause this difference to some extent.

Next, the responses of the subjects to the biographical questionnaire were analysed. Only the responses given to the five questions were considered in the present investigation and the figures are presented in Table-2.

**Table-2**

FREQUENCY OF NO-RESPONSES OBTAINED IN FIVE QUESTIONS OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE.

Number of non-responses	Boys	Girls	Total
0	51	8	59
1	23	8	31
2	38	42	80
3	34	24	58
4	37	20	57
5	7	2	9
Total	190	204	294

Next on the basis of the number of no-responses to these five questions, the subjects were divided into the following three groups:

- (a) Non-suppressor—those who answered all the five questions.
- (b) Intermediate —those who answered 3 or 4 questions.
- (c) Suppressor —those who gave no answer or answered 1 or 2 questions.

For the present study only the two extreme groups i.e. suppressor and non-suppressor groups were taken into consideration and the middle group was rejected anticipating that there were some borderline cases whose responses might affect the result in a way difficult to

\* Critical Ratio=5.76; significant at 1% level.

interpret. It might be noted here that there was no way of checking the correctness of the statements given by the subjects and hence all the responses were accepted to be correct.

Table-3 represents the distribution of suppressor and non-suppressor among the subjects in the sample.

**Table-3**  
**FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION SUPPRESSOR AND NON-SUPPRESSOR**  
**IN TWO SEX GROUPS**

	Boys	Girls	Total
Suppressor	78	46	124
Non-suppressor	51	8	59
Total	129	54	183

Here also as observed in case of classifying the subjects into delinquent and non-delinquent groups the proportion of girls who fell in the suppressor group was more than that of the boys and these proportions were significantly different\*. This indicated that the girls were more inclined to remain non-committal with respect to their socio-economic status. But according to Jourard (2; p-71) it is necessary to "investigate the conditions under which women will or will not be higher discloser than man". It may be that these girls will disclose their every information to their friends though they are very much reluctant to supply any information while answering such a questionnaire.

Finally the frequency distribution of suppressor and non-suppressor children among the delinquent and non-delinquent groups were determined separately for the two sex groups and the values are presented in Table-4.

In order to examine the independence of the two variables i.e., suppressor and delinquency, the usual Chi-square (1) tests was carried

\* Critical Ratio=3.37; significant at the 1% level.

## A COPY OF RATING FORM

(To be filled in by the teacher)

1. Name of the School \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of the student \_\_\_\_\_

Please put tick mark in the appropriate box.

The student in question

1. escapes from school during school hours — Yes ( ) No ( )
  2. does not come school regularly (not due to ill health) — Yes ( ) No ( )
  3. does not prepare lesson often (inattentive in study) — Yes ( ) No ( )
  4. does not show proper respect to the teachers — Yes ( ) No ( )
  5. quarrels with others students — Yes ( ) No ( )
  6. steals other's books, pencils or pens (put tick mark if at least in one occassion it is reported so). — Yes ( ) No ( )
    1. Often ( )
    2. Seldom ( )
    3. once ( ) or twice ( )
  7. smokes — — — — Yes ( ) No ( )
    1. Often ( )
    2. Seldom ( )
    3. once ( )
  8. Visits Cinema *often* — — — — Yes ( ) No. ( )
  9. does not obey class room rules or regulations. — Yes ( ) No ( )
  10. does other types of mischief such as —
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## A COPY OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

(To be filled in by the student)

1. Name :—
2. Age :—
3. For how many years are you staying in Calcutta ?
4. How many brothers and sisters do you have ?
5. What is the number of persons living in your family ?
6. How many rooms are there in your house ?
- \*7. What is the occupation of your father ?
- \*8. What is your father's educational level ?
9. What is the occupation of your mother ?
- \*10. What is your mother's educational level ?
- \*11. What is your father's monthly income ?
- \*12. What is the monthly income of your family ?
13. Do you have any private tutor ?
14. Who helps you in your study at home ?
15. Do you read alone or with other persons at home ?
16. When do you read at home ?
17. Do you have any reading room at your home ?
18. How long do you read at your home ?
19. Which subject do you like most ?
20. Who does accompany you usually when you go out of your home ?

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\* Responses to these items were considered in this analysis.

**Table-4**

FREQUENCIES OF THE SUBJECT IN THE FOUR CELLS—SUPPRESSOR, NON-SUPPRESSOR, DELINQUENT AND NON-DELINQUENT.

	BOYS		GIRLS	
	Suppressor	Non-suppressor	Suppressor	Non-Suppresso
Delinquent	7	13	21	4
Non-delinquent	71	38	25	4
Total	78	51	46	8

out separately for the two sex groups. The obtained values are as follows :

For the boys' group  $\chi^2=6.42$  with 1 degree of freedom and this was significant at the 5% level.

For the girls' group  $\chi^2=.05$  with 1 degree of freedom and this was insignificant.

It can be concluded from the Chi-square values that the tendency of suppression was not so common among the delinquent boys as was observed among the non-delinquent ones. This difference was significant. But suppression of facts was a common trend dominating in both the delinquent and non-delinquent girls' groups so far as the present samples were concerned.

## REFERENCES

1. Cramer, H. *Mathematical Methods of Statistics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954.
2. Jourard, S. M. *Self-Disclosure*, New York: Wiley Inter-Science, 1971.