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TRACING THE PATH TO DELINQUENCY: A STUDY OF JUVENILE DELINQUENTS IN OBSERVATION HOMES OF MADHYA PRADESH

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Abstract

Juvenile delinquency is a multifaceted issue influenced by numerous factors, including family environment, socio-economic standing, education, peer pressure, and substance abuse, among others. This study draws on observations from homes in the Ratlam and Ujjain districts of Madhya Pradesh, using them as the centre for primary data collection, to ensure an in-depth, on-the-ground understanding of the background of juvenile delinquency by interviewing the delinquents housed there. The study adopted a qualitative descriptive approach and gathered primary data through unstructured interviews with 18 juveniles aged 10 to 18 years. Non-probability sampling was used to gain insight into their lives. The results show that juveniles mostly come from economically poor families, have messy and dysfunctional families, and do not pursue education. Absence of parental guidance, inadequate family bonding, exposure to drug abuse, and affiliation with deviant peer groups contribute significantly to their delinquent behaviour. Nevertheless, the study also notes the importance of rehabilitation services and the home environment in which juvenile offenders stay for correcting their behavioural patterns and preventing further criminal activities. This study underscores the importance of strengthening family, socioeconomic, and rehabilitation programs for juveniles.

Keywords: *Juvenile Delinquency, Observation Homes, Family Environment, Socio-Economic Factors, Rehabilitation, Children in Conflict with Law*

INTRODUCTION

The future of a nation mostly depends on the next generation. A nation's human resource base determines whether it will evolve into a developed country or its growth rate will remain constant. Therefore, investing in the citizens' growth is imperative, particularly in the younger

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generation, including children, adolescents, and teens. They will undoubtedly grow up to be law-abiding citizens if they are raised with love, care, and moral principles instilled in them.

Nonetheless, they may develop into delinquents or someone who misbehaves or disregards social norms, laws, and regulations from an early age if they are mistreated, raised in unsavoury company, or endure abuse as a youngster.³ Social changes, urbanisation, poverty, broken families, drug addiction, pressure from peers, and violent surroundings affect the lives of youth worldwide, leading them to conflicts with the law. The issue of Juvenile delinquency in India has also become increasingly serious nowadays. In particular, many children come into conflict with the law by committing various offences.⁴ According to the NCRB 2024 report, there is an 11.2% increase in crimes committed by juveniles. A total of 34,878 cases has been registered against juveniles under the IPC, BNS and SLL. The majority of the juveniles were in the age group of 16 to 18 years. Bihar (5037) recorded the highest number of crimes committed by juveniles, followed by Maharashtra (3779) and Madhya Pradesh (3474).⁵ Juvenile delinquency, sometimes referred to as juvenile offending or adolescent crime, is the involvement of minors in criminal activity. A person who performs an act that would have resulted in criminal charges if they had been an adult is known as a juvenile delinquent. Typically, these individuals are under the age of 16. Stated differently, juvenile delinquents are defined as offenders, including both boys and girls, who are typically under the age of sixteen.⁶ Juvenile delinquents are the term used for those minors aged up to 18 who have allegedly committed an offence in India according to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. From a juridical point of view, children are defined based on their behaviour and actions. However, from a sociological and criminological perspective, juvenile delinquency should be viewed as a social phenomenon caused by adverse life circumstances, rather than a natural inclination towards criminal activity.⁷ These children face neglect and abuse, poverty, social exclusion, a dysfunctional family environment, lack of education, or insufficient parental care. Juvenile criminals are sometimes referred to as delinquents. Because of the perception that delinquents

³ Amandeep Kaur and Monesh Mehndiratta, "Juvenile Delinquency in India," *iPleaders* (blog), July 10, 2023, <https://blog.ipleaders.in/juvenile-delinquency-related-legislations-india/>.

⁴ Ministry of Women and Child Development, *The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015* (New Delhi: Government of India, 2015).

⁵ National Crime Records Bureau, *Crime in India 2024*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 2024), <https://ncrb.gov.in/>.

⁶ Archana Singh and U. V. Kiran, "Effect of a Single-Parent Family on Child Delinquency," *International Journal of Science and Research* 3, no. 9 (2014): 886–890.

⁷ Curt R. Bartol and Anne M. Bartol, *Criminal Behaviour: A Psychosocial Approach*, 11th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2017).

do not adhere to moral and constructive standards, delinquency is sometimes described as a social disorder.⁸ Several factors contribute to a child's delinquent behaviour, such as having parents who are involved in criminal activity, parental abuse and neglect, insufficient parental supervision, domestic violence, parents' age at childbirth, their history of drug use and mental illness, the family's size, their educational background, their social standing, and their isolation from one another. Children from families where there is a negative family trait, such as inadequate parental supervision, are thought to be more vulnerable to eventual delinquency or criminality than children from homes with a positive characteristic.⁹ In contrast, children who live in a positive home environment with parental support, guidance, etc., are less likely to show delinquent behaviour.¹⁰ Delinquency among youth is a serious issue that affects not only the victims of the crime but also the offenders (i.e., young offenders), their families, and the community. Adolescent offenders suffer the repercussions of their conduct even if they cannot foresee them on their own. Since they may wind up in jail or on probation, the bulk of these infractions result in the youngsters losing their freedom. Their academic well-being will suffer as a result of their absence from academic events while they are incarcerated or on probation. When a child is placed in a residential institution for confinement, there are situations when older, more experienced juvenile criminals may have an impact on him or her, increasing the likelihood that the young person will face the repercussions of their next violation. The minor's future job decisions may be determined by and impacted by their delinquent past.¹¹ The juvenile justice system of India is a legislative framework created to protect children's rights and well-being while providing appropriate care and protection. Its basis is not punitive measures, but rather rehabilitation and change. The Indian federal government enacted the Juvenile Justice Act of 1986 that year. As per the data compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB, 2024), a substantial number of juveniles detained for violating the laws are from disadvantaged socio-economic communities. It established welfare boards for children who were not criminals or who had been mistreated, and juvenile courts for offenders.¹² In the year 2000, the

⁸ Veditje Ratkoceri and Ebru Ibis, "Characteristics of Juvenile Delinquency with Special Emphasis on Juveniles as Child Sexual Abusers," *South East European University Review* 16, no. 1 (2021): 80–92, <https://doi.org/10.2478/seeur-2021-0009>.

⁹ Archana Singh and U. V. Kiran, "Effect of a Single-Parent Family on Child Delinquency," *International Journal of Science and Research* 3, no. 9 (2014): 886–890

¹⁰ Prakash and Haveripeth, "Contributing Factors of Juvenile Delinquency," *International Journal of Innovative Research & Development* 2, no. 1 (2013): 636–643

¹¹ Archana Singh and U. V. Kiran, "Effect of a Single-Parent Family on Child Delinquency," *International Journal of Science and Research* 3, no. 9 (2014): 886–890.

¹² Deepshikha Agarwal, "Juvenile Delinquency in India: Latest Trends and Entailing Amendments in the Juvenile Justice Act," *People: International Journal of Social Sciences* 4, no. 3 (2018): 1365-1383.

Act was replaced with the JJ (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2000, to instil the values outlined in UN conventions, including the 1990 Rules, the Beijing Rules, and the CRC. After the Nirbhaya case in the year 2012, the Act was further amended, and new legislation was introduced, known as the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015.¹³ The JJ Act, 2015, provides a legal framework to deal with CCLs and CNCs to ensure their welfare and well-being while following child-friendly measures. Instead of using sanctions, the Act aims to hold the child who is accused of a crime responsible through counselling. An observation home is described as the location where CCLs are temporarily housed and rehabilitated while the trial is ongoing. Section 47 of the Juvenile Justice Act of 2015 defines it. CCLs are minors who are charged with crimes but have not yet turned eighteen years old. The observation home is designed to offer CCLs safety, protection, and care while the trial is pending. Additionally, it focuses on the child's rehabilitation, education, and vocational training.¹⁴ Scholars and political commentators agree that reform and rehabilitation should be the primary emphasis of laws governing juvenile justice and juveniles who come into conflict with the law.¹⁵ To protect against juvenile delinquency, legislation was amended several times according to need, with a focus on rehabilitation and reformation of juvenile delinquents to prevent them from re-offending. Various scholars conducted research to identify the causes of juvenile delinquency. Observation Homes are very important in the juvenile justice system in India. The institutions are founded to offer temporary shelter, protection, guidance, counselling, rehabilitation, and social integration to children who have been reported to be involved in criminal activity. Nevertheless, although there is a need for further research on the issues concerning juvenile offenders, there is little qualitative research done in terms of examining the personal experience, emotional challenges, social dynamics, and journey to delinquency in juveniles, particularly those in small cities such as Ratlam and Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh. The districts of Ratlam and Ujjain provide a rich setting for an analysis of juvenile delinquency in view of the particular socio-cultural and economic circumstances there. Elements such as migration, unemployment, substance abuse, urban poverty, peer pressure, and changes in the structure of families could serve as reasons behind the involvement of young

<https://doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2018.33.13651383>.

¹³ M. N. Chaturvedi and I. Raj, "Exploring Legal Frameworks: Juvenile Justice in India," *iPleaders* (blog), 2022, <https://blog.ipleaders.in/exploring-legal-frameworks-juvenile-justice-in-india/>.

¹⁴ "Living Conditions in Institutions for Children in Conflict with the Law: Objectives and Approach of Child Care Institutions," Vikaspedia, accessed August 14, 2026, <https://vikaspedia.in/education/child-rights/living-conditions-in-institutions-for-children-in-conflict-with-law/objectives-and-approach-of-child-care-institutions>.

¹⁵ V. Chaturvedi and Rohit, "Understanding Juvenile Delinquency: A Comprehensive Guide," *iPleaders* (blog), 2019, <https://blog.ipleaders.in/understanding-juvenile-delinquency-comprehensive-guide>.

people in criminal acts. The purpose of qualitative research lies in examining the reasons that led those kids into delinquent activities, along with describing the nature of the crimes they committed.

Qualitative approaches are necessary to explore the underlying drivers, intentions and contexts of delinquent behaviours. It also requires the need for enabling a voice for juveniles and gaining insight into their experiences, a subject that continues to be neglected and misunderstood by society. By understanding their experiences in Observation Homes and discovering the context that drives them towards delinquency, the study aims to find out what leads them towards delinquency. With a focus on subjectivity and context, the study hopes to advance the fields of criminology, policy analysis and practice in relation to adolescence within the juvenile justice area. The study perceives delinquents as children who were shaped by their social realities, who need care and understanding of their current situations, rather than being offenders who committed a certain act defined by the law of the country, to ensure their rehabilitation. The study also focused on determining the interpersonal relationships of juvenile delinquents with their families and the criminal history of the family. From the study, the researcher analysed the impact of socioeconomic background on delinquent behaviour among juveniles and the specificity of crimes committed by the juveniles because of a poor socioeconomic background.

OBJECTIVES

To research the juvenile offenders housed in the Observation Homes concerning their educational, social, and economic backgrounds.

Research Questions

1. What are the different types of crimes committed by juveniles?
2. Which component of the cause influences delinquency the most?
3. How do educational, socio-economic variables and interpersonal relationships impact juvenile delinquent behaviour?
4. Is there any relation between a particular type of crime and a poor socio-economic background?

Methodology

The research study aimed to comprehensively explore the educational, social, and economic factors influencing juvenile delinquency through a qualitative and descriptive approach. Primary data were gathered from interviews with juvenile delinquents in observation homes in

Ratlam and Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, supplemented by secondary data from various academic sources. The sample consisted of 18 boys, selected through non-probability convenience sampling based on their availability and willingness to participate. Data collection involved in-depth interviews guided by an unstructured questionnaire, focusing on various socioeconomic parameters. Thematic analysis was employed to examine the data, categorising it into key themes such as education, social background, economic conditions, interpersonal relationships, and criminal history.

Ethical Considerations: Several ethical norms were maintained during data collection. The privacy of respondents was maintained, and the confidentiality of the information was maintained. Prior information regarding the research study was provided to the administrative staff and the respondents. No photos or videos of the respondents were taken. The whole data collection process was conducted based on the interest of respondents to participate.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The purpose of the research study was to examine the juvenile offenders' educational, social, and economic backgrounds as well as their interpersonal interactions with the parents, friends, and neighbours who were living in the boys' observation homes. All of these variables are important in the development of delinquent behaviour in young people. Young offenders were housed at the observation home while the trial was pending, where they received care, therapy, and rehabilitation programs. The data were gathered from the Boys Observation Homes of Ratlam & Ujjain, situated in Madhya Pradesh. The data were collected based on the availability and interest of juvenile delinquents to participate in the research study. A total of 18 samples were collected from both Observation Homes. The Ratlam Observation Home for Boys is situated between 3 districts of Madhya Pradesh, i.e., Ratlam, Mansour & Neemuch, and is situated at Mohan Nagar, Ratlam. All the young offenders who commit crimes in these 3 districts are kept in the Ratlam Observation Home. The Ujjain Observation Home is situated in front of Christ Jyoti School, Malanwasa, Ujjain.

- **Age Distribution**

Thirteen of the eighteen juvenile offenders were between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, four were between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, and only one was between the ages of ten and twelve. One of the adolescent perpetrators was identified as mentally retarded. All 18 respondents were male.

Note: The details of one respondent were not mentioned because the respondent was mentally retarded, and because of that, not much information was extracted from him.

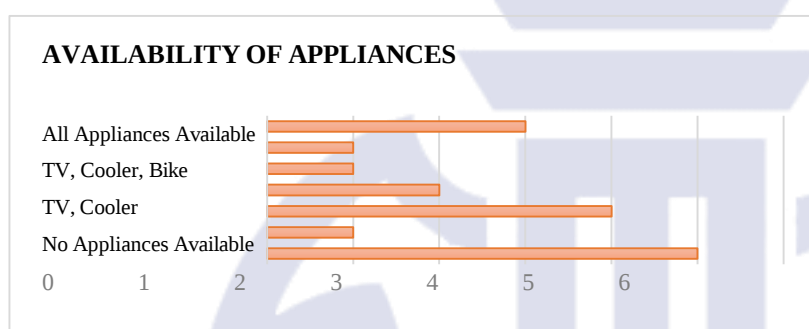
- **Socio-Economic Background of Juveniles**

The analysis of the economic and social backgrounds of juvenile delinquents indicates that many come from low or moderate economic situations, primarily due to their parents working in low-wage jobs such as farming, construction, selling fruits, driving, tailoring, etc. Only a few of them were doing jobs in higher positions. Eight Juvenile delinquents reported that their family's financial condition was poor, stating, "bss hamara ghar chal jata he," and experienced financial difficulties consistently. As a result of these economic issues, some delinquents began to work to help support their families. Eight delinquents noted that their economic situation was moderate or good, but they occasionally faced financial challenges and needed to borrow money. Only one delinquent mentioned that their economic condition was very good and that they had not encountered any financial difficulties within the family. But the major population are with low economic situation; this financial strain often forces delinquents to leave their education to aid their families, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and low literacy rates. Socially, most juvenile delinquents live in nuclear families, with only a few in joint families and broken families. While they maintain friendships, most of their peers do not have criminal backgrounds, apart from a small minority. Nevertheless, peers significantly influence their choices, especially regarding substance use. In contrast, the impact of their neighbourhood seems minimal, with most reporting positive interactions with their neighbours.

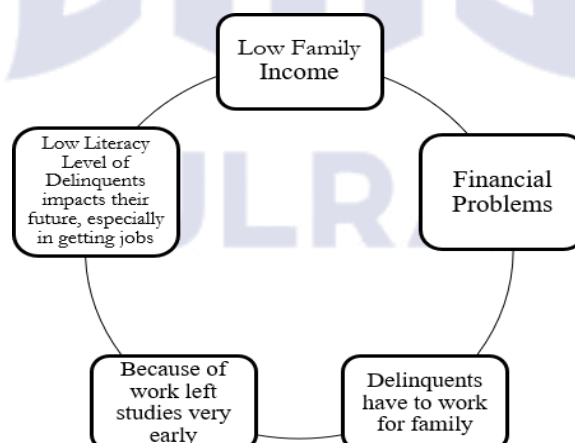
Sample No.	Working/Not Working	Type of Work	Per-day Working Hours	Working Income
1	Working	Saree Packing	10 hours	17,000 per month
2	Working	Factory	9 hours	2500 every week
3	Working	Garage	10 hours	50 per day
4	Working	Auto Driver	9 hours	250 per day
5	Working	Caterer	Not fixed	600 per day
6	Mentally Retarded	-	-	-
7	Working	Restaurant	12 hours	15,000 per month
8	Working	Cement Factory	12 hours	12,000 per month
9	Working	Tea Stall	13 to 14 hours	1500-2000 per day

10	Working	Agriculture with Father	Not fixed	-
11	Working	Construction Worker	8 hours	350 weeklies
12	Not Working	-	-	-
13	Not Working	-	-	-
14	Working	Driver	5 to 6 hours	300 per day
15	Not Working	-	-	-
16	Working	Scrap Taking	Not fixed	Not known
17	Not Working	-	-	-
18	Working	Brick Klin	10 hours	300 per day

Source: data collected from juvenile delinquents present in Observation Homes



Source: data collected from juvenile delinquents present in Observation Homes

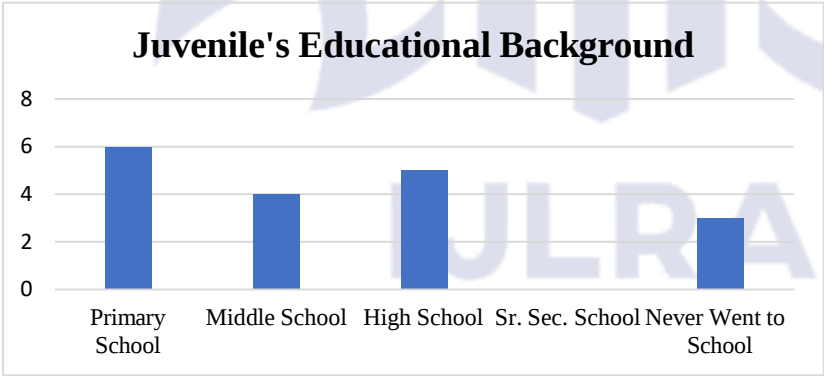


Source: observation drawn from the findings by the researcher

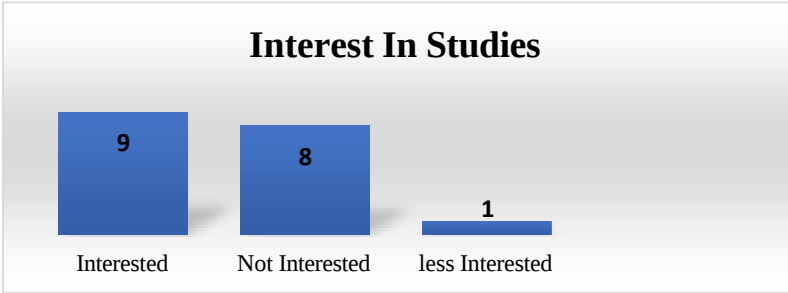
• Educational Background and School Dropout Trends

An examination of the educational histories of juvenile offenders reveals that the majority of juveniles are interested in studies and want to continue studying after release. The delinquents who were interested in studies talked about their school achievements, their favourite subjects, and their goals for the future. However, some of them discontinued their studies prematurely,

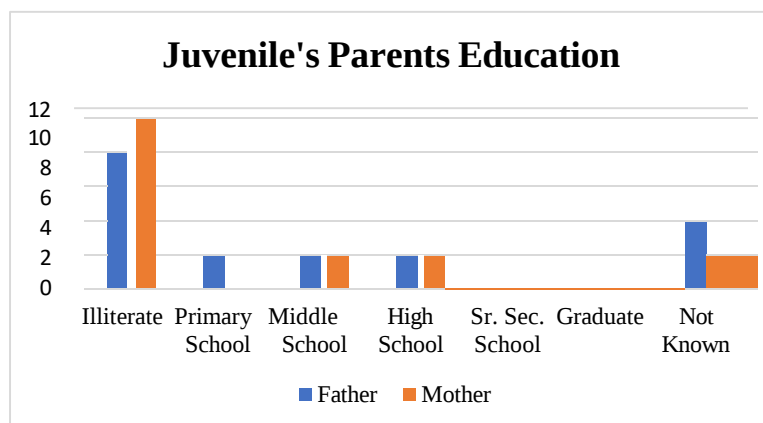
largely due to economic constraints within their families. Some juveniles were found to be not interested or less interested in studies, and some of them never went to school, nor do they want to go to school. Similarly, their parents typically possessed limited educational attainment, most having completed only primary or lower-secondary schooling, a circumstance that exerted a detrimental effect on their children’s intellectual and moral development. Parents with a solid educational foundation generally cultivate a home environment conducive to academic achievement and ethical maturation, thereby mitigating the likelihood of delinquent behaviour. Conversely, parents with minimal literacy often fail to provide adequate supervision or academic encouragement, rendering their children susceptible to adverse external influences. Nonetheless, interviews with juvenile offenders indicate that observation homes and their rehabilitative initiatives exert a constructive influence in reigniting educational motivation. Many participants articulated a renewed aspiration to pursue learning, where they were taught different things, such as computers, general knowledge, English, arts & crafts, drawing, etc., as part of their rehabilitation; they developed an interest in studies. Many delinquents who left their studies very early or never went to school learned to write their names, the alphabet, signatures, etc., suggesting that a supportive and intellectually enriching environment can play a pivotal role in diminishing recidivism among young offenders.



Source: data collected from juvenile delinquents present in Observation Homes



Source: data collected from juvenile delinquents present in the observation home



Source: data collected from juvenile delinquents present in the observation home

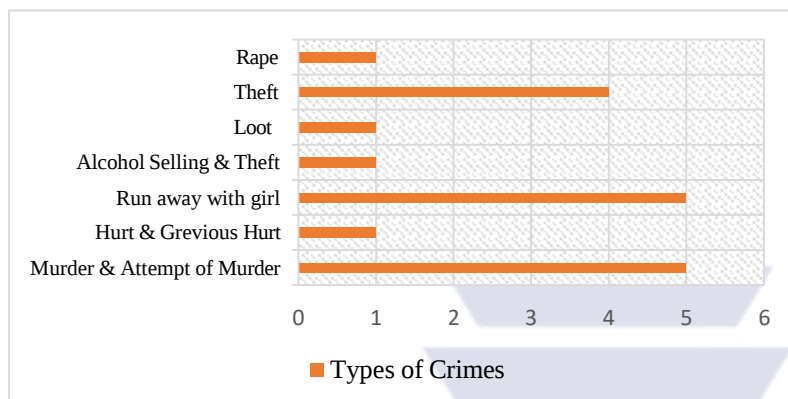
• Aspects of Crime Committed

A total of 18 respondents involved in a research study were accused of various serious crimes, including kidnapping, murder, attempted murder, theft, causing hurt, and looting. Specifically, 5 individuals were charged with kidnapping (running away with the girl), citing pressure related to a girl's suicide as a motive. Two juvenile delinquents faced murder charges, claiming they were unwittingly trapped into committing the act. Three respondents were accused of attempted murder, with one asserting self-defence and others attributing their involvement to peer pressure. Four other delinquents were charged with theft, offering various motivations ranging from financial issues to being caught up in a friend's crime. Additionally, one juvenile was charged with inflicting hurt and grievous hurt during a fight, while another was a repeat offender involved in extensive theft and looting, indicating a desire for notoriety linked to gang involvement. One individual was accused of theft and alcohol sale, maintaining his innocence by claiming ignorance of the situation. Lastly, a juvenile delinquent accused of rape was found to be mentally retarded, complicating the investigation into the motive behind the crime.

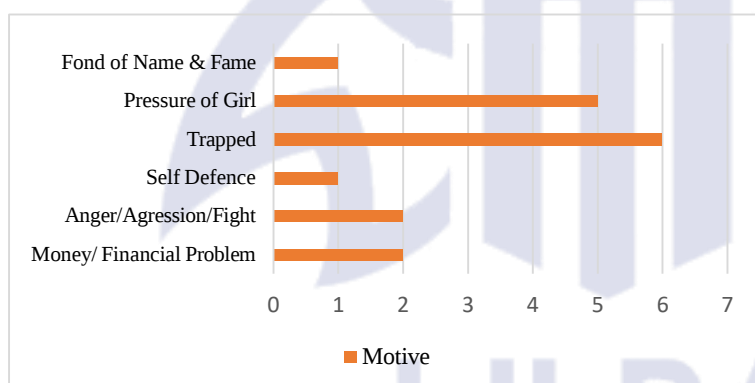
Most of the juvenile offenders were found to be first-time offenders; only three were repeat offenders. After the analysis of the data and from the interview with the delinquents, a few things were found that played a major role in the commission of crime by the delinquents.

First, it was found that the occupation the delinquents were doing before coming to the observation home was a factor, as when the delinquents were asked about the reason behind the commission of a crime, it showed that though they had no intention to commit the crime, the place where they were working or the occupation they were doing made them commit different types of crimes. **Second**, the influence of friends was found to be that a few of the delinquents committed crimes during their school holidays when they were with their friends, and small fights among friends led them to commit crimes in anger and aggression, and some

got trapped because of the crime committed by their friends. **Third**, the financial condition of the family led them to commit small crimes like theft, etc., and the urge to get a name and fame in society; because of this, the delinquents joined the gangs. Lastly, a few of them were found to commit the crime because of pressure from the girl they loved, and because of her pressure, they took the girl and got caught by the police. However, because of the delinquents' weak socioeconomic circumstances, no specific crime was discovered.



Source: data collected from juvenile delinquents present in the observation home



Source: data collected from juvenile delinquents present in the observation home

• Family Environment and Parental Relationships

The interpersonal relationships among delinquents and their parents were found to be good and satisfactory. Most of the delinquents got support from their families in getting bail, and most of the parents of the delinquents came to meet them twice or thrice. A few of the delinquents did not get support from their parents because they did not listen to their parents and got engaged in criminal activity because of the influence of others. The interpersonal relationships of the delinquents with their friends and neighbours were generally positive, with most stating that their friends and neighbours were supportive. There was no evidence that the delinquents' relationships with their parents influenced their involvement in crime. However, a notable lack of parental supervision was identified, as many delinquents spent long hours working outside

the home and subsequently socialising with friends. When asked about crime in their families, all juvenile offenders replied that neither their parents nor other family members had a history of criminal behaviour. The presence of a family history of crime did not appear to affect the delinquents' likelihood of committing offences. When inquired about criminal activity in their community, most juvenile offenders stated that none of them had previously committed a crime and described their community as safe. Only two mentioned isolated incidents, one involving a boy who had eloped with a girl and was later jailed, and another noted that many residents had theft convictions, indicating a less desirable residential area. Overall, the criminal history of the neighbourhoods where some of the delinquents resided had minimal impact on their own illegal activities.

- **Substance Abuse and Risk Behaviour**

A majority of the delinquents were found to be using substances like Cigarettes, bidis, Vimal, Drugs (Ganja), etc., and all of them learned this from their friends because they were also consuming the same. When the delinquents were asked about awareness of their parents regarding their abuse, all of them said that their parents were not aware of that, and they did not learn this from their parents. However, it was not found that, because of the influence of substance abuse, the juvenile delinquents committed any crime; they only consumed because their friends were also consuming.

- **Life in Observation Homes**

The researcher collected data from two different observation homes, and the conditions within these two facilities were completely distinct. In one observation home, it was observed that significant attention was devoted to the rehabilitation of the juveniles; for instance, they were provided with computer classes, and those who did not know how to read or write were taught these skills. Furthermore, emphasis was placed on government policies designed to assist them in their future endeavours. They were instilled with a sense of discipline, specifically during meal times, when all the children would first offer a prayer before sitting down to eat together. They were also provided with a uniform to wear and a basic education. Moreover, a positive attitude was evident among all the children, characterised by a resolve to pursue their education after their release and to refrain from ever engaging in criminal activities again. When the staff at this facility were interviewed, they proved to be extremely helpful; they even suggested specific questions to ask the children. Conversations with the staff revealed that they make every possible effort to provide the children with proper rehabilitation and to prevent

recidivism. However, when we turned our attention to the second observation home, the environment was entirely different. Conversations with the children there revealed that very little focus was placed on rehabilitation; furthermore, there was a noticeable shortage of staff. In fact, the general atmosphere was quite dismal, and the physical conditions of the observation home itself were in a very poor state. Regarding their past actions, they expressed guilt and a determination never to repeat their mistakes in the future; however, concerning their education, the majority of them stated that they had no desire to pursue further studies. From this, we can deduce that the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Model Rules, 2016, formulated to facilitate the implementation of the JJ Act, 2015, stipulate that the focus should be placed on providing educational and vocational training to juveniles, offering counselling services, and attending to their medical health needs. In short, the emphasis is to be laid on the holistic development of juveniles to ensure that they do not reoffend in the future.

However, the reality is quite different; while we observe this approach being followed in some observation homes, it is absent in others.

Furthermore, a positive environment within an observation home plays a crucial role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of juveniles and in reducing the recidivism rate.

DISCUSSION

As we know, the youth constitute a vital asset for our country. If provided with a quality education at the right time and moulded into responsible citizens, there is a high probability that they will refrain from engaging in crime, criminal activities, or anti-social behaviour later in life. Data analysis reveals that when delinquents were questioned about their education, the majority expressed a genuine interest in learning; however, for various reasons, they were compelled to abandon their studies at an early age. Financial constraints are not the sole factor behind this; the parents' educational background also plays a pivotal role. Educated parents, recognising the significance of education, foster an environment that sustains a child's interest in learning. It can be easily noted from the above-mentioned results about the socio-economic background of the juvenile offenders that economic weakness has continued to act as one of the most important determinants of juvenile delinquency. The majority of the juveniles interviewed come from poor or lower-middle-class backgrounds whose parents indulge in economically weak professions such as farming, building work, tailoring, fruit business, and driving. It was revealed by them that they lived a life that was not marked by criminal behaviour but was characterised by economic hardships all the time. “Bas hamara ghar chal jata he”, which is said by most of the youngsters, indicates a situation where families struggle to survive

daily to meet their basic needs with no economic protection at all. Consequently, they may indulge in substance abuse and exhibit behavioural shifts such as increased anger, aggression, and a propensity to pick fights over trivial matters, which ultimately steer them toward a life of crime or delinquency. Interviews conducted with juveniles corroborated the presence of all these contributing factors. However, it was found that the level of education of the parents would play a vital role in influencing the behaviour of the teenagers. Most of the respondents to the questionnaire had attended primary and junior high school and were therefore unable to provide any educational advice or discipline to their children.

In some instances, it was observed that the juveniles harboured no criminal intent but became entangled in legal trouble and were subsequently apprehended by the police due to the influence of their friends or the environment of their workplace. An examination of the juveniles' relationships with their parents revealed that, in many cases, they maintained positive bonds with both their parents and their siblings; furthermore, their home environments did not appear to be conducive to criminal activity. Similarly, the delinquents were found to share positive relationships with their friends; however, these peer groups were identified as playing a major role in their substance abuse.

Interviews conducted with the children about their offences found that many were committed during school holidays and involved in minor fights that turned into anger, simple but grievous hurt. A few delinquents said they intended to commit no crime, adding that a friend had committed the offence, which led to them being caught. Also, economic factors do play a critical role, as the majority of the offenders belong to either poor or middle-class economic groups of the society, whose parents, except for rare cases, hold low-wage occupations, mainly in the category of daily wage workers. As a result, because of their unstable economic situation, they had to quit their schooling and start working, which later on resulted in their delinquent behaviour, which then led to their admission into an observation home. Because of their extended working hours, most of their time was spent outside of the home or family; thus, we noticed a lack of parental control over them/ their understanding of specific situations, as well as vulnerability to peer pressure. As regards the question about how their life was in observation centres, two different situations were witnessed. In the first case, the environment was so gentle that it actually generated a liking for studies among almost all the kids; kids who had never been to school before and knew nothing about reading and writing actually began to learn. On the other hand, the kind of environment at the second observation home seemed anything but

rehabilitative; in fact, the kids admitted that they had absolutely no inclination, interest or support towards education and intended to go straight into work so that they could get money in their hands. Nevertheless, there was one common factor that came out in both environments; the offenders were feeling guilty about what they had done in the past and were determined not to commit themselves again.

Juvenile delinquency is definitely associated with socio- economic and environmental aspects. Economic troubles, detachment from education, early involvement in work within a not- so educated circle of the daily wage system, peer pressure, no parental supervision, and psychological immaturity are some of the situations that increase vulnerability to criminal behaviour on the part of the child. In general, most of the kids were offenders for the first time in their lives and felt remorseful about what they had done in the past. Also, when these children are placed under observation for rehabilitation and provided with proper education, vocational training, and counselling, we can transform them into good human beings and law-abiding citizens who play a vital role in the development of our country.

Notwithstanding the differences within these observation homes, an emotional trend was found amongst most of the juveniles; they felt guilty and regretful about their past actions and wished that they would not make similar mistakes in the future. This observation is highly significant since it proves the fact that there exist juveniles who have an ethical background and can think about their actions. Timely measures may help juveniles return to society through counselling, education, and vocational training.

On the whole, this study shows that juvenile delinquency has nothing to do with criminal tendencies. It is based on several socio-economic factors, such as lack of education, exposure to harsh conditions, peer influence, and lack of proper supervision, that make children susceptible to delinquency.

From a broader criminological perspective, the study also validates the hypothesis that the great majority of children participating in crimes are actually the victims of poor socio-economic environments and not actual offenders of their own free will. Therefore, steps for dealing with juvenile delinquents must not only encompass punishment but should also focus on improving education, socio-economic status, parental education, child labour abolition, and creating positive environments among friends and community members.

Observation homes and rehabilitation centres can never be overemphasised when it comes to improving the self-respect and emotional stability of these children. With proper counselling and guidance, they are capable of becoming productive citizens of the nation. The significance of an integrated and child- centric approach towards juvenile justice in India is emphasised. It is essential to ensure that these children receive an appropriate family background, ensure their education, remove them from working in child labour, enhance opportunities for financial security for the underprivileged segments, and strive for improvements in terms of the quality of rehabilitation centres. Rather than viewing them as criminals who have done something wrong, we need to see them as an individual who requires guidance and rehabilitation, which will enable the transformation of these children into productive citizens of society.

CONCLUSION

Young children are sensitive and change their appearance based on their situations. They might either emerge as shining examples of society or turn into criminals. Consequently, it becomes imperative to prioritise their development and progress to prevent juveniles from indulging in criminal behaviour. A qualitative & descriptive research study was conducted to determine the influence of social, educational & economic background, as well as interpersonal relationships of the juveniles, on their delinquent behaviour. Based on the research study, it was found that certain factors, such as lack of parental supervision, absence of parental monitoring, low level of education, poor income, economic hardship, drug and other abuses, & influence of acquaintances, were found to be influencing factors in forming delinquent behaviour among juveniles. However, the impact of interpersonal relationships of juvenile delinquents with their parents was not found to be an influencing factor in the commission of crime. From the research study, no specific type of crime was found to be committed because of the poor educational and socio-economic background. It was discovered that the observation home's positive atmosphere and rehabilitation programs were effective in lowering the recidivism rate among young offenders because they regenerated educational interest among many of the juvenile delinquents.