

Socio Economic Status of Adolescents in Government Juvenile Homes in Lucknow

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find socio-economic status of the adolescents in government juvenile homes in Lucknow. The study adopted a descriptive method, 156 juveniles in juvenile homes were interviewed with structured schedule and questionnaire. It was found in present study that the adolescents from older age group were more prone to juvenile delinquency and the main reason for their institutionalization was conflict with Law. Low literacy rate, low income group, nuclear family constitution with less parent supervision and rural/slum environment were the main cause of juvenile delinquency.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquency, Socio Economic Status, Conflict with Law

INTRODUCTION

Children are a vulnerable part of the society. For a holistic development of a child it is necessary that the child is provided with all the important inputs for the growth and development into a well-balanced individual. When we talk about the necessary inputs for a human being and a contributor to the society, we are not just talking about physical but also the emotional and intellectual development. Children being a young and vulnerable can be guided in a positive direction, if the right inputs are provided.

Adolescence is a transitional period of development from childhood to adulthood considered by biological and emotional changes. The word ‘juvenile delinquency’ refers to association of children less than 18 years of age in illegal activities which would be considered as a crime. Therefore, in this context, those children who break the law are referred to as “children in conflict with law” or “juvenile delinquents” The word Juvenile originated from the Latin word “Juvenis”, which signifies a teenager (Hassan, 2022).

The family has been seen to be an important factor

for child development and as a formative factor for children’s successive participation in crime. This paper seeks to explore the relationship between various family-related factors and crime (Mwangangi, 2019). The family has many definitions, because families differ greatly in their sizes and constituent parts. These various types of family accomplish different things for their family members (Gordon, 2003).

Juvenile delinquency is a social problem which requires to be controlled before it deepens its roots. There were many studies done in various countries aiming to explore the factors leading to the delinquent behaviour. The difficulty of factors contributing and increasing trend of juvenile delinquency necessitates many more explorations for good policy (Vemuri *et al.*, 2019).

India has signed the UN convention on the rights of the child and obliged itself to work to ensure all the fundamental rights to all its children. The incident in Delhi in December, 2012, in which a juvenile and five others were arrested by Delhi Police for brutally raping and assaulting a 23-year-old girl implicates the significance for taking remedial measures for juvenile delinquency (Sahmey and Patnaik, 2013).

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India since last few years has passed a number of acts to fight the problems of children in conflict with the law starting with the Apprentices Act (1850), the Indian Penalties Code Act (1860), the Whipping Act (1864), the Reformatory Schools Act (1897), the Madras Children Act (1920), the Model Children Act (1960), and then the Juvenile Justice Act (1986). They were later codified and restructured under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act (2000) and its broader based successor, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act (2015), which was revised in 2021. Besides legal provisions, children have rights that are guaranteed by the Constitution of India under Article 15, 21A, 24 and 39, which bring fairness, free and compulsory education, and protection against dangerous work, and child protection welfare (Singh *et al.*, 2026). Although the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 is an significant landmark, which has placed India on the international level in meeting the international standards of child rights, as it focuses more on the concept of rehabilitation and reintegration as opposed to the punitive approach, there are still problems in implementation. The crowded environment of the observation homes, inadequate staff, equipment, and access to counselling services, as well as the disgrace surrounding juvenile offenders, still do not allow its successful implementation (Sharma, 2021).

Literature Review

The association between socio-economic factors and the youth criminal behaviour has been covered both in domestic and international studies. Scholars frequently point out poverty, lack of employment, and limited access to education as some of the reasons that lead to delinquency. According to Hazra (2021), these conditions serve as constant motivators to juvenile delinquency in India. Based on the Economic Theory of Crime, Raj and Rahman (2023) made the point that income and opportunity disparities are directly connected to the likelihood of youths engaging in unlawful activity. Likewise, Maity and Roy (2021) discovered that the delinquent behaviour is strongly associated with the lack of education and employment opportunities. At large, these studies demonstrate that structural deprivation is the platform on which delinquent behaviours are often formed. Young people are greatly affected by the conditions in their families and the peer groups. Chauhan *et al.* (2022) have found that parental lack of supervision

in addition to peer negative influence has a huge effect on adolescents as far as deviance is concerned. In a study pertaining to the state of Rajasthan, Atrey and Singh (2024) highlighted that family breakdown, poverty, and insufficient education increases the chances of young people committing crimes. Shailja *et al.* (2022) noted that children in poor families do resort to delinquent behaviour often in the absence of positive developmental systems. All these findings point to the effect of family trouble and peer pressures on structural difficulty resulting in unexpected outcomes. Research also highlights the importance of social, cultural and regional factors in the formation of youngster's behaviour. In a 2025 comprehensive legal-empirical study by the India Justice Report (IJR) tracking frontline capacity in the juvenile system, researchers highlighted a massive influx of youth entering institutions through the courts. The report showed that tens of thousands of juveniles enter government observation and special homes annually due to formal police apprehensions, causing over 50,000 cases to remain pending before Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) at any given time (India Justice Report, 2025).

Because older adolescents experience unique cognitive shifts, researchers have increasingly tested targeted therapeutic interventions tailored to their specific age bracket. For instance, a pilot study implementing an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) framework specially targeted older male adolescents aged 14 to 17 within a detention setting (Duchschere *et al.*, 2022). Researchers observed that the vast majority of admitted youth belonged to the 12 to 18 years age cohort (Prabhakar *et al.*, 2017). In a study of 170 juveniles under institutional care in Mumbai, 82.4% of the juveniles belonged to nuclear families, while only 17.6% belonged to joint or joint-extended families (Mishra and Mangla, 2011). The study on children living in institutional care in Northern India reported that most institutionalized children came from small, nuclear, and economically disadvantaged families, with family instability contributing to institutionalization (Rohta, 2020). The vast majority of juveniles in Indian observation homes come from households with monthly incomes well below the national average. Empirical data indicates that a massive percentage of these families survive on monthly incomes under Rs. 25,000, with median household incomes for CICL families frequently hovering around Rs. 7,500 (Fathima Hasanath *et al.*, 2024). 47.5% of juveniles belonged to families earning below Rs. 10,000 per month,

while 33.75% came from families earning Rs. 10,000–Rs. 25,000, indicating that the majority of juveniles belonged to economically disadvantaged households (Ramesh and Kannan, 2021). The study found that juveniles from low-income families were more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour than those from higher-income families. Financial hardship, poor standard of living, and parents' low-paying occupations contributed to family stress and inadequate parental supervision, increasing the risk of juvenile delinquency (India Justice Report, 2025).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive method in examining the socio-economic characteristics of juveniles in Lucknow. To ensure validity and reliability, data collection was done using both primary and secondary methods. Primary data were obtained through structured interview schedule and questionnaires, which aimed at taking socio-demographic facts and educational details. The secondary data were gathered through institutional records, case files and administrative reports. Quantitative analysis of these data was done in form of percentage. The process of informed verbal consent, informed verbal confidentiality, and awareness of vulnerable situation of the participants were enforced throughout the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 and Fig. 1 show the distribution according to the age of adolescents in Juvenile homes. Out of 130 boys, the age range of the greatest number of them (60.77%) was 16-18 years, the second-highest (33.08%) was 13-15 years, and the lowest (6.15%) was 10-12 years. Out of 26 girls, the age range of the greatest number of them (84.62%) was 16-18 years, the second-highest (15.38%) was 13-15 years, and the lowest (0%) was 10-12 years. More and less similar findings were reported by Dokudan *et al.* (2019) reported children's mean age was 15.14. Islam *et al.* (2018) stated similar findings in their study.

Table 1 : Distribution according to age of adolescents		
Age in Years	Boys (Percentage)	Girls (Percentage)
10-12	6.15	0.0
13-15	33.08	15.38
16-18	60.77	84.62
Total	100.00	100.00

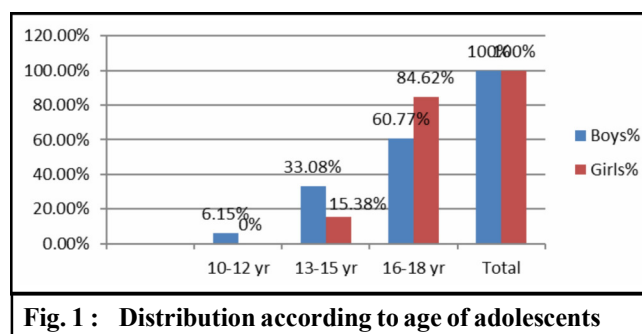


Fig. 1 : Distribution according to age of adolescents

Table 2 and Fig. 2 shows the distribution according to the education of adolescents. 130 boys and 26 girls are aged 10-18 years. Out of 130 boys, the education level of the highest number of them (29.23%) was in middle school, and the lowest (9.23%) were illiterate. The percentages of 25.38, 22.30, and 13.80 of the boys were educated to primary, secondary and senior secondary, respectively. Out of 26 girls, the education level of the highest number of them (38.46%) was in middle school, and the lowest (7.69%) were primary. The percentages of 7.69, 26.92, and 23.07 of the girls were illiterate, secondary and senior secondary, respectively. According to (Singh, 2024), The empirical data demonstrated a massive cluster of youth falling precisely into the “above primary but below matriculation” tier. (Nisha, 2024) also said that in an analysis of the socio-legal aspects of juvenile delinquency in India, researchers evaluated the transition between school levels. The study

Table 2 : Distribution according to education of adolescents		
Education	Boys (Percentage)	Girls (Percentage)
Illiterate	9.23	7.69
Primary (1-5)	25.38	3.84
Middle school (6-8)	29.23	38.46
Secondary (9-10)	22.30	26.92
Senior secondary (11-12)	13.86	23.09
Total	100.00	100.00

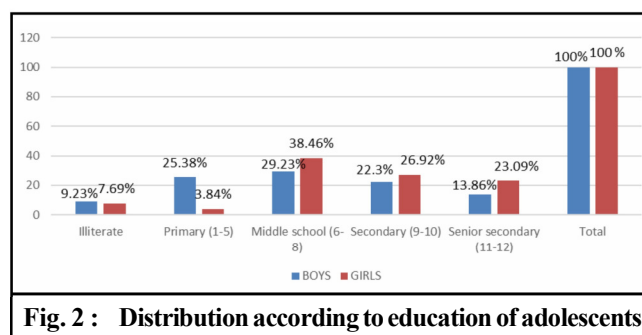


Fig. 2 : Distribution according to education of adolescents

notes that the transition from primary school to high school represents a major systemic fracture point for underprivileged youth.

In this study Table 3 and Fig. 3 show the Distribution according to reason for institutionalization of respondents. Out of 130 boys, the reason for institutionalization of the maximum number of them (70.00%) were in conflict with law, and the lowest (9.23%) were in parents' death and behaviour problem. The percentages of 19.23, and 7.69 of the boys were in family problem and poor economic condition, respectively. Out of 26 girls, the reason for institutionalization of the maximum number of them (46.15%) was in conflict with law, and the lowest (7.69%) were in parent's death. The percentages of 19.23, 15.38 and 11.55 of the girls were in family problem, poor economic condition and behaviour problems respectively. More and less similar findings were reported by (Kumar *et al.*, 2024) stated that when assessing the primary admissions data of state-run shelters, the overwhelming majority of adolescent beds are occupied by Children in Conflict with Law (CCL).

Table 3 : Distribution according to reason for institutionalization of respondents		
Reason for institutionalization	Boys (Percentage)	Girls (Percentage)
Conflict with law	70.00	46.15
Family problems	19.23	19.23
Poor economic condition	7.69	15.38
Parent's death	1.54	7.69
Behaviors problems	1.54	11.55
Others	0.00	0.00
Total	100.00	100.00

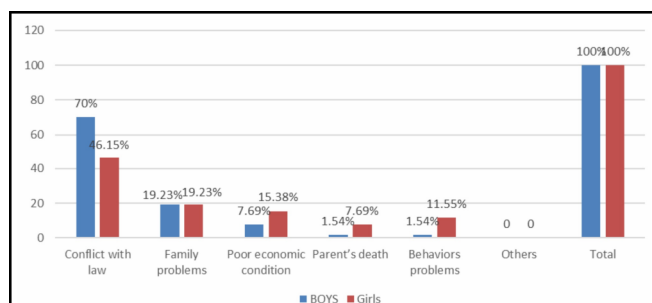


Fig.3: Distribution according to reason for institutionalization of respondents

In this study Table 4 and Fig. 4 show the Distribution according to family structure of the respondents. Out of 130 boys, the family structure of the largest number of them (70.77%) were having nuclear family, and the lowest

(29.23%) were in joint family. out of 26 girls, the family structure having greatest number of them (69.23%) were in nuclear family, and the lowest (30.77%) were in joint family. More and less similar findings were reported by Staples-Horne *et al.*, 2022) stated that family structure has impact on adolescent growth. Mishra and Mangla (2011) stated that In a study of 170 juveniles under institutional care in Mumbai, 82.4% of the juveniles belonged to nuclear families, while only 17.6% belonged to joint or joint-extended families.

Table 4 : Distribution according to family structure of the respondents

Family Type	Boys (Percentage)	Girls (Percentage)
Joint	29.23	30.77
Nuclear	70.77	69.23
Total	100.00	100.00

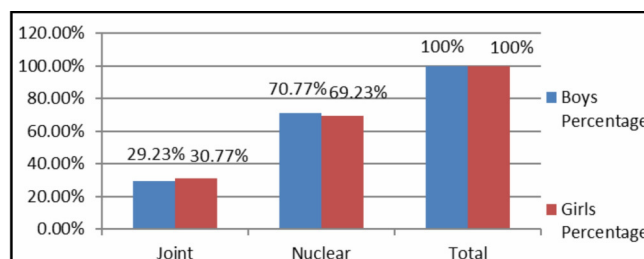
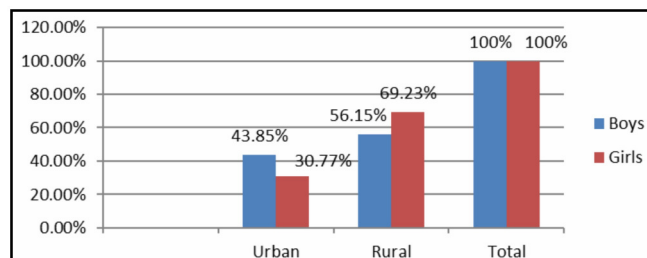


Fig. 4 : Distribution according to family structure of the respondents

In this study Table 5 and Fig. 5 show the Distribution according to area of living of the respondents. Out of 130 boys, living area of the largest number of them (56.15%) were living in rural family, and the lowest (43.85%) were living in urban family. Out of 26 girls, the area of living having greatest number of them (69.23%) were in rural family, and the lowest (30.77%) were in urban family. More and less similar findings were reported In a retrospective analysis conducted on the psychosocial profiles of juveniles in Kashmir, researchers highlighted that rural and lower-socioeconomic-status backgrounds are heavily associated with juveniles falling into conflict with the law (Raj, 2024). Rural youth often face a severe lack of institutional support, leisure activities, vocational setups, and developmental opportunities, making them vulnerable to drift into negative peer dynamics. A study on the socio-economic factors of juvenile delinquency in Haryana notes that rural caste-based exclusion, structural poverty, and educational deprivation are deeply intertwined with delinquent pathways (Singh, 2024).

Table 5 : Distribution according to area of living

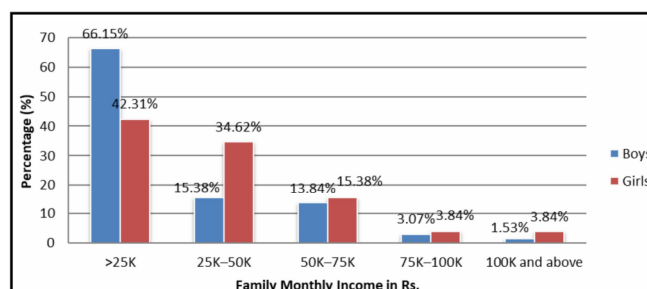
Area	Boys (Percentage)	Girls (Percentage)
Urban	43.85	30.77
Rural	56.15	69.23
Total	100.00	100.00

**Fig. 5 : Distribution according to area of living**

In this study Table 6 and Fig. 6 show the Distribution according to family monthly income of respondents. Out of 130 boys, the family monthly income, the largest number of them (66.15%) were having below 25000 Rs per month, and the lowest (1.53%) were having 1lakh and above Rs. and 15.38%, 13.84 and 3.07% were in 25 thousand to 50 thousand, 50thousand to 75 thousand and 75thousand to 1 lakh respectively. out of 26 girls the family monthly income, the largest number of them (42.31%) were having below 25000 Rs. per month, and the lowest (3.84%) were having 75 thousand to 1 lakh and above, respectively. 34.62%, 15.38%, were in 25 thousand to

Table 6 : Distribution according to family monthly income of respondents

Family Monthly Income in Rs.	Boys (Percentage)	Girls (Percentage)
Below 25000	66.15	42.31%
25000 – 50000	15.38	34.62%
50000 -75000	13.84	15.38%
75000-100000	3.07	3.84%
100000 and above	1.53	3.84%
Total	100.00	100.00

**Fig. 6 : Distribution according to family monthly income of respondents**

50 thousand, and 50 thousand to 75, respectively. More and less similar findings were reported by Poduthase (2012) stated that, 62% of respondents had lower middle-incomes, while 38% had lower incomes, Anoshiravani (2020) reported the same.

Conclusion

The basic goal of the study was to find the socio-economic status of adolescents in the government juvenile homes in Lucknow and its impact on juvenile delinquency. This study identified that most of the adolescent belongs to age group of 16-18 years were more prone to execute crimes as compare to the lower age group adolescents. It was also found that adolescents from lower educational groups were more involved in criminal activities rather than those of higher educational groups. So it can be said that the lack of education in adolescent leads them to delinquency. We also saw that the major reason for institutionalization was Conflict with Law.

Family structure and Area of living has a strong impact on the adolescents. Adolescents from Nuclear Families spend more time out or with friends which have negative impact on their personalities. In nuclear family parents have less time to observe or supervise their kids due to lack of time and adolescent have more unsupervised time which leads them towards bad influence. Those who live in joint family were found to less involve in juvenile crimes compared to those who were from nuclear families. Area of living also provides the environment under which adolescents are raised has great impact on their behaviour. The rate of criminal activity is higher in rural area, slum area due lack of sports and entertainment facilities, exposure to violence and poor policing.

Another most powerful determinant is family income. Most of the juveniles were related to low monthly income families and was not satisfied with their low income. Families which can hardly afford basic needs and can hardly offer proper supervision, emotional support to their children. Usually poverty forces juveniles to indulge in stealing, breaking and theft as survival mechanism. Type of family and poor economic background was great reason behind juvenile delinquency.

Findings of the study suggest that juvenile crime is not an individualized event but a complex of economic, social and environmental event. In order to fight against this problem we need to improve education system, mitigate poverty, bettering family environment, better

work life balance, better justice system and social awareness.

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Research Funding

No research funding was received for conducting this study.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

This research was carried out in line with ethical guidelines of research. The relevant institutional authorities and the observation homes/detention centres in the Lucknow were contacted to take the necessary permissions before the data was collected. Participants were informed of the study wherever feasible and where the minors have been used consent/assent procedures were adhered to as required both institutionally and by law. All confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were observed.

Data Accessibility Statement

The data has been collected primarily by the author.

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