

# Study of Profile on Juvenile criminals in Chennai

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## Abstract

Juvenile delinquency is a serious offence and it is detrimental for the social order in any country. There is a trend of increase in juvenile crimes world-over, with more and more involvement of the youth in violent crimes. Chennai shows similar trends of increasing rate of violent crimes committed by the juveniles. It is a very serious concern for the district and solutions to end the problem need to be sought very carefully. Indian legal system and judiciary has responded to these trends and has brought some amendments in the laws pertaining to juvenile justice in India [1]. This paper aims at looking at the causes of juvenile delinquency and explanations in Chennai for the year 2016. The analysis of statistical data available at the CBCID office crime branch indicates increasing involvement of the juveniles in heinous crimes. Observation homes, Shelter homes have been started by the government for the sake of such offenders then also the rate is continuously increasing day by day. For delinquent juvenile we can say that Prevention is better than cure juveniles should be protected from going to the wrong path.

**Keywords:** Juvenile criminals, Educational status, Economic status, Nature of crime, Family background, Recidivism, Juvenile delinquency.

## Introduction

A child is born with innocence and if nurtured with tender care and attention, then they grow in positive way. Physical, mental, moral and spiritual development of the children makes them capable of realizing their fullest potential. On the opposite side, harmful surroundings, negligence of basic needs, wrong company and other abuses may turn a child to a delinquent i.e. a juvenile delinquent [2].

Juvenile Delinquency means participation of minors or young people in illegal activities. Various legal systems in the world have adopted specific procedures to deal with juvenile offenders such as Juvenile Justice Courts, Observation Homes etc. A juvenile delinquent in India is a person below the age of 18 and has committed act prohibited under the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

This paper aims at looking at the causes of juvenile delinquency and explanations given by scholars from various fields to explain the problem.

### Objective

1. To identify the insights about the personal and family background of the juveniles in under the conflict

with the law in Tamil Nadu.

2. To explore the nature of offences and charges committed by juveniles such as offence against person, property, etc.,

3. To analyze the role of family and other agencies for the cause of juveniles who are charged committing the offence.

## Materials and Method

In case of juvenile criminals the nature and severity of the problem though vary to a great extent in the different part of the world but has posed a serious menace for every society in recent years. Therefore, it needs an in-depth study so as to suggest suitable preventive and curative measures [3]. In this descriptive work, efforts have been made to study and analyze the problem of juvenile in conflict with the law with special focus on the factors responsible for prevalence of the problem which include the educational status, age limits, economical status, family background and recidivism of the juveniles. The design structured for this study is descriptive because the aim of descriptive research design is to interpret and explain the problem on the basis of collected facts. The purpose of this research design is to provide description

of the individuals, nature and causes of the problem under investigation, i.e. juvenile in conflict with the law. This study describes the profile of the juveniles to be in conflict with the law.

The secondary data were collected from different sources such as books, journals, documents and newspapers to substantiate the primary data and to add validity to the analysis. Information was also collected from the records of the District Crime Records Bureau, Chennai.

## Result

### Educational status

As we know education plays an important role in the formation of behaviour pattern particularly among the children at the earlier stages. From our data it is clear that out of 485 juvenile offenders the majority of the juvenile offenders i.e. 208(42.8%) belong to above primary but below matric education. But no one had the opportunity to study matric or higher secondary. About 19.7% of the juvenile criminals are illiterate and 181(37.3%) juvenile criminals attended primary school.

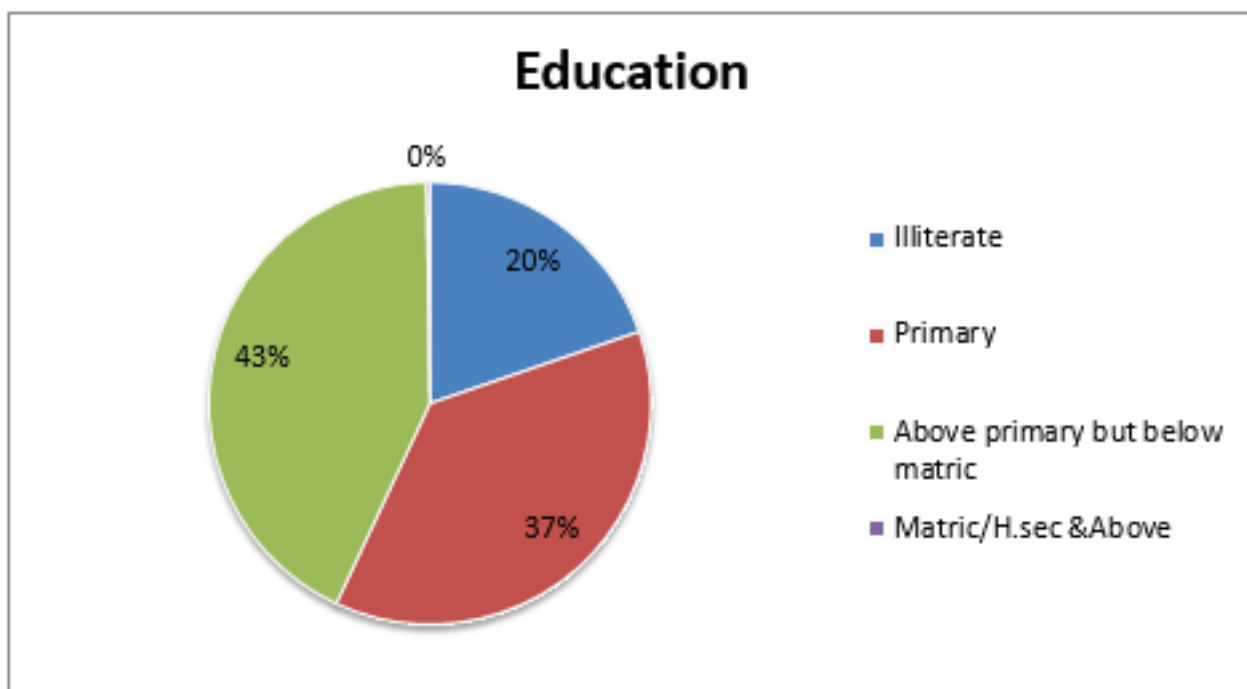


Figure 1: Education of juvenile criminals

### Age

The age group starts from below 12 years and till 18 years. These age limitation was also amended by Juvenile Justice Act 2000. It is seen from the collected data that major age group was found to be between 16 to 18 years and out of 485 juvenile criminals the number of juvenile criminals who belong to this category are around

339(69.8%), as the age increases anti-social activities also increases. The minimal juvenile delinquents belong to below 12 years of age that is about 8.1%. The juvenile criminals between 12 years to 16 years are 107(22.06%)

It is found out from the above analysis that overwhelming majority of the juvenile delinquents belong to the age group 16 -18 years of age.

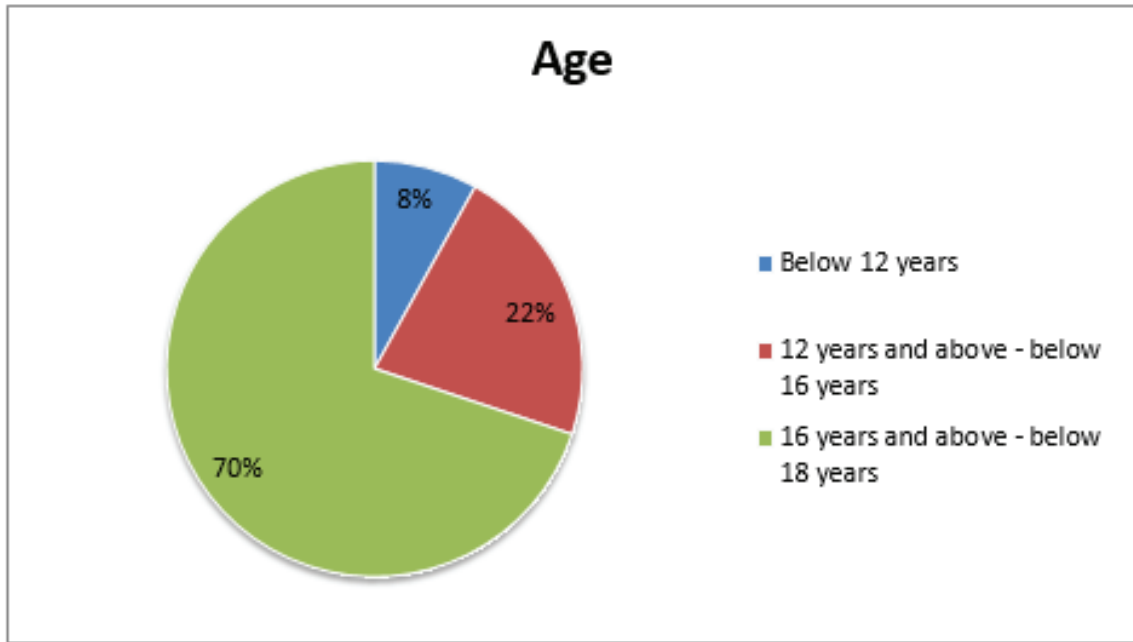


Figure 2: Age of juvenile criminals

**Economic status**

Our collected data indicates that out of 485 criminals a large majority i.e. 243(50.1%) of the juvenile criminals had annual income of Rs.50, 001 -1, 00,000 and the remaining 50% have a varied annual income. Juvenile criminals with annual income of Rs.25,001 to Rs.50,000 are 40(8.2%) and criminals with middle income of Rs.1,00,001 -2,00,000 are 191(39.38%). There were no criminals with annual income more than Rs.3, 00,000 and very little criminals belong to the upper middle class. Findings summary indicated that most of the criminals were belonging to poor families which were resource poor or were earning limited income. It can be said that poverty and wishes for better life were leading these young children towards crime.

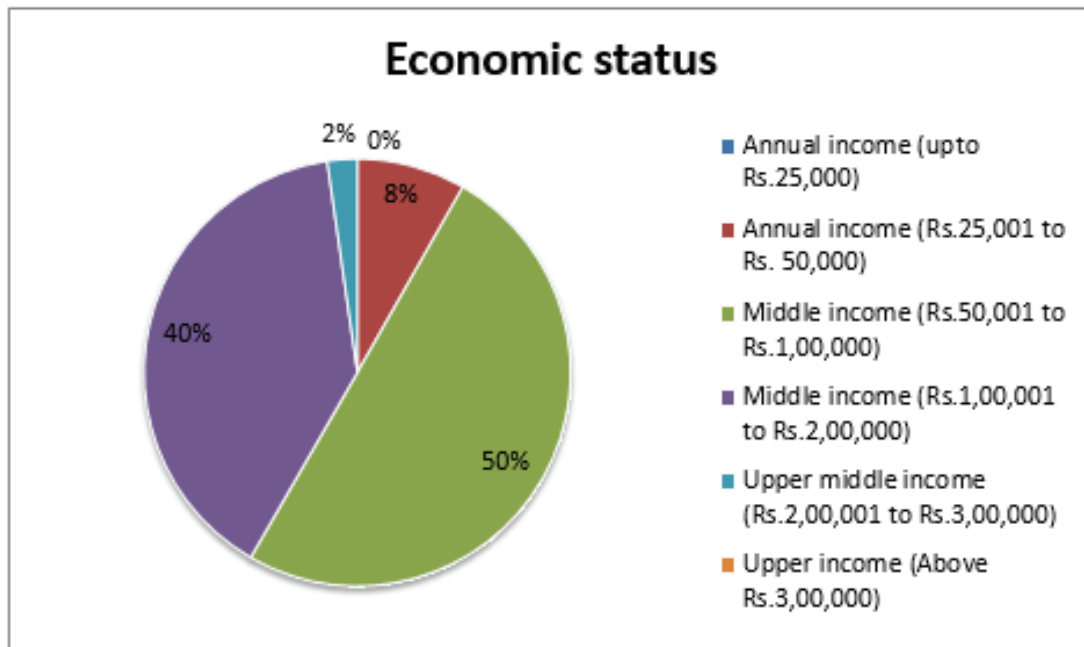


Figure 3: Economic status of juvenile criminals

**Nature of the crime**

**Table 1: Nature of crime of juvenile criminals**

Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Murder	1	0.2
Culpable homicide not amounting to murder	2	0.5
Rape	0	0
Kidnapping and abduction	0	0
Dacoity	1	0.2
Robbery	6	1.7
Criminal trespass/Burglary	14	3.9
Theft	307	87.4
Forgery	0	0
Other IPC crimes	20	5.6
Total	351	100

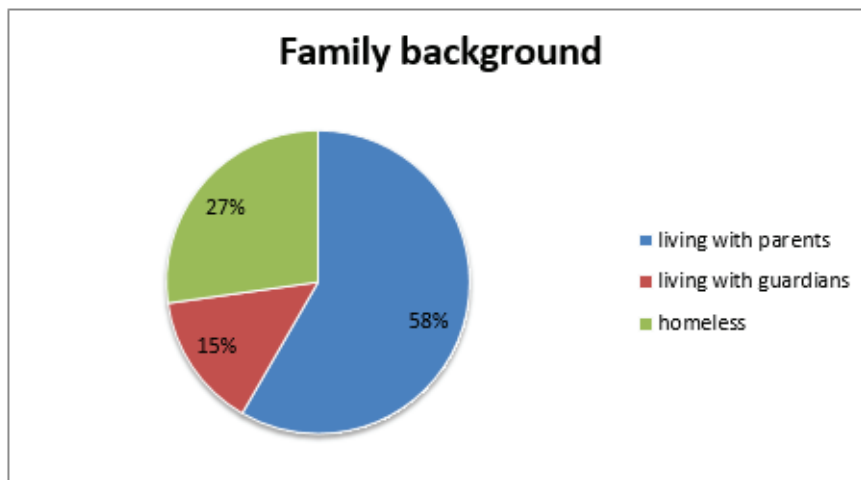
The table 1 depicts the crime committed by the juvenile criminals. About more than 3/4 of the criminals have committed theft. 3.9% of the criminals are involved in criminal trespass or burglary. The remaining criminals have committed varied crimes like robbery, murder, dacoity, culpable homicide not amounting to murder and other IPC crimes.

It can be said that theft and criminal trespass or burglary are the majority of the crimes committed by juvenile criminals. So it can be inferred that the juveniles have committed these crimes mostly for their income

generation.

**Family background**

Our data reveals that the majority of the criminals which is 283 (58.3%) live with their parents and 70(14.4%) criminals are living with their guardians. On the other hand, 132(27.3%) criminals are homeless. The criminals who are with their parents should have committed crimes in order to satisfy their daily and family requirements.



**Figure 4: Family background of juvenile criminals**

## Recidivism

In Chennai majority of the juvenile criminals (93.1%) have been apprehended for the first time. Minority of the juvenile criminals (6.9%) have been apprehended in the past. Most of the juvenile criminals who have committed crime for the first time have not reoffended the crimes for the second time.

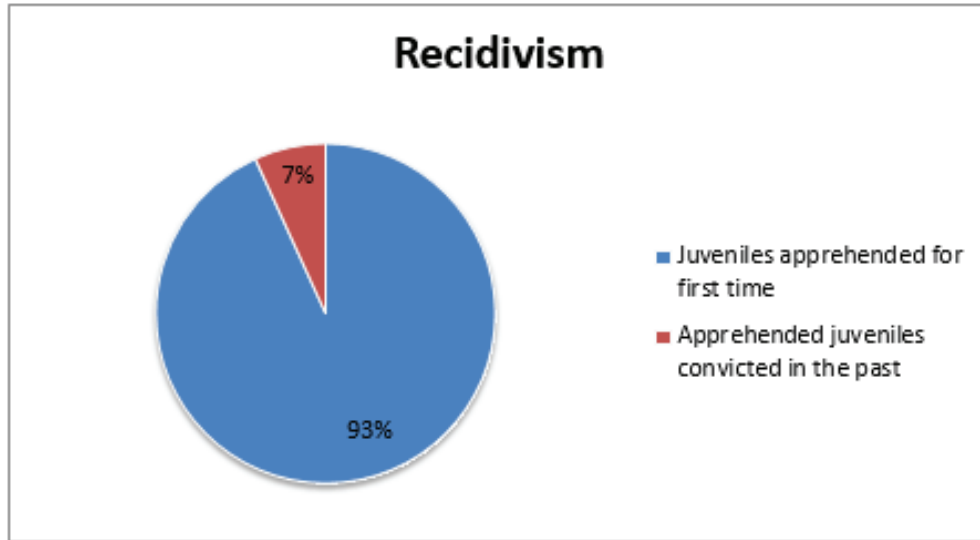


Figure 5: Recidivism of juvenile criminals

## Discussion

### Education

From our study it is found that majority of the juvenile offenders in Chennai belong to above primary but below matric education category. But no one had the opportunity to study matric or higher secondary. And about 19.7% of the juvenile criminals are illiterate. According to times of India, out of the 7,870 juveniles apprehended in 2015, 3,088 have only been educated up to a primary level, 902 were illiterate and 3,261 had an educational background till higher secondary [4]. For many young offenders, education has long been a struggle. Peter Leone, a professor of behavior disorders at the university of Maryland who specializes in youth incarceration, said that kids who do poorly in school early on are more likely to be truant, or to participate in the sorts of low-level criminal activity that send many kids to detention facilities. The evidence is clear that poor school performance, truancy, and leaving school at a young age are connected to juvenile delinquency.

### Age

In our study it is found out that over whelming majority of the juvenile delinquents belong to the age

group 16 -18 years of age and minimal juvenile criminals are below the age of 12 years. As per the statistics released by the National Crime Bureau (NCRB), juvenile criminals between 16 and 18 years accounted for more than 60% of the crimes registered against minors in India in 2013. So it is evident that most of the juvenile offenders belong to the age group 16-18 years of age [5]. However, when the latest trends in juvenile delinquency in India are analyzed, in respect of the age pattern and nature of offences committed, it appears that we need to review and amend our juvenile justice policy (Shivani Goswami and Neelu Mehra, 2014). The same kind of trends appeared in US and UK, with peaking of heinous crimes committed by the juveniles in the age group of 16 to 18 years (McDowell, L. Gary, Smith, Jinney, 1999). So there should be strict laws for such juveniles. So that a person cannot be remained unpunished in the cover of a juvenile. Studies of criminal activity by age consistently find that rates of offending begin to rise in preadolescence or early adolescence, reach a peak in the adolescence, and fall through young adult.

### Economic status

On analysis of our data it indicates that a large majority i.e. 50.1% of the juvenile criminals had a annual

income of Rs.50,001 -1,00,000 and the remaining 50% have a varied annual income and very little criminals belong to the upper middle class. There were no criminals with annual income more than Rs.3,00,00. Similarly in a research conducted in Madurai Kamaraj University on a study of the causal factors leading juveniles to be in conflict with the law in Tamilnadu indicates that nearly 42 percent of the children come from poor economic condition of their parents (or) family. Around 47 percent of the children belong to normal economic condition of their parents (or) family and only 5.4 percent come from rich background [3]. One of the important reason for juvenile delinquency is poor economic status. Low income is not, as we have seen, often a single direct cause of juvenile delinquency. It is a complex of factors associated with low income: bad housing, slum neighborhood, prevalence of gangs and lack of community organization. From the above discussion it is understood that people with low economic status tend to commit crimes more than people with moderate economy in order to improve their economy.

#### **Nature of crime**

In our study about more than 3/4 of the criminals have committed theft 3.9% of the criminals are involved in criminal trespass or burglary. In similar studies conducted in Maharashtra and Rajasthan in 2015, the highest share of cases registered against juveniles were reported under the crime head “theft” (19.2%), “rape” (5.4%), and kidnapping and abduction (5.2%) [6]. The most involved criminal activity is theft. These crimes are almost always likely to rise with poverty. Thus, both poverty and income inequality are considered to be reasonable proxies of resource deprivation. But, some other types of crimes are different in their relationship with poverty.

#### **Family background**

The data in our study reveals that the majority of the criminals (58.3%) live with their parents and 14.4% of the criminals are living with their guardians. On the other hand, 27.3% of the criminals are homeless. Another study done by the child line, India in 2004 reveals that children living with parents /guardians accounted for 76.6% of the total juvenile arrested. The number of homeless children arrested for various crimes was only 7.5% [7]. As a child’s emotional attachment to his parents ensures a well-adjusted adult, so parental rejection of the child has powerful opposite effects. Rejection by

the family, which is the child’s first and fundamental “community,” sets the stage for another social tragedy. Rejected children tend gradually to drop out of normal community life. Bonding between children and parents is critical to helping protect against youth violence.

#### **Recidivism**

On analysis of the data it is seen that majority of the juvenile criminals (93.1%) have been apprehended for the first time. Minority of the juvenile criminals that is 6.9% have been apprehended in the past. In an identical study too, among the 211 juveniles interviewed, 174 juveniles (82%) indicated that they were the first time offenders whereas only 37 juveniles (18%) mentioned that they were repeat offenders [6]. While researchers have not yet been able to establish a direct causal relation between these two variables, it has been demonstrated that poor academic outcomes can adversely affect a child’s behavior, and early behavioral problems can lead to poor academic outcomes. Studies have also shown that rates of recidivism are highly correlated with low levels of academic performance. Lastly, research has demonstrated that the implementation of sound academic interventions, particularly in reading, can effectively reduce rates of both delinquency and recidivism.

#### **Conclusion**

Juveniles involved in crimes are not criminals, in fact, they are victims of society. Juvenile delinquency can be stopped at an early stage, provided special care is taken both at home and in school. Parents and teachers play a significant role in nurturing the mind of a child. Instead of labeling them as criminals or delinquents- steps need to be taken to give them a scope of rectification and it would be better if the errors in their lives (involving social and psychological) are brought to their notices. Juvenile delinquent needs the sympathy and understanding of our society and not the heavy hand of the law. In India, it is indicated from the crime trends that existing laws (prior to 2016) were not proving to be a deterrent. The constant exposure of children to violence and lack of understanding about the consequences of crime committed makes them quite prone to delinquent tendencies. The problem gets worsened in absence of some adults in role of responsible guardians to give them and help them in filtering the information that comes to them through various sources. The primary socialization that functioned through groups such as family, peer groups, traditional neighborhood ties, close kin circles

is fast becoming ineffective in Indian society. All this has led to present trends in juvenile delinquency. It is hoped that the study findings will be useful for increasing greater awareness about the profile juvenile criminals, enhancing sensitivity towards the vulnerability of juveniles in conflict with law and planning for systematic rehabilitation.

### Recommendation

1. Training should be given to the parents who are not able to adjust with their children's behavior, by the family counsellors'

2. Create the awareness about the moral education and behavioral changes among the school children by the school teachers, NGO's, counsellors

3. Creating and inspiring team work of private and public agencies to prevent the increasing delinquency 4. Giving preparatory training to the members and staff of all organizations concerned with delinquency control. 269

5. Establishing child guidance clinics to give appropriate treatment to the disturbed and mal adjusted children in schools and all local areas especially rural and slum areas.

6. Counselling centre in every school should be established for early detection and care of the problematic children in the school

7. General awareness programmes should be launched for educating the family to motivate the children in developmental activities.

8. Proper healthy recreational facilities should be provided in rural areas and slums so that the children may channelize their energies in the right directions and neutralize the criminal tendencies.

9. Giving proper assistance to under privileged children to build them with good character.

10. Improving the social environment – slum areas, devoid of gambling centers to prevent children from getting polluted.

**Fund** - Self.

**Conflict of Interest** - Nil

**Ethical Clearance** - Approved by the institution and ethics committee of Saveetha Medical College.

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