

## Juvenile Delinquency In India: A Sociological Study

Pushpender<sup>1</sup>, Desraj Sabharwal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>(Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, M.D University, Rohtak, India)

<sup>2</sup>(Professor, Department of Sociology, M.D University, Rohtak, India)

---

### Abstract

India's Crime Rate Is Rising Steadily, And The Most Surprising Tendency That Can Be Seen Is That It Is Rising Among Young People As Well. In Our Nation, Juvenile Delinquency Is A Harsh Reality. The Majority Of Issues Come When These Juveniles Start To Exhibit Delinquent Traits And Get Involved In Law-And-Order Issues. Criminality Or Delinquency Generally Peaks In Adolescence And Declines With Age, According To The Usual Observation. Juvenile Delinquency Refers To The Antisocial Behaviour Of Children Under The Age Of 18 Years. In This Study, We Have Examined The Relation Between Juvenile Delinquency; Age Group, And Education Level Of Delinquents. Therefore, The Present Attempt Is An Effort To Study The Incidence Of Crime Committed By The Juvenile Delinquents, Their Age Group And Education Status In India From Year 2005 To 2015. We Have Used The Secondary Data From The Report Of Crime Bureau Of India. The Result Of The Study Indicates The Crime Rate Of Juvenile In India. The Study Analysed The Age Group And Education Status Of Juvenile Delinquents And Detected That Juvenile Delinquents Of Age Group Between 16-18 Years Are Mostly Include In Crimes Compares To Other Age Group Of 7-12 Years And 12-16 Years Respectively. Most Of The Delinquent Are Literate In Crime As Compare To Illiterate Juvenile Delinquents. So, Education Is Not Only The Single Option To Control Of Delinquency.

**Keywords:** Juvenile, Delinquency, Antisocial Behaviour, Crime Rate, Society

---

Date of Submission: 19-06-2023

Date of Acceptance: 29-06-2023

---

### I. Introduction

Juvenile delinquency is one of the banes of modern time, the most challenging and complex social problem faced across the globe (Mishra and Biswal, 2018). Juvenile delinquency is through to arise out of socio-personal dysregulation. Sociological theories of juvenile delinquency put emphasis on the environment, social structure and the learning process (Rathinabalan et al., 2017). The term 'Juvenile Delinquency' is very frequently used in the common man's vocabulary. Word 'delinquency' is a failure in or 'omission of duty' or 'fault' or 'crime'. In the year 1484, The word also found a place in **Shakespearean** famous play 'Macbeth' in 1605. Thus, juvenile delinquency indicates any failure or omission of duty or fault or crime on the part of a child. That is to say that, by 'juvenile delinquency' one should bear in mind the offenses that are specified in the law of the land. Though the age varies from society to society and even among different strata of the same society, it has been noticed that the majority of the nations in the world fix the age, with little variations, at eighteen years approximately. So, in brief delinquent propensities or acts of the children as well as of the adolescents are treated as juvenile delinquency. In simpler words, it may be said that delinquency is a form of behaviour or rather misbehaviour or deviation from the generally accepted norms of conduct in the society (Sadaf & Punam Kumari Bhagat, 2019). The word 'juvenile delinquency' refers to involvement of children who less than 18 years of age in unlawful behaviour which would be considered as crime (Sharma et al., 2009). The Indian Penal Code uses the expression 'juvenile offence' rather than 'delinquency'. According to the Reformatory School Act, first passed in India in 1876 and later modified in 1897, a youthful offender is defined as person below the age of 15 years who has been convicted of any offence punishable by imprisonment of transportation. There are special courts known as 'juvenile courts' established in some larger states of our country for the trial of theses offenders (Kundu and Yadav, 2021). According to Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 stated that the offender below age of 16 years for male and age of 18 year for female shall be treated as juvenile in conflict (care and Protection). After the amendment the juvenile justice Act, 2000 which has been brought uniformity in age of 18 years irrespective of gender. In 2015 the act has been amendment again and juveniles are brought between the age bracket of 16 and 18 years but if alleged to have committed heinous or grave offence shall be treated as adult (Ghosh, 2021). Clause 15 of the Juvenile Justice Act 2015 (India) state, "In case of the heinous offense alleged to have been committed by a child who has completed or is above the age of 16 years, the Board shall conduct a preliminary assessment about his

mental and physical capacity to commit such offense, ability to understand the consequences of the offense and the circumstances in which he committed the offense” (Juvenile Justice Act, 2015).

The sociological approach views the delinquent from group norms and as a disruptive force in the smooth functioning of organized social life. In the sociological approach, the focus is on two aspects: age and conduct. Age is important from the point of view of maturity chronological, mental, and social levels. The ‘Conduct’ is a concept of delinquency that has evolved from an appreciation of the danger that the young offender may easily become an adult criminal if no deterrent or rehabilitative influence plays upon him. Hence, the effort to curb anti-social traits in their incipience (Ahuja, 2017).

**According to Oxford dictionary** “Delinquent means tending to commit offence/crime. In legal view the word “Juvenile Delinquency” refers to the antisocial or criminal activity of a juvenile or child or minor under age of 18 years.”

India is the second most populous country of the world. Children make up 39 percent of the total population of India ([childlineindia.org.in](http://childlineindia.org.in), 2018). 28 per cent of the children population lie in the age group of 6-10 year followed by 27 per cent in the age group of 11-16 years and 16 per cent in the age group of 16-18 years. 21.9 per cent of the Indian population resides below the National poverty line (Asian Development Bank, 2018). More over 50% of people in India are under the age of 25. With 242 million, it has the most 10 to 24 years old in the world (Tanwar, 2020). Children living in extreme poverty in India account for more than 30 per cent alone (UNICEF and World Bank, 2016). Extreme poverty along with other factor like parental ignorance, lack of proper education, bad neighbourhood, peer influence, migration, cultural conflict, excess use of internet, frustration due to less available opportunity etc. (Ferdousi, 2011) act as some of the major attributes which lead to the development of deviance behaviour in children. Lack of proper control by parents, guardians as well as society along with lack of self-controlled to deviancy in children (Karzon, 2008).

## II. Objectives

1. To analyse the juvenile delinquency trends based on age, gender and economic status of delinquents.
2. To examine the family background and educational status of the juveniles arrested from 2005-2015

## III. Methodology

The study was conducted with the data obtained from National Crime Record Bureau website about juvenile delinquency. NCRB compiles crime data from all the 36 State and Union Territories of India. The information on various crimes and offenders are collected from police reports. Finally, being compiled into an annual report under publication titled Crime in India. Juvenile delinquency data from NCRB reports from 2005 to 2015 are taken into consideration. The data have been then categorically divided based on the classifications provided in Crime in India reports. IPC crimes have been divided into five categories namely offences affecting the body, offences against women, offences against public tranquillity, offences against property and miscellaneous offences. In this paper, the rate of juvenile crime in decade, a comparative study of crime committed by boys and girls, and their age and education level have been studied through tabulations and graphs. The study's major outcomes are presented below and discussed.

## IV. Review of Literature

**Sandhu, H.S (1987)** study shows that Juvenile delinquency is not a nationwide phenomenon in India, since two States, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, account for 43-45 percent of the delinquency in the entire country. The institutions which socialize persons to be law-abiding are the family, the school, peers, the work world, and the government. Of these institutions, the family is clearly the strongest.

**Vigneswari, G.G and A. Thanappan (2016)** reported that around 48 per cent juvenile has involved in theft crime, followed by murder which was 23 per cent of the crime committed. Which only 8 per cent of the sample was caught for minor offence like smoking and drinking, around 17 per cent offenders were accused of rape.

**Saeed, Maima et al., (2018)** study shows that less education as well as illiterate adolescents were substantially more susceptible of criminal offences.

**According to Clinard (1974)**, states that 85% of children have picked up smoking and drinking habits. In addition to smoking and drinking, 58% of these minors engage in prostitution, drug abuse, and gambling. The majority of the time, juveniles adapt these behaviours from their peer groups. Deviance is brought on by inadequate leisure facilities and peer pressure.

**Surong, Riyaka and Lyngdoh (2020)**, in their study entitled “A Study on the Cause of Juvenile Delinquency and its Prevention by the Community” the main objective of their study was to find out the cause that contributes to juvenile delinquency and to explore the role of the community in preventing juvenile crimes. The study was conducted in Shillong, East Khasi hill district. The study reveals that some of the major causes of

juvenile crime such as peer pressure, a social familial factor of family, addiction, poverty, and influence of social media like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc. The study also found that parents need better understanding in dealing with their children and teacher.

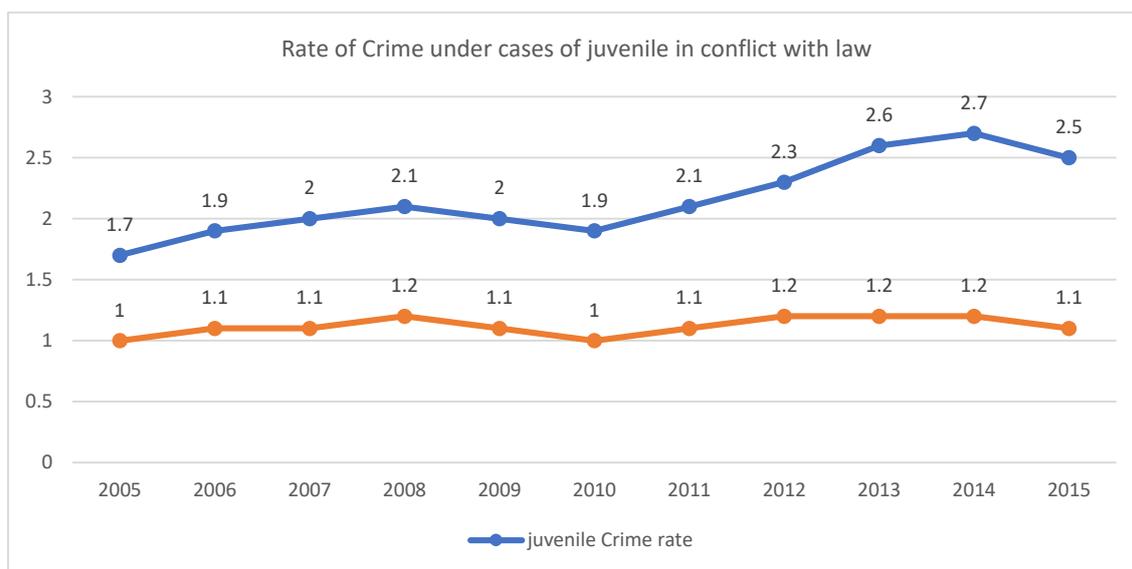
**Bhardwaj, Ramesh Kumar, and Neeraj (2021)** in their research paper entitled “Juvenile Delinquency in India: A study” the study was based on the secondary source of data. The researcher has used the Crime Bureau of India Report, 2016, to estimate the crime committed by a juvenile from 2014 to 2016. The main objective of this research was to study the incidence of crime committed by juvenile delinquents in different states of India and particularly in Haryana. The study also found that the highest rate of crime was found in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and the lowest rate of crime was found in Meghalaya, Telangana, and A&N Island. It is also found that juvenile delinquency cases were increasing in Haryana as compared to last year’s cases.

**Table no 1:** Incidence of juvenile crime, percentage of juvenile crime to total crime and rate of crime by juvenile from 2005-2015

Years	Incidence of juvenile crime	Percentage of juvenile crime to total crime	Juvenile crime rate of India
2005	18939	1.0	1.7
2006	21088	1.1	1.9
2007	22865	1.1	2.0
2008	24535	1.2	2.1
2009	23926	1.1	2.0
2010	22740	1.0	1.9
2011	25125	1.1	2.1
2012	27936	1.2	2.3
2013	31725	1.2	2.6
2014	33526	1.2	2.7
2015	31396	1.1	2.5

Source: Constructed by author using data from the National Crime Records Bureau.

Table 1 shows clearly that juvenile crime rates have risen over the past ten years. The proportion of juvenile offences to all crimes that can be considered crimes has stayed at 1.2 or 1.1. Over time, there has been a consistent rise in the percentage of juveniles committing crimes. The number of juvenile arrests has increased in tandem with the incidence of juvenile crime. The statistics unambiguously demonstrates that 2014 had the highest number of minor offences.



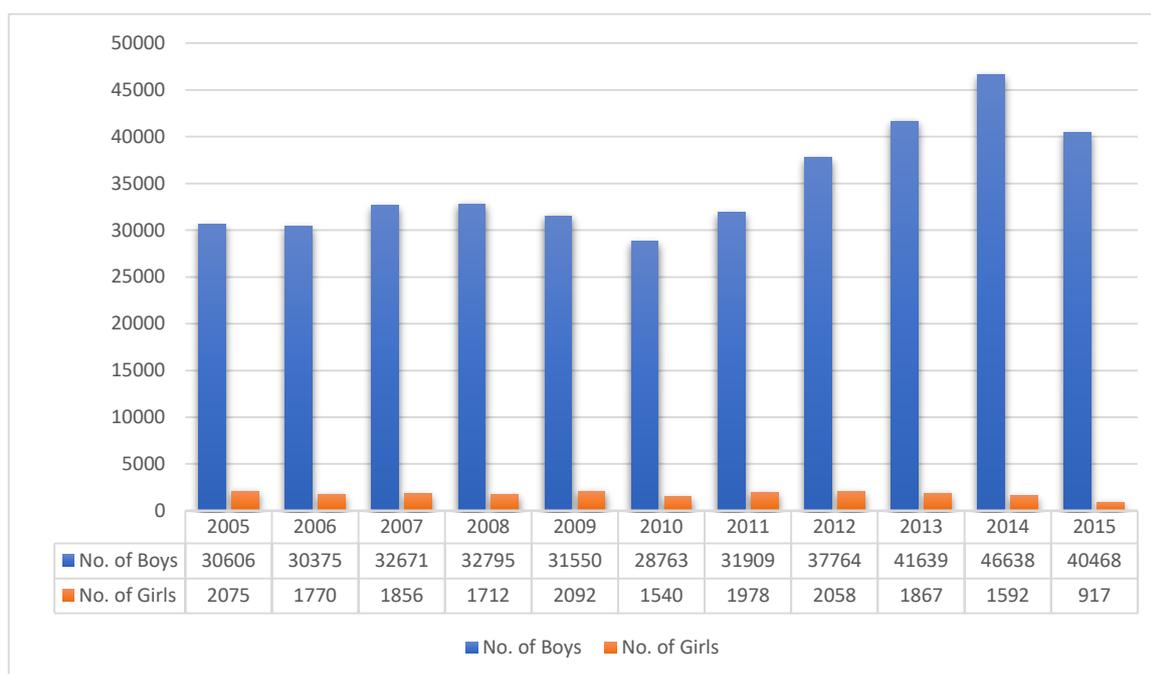
**Table no. 2:** Juvenile Apprehender IPC+SLL 2002-2015

Years	No. of Boys	No. of Girls	Total	Percentage of Boys to total	Percentage of Girls to total
2005	30606	2075	32681	93.7	6.3
2006	30375	1770	32145	94.5	5.5
2007	32671	1856	34527	94.6	5.4

2008	32795	1712	34507	95	5
2009	31550	2092	33642	93.8	6.2
2010	28763	1540	30303	94.9	5.1
2011	31909	1978	33887	94.2	5.8
2012	37764	2058	39822	94.8	5.2
2013	41639	1867	43506	95.7	4.3
2014	46638	1592	48230	96.6	3.3
2015	40468	917	41385	97.8	2.2

Source: Constructed by author using data from the National Crime Records Bureau.

Table 2 makes it very evident that juveniles arrested for various IPC and SLL crimes have increased significantly in recent years. Boys are believed to be involved in numerous crimes at a far higher rate than girls. In contrast to the fluctuating number of girls caught under various crimes throughout time, the total number of boys apprehended under various crimes has exhibited consistent growth.

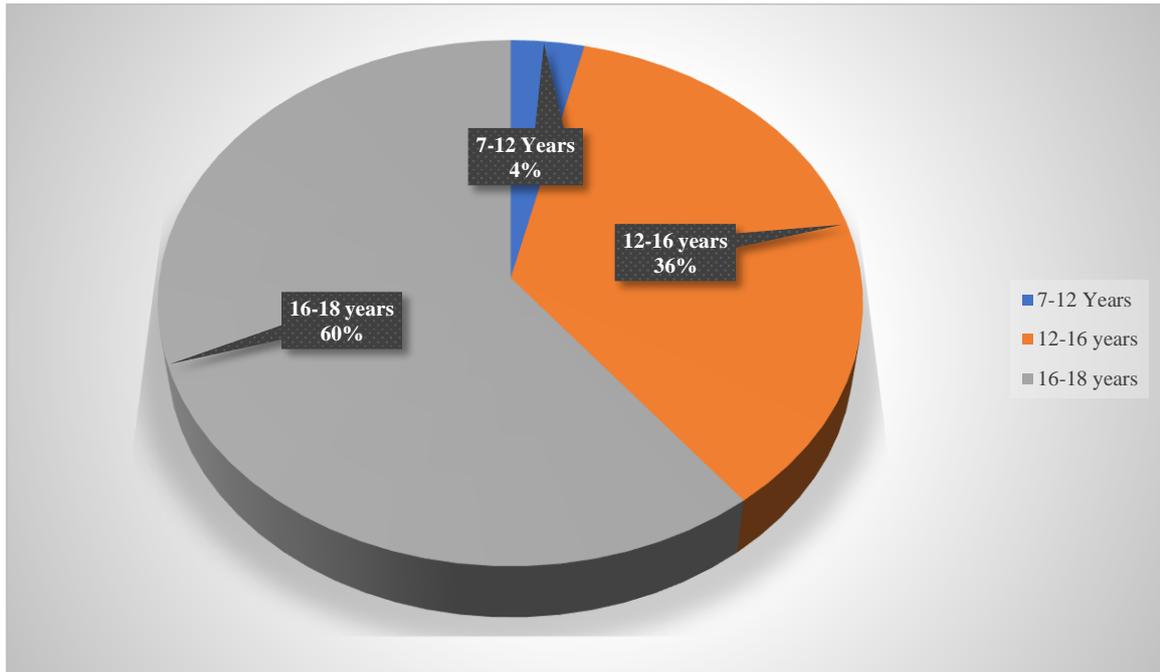


**Table no. 3: Age wise distributions of juvenile delinquents 2005-2015**

Year	7-12 years	Percentage of total	12-16 years	Percentage of total	16-18 years	Percentage of total	Total apprehended
2005	1645	5.0	13090	40.1	17946	54.9	32681
2006	1595	5.0	12535	39.0	18015	56.0	32145
2007	1460	4.2	12114	35.1	20943	60.7	34527
2008	1281	3.7	12272	35.6	20954	60.7	34507
2009	1133	3.4	10741	31.9	21768	64.7	33642
2010	927	3.1	10123	33.4	19253	63.5	30303
2011	1211	3.6	11019	32.5	21657	63.9	33887
2012	1286	3.2	12063	30.3	26473	66.5	39822
2013	1330	3.1	13346	30.7	28830	66.3	43506
2014	872	1.8	11220	23.3	36138	74.9	48230
2015	601	1.5	11052	26.7	29731	71.8	41385

Source: Constructed by author using data from the National Crime Records Bureau.

Table 3 makes it evident that the age range of 16 to 18 years sees the highest number (60 per cent) of juveniles apprehended for various IPC and SLL crimes. The number of minors detained between the ages of 16 and 18 has increased over time. The number of children detained between the ages of 7-12, and 12-16 year for various crimes has declined. Every year, juveniles between the ages of 16 and 18 are the most frequently detained, followed by those between 12-16 and 7-12 years.

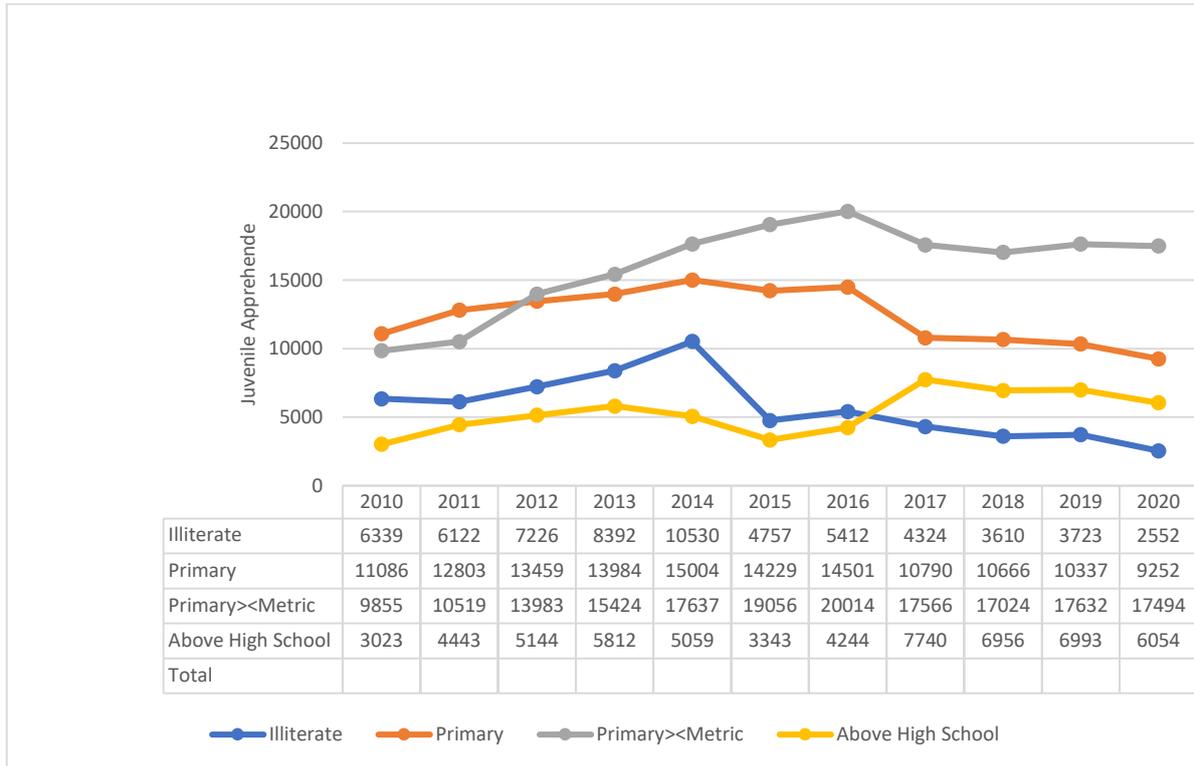


**Table no. 4:** Education Status of Juvenile Apprehended in 2005-2015

Year	Illiterate	Primary	Above Primary but below Matric	Above High Secondary	Total
2005	8660	12394	9508	2119	32681
2006	7975	12688	9405	2077	32145
2007	7926	12659	10620	3322	34527
2008	9069	12544	10072	2822	34507
2009	7781	11653	10461	3747	33642
2010	6339	11086	9855	3023	30303
2011	6122	12803	10519	4443	33887
2012	7226	13459	13983	5144	39822
2013	8392	13984	15424	5812	43506
2014	10530	15004	17637	5059	48230
2015	4757	14229	19056	3343	41385

Source: Constructed by author using data from the National Crime Records Bureau.

Table 4 shows it abundantly evident that juveniles who have attended middle school have committed more crimes than minors who have only completed kindergarten. Juveniles who have attained a high school or above have a lower crime rate. Juveniles who lack literacy or who never received any kind of formal education are much less likely to commit offenses than those who have attended school and received some form of formal education.

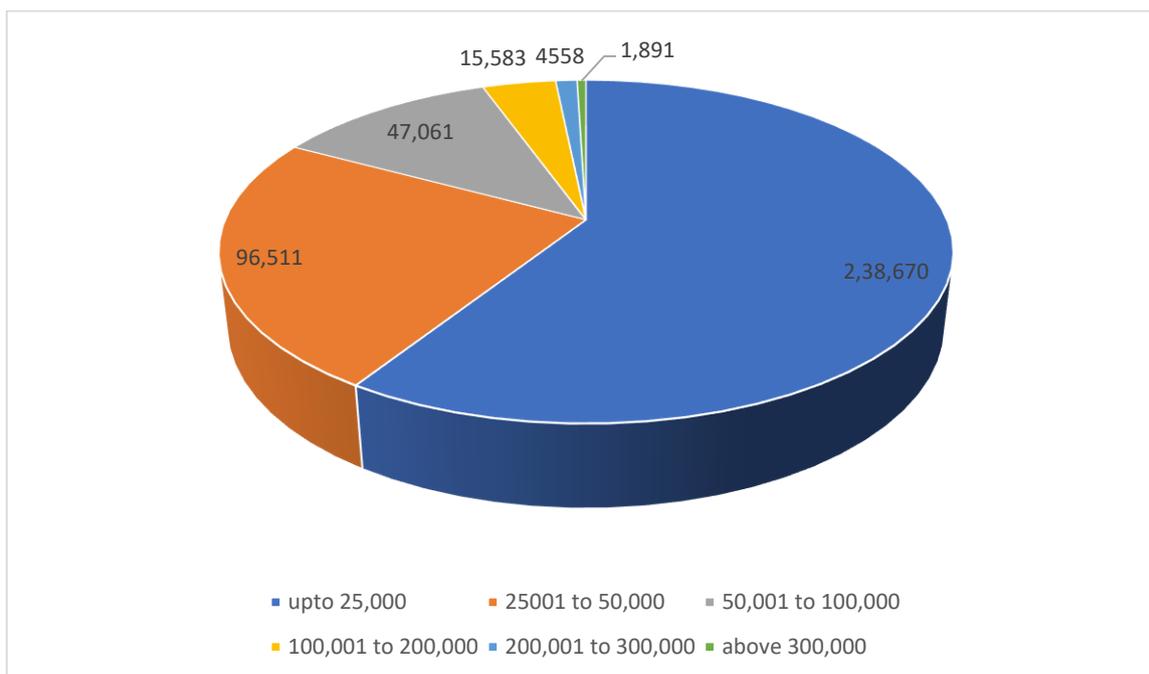


**Table no. 5: Economic status of juvenile delinquents in India 2005-2015**

Years	Upto 25000	25001 to 50000	50001 to 100000	100001 to 200000	200001 to 300000	Above 300000	Total
2005	23276	6255	2223	746	140	41	32681
2006	23268	6353	1913	499	52	60	32145
2007	23626	7296	2339	1037	136	93	34527
2008	21453	8035	3885	826	281	37	34507
2009	21576	7450	3151	1142	290	33	33642
2010	18980	7310	2836	860	257	60	30303
2011	19230	9059	3892	1212	398	96	33887
2012	21049	10360	5458	1972	648	335	39822
2013	21860	11885	6494	2296	626	240	43506
2014	26809	10813	6887	2506	776	439	48230
2015	17543	11695	7983	2757	951	457	41385

Source: Constructed by author using data from the National Crime Records Bureau.

Table 6 shows that majority of the juveniles come from families having an annual income less than Rs. 25,000 followed by juveniles whose families' annual income varies between Rs. 25,000-50,000. Less number of juveniles are apprehended from upper middle-income families and upper family. Marginal number of juveniles belong to families in the middle-income group. This clearly states that maximum of the juvenile population belongs to poor families with low income.

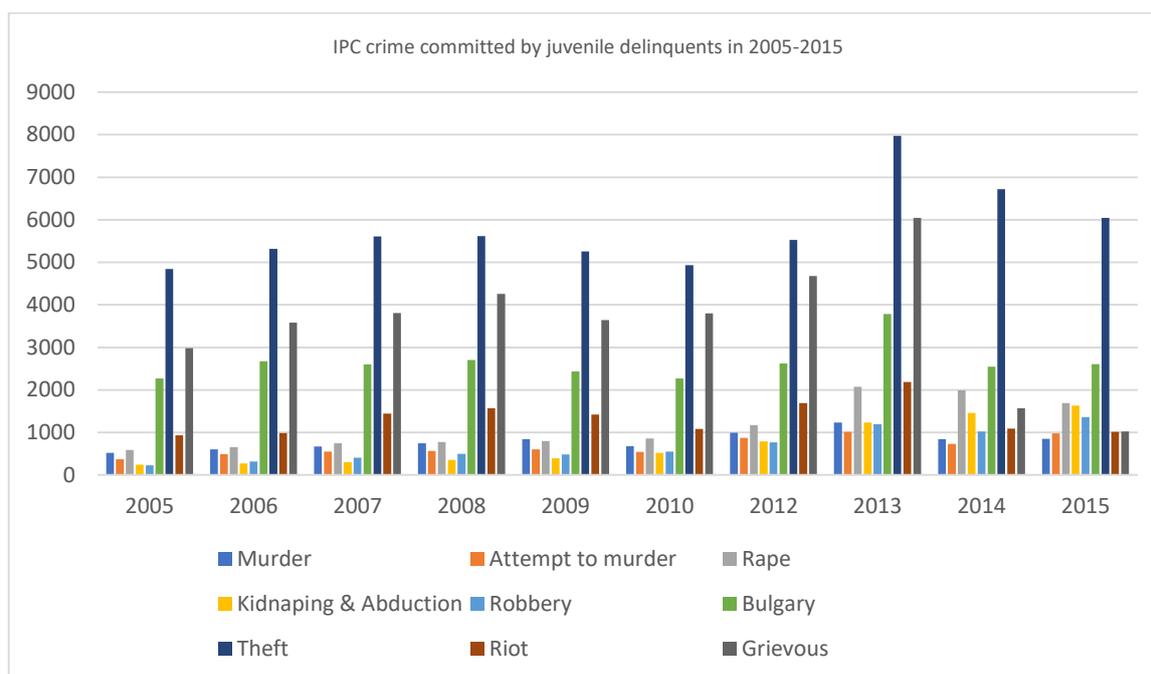


**Table no. 6:** Major IPC crime committed by juvenile delinquents in 2005-2015

Type of crime/Years	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Murder	522	606	672	743	844	679	1168	990	1230	841	853
Attemp to murder	374	489	547	563	603	543	826	876	1017	728	980
Rape	586	656	746	776	789	858	1231	1175	2074	1989	1688
Kidnaping & Abjuction	246	271	301	354	396	524	823	789	1230	1455	1630
Robbery	230	321	409	500	481	551	782	767	1194	1024	1358
Bulgary	2270	2675	2603	2702	2431	2271	3334	2625	3784	2546	2605
Theft	4846	5316	5606	5615	5253	4930	6552	5528	7969	6717	6046
Riot	934	988	1440	1574	1422	1081	2067	1690	2188	1092	1017
Grievous	2979	3585	3810	4257	3646	3800	5016	4681	6043	1568	1027

Source: Constructed by author using data from the National Crime Records Bureau.

The major IPC crime committed by juveniles are included in the tabulation. Theft is the most common crime perpetrated in this ten-year period; 64378 juvenile criminals have been apprehended for theft-related offenses, with offenses like grievous/hurt coming in at number two with a total of 40412. Theft offenses are on the upswing; in 2005, 4846 juvenile offenders were apprehended; this figure increased to 5615 for four years; and in 2013, the greatest number of juvenile delinquents ever apprehended for theft, with 7969. After then, its number dropped to 6046 in 2015. Juveniles are also capable of committing heinous crimes like rape; in 2005, there were 587 rapes by juvenile delinquents; this number had risen steadily to 1231 in 2011, the highest number in the past ten years. Crimes like rape, which occurred 2074 times in 2013, increased even more in 2013. This number decrease to 1989 and 1688 in 2014 and 2015, respectively. The result also shows that in the year 2011, 2012 or 2013 all types of crimes have increased. In the year 2005, 522 juveniles were caught for heinous crimes like murder, the same number increased to 1230 in the year 2013, which means there has been an increase of about 60% in these 8 years.



### V. Conclusion

Juvenile delinquency is one of the social problems affecting children not only on the law, but also on conflicts with families, communities and society. The criminal behaviour of the child makes the family a victim and faces problems in the society. The increase in juvenile crime is basically seen on the children in the age of 16-18 years i.e., those who are in their adolescence phase of life. The juvenile in this age category is highly involved in crime like theft, burglar, riot, hurt and rape offense. All these crimes committed by juveniles can be broadly attributed to family, failure in education, low income of the family, bad peer influence, bad neighbourhood etc. The crime rate fluctuates throughout time and never stays the same. The juvenile crime rate was 1.7 in 2005, and it increased to 2.5 in 2015. 2014 had the highest crime rate, which was 2.7. Both boys and girls commit offenses, but statistics suggest that boys engage in it more frequently than girls. In the year 2005, the crime rate of boys was 93.7, which has increased to 97.8, while the crime rate of girls was 6.3, which has decreased to 2.2. The age of most crime has been found to be 16 to 18. Juvenile delinquents who have completed primary school but not matriculation is most frequently discovered engaging in criminal activity. As soon as education comes, there is control over crime, but this control is also not completely dependent only on education. Because the number of children above higher secondary who were apprehended 2119 juveniles' crimes in 2005 has increased to 5057 in 2014. The income of the family changes the environment of the family. Poverty is considered one of the main reasons behind crime, but data shows that juvenile delinquents whose family income is more than 3,00,000 have increased crime by 11 times from 2005 to 2015. Most juveniles are involved in the theft because poverty is the main reason. Heinous crimes like rape and murder are committed by juveniles. They are attracted toward wrongdoing by their aspirations to become wealthy and famous at a young age. Teenagers are highly influenced by the media as well. This impression develops in his mind as he observes the crime scene. Pornographic and adult literatures are seen as the primary causes of rape since they are so accessible to access in modern times via the internet, OTT platform, social media etc changing children's behaviour and contributing to crimes like rape, murder, Eve-teasing, etc

### Bibliography

- [1]. Ahuja, Ram. (2014). Social Problems in India, Rawat Publication, Jaipur
- [2]. Ahuja, Ram. (2017). Criminology, Rawat Publication, Jaipur
- [3]. Bhardwaj, Rajesh Kumar & Neeraj. (2021). Juvenile Delinquency in India: A Study, journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science. Vol., 9 (11), pp: 69-76.
- [4]. Cohen, A.K. (1955) The Delinquent Boys, Glencoe, The Free Press
- [5]. Ferdousi, N. (2011). Trends and Factors of Juvenile Delinquency in Bangladesh: Some Observation. Bangladesh Journal of Law, 11 (1 & 2): 1-17.
- [6]. Haveripet, Prakash (2013). Causes and Consequences of Juvenile Delinquency in India. Recent Research in Science and Technology., 5 (3): 29-31.
- [7]. Thio, Alex (1978) Deviant Behaviour, Houghton Mifflin Company, London
- [8]. J.L., Simmons, (1965) Public Stereotypes of Deviants, Social problems 13, 223-224.
- [9]. Karzon, S.W. (1989) Delinquency in adolescence. Sage Publication, US.
- [10]. Kumar, Sandeep (2019). The Emerging Trends of Juvenile Delinquency in India. Think India Journal., 22 (1): 682-688.

- [11]. Kundu, Abhijit & Nupurnima Yadav (2021). *Sociology of India*, Sage Publication. New Delhi.
- [12]. Lal, R., & Lal, D. (2020). *The code of criminal procedure*, 46 (3rd ed.). LexisNexis Publication.
- [13]. Mishra, Elsie and Biswal, Ramakrishna (2018). Trends and Factors Associated with Juvenile Delinquency: A Study from India. *International Journal of Applied Social Science.*, 5 (10): 1613-1625.
- [14]. Nagla, B.K. (1981). The Juvenile Delinquency in Society. *Indian Journal of Criminology*, 9 (1): 44-50.
- [15]. Nagla, B.K. (1991). *Women, crime and Law*, Rawat Publication, Jaipur
- [16]. NCRB. (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015). *Crime in India*. Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi
- [17]. Rathinabalan, I and Sridevi A. Naaraayan (2017) Effect of Family on Juvenile Delinquency. *International Journal of Contemporary Pediatrics.*, 4 (6): 2070-2082.
- [18]. Sadaf and Punam Kumari Bhagat. (2019). Juvenile Delinquency: A Critical Analysis. *international Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, Vol., 6 (1), pp: 257-263.