

## Juvenile Delinquency, Current Scenario Analysis: A Retrospective Study

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### Abstract

Juvenile delinquency is defined as antisocial or criminal behavior by children under the age of eighteen. There is an increase in juvenile crimes in India at a panic rate, and most of them are involved in violent crimes. The increase in such crimes is a serious threat to society and the nation. This study aims to analyze the most reported types of crimes and age groups of children involved in crime in the current scenario. This study has been done by visiting a juvenile home and a few police stations in Kerala and collecting details of recent juvenile crimes that have been reported there between the years 2016 to 2021. The result of the study revealed that most of the juvenile involved in the criminal activities were between the ages of 15 to 18. The majority of the cases reported involved theft and burglary. In conclusion, the study suggested some preventive measure for juvenile crimes in our society for a better future ahead.

**Keywords:** Juvenile Delinquency; Antisocial; Criminal Activity; Burglary; Theft; Current Scenario.

## INTRODUCTION

A juvenile is defined as an individual who is under 18 years of age. Children are the structure of a society, so it is necessary to shape them physically and mentally for a crimeless and peaceful society.<sup>1</sup> Juvenile delinquency is an unlawful or antisocial activity done by a juvenile. Juvenile crimes are

increasing day by day at an alarming rate. At least one juvenile crime is reported in India every week, and this rate is increasing fast.<sup>2</sup> The crimes vary from small antisocial activities like theft and burglary to heinous acts like rape and murder.<sup>3</sup> The behaviour of a child may change from time to time based on the circumstances they face as they mature. The conventional changes in their behaviour have no anomalies, but the risk arises when they develop delinquent tendencies.<sup>4</sup>

The term 'delinquent' has been derived from the Latin word 'delinquens', which means 'to omit'. The Romans used this term to define the failure of a person to perform his duty. William Coxson, in 1484, used this term to define those who were found guilty of customary offenses. This word is also mentioned in the famous Shakespearean play 'Macbeth' in 1605.<sup>5</sup>

However, juvenile delinquency has a different interpretation; it is a large variety of disapproved

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behavior of children that society does not approve of, and some kind of punishment or corrective measures are implemented in the public interest.<sup>6</sup> Thus, this term has a very extensive meaning, which includes the hostile and rebellious behavior of children and their indifferent attitude towards society. The term juvenile delinquency also includes many other acts that vicious persons very often commit, such as begging, truancy, vagrancy, obscenity, loitering, pilfering, drinking, gambling, etc.<sup>7</sup> Thus, a juvenile is an adolescent person between childhood and woman hood or manhood who indulges in certain misbehaviors or antisocial activities that, if not checked, may turn him into a potential offender.<sup>8</sup>

According to Albert Cohen, the only possible definition for juvenile delinquency is one that relates the behavior in question to some set of rules. The rules themselves are a heterogeneous collection of regulations, some common to all communities and others only found in one or two.<sup>9</sup> Caldwell prefers to leave the term vague and includes within it all acts of children that tend to be pooled indiscriminately as wards of the State.<sup>10</sup>

Mrs. Ruth Shonle Cavan observed that irrespective, he shall be regarded as delinquent when his anti-social behavior inflicts suffering upon others or when his family finds him difficult to control and he becomes a serious concern of society.<sup>11</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

For the study, several methods were used, including interviews with both judicial and law enforcement agencies and various government websites. The statistical data was collected from 2016 to 2021 for juvenile in conflict with the law. The data was collected from the State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) and Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The data is based on the age group, gender, and type of offence committed by the juvenile apprehended. Consulted various child welfare committees and other government and non-government organisations to gather more information regarding juveniles in conflict with the law. The data was also collected regarding juvenile recidivists.

### Sample Collection

Collected data from the following Sources:

Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), Chief Judicial Magistrate Court Thiruvananthapuram, State Crime

Records Bureau (SCRB), State Police Headquarters, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, Museum Police Station, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, District Child Protection Unit, Department of Woman and Child Development, ICPS Head Office, Pooja ppora, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Thiruvananthapuram, SP Office Pathanamthitta, Pathanamthitta Town Police Station, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, Perunad Police Station Pathanamthitta, Kerala, Chittar Police Station, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, Adoor Police Station, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, Ranni Police Station, Kodumon Police Station, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, Enathu Police Station, Pathanamthitta, Kerala.

The samples were collected with permissions approved by the Women and Child Development (WCD) Office in Thiruvananthapuram, the State Police Headquarters in Thiruvananthapuram and the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court in Thiruvananthapuram. The statistical data was obtained from SCRB and JJB from 2016-2021. The data was qualitatively analyzed as per the objectives of the study.

## RESULTS AND DICUISSION

After the data was collected and analyzed, the major findings of the analysis were as follows:

**Table 1:** Data collected from JJB, Thiruvananthapuram on juvenile in conflict with law 2016 to 2021

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
No. of case summoned in court	11%	15%	18%	24%	19%	10%
No. of cases registered	26%	19%	12%	13%	14%	13%
Average No: of cases	37%	34%	30%	37%	33%	23%

From the table, it was found that most of the cases summoned in court in the year 2019 [24%]. Theft was reported most commonly in JJB from 2016-2021, and in the year 2019-2021, rape and POCSO cases are reported. The most reported age group was under 15-18. The highest number of cases reported in the year 2016 and 2019.

### 1. Age

The age characteristics of the sample were analyzed to determine which age group represented a higher rate of committing a crime

in the age range of 6-18 years. The juveniles falling under the age group of 5-9 years were not found in the observation Home. Children in the group of 10-14 years constituted 20% of the inmates, whereas 80% of the inmates fell into the age group of 15-18 years. It is indicated by these

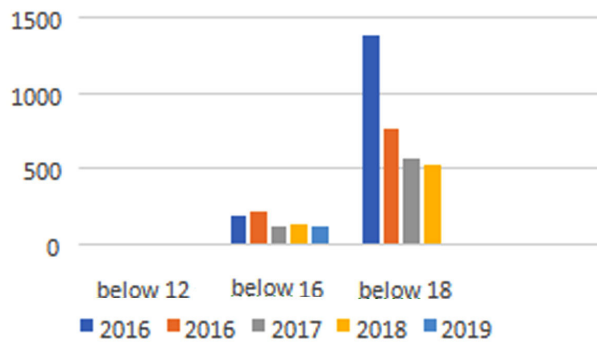


Fig. 1: Age wise Distribution

statistics that the children above 15 years of age represented the age group with the maximum number of offenders.

## 2. Nature of Offense

The results showed a significant involvement of the juveniles in the offenses like rape, murder, theft, and some other offenses like drinking and smoking. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of children getting involved in violent crimes like rape and murder. The highest involvement in the offenses committed was theft,

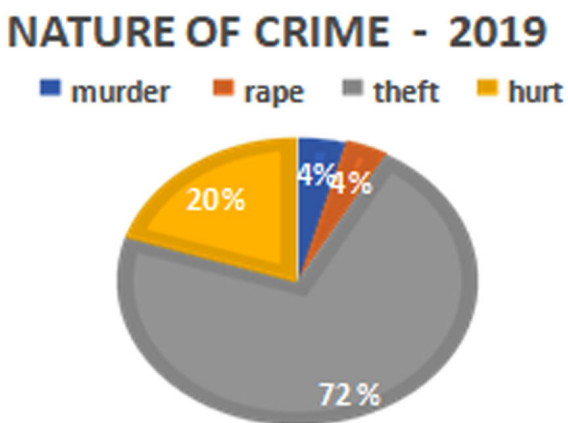


Fig. 2: Crime wise distribution

i.e., around 36%, followed by a murder, which was 32% of the crimes committed. While only 8% of the sample was caught for minor offenses like smoking and drinking.

## 3. Educational Qualification

According to the data we have collected, we can see that most of them have only completed upper primary education.

### Educational qualification

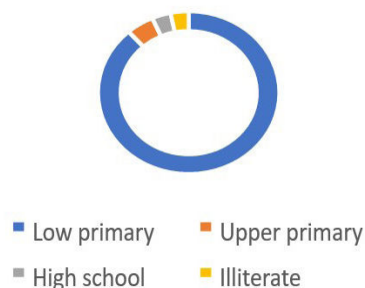


Fig. 3: Educational distribution

## 4. Gender

The characteristics of the sample can be analyzed to determine which sex group had a higher rate of committing a crime in the sex range of 6-18 years. The study that concluded the male juveniles are more in the observation homes. Then females are also there, but their range is smaller than that of males. Most men commit crimes because of their own needs and bad influences.

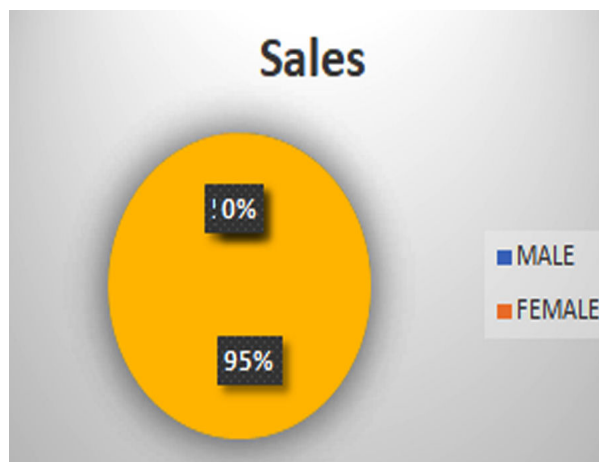


Fig. 4: Gender distribution

## 5. Year Wise Distribution

The sample is collected from the years 2016 – 2021. According to investigators, the corona period has made children more addicted to the mobile phone because their characters are different.

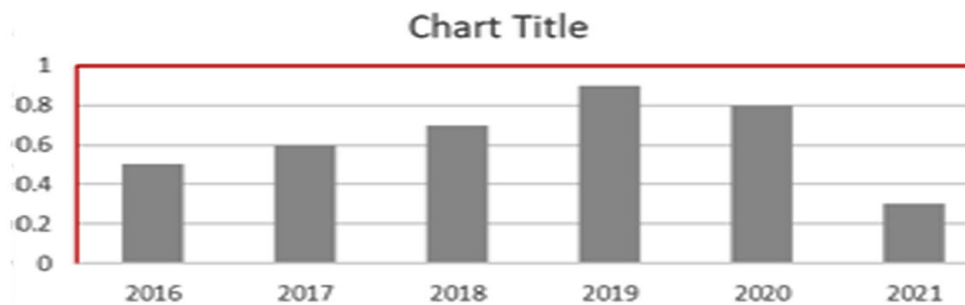


Fig. 5: year wise distribution

## CONCLUSION

Adolescence is the age range of 14-18 years, which shows a higher rate of criminal behavior. This is the age where children mostly indulge in acts like drinking, smoking, rape, and murder, etc. Adolescence is the period of time where changes occur in children, both physically and mentally. Essential features such as self-consciousness, asserting their identity, social integration was developed in this age. They need to have a sense of right or wrong and other factors that reflect the unstable personality of a teenager. It is considered that the parents and teachers play a major role in the growth and development of a child.<sup>12,13</sup> The rise of technology and instant access to anything is changing the mentality of today's youth, contributing to their committing heinous crimes.<sup>14</sup>

Juvenile in conflict with the law and children in need of care and protection must be brought together for the purpose of providing care, protection and treatment through sole legislation, which has to be amended within the spirit of the constitutional mandate.<sup>15,16</sup>

Children are considered the assets of society, so it's our responsibility to guide them, care for them, and nurture them to become responsible and great personalities of tomorrow.<sup>17</sup> They needed to be taken care of because it is not only their need but the need of the society as well.<sup>18</sup> They should be taught to love, care and respect every living being on the earth to make the future a better one.<sup>19,20</sup>

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