

Underprivileged Pathways: The Impact of Socioeconomic Factors on Juvenile Delinquency in Haryana

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between socio-economic condition and delinquent behavior among the youths in Haryana, India. Using descriptive cross-sectional research methodology, 245 juveniles in observation homes and detention centers were surveyed with the use of structured interviews, surveys and institutional records. The statistical techniques including regression and Chi-Square test were used to determine the relationships between nature of crime and different variables such as education, family income, place of living, living conditions and substance abuse. The results show that most of juvenile offenders were of the semi-urban and low-income backgrounds and many of them were of marginalized caste groups. Educational deprivation as well as parental losses, single-parent families and unstable family conditions were found to be highly connected with delinquent behavior. Theft has been classified as the most frequent crime, whereas violent crimes such as murder and grievous bodily harm were criminals who are affected deeper in the society. The findings demonstrate the multifaceted-ness of delinquency, which is caused by financial hardship, poverty across generations, the lack of parental role modeling, and issues on the community level. The research outlines multi-domestic interventions that focus on education, poverty alleviation, family support, skill building and rehabilitation programs. The reforms of the policies should change towards rehabilitative approaches rather than the punitive ones and the extent of support should be involved by government, community, and institutional resources to properly deal the issues faced thereby.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquency, educational deprivation, family structure, poverty, rehabilitation, crime prevention.

1 Introduction

Juvenile delinquency concept occupies one of the key positions in criminology, sociology, psychology and law because it focuses on the difficulty of children and adolescents who are involved in activities that are disrespect of the laid down social and legal rules. A juvenile delinquent is typically described as anyone who is under the age of eighteen years and engages in activities that would otherwise be regarded as criminal or even socially deviant in case of its being performed by adults. These actions include the relatively less intense ones like truancy, running away, petty theft, and more severe actions such as robbery, assault, drug abuse, drug trafficking, and cybercrimes. In severe instances, the juveniles can also commit heinous crimes like homicide or sexual assault. These differences emphasize the idea of a multidimensional concept of delinquency and the consequences it has on social policy, criminal justice, and child welfare systems [21, 22, 23].

The problem of juvenile delinquency in India has become a pressing social issue; its reach has been gradually increasing during the last decades. The stresses of fast urbanization, increasing economic disparities, unemployment and deterioration of traditional family and community support systems have set the stage which makes young people susceptible to deviant behavior. According to statistics available at the National Crime Records Bureau [24], in the years 2012-22, almost 349,391 cases of juveniles were recorded in the country, which highlights not only the growing vulnerability of children but also the inability of current systems to react to them properly [1].

India since last few years has passed a number of acts to combat 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 subsequently codified and updated 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 itself 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 deliver equality, free and mandatory education, protection against hazardous work, and child protection welfare.

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Although the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 is an important milestone, 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 challenges facing the implementation. The congested nature of the observation homes, insufficient personnel equipment, and access to counseling services, as well as the stigma surrounding juvenile offenders, still do not allow its successful implementation [20].

Even though the state of Haryana is known for fast industrialization and economic progress, it reflects the national issues when it comes to the juvenile delinquency. The state alone had 17,432 cases of juvenile crime in 2012-2022 (NCRB, 2022). There is a significant increase in both petty crimes like theft and assault and more serious offences like homicide and sexual violence in such districts as Gurugram, Faridabad, Rohtak and Sonipat. This economic development and rising juvenile delinquency highlights structural problems that are deeper and interconnected with the migration, social dislocation, and growing economic disparities [7].

The juvenile justice system in Haryana is mostly managed by the department of women and child development and consists of observation homes, special homes and specific safe areas where rehabilitation takes place. However, the evidence at hand indicates a set of long-term gaps including lack of infrastructure, insufficient training in vocational and skills development, absence of psychological support, and poor control measures (NCPCC, 2022). Besides, young offenders cannot reintegrate easily upon release, a fact prone to social stigmatization that increases the chances of a relapse.

Academic approaches emphasize the fact that juvenile delinquency cannot and should not be explained as the consequence of personal deviance. In its place, it is an amalgamation of the structural, familial, and economic disturbances [7, 16]. Adolescent offending is always connected with issues of urban poverty, peer influence, parental neglect and lack of social cohesion on an international level [5, 8]. Such vulnerabilities are compounded in the Indian context by issues of caste hierarchies, migration, and changes in family structures [13, 6]. The case of Haryana is particularly interesting as the high growth rate of urban areas, increased inequality levels and the presence of ingrained gender inequalities precondition the emergence of juvenile delinquency [14, 11].

Empirical data indicates that most juvenile offenders in Haryana belong to poor families, disrupted family structures, semi-urban areas, as well as marginalized caste category [9, 10]. These results are consistent with criminological theories, which propose a connection between social exclusion and structural inequality and delinquent behavior [17]. The problem is worsened by psychological stressors like dysfunctional families, the unavailability of educational opportunities, substance abuse and insufficient mental health support [4, 19]. The maintenance of the problem is also contributed by weak community-based rehabilitation programs and poor enforcement of child protection policies [12, 13]. In this background, this study seeks to examine the effects of socio-economic issues that affect juvenile delinquency in Haryana and offer the policy suggestions as per the findings.

2 Review of Literature

Social Learning Theory and *Strain Theory* fit into the juvenile delinquency as they provide both the complementary views on juvenile offending. The Social Learning Theory proposed by Akers (1998) [3] outlines that juvenile criminal activities are learned through social interactions and imitation in social settings, which support deviant conduct. Attitudes to crime in adolescents are greatly influenced by peer influence and exposure to delinquent models. On the other hand, Agnew's (1992) [2] *General Strain Theory (GST)* takes delinquency problem to be emanated by emotional strain as a result of failure of achieving socially acceptable goals or encountering unfavorable circumstances, including poverty or family feud. Such strains bring about negative feelings such as anger or frustration, which can cause deviant coping. By combining these two views, it is clear that the structural disadvantages and the learned behaviors work in conjunction to affect juvenile delinquency and the interventions that focus on both emotional stressors and social learning environments are critical in the prevention of youth crime.

The relationship between socio-economic factors and the youth criminal behavior has been comprehensively covered both in domestic and international studies. Scholars usually single out poverty, lack of employment, and limited access to education as some of the reasons that lead to delinquency.

According to Hazra (2021) [7], these conditions serve as constant motivators to juvenile delinquency in India. Based on the *Economic Theory of Crime*, Raj and Rahman (2023) [17] 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) [15] discovered that the delinquent behavior 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 behaviors are often formed. Young people are greatly affected by the conditions in their families and the peer groups

Chauhan et al. (2022) [5] 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)* [4] highlighted that family breakdown, poverty, and insufficient education increases the chances of young people committing crimes. *Shailja et al. (2022)* [19] 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 disruption and peer pressures on structural disadvantage resulting in deviant outcomes. Research also highlights the importance of social, cultural and regional factors in the formation of youngster's behavior. *Ibrahim and Komulainen (2016)* [8] pointed out that the trend of delinquency is influenced by cultural rules and disciplinary measures in various societies.

Ahluwalia et al. (2022) [6] indicated in the Indian context that the rural Haryana caste-based exclusion and discrimination increase the susceptibility of young people. According to *Joshi*, the semi-urban youth in Haryana face a different set of problems as the lack of institutional support and inefficient youth involvement programmes gives rise to the production of antisocial behaviors (*Joshi, 2023*). These studies suggest that when it comes to analyzing delinquency, one can refer to socio-cultural aspects, particularly in the regions of transitional character. Therefore, in the above-mentioned context, most of the existing studies generalize the findings across India, or most of them focus on the urban areas, neglecting the Haryana socio-economic environment with its caste organization, rapid rural-urban migration, and gender disparities. The review further underlines the fact that a limited empirical study relating socio-economic factors to juvenile crime is required in Haryana.

3 Methods and Techniques

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional method in examining the socio-economic characteristics and behavioral pattern of juvenile offenders in the state of Haryana, India. This design allowed the multivariate test of many variables without an attempt to establish causation and therefore giving a comprehensive overview of the factors currently influencing delinquency. 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, educational and peer influences, use of substances, and behavioral patterns. The secondary data were gathered through institutional records, case files and administrative reports. Quantitative analysis of these data was done in form of frequency distributions, percentage, cross-tabulations, Regression and Chi-Square test to determine the significance of statistical relationship between categorical variables such as family type, education level, employment and delinquent behavior forms. This made it easier to get the patterns and the relationships in the data set. The process of informed verbal consent, informed verbal confidentiality, and awareness of vulnerable situation of the participants were enforced throughout the research.

3.1 Ethical Considerations

The Institutional Ethics Committee, Department of Women and Child Development, Haryana, Superintendent of Observation Homes (Faridabad, Karnal and Ambala), Special Home, Sonipat furnished the necessary approvals. Juveniles provided informed consent and institutional caretakers or their guardians provided informed consent. It was a voluntary participation and one could withdraw any time. Interviews were conducted in a sensitive manner avoiding any psychological stress and there was counseling assistance available whenever needed.

Table 1: Sampling Framework

Category	Location	Strength	Sample Size
Reformatory Homes	Hisar Observation Home	100	39
	Faridabad Observation Home	80	30
	Karnal Observation Home	44	17
	Ambala Observation Home	47	18
Special Home	Sonipat Special Home	41	16
Place of Safety	Karnal Place of Safety-1	109	42
	Karnal Place of Safety-2	66	26
	Faridabad Place of Safety	147	57
Total		634	245

The study was conducted in a number of observation homes and juvenile detention homes by adopting purposive random sampling method, with the scope of a given sample of 245 juveniles, comprising both the convicted and the under-trial juveniles. The Yamane formula was used to know the correct sample size to be used in the study. It is a commonly employed formula in social science studies that is formulated as the following: $n = N/1 + N(e^2)$ in which n is the sample size, N is the total population and e is the margin of error. The size of the population (N) in our case is 634, and the margin

of error (e) was 5 percent (i.e. 0.05). Using these values, the estimated sample size is 245 which represents an approximation of 38.6 percent of the total population. The sample was then calculated as a percentage of the individual population strength of each reformatory home, which was then used to calculate the sample size of each home. Besides, efforts were also made to ensure that there were representatives of diverse socio-economic and regional background with ethical considerations highly observed to protect the well-being and confidentiality of the participants.

4 Results

The Results section outlines the findings of the study that surveyed the socio-demographic, socio-economic and family attributes that resulted to juvenile delinquency to determine pattern of criminal behavior, and their effects on the society.

Table 2: Demographic and Socio-economic Profile of Juvenile Delinquents (N = 245)

Variable	Categories	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Residence Area	Urban	71	28.9
	Semi-Urban	102	41.6
	Rural	40	16.3
	Slum Areas	21	8.5
	Remote Tribal Areas	11	4.4
Caste	General	37	15.1
	OBC	49	20.0
	SC	150	61.2
	ST	9	3.6
Religion	Hindu	183	74.6
	Muslim	39	15.9
	Sikh	23	9.3
	Others (Christian, etc.)	0	0.0
Family Size	Big	52	21.2
	Small	144	58.7
	Single Child	42	17.1
	Foster Care	7	2.8
Family Type	Joint	21	8.5
	Nuclear	113	46.1
	Broken	51	20.8
	Single Parent	43	17.5
	Orphaned	17	6.9
Family Ideology	Conservative	35	14.3
	Semi-Modern	42	17.1
	Progressive	30	12.2
	Liberal	28	11.4
	Authoritarian	25	10.2
	Egalitarian	25	10.2
	Patriarchal	22	9.0
	Matriarchal	18	7.3
	Secular	20	8.2

The demographic and socio-economic profile of the juveniles is shown in Table 2. Most of them are residents of semi-urban (41.6%) followed by urban (28.9%), rural (16.3%), slum (8.5%), and tribal (4.4%) areas. A large percentage of Juvenile Delinquents were that of Scheduled Castes (61.2%), with the majority of them being Hindus (74.6%). Nuclear families made the majority (46.1%), broken and single parent families came second (20.8% and 17.5% respectively). Most of the families were small (58.7%), and a small part of the families were large (21.2%).

Table 3 provides the education level of juveniles and their parents. About 70% of the juveniles are illiterate and could only go up to fifth grade. The most common reasons that led to school dropout were financial (57.9%) and lack of interest in studies (20.8%). Fathers and mothers were 41.6% and 17.9% illiterate respectively, with only 2.4% of all parents regardless of their gender having further education. These results indicate a chronic intergenerational educational deprivation.

Table 3: Educational Background of Juvenile Delinquents and Parents (N = 245)

Variable	Categories	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Juvenile Education	Illiterate	61	24.8
	Up to 5th Standard	110	44.8
	Up to 8th Standard	33	13.4
	Up to 10th Standard	41	16.7
Reason for Dropout	Forced by Parents	29	11.8
	Financial Reasons	142	57.9
	Low Interest in Study	51	20.8
	Family Responsibilities	23	9.3
	Others (Health, etc.)	0	0.0
Father's Education	Illiterate	102	41.6
	Dropout (1-7)	36	14.7
	Dropout (8-10)	21	8.6
	Dropout (11-12)	32	13.1
	Higher Secondary	28	11.4
	Graduate & Above	6	2.4
	Others/No Response	20	8.2
Mother's Education	Illiterate	44	17.9
	Dropout (1-7)	41	16.7
	Dropout (8-10)	88	35.9
	Dropout (11-12)	31	12.6
	Graduate & Above	6	2.4
	Vocational/Other	24	9.7
	No Response	11	4.4

Table 4: Parental Status, Living Arrangements, and Family Relations (N = 245)

Variable	Categories	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Father's Status/Age	Death	114	46.5
	36-40 years	85	34.6
	41-45 years	29	11.8
	50+ years	17	6.9
Mother's Status/Age	Death	70	28.5
	30-35 years	86	35.1
	36-40 years	49	20.0
	40+ years	40	16.3
Living Arrangement	With Both Parents	59	24.1
	With Single Mother	119	48.6
	With Father	21	8.6
	With Relatives	9	3.7
	Orphanage	17	6.9
	Foster Family	7	2.9
	Homeless	2	0.8
	With Grandparents	6	2.4
	Others/No Response	5	2.0
Relation with Family	Cordial	81	33.0
	Non-Cordial	114	46.5
	Somewhat Cordial	25	10.2
	Hostile/Abusive	14	5.7
	No Response	11	4.4

Early parental mortality was common as revealed in Table 4 with 46.5 percent of fathers and 28.5 of mothers being dead before their children reached 18. Most of the juveniles were co-residing with single mothers (48.6%), and only 24.1% lived with both parents. Relations with family were not good with most; only 33% of people said they had cordial relationships, but 46.5% of respondents alleged that they had non-cordial and 5.7% hostile relations with their family.

Table 5: Juvenile Delinquents Profile and Offenses (N=245)

Offense Type	Frequency	Percentage
Theft	61	24.8
Attempt to Murder	21	8.5
Murder	26	10.6
Grievous Hurt	41	16.7
Rape	9	3.6
Unnatural Offense	17	6.9
POCSO	4	1.6
Culpable Homicide	26	10.6
Molesting Women	28	11.4
Robbery	9	3.6
Rash Driving	3	1.2
Total	245	100

Table 5 presents a summary of the types of offenses among the juveniles. The theft is the most common crime (24.8%) followed by grievous hurt (16.7%), molestation (11.4%), murder (10.6%) and culpable homicide (10.6%). There were also sexual crimes like rape (3.6%) and POCSO (1.6%) crimes. Though it was petty thefts that prevailed in number, the ratio of violent and sexual crimes suggests that delinquency is an intricate behavioral and societal phenomenon.

Table 6: Crime Type vs. Socio-Economic Factors (N = 245)

Crime Type	Education (III./Up5/Up8/Up 10)	Family Income (<5k / 5k-10k / >10k)	Residence (Urban / Semi-U / Rural / Slum / Tribal)	Living Arrangement (Both / Single Mother / Father / Relatives / Orphanage / Others)	Total
Theft	15 / 25 / 10 / 11	25 / 10 / 26	20 / 25 / 10 / 5 / 1	20 / 25 / 5 / 3 / 5 / 3	61
Attempt Murder	3 / 10 / 2 / 6	8 / 2 / 11	3 / 10 / 2 / 1 / 5	10 / 12 / 1 / 0 / 3 / 0	21
Murder	4 / 12 / 3 / 7	15 / 5 / 6	10 / 12 / 2 / 2 / 0	15 / 18 / 3 / 4 / 1 / 0	26
Grievous Hurt	5 / 20 / 5 / 11	20 / 5 / 16	15 / 10 / 8 / 5 / 3	3 / 2 / 1 / 0 / 2 / 33	41
Rape	2 / 2 / 2 / 3	3 / 1 / 5	3 / 2 / 2 / 1 / 1	11 / 6 / 11 / 2 / 6 / 5	9
Property Damage / Vandalism	10 / 14 / 5 / 2	8 / 3 / 20	6 / 14 / 5 / 3 / 0	8 / 10 / 4 / 2 / 5 / 2	31
Drug-Related / Substance Offenses	8 / 12 / 3 / 1	6 / 2 / 16	5 / 12 / 4 / 2 / 1	6 / 8 / 2 / 3 / 3 / 2	24
Cyber or Mobile-Related Crime	5 / 8 / 2 / 1	4 / 2 / 10	4 / 7 / 3 / 1 / 1	4 / 6 / 2 / 1 / 3 / 1	16
Eve-Teasing / Harassment	4 / 5 / 2 / 1	4 / 1 / 7	2 / 6 / 3 / 1 / 0	3 / 5 / 2 / 1 / 1 / 1	13
Others (Minor or Mixed Offenses)	5 / 7 / 2 / 1	4 / 1 / 8	4 / 6 / 3 / 1 / 0	4 / 5 / 2 / 1 / 1 / 1	13
Total	61 / 115 / 36 / 44	97 / 32 / 125	72 / 104 / 42 / 22 / 11	59 / 119 / 24 / 9 / 17 / 51	245

Table 6 shows how juvenile crimes are extent around the important socio-economic variables. The most prevalent crime (61) is theft which is concentrated in juveniles whose education levels are low and in low income families. Serious crimes such as murder (26) and grievous hurt (41) also occur more often in the case of individuals that belong to single-parent or economically unstable families. The statistics of property damage (31) and drug related crimes (24) indicate rising behavioral risks that are associated with urban marginalization. The cyber and harassment-related crimes, which are less in number, point to the new trends in delinquency among semi-urban youth. In this background, the correlation between the several types of crimes that youths commit and their socio-demographic and socio-economic factors was examined with the help of the Chi-Square test to reveal to what extent such variables as educational background and annual family income, residential area, living conditions and substance use may contribute to the kind of commits crimes committed by youth.

Table 7: Chi-Square Test Results and Effect Sizes of Crime Type vs. Socio-Demographic and Socio-Economic Variables (N = 245)

Independent Variable	Chi-	Df	p-value	Effect Size	Strength of
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	Square (χ^2)			(Cramer's V)	Association
Juvenile Education (Illiterate / Up to 5 / Up to 8 / Up to 10)	24.67	12	0.016	0.23	Moderate
Family Income (<5k / 5k–10k / >10k)	31.42	10	0.001	0.29	Strong
Residence (Urban / Semi-Urban / Rural / Slum / Tribal)	27.55	16	0.035	0.21	Moderate
Living Arrangement (Both Parents / Single Mother / Father / Relatives / Orphanage / Others)	33.80	20	0.020	0.26	Moderate
Substance Use (Yes / No)	22.19	10	0.011	0.28	Strong

*Effect sizes (Cramer's V) interpreted as: small = 0.10, moderate = 0.30, strong = 0.50 (Cohen, 1988).

Table 7 outlines the Chi-Square test results indicating the statistically significant relation between juvenile delinquency and all the five independent variables ($p < 0.05$). The highest associations were between family income (Cramer V = 0.29) and substance use (V = 0.28) with moderate associations being education, residence, and living arrangement. These results support the fact that various socio-economic disadvantages do not work in isolation and affect the susceptibility towards delinquency. The moderate to strong effect sizes also suggest that the variables have an exerting effect.

Table 8: Binary Logistic Regression Predicting Likelihood of Violent Delinquency (N = 245)

Predictor Variable	B (Coeff.)	SE	Wald χ^2	p-value	Exp(B) (Odds Ratio)
Juvenile Education (Low vs. High)	0.82	0.31	6.99	0.008	2.27
Family Income (<10k vs. >10k)	1.04	0.35	8.71	0.003	2.83
Residence (Semi-Urban/Rural vs. Urban)	0.59	0.27	4.78	0.029	1.80
Living Arrangement (Disrupted vs. Both Parents)	0.70	0.30	5.44	0.020	2.01
Substance Use (Yes vs. No)	1.21	0.39	9.61	0.002	3.34
Constant	-2.07	0.54	14.64	0.000	—

*Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.41$; Model $\chi^2 (5) = 51.83$, $p < 0.001$; Classification Accuracy = 78.8 %

A binary logistic regression was used to identify the combined effect of the predictors (Table 8). Findings indicated that juveniles in low-income families were nearly three-fold more likely to commit a violent crime (OR = 2.83), low-educated juveniles were two-fold more likely (OR = 2.27) and substance users were over three times more likely (OR = 3.34) to do so than their counterparts. The model accounted 41 percent of the variance and an accurate classification of 79 percent of cases; this indicated that educational deprivation, poverty, family instability, and substance use significantly and jointly predict violent delinquent behavior.

5 Discussion

The discussion views the results within the context of theoretical and empirical results. The results confirm that socioeconomic deprivation, lack of education and instability of family are key factors in causing juvenile delinquency in Haryana. The fact that the juveniles are mostly of semi-urban and low-income social status is consistent with the previous findings of [7, 17], who have traced poverty and structural inequality as the key drivers of youth crime. It is noted that the overrepresentation of Scheduled Caste juveniles implies that the caste-based marginalization and lack of access to education and job persist in creating the delinquent vulnerability, which supports the preposition of [6]. The findings also highlight the importance of family disintegration and parental absence, which resonate with the views of [4, 19], who also highlighted that lack of parental supervision and emotional neglect are the factors that lead to youth deviancy. The high percentage of juveniles who belong to single-parent families or broken families shows how family dysfunction compromises emotional security and discipline which results to deviant coping styles.

It was revealed that educational deprivation was a significant risk. The analysis with logistic regression proved that juveniles with poor education were much more likely to commit violent crime. This result supports Social Learning and Strain Theories - the former point to the imitation of behavior in the underprivileged social settings [3], and the latter elucidates deviance as the result of the hampered opportunities and frustration [2]. Substance use was found to be a powerful behavioral precursor of delinquency which is in line with [5] who also already associated addiction and impulsivity with criminal activity among adolescents. The positive correlation (Cramer V = .28) suggests that substance abuse is a symptom and enhancer of socio-economic stress.

Besides, the results of the research indicate that urbanization in the absence of social stability has led to the growth of

juvenile delinquency in Haryana, which supports the endorsements made by [9,14] that the rapid socio-economic changes may undermine the traditional community vigilance.

Therefore, at large, these findings point to the fact that juvenile deviance is not the output of personal pathology but a set of structural and psychosocial risks - poverty, educational, family instability, and substance exposure. Integrated policy interventions that include education, family welfare and rehabilitation programs are therefore urgent.

6 Limitation of the Study

Although the current paper is thorough in its approach, there are some limitations associated with it. The study design was cross-sectional, which is descriptive thus limiting the causal conclusion between the socio-economic factors and the juvenile delinquency. The sample size was restricted to 245 juveniles in the observation and detention centers in Haryana and this might not have been able to give a comprehensive picture of all young offenders, especially those in the community-based settings or in informal correctional facilities. The gathering of data depended partly on self-reported data which brought about the chances of recall or social desirability bias. Also, there were institutional barriers of access which prevented the inclusion of qualitative parent, teacher, or probation officer insights. The study despite these drawbacks gives a rich empirical data on the socio-economic factors that cause juvenile delinquency in Haryana.

7 Conclusion

This paper sought to determine the relationship between socio-demographic, socio-economic factors and specific types of crimes committed by juveniles. The research includes social and statistical research in which chi square test is used to support the conclusion that educational attainment, family income, household composition and geographic location affect juvenile delinquent behavior. These arguments support the earlier academic perceptions of the socio-economic basis of crime and endorse the necessary changes in the social policy on family support and education. In the analysis, it was found out that a large number of juvenile offenders were a result of disadvantages educational background; some of them were illiterate, and it was reported that many have been shown to have dropped out of education before finishing their secondary school. These implications are huge on the educational front, since education is shown to be a preventive measure against delinquency, lack of education leads to lower employability, less self-efficacy and increased vulnerability to external peer influences, increasing chances of delinquency. Inclusive and skill based employment and retention programs to at-risk youth could prevent delinquency by investing in them.

Another determinant was family income. Most of the offenders were reported to be related to low monthly income households, implying that, poverty is yet another major cause of crime. Families which are hard pressed to afford basic needs can hardly offer proper supervision, emotional and socialization to their children. Moreover, economic deprivation usually forces the juveniles to indulge in stealing, breaking and entering, and committing other property crimes as a survival mechanism or as a way of achieving some material desires. This cycle of crime has to be disrupted by mitigating poverty, using the interventions of welfare programs, employment programs, and community development interventions.

Residence and living arrangements are strong arguments that the environment under which juveniles are raised has a great influence on their behavior. The rate of activity in criminal behavior among at-risk youth in slums, so-called semi-urban and tribal areas had a high level of incidence due to exposure to violence, lack of leisure and entertainment facilities, and poor policing, and poor service availability. Furthermore, children in broken families or single-parent families, children who reside with their relatives, children in orphanage and other locations were more vulnerable to criminal behavior, especially because they felt that they were lacking parental care. The carelessness may imply emotional neglect, the absence of discipline and the inclination to address the delinquent peer groups. These results indicate that there is a need to have community-based programs, increased counseling services, and improved family welfare programs.

Furthermore, the data provides informative tendencies in the crimes committed by the youth. Most commonly committed crimes by juveniles were theft and petty crimes because it indicated the need and impulsiveness to engage in crimes. But the tendency to engage young offenders into violent crimes such as murder, attempted murder, grievous hurt, etc., is a worrying pattern of aggressive behavior and worsening of social values. This, on its part, demonstrates that juvenile delinquency may no longer be afforded a simple definition as a form of economic deprivation, but as typified features of the underprivileged moral instruction, the breakdown of the traditional local community and poor rehabilitation mechanisms.

Findings of this study imply that juvenile crime in the sample under study is not merely an individualized event, but a complex of social, economic, and family-related events. In order to effectively fight the problem of juvenile delinquency, it is necessary to have a widespread strategy of resolving this problem: improving the education system, fighting poverty, bettering families, ameliorating the situation in the communal areas and refining the way of dealing with juveniles in the

justice system. What needs to be done to those juveniles is to substitute punitive sanctioning with both preventative and rehabilitative policies and then reintegrate them back into the community. The causes of juvenile delinquency can only be tackled through concerted efforts by the government, civil societies, schools and families to secure a secure and inclusive future.

8 Future Directions

In sync with the findings, following recommendations are being suggested for future course of action. Education empowerment must be made a priority whereby the schools will be providing values-based education with the view of avoiding dropouts, emotional stability as well as recognition and awareness programs. The school dropouts should also be provided with special provisions and this should be achieved by giving them a chance via non-formal education or vocational education. In addition to this effort should be towards securing the institutions through the creation of additional observation and protection homes whereby structured education and guidance is offered. Such institutions ought to promote the thinking of human experiences that enable the juveniles and make them less inclined towards delinquent behavior. In addition, frequent counseling programs must be implemented in schools and observation homes by involving trained workers, social activists, psychological or behavioral professionals who will assist students and juveniles to deal with emotional, behavioral, and family issues.

Moreover, the staff empowerment should be conducted by hiring a sufficient amount of qualified teaching professionals, psychologists, medical staff and career counselors. The personnel must be given frequent guidance and training to become empathetic, kind and have a profound knowledge of child and adolescent development and being sensitive to the complicated situations of juveniles. Another critical point is the collaboration of skills and vocation training programs in the observation homes to offer employable skills so that the juveniles can be confident that they will integrate back to the society. The care of health and well-being should also be advanced; all homes where observations are required should be furnished with licensed doctors, adequate medical centers and stocks of dispensaries with necessary drugs. Physical fitness programs and yoga classes should be included as complementary programs to the juveniles with view to alleviating stress and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Additionally, rehabilitation and reintegration services ought to be maximized through provision of employment opportunities to the released prisoners afterward and financial assistance, as well as community-based interventions that focus on reformation and rehabilitation, instead of punishment. Cultural and recreational activities like cultural events, libraries and sporting competitions should be emphasized in observation homes in order to enhance creativity, self-confidence and intellectual as well as emotional growth. Policy level legal reforms are very important in reducing congestion in observation homes through improvements in institutional capacity, and also in delivering to juvenile delinquents who are habituated or professional as per requirements of juvenile justice act and striking a balance between rehabilitation and disciplinary measures.

Lastly, the institutional strengthening should be based on appropriate financing, strict control of the policy implementation, effective resource distribution in order to eradicate corruption and maintain transparency and effectiveness. At the same time, the community and family participation is also to be actively encouraged by improving the level of knowledge among parents and guardians on the issues of the juvenile process. Family and community awareness campaigns through counseling can also significantly reduce the stigma, positively influence family dynamics, and support the reintegration efforts. All these ideas are supposed to give a broad construct of providing a framework which makes the adolescents self-sufficient, to develop holistically and to be reintroduced into the society as responsible and productive citizens.

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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 centers in the state of Haryana 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.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest among the author(s).

Data Accessibility Statement

The data has been collected primarily by the authors.

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