

## **Socio-Economic Threads in Child in Conflict with Law: A Quantitative Assessment**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Children in India form a diverse and dynamic demography. They represent a significant portion of the country's population. Shaped by a rich cultural heritage and influenced by rapid socio-economic changes, the experiences of Indian children vary and multifaceted in nature. The vulnerability of these tenders or teens to delinquent behaviours is increasingly influenced by disparities in social structures and economic opportunities. The study area focuses several social economic factors such as locality, family income, family type, place of live, parent's education, peer group influence which has influence on the delinquency. The major objective of the study is to check the relationship between the social economic factors and the juvenile delinquency in Tirunelveli city. This research paper investigates the dynamics of children's exposure to delinquency and its impact on the society. Utilizing convenience sampling, the study gathered data from 331 students across various types of schools, including government (public), state board (matriculation- government aided) and Central board of Secondary Education (only private) Schools in the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu, India. . The prior consent was obtained from the parents of the participants through the school administration. The data was collected through Personal Distributed Questionnaire. This research attempted to correlate various contributory factors which invokes the children's towards juvenile delinquency. The preliminary results of study revealed that respondents has not influenced to juvenile delinquency via living place, family type and parent's education. Finally, the authors suggest some policy recommendations for parents, policy makers, and teachers to address the issues through preventive measures.

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**Keywords:** *Socio- Economic Factors, Child in Conflict with Law, Policy Recommendations*

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## Introduction

Children in conflict with the law present a multifaceted challenge that intersects the domains of legal systems, social welfare, and economic structures. The causes of child in conflict with law in childhood include poverty, neglect, abuse, learning disabilities, and mental health disorders (Desai & Goel, 2018). Understanding the socio-economic threads that weave together the lives of these children is crucial for developing comprehensive interventions and policies. Factors responsible for children coming in conflict with law include socio-economic factors like locality, parent's education, place of live and family type (Chopra, 2015). This exploration delves into the complex interplay between socio-economic factors and juvenile delinquency, aiming to illuminate the underlying causes and potential pathways for rehabilitation. Fergusson et al. (2004) states that childhood socio-economic disadvantage is associated with increased rates of self-reported crime and officially recorded convictions, but this association becomes non-significant when considering other factors like parenting, individual, school, and peer factors.

Child in conflict with the law often emerge from environments characterized by poverty, lack of education, and limited access to resources. Parackal and Panicker (2019) states that children in conflict with the law tend to come from poor or dysfunctional families and have parents with lower levels of education. These socio-economic conditions can contribute to a range of behaviors that bring children into contact with the justice system. Children in conflict with law face psycho-social problems due to rapid industrialization, urbanization, and slum growth (Subakade & Lawani, 2022). By examining these underlying issues, we can better appreciate how societal structures influence individual choices and actions.

This study aims to unravel these socio-economic threads, offering insights into how economic instability, family dynamics, and community support systems shape the experiences of these children. It seeks to identify patterns and correlations that can inform more effective legal and social responses. By addressing the root causes of juvenile delinquency, society can move towards a more just and supportive framework that prioritizes the well-being and potential of every child.

Understanding the socio-economic dimensions of child delinquency is essential for crafting policies that not only address immediate legal concerns but also promote long-term social and economic stability. This research contributes to a growing body of knowledge that advocates for a holistic approach to juvenile justice, recognizing the inherent potential within every child to thrive and contribute positively to society.

### **Need for the study**

The need to investigate the socio-economic factors influencing children in conflict with the law is pressing and multifaceted. This study addresses several critical gaps in existing research and aims to provide a robust foundation for policy-making, intervention strategies, and preventive measures. Understanding the socio-economic threads that contribute to juvenile delinquency is essential for creating a justice system that is both effective and humane. This study aims to fill crucial knowledge gaps, inform better policies, and ultimately contribute to a society where every child has the opportunity to thrive.

### **Research Methodology**

The researchers have conducted an in-depth examination of the research objectives using a wide variety of primary and secondary sources of information, such as books, journals (online & offline), various related websites, and discussions with experts.

### **Research Design**

This study is a descriptive study using quantitative data and has used an inferential approach to elicit the results.

### **Objective of the study**

To study the effect of Socio-economic status on children in conflict with law.

To record the factors which lead the children to commit crimes.

To suggest some preventive techniques to overcome children committing crimes.

### **Hypothesis**

H<sub>01</sub> There is no significant difference between the Family types and Child Maltreatment.

H<sub>02</sub> There is no significant difference between the Dangerous Neighbourhood and Locality.

H<sub>03</sub> There is no significant difference between the Poly Victimization of Children and Gender.  
H<sub>04</sub> There is no significant difference between the Place of Living and Abuse by Care Giver.  
H<sub>05</sub> There is no significant difference between Parent Education and Child Maltreatment.

### **Variables**

#### **Dependent Variable**

Child Maltreatment, Poly Victimization, Abuse by caregivers, Dangerous Neighbourhood.

#### **Independent variable**

Gender, Family Type, Parents Education, Place of Live, Locality

#### **Universe of the Study**

The universe of this study was schools in Tirunelveli City, Tamil Nadu.

#### **Sample**

The sample of the study were school students namely Central Board of Secondary Education, Government, & Matriculation schools in Tirunelveli city.

#### **Proposed Sample Size**

The proposed sample size of the study was 500. The achieved sample of the study was 331.

#### **Sampling Techniques**

The sampling technique used in the study was multi- stage sampling technique. In the first stage schools in the city were selected using simple random method. Second stage the purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the participants of the study as it involves certain ethical concerns.

#### **Inclusion Criteria**

Children's age was between 13 to 18 years and there were studying in three different modes of schools.

#### **Exclusion Criteria**

- The children who were truancy and vagrancy
- The child in conflict with law.

#### **Data Analysis**

The data were coded and transferred into Excel sheet and statistical analysis was done using SPSS software version 21. The data collected was tested for normality for all the variables with the results researcher decided to test the hypotheses H<sub>01</sub>-H<sub>05</sub> with the parametric test.

## Major findings

### Family Types Vs Child Maltreatment

Among the child victimisation the child maltreatment is voluntary abuse on the child. In order to determine the relationship between the child maltreatment and family type. The researcher has conducted the ANOVA and the results are given below

The act of child maltreatment has significant impact in the children physical and mental health which later lead to deviant behaviour.

**Table 1: Family Types vs Child Maltreatment**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	621.191	2	310.595	2.995	.051
Within Groups	34013.377	328	103.699		
Total	34634.568	330			

**Source:** The primary data of the research

$H_{01}$  There is no significant difference between the family types and child maltreatment.

During the analysis it was found that there exist no significant difference between the child maltreatment and family type. Hence, the null hypothesis accepted, therefore the alternative hypothesis rejected.

The child maltreatment has no significant difference in the family type. The shocking fact is the child maltreatment is across the class, financial states & family type. The children in nuclear family were facing more abuse than the children in the joint family. The study conducted by Gilbert (2008) states that Child maltreatment has long-lasting effects on mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, risky sexual behaviour, obesity, and criminal behaviour, which persist into adulthood.

### Dangerous Neighbourhood vs Child Abuse

The dangerous neighbourhood has much influence in the children behaviour. The community and neighbourhood play a major role in the children development. To determine the relationship between the dangerous neighbourhood and locality they live, the researchers has conducted the ANOVA and the results are given below

**Table 2: Dangerous Neighbourhood vs Child Abuse**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	219.941	2	109.971	2.344	.098
Within Groups	15388.633	328	46.917		
Total	15608.574	330			

**Source:** The primary data of the research

H<sub>02</sub> There is no significant difference between the Dangerous Neighbourhood Vs Locality.

During the analysis it was found that there exist no significant difference between the Dangerous Neighbourhood and Locality. Hence, the null hypothesis accepted, therefore the alternative hypothesis rejected.

The dangerous neighbourhood or community may lead to drug abuse, criminal behaviour, bunk classes, manipulate them for criminal activity etc. As Edwin Sutherland proposed on his Differential Association theory the criminal behaviour is learned. The children will learn many things from their community. So, the society and neighborhood play a vital role in the development of children and poly victimization.

**Gender vs Poly Victimization of Children**

The gender discrimination affects the physical and psychological well-being of the children. To find out the relationship between gender and poly-victimization. The researcher conducted the ANOVA test and the result is discussed below

**Table 3: Gender vs Poly victimization of Children**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.024	1	.024	.000	.985
Within Groups	22627.541	329	68.777		
Total	22627.565	330			

**Source:** The primary data of the research

H<sub>03</sub> There is no significant difference between the poly victimization of children and Gender.

During the analysis it was found that there exists no significant difference between the poly victimization of children and gender. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted, therefore the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

The study conducted by Spataro et al. (2021) points out that child sexual abuse is reality for both sexes, but male victims are given less counselling than females, despite comparable psychological sequelae. The victimization is common to both male and female. The abuse against the male children was not reported due to the social stigma. Many male children were becoming victims due to child maltreatment. But, in the case of child abuse both male and female children were abused by Parents, Teacher, Peer Group and Abuse by Care Givers.

**Place of living vs abuse by caregiver**

The abuse by caregivers has an excessive effect in the children physical and psychological strength which may influenced by their place of living and bitter or butter experience. Among the factors influencing the child abuse the abuse by care givers is sensitive one. To determine the relationship between the abuse by caregiver and place of live. The researcher conducted the ANOVA test and result is discussed below.

**Table 4: Place of living vs abuse by care giver**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	506.433	4	126.608	3.291	.012
Within Groups	12540.848	326	38.469		
Total	13047.281	330			

**Source:** The primary data of the research

H<sub>04</sub> There is no significant difference between the Place of Live and Abuse by Care Giver.

During the analysis it was found that there exist no significant difference between the poly victimization of children and gender. Hence, the null hypothesis not accepted, therefore the alternative hypothesis accepted.

The place of living remains a major factor in children development and social participation. The children lives in the urban area have faced more victimization compared to the children living in the ruler and semi urban area. Mostly, child get abused by their neighbourhood, auto man, teachers, peer groups and family members. The neglecting behaviour by their parents was the major reason for the child abuse in the particular universe. Similar, result was found

in this study conducted by Wekerle et al. (2007) substantiation of child abuse and neglect is best predicted by the total number of caregiver vulnerabilities, which is exacerbated by the presence of partner violence, indicating that caregiver issues should be considered in tandem with partner relationships for child maltreatment prevention and early intervention.

### Parent's education vs Child Maltreatment

H<sub>05</sub> There is no significant difference between the parent education and children maltreatment. The parent education directly influence the physical and psychological well-being of the children.

To find out the relationship between the parent education and children maltreatment. The researchers conducted the ANOVA test and result is discussed below

**Table 5: Parent's Education vs Child Maltreatment**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1092.261	5	218.452	2.117	.063
Within Groups	33542.307	325	103.207		
Total	34634.568	330			

**Source:** The primary data of the research

During the analysis it was found that there exist a no significant difference between the parent education and child maltreatment. Hence, the null hypothesis accepted, therefore the alternative hypothesis rejected.

Parental education plays a crucial role in shaping family dynamics and can significantly influence the occurrence and nature of child maltreatment. Literate parents are generally better equipped with knowledge and skills that can contribute to a healthier and safer environment for their children. But, the result of the study revealed there is no significant difference between parent education and child maltreatment. Even literate parents were abusing their children. The study conducted by Harden et al. (2016) states that inadequate parental knowledge and skill regarding child development and caregiving contribute to child maltreatment, which can lead to negative physical, developmental, and mental health outcomes in childhood and adulthood.



## Suggestions

Provide training and resources to parents on positive parenting, conflict resolution, and the importance of education. The financial assistance, job training, and employment opportunities to families in need to reduce economic stress. Ensure all children have access to quality education, regardless of their socio-economic background. The children may provide vocational training programs that equip children with practical skills and improve their employability. Establish community centers that offer recreational activities, mentorship programs, and counselling services. Parents shall create after-school programs to keep children engaged in positive activities and away from negative influences. Use positive role models and success stories to inspire children and communities. Improve child welfare services to identify and protect children at risk of neglect, abuse, or exploitation. Working with policymakers, community leaders, and other stakeholders to create a supportive environment for at-risk children. Implementing these suggestions requires a collaborative effort from government agencies, non-governmental organizations, communities, and families. By addressing the socio-economic factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency, it is possible to create a safer and more supportive environment for children.

## Conclusion

The intricate relationship between a child in conflict with the law and socio-economic status underscores the multifaceted nature of juvenile justice and social equity. Poverty, lack of access to good education and healthcare, exposure to adverse environments, and limited support systems significantly increase the vulnerabilities of these children, predisposing them to legal entanglements. Effective collaboration between stakeholders, including policymakers, legal professionals, criminologist, social workers, educators, and community advocates, is essential in driving systemic reforms and ensuring that every child, regardless of their socio-economic background, receives the support and opportunities they need to thrive. By addressing the intertwined issues of child in conflict with the law and socio-economic status, we can work toward a society where every child has the chance to grow up in a safe, nurturing environment and reach their full potential as valued members of their communities. The growth should regularly involves academic researcher's to check the impact of Juvenile Justice Act and paper to practice nuances and rectify the same as the earliest for better tomorrow of the Indian children.

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