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Familial and socio-economic characteristics of juvenile delinquents: Association between socio-economic factors and aggression

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Abstract

Juvenile delinquents refer to individuals who engage in criminal or unlawful actions prior to reaching adulthood. Judicial delinquency is a pervasive social ailment that affects the entire world, but the situation is particularly dire in India. It is an extremely alarming situation for any nation as it detrimentally impacts the lives of the younger generation. Similar to numerous other countries worldwide, the prevalence of youthful criminality is rising swiftly in India as well. This study explores the familial and socio-economic aspects of the juvenile delinquents of three different Government Observatories of Uttar Pradesh in India. Data of 300 juvenile delinquents were obtained from the Government Observatory of Ayodhya, Gorakhpur and Lucknow, 100 juveniles from each district government observatory. Purposive sampling was employed. Results showed that majority of the juveniles come from the agricultural (Farmer) background and their parents' have only primary education. Respondents from nuclear families showed more aggression in physical aspect than respondents from joint families. No significant co-relation was found between respondents aggression and their family income.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquents, socio-economic, familial factors

Introduction

Juvenile delinquency is a multifaceted issue that has a profound impact on all individuals within a society, as well as the overall social framework. Delinquency is characterized as a set of behaviors that are incongruous with the customs and values of the prevailing social group. According to Georges (2009) ^[14], these behaviors fundamentally diverge from transgress community norms and, more especially, infringe against established legislation pertaining to criminal offenses and legal regulations.

Crime trends are undergoing global changes on a daily basis. The number of offenders is also on the rise, with youths increasingly engaging in violent offenses that are growing more prevalent. Moreover, with the alteration of crime patterns, there has been a substantial transformation in our lifestyle, our perceptions of the environment, and our strategies for dealing with crime (Edwin, 2006) ^[10]. While the exact causes of this violence could still not be completely comprehended, significant contributing elements include the discontentment arising from limited employment and financial prospects, particularly among the youth (Azeb, 2009) ^[3]. Social inequality, social exclusion, and inadequate institutional and social safeguards were factors contributing to violence, criminal activities, and antisocial behavior (Sisay, 2015) ^[21].

A delinquent young person is defined as one who is

disobedient and wayward, flees from home and school, is uncontrollable by parents or teachers, is resistant to all forms of discipline, is self-willed, and frequently behaves in a way that is harmful to both his own well-being and the well-being of others (Rathinabalan and Naaraayan, 2017) ^[20]. Effective education, instruction, supervision, and parental nurturing are crucial factors in a child's overall physical and mental growth as the lifestyle, habits, and teachings of parents directly influence the lives of their children (Durisic and Bunijevac, 2017) ^[9]. The mainstream theory of criminology posits that parental education is a critical component in the prevention and management of children's antisocial behaviors (Wallner *et al.*, 2020) ^[23]. The relationship between parenting style and problem behaviors in kids and teenagers has also been supported by later, relevant research (Walters, 2019) ^[24]. According to Glenn and Espelage (2019) ^[15], one major predictor of adolescent delinquency is parental knowledge. Furthermore, the nation's economic, cultural, political, environmental, and law-and-order circumstances significantly influence the attitudes and actions of individuals, especially adolescents. The cognitive abilities of young individuals naturally progress incrementally as they age, enabling them to make informed choices on a wide range of life matters, including social, economic, educational, cultural, and political aspects. However, complications develop when they participate in

any form of antisocial behavior due to various factors. The relationship between crime and age is significant as juveniles exhibit a higher propensity for criminal behavior compared to older individuals, and conversely, older individuals are less likely to engage in criminal activities (Ahmad, 2017) ^[1].

When it comes to a child's physical, social, psychological, and moral growth, society is the second most important institution after the family. Additionally, it has the capacity to deter a young individual from engaging in criminal behavior. A youngster assimilates social standards and values from their society, which exert a profound influence on the child's conduct. There are several negative influences in society that have a detrimental effect on children's behavior, leading them to become delinquents. Problematic neighborhoods have been demonstrated to have high rates of youth delinquency and violence, according to research conducted by Wolff *et al.* (2018) ^[26]. According to Kennedy *et al.* (2019) ^[16], the risk of juvenile delinquency is passed on to adolescents not only via their family but also through their friends. The surrounding area structure and social traits are major predictors of juvenile criminality. There is no doubt that the social relationships that exist within the society will possess an effect on adolescents. According to Steinberg (2006) ^[22] and Wang *et al.* (2020) ^[25], the benefits of community life are indirectly connected to the problem of adolescent delinquency via the process of parenting. That suggests that social interactions will have an effect on the criminal behavior of juveniles. In a subsequent attempt to explain juvenile delinquency, Hirsch attempted to explain it in terms of social interactions. He felt that an individual's attachment to his family, school, and other significant social institutions may predict whether or not he would commit a crime (Brown and Jennings, 2014; Pyle *et al.*, 2020) ^[5, 19]. The following study appraised the growth of social ties by analyzing the interaction between people and their families (Ohtaka and Karasawa, 2019) ^[18], teachers (Mainhard *et al.*, 2018) ^[17], and peers (Amati *et al.*, 2018) ^[2]. This was done in order to determine how individuals grow their social relationships. In addition to their faith in the legal system and their religious beliefs (Bouffard and Rice, 2011) ^[4]. According to Ge *et al.* (2002) ^[13], there is a positive correlation between an individual's affiliation with deviant peers and the presence of communal inferiority and social disorder. Based on research conducted by Brown and Jennings (2014) ^[5] and Copp *et al.* (2020) ^[8], it has been shown that social interactions are the most accurate predictor of criminal behavior. As a result, criminal activity damages social relationships and leads to more criminal activity. According to Ford (2005) ^[12], social ties are the means by which historical acts are connected to future actions. According to these research, social relationships have the potential to forecast the occurrence of criminal activity. Therefore, everything that brings to a weakening of social ties has the potential to assist us in comprehending the development of criminal conduct. These causes include moral degradation, social deviance, immoral acts, and bad

values and norms (Chingtham, 2015) ^[6]. An immature youngster or an individual lacking the ability to discern between right and wrong is very susceptible to being influenced by the prevailing negative practices or ideals of society. Consequently, they are more likely to engage in antisocial acts.

Identifying a singular cause for juvenile delinquency is an unattainable task. The etiology of juvenile delinquency varies among individual children. Various causes, including familial instability, adverse family circumstances, parental addiction, peer influence, and association with delinquent peers, significantly contribute to the rise in child delinquency rates in India. Based on these reviews it is important to explore the current familial and economic factors which are to some extent responsible for delinquency in juveniles.

Objective of the study

- To explore familial and socio-economic status of the juvenile offenders.
- To explore the relationship between aggression and familial factors of the juvenile offenders.

Materials and Methods

This study was carried out in Government observatory of three different districts namely; Ayodhya, Lucknow and Gorakhpur. A total of 300 adolescents (boys) who were in conflict with the law took part in the survey. All of whom were aged between 13 and 18 years old. A letter was issued by the research guide on the behalf of the department of Human development & Family Studies, CSAUA&T, Kanpur to obtain the permission for conducting research in Government observatory homes for CICLs (*Children in conflicts with the Law*) of Ayodhya, Lucknow, and Gorakhpur. The letter was addressed to District Provision Officer of the selected districts. After obtaining approval from D.P.O., wardens of the reform homes were informed about the survey. CICLs were informed that their participation would be voluntary, confidential and anonymous.

Results and Discussion

Table and figure No. 1 indicated that, majority (57%) of the respondents reported that their fathers' had primary education and 17.7 percent reported high school education. Whereas, 11.3 percent juveniles reported that their fathers' are illiterate whereas, 10.7 percent reported that their fathers' had intermediate education. Only 3.3 percent juveniles reported that their fathers' had under-graduated degree. On deeper study it was observed that within this 57 percent majority (65.7%) of the respondents were from Ayodhya district who reported that their fathers' had primary level education. Whereas, within 17.7 percent juveniles who reported that their fathers' had high school education it was detected that majority (20%) were from Gorakhpur district.

Table 1: Percentage and frequency distribution of respondents on their fathers' education

Education of fathers * District Crosstabulation						
			District			Total
			Ayodhya	Lucknow	Gorakhpur	
Education of fathers	Illiterate	Count	0	29	5	34
		% within District	0.0%	29.6%	5.0%	11.3%
	Primary education	Count	67	41	63	171
		% within District	65.7%	41.8%	63.0%	57.0%
	High school	Count	19	14	20	53
		% within District	18.6%	14.3%	20.0%	17.7%
	Intermediate	Count	13	9	10	32
		% within District	12.7%	9.2%	10.0%	10.7%
	Graduation	Count	3	5	2	10
		% within District	2.9%	5.1%	2.0%	3.3%
Total		Count	100	100	100	300
		% within District	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

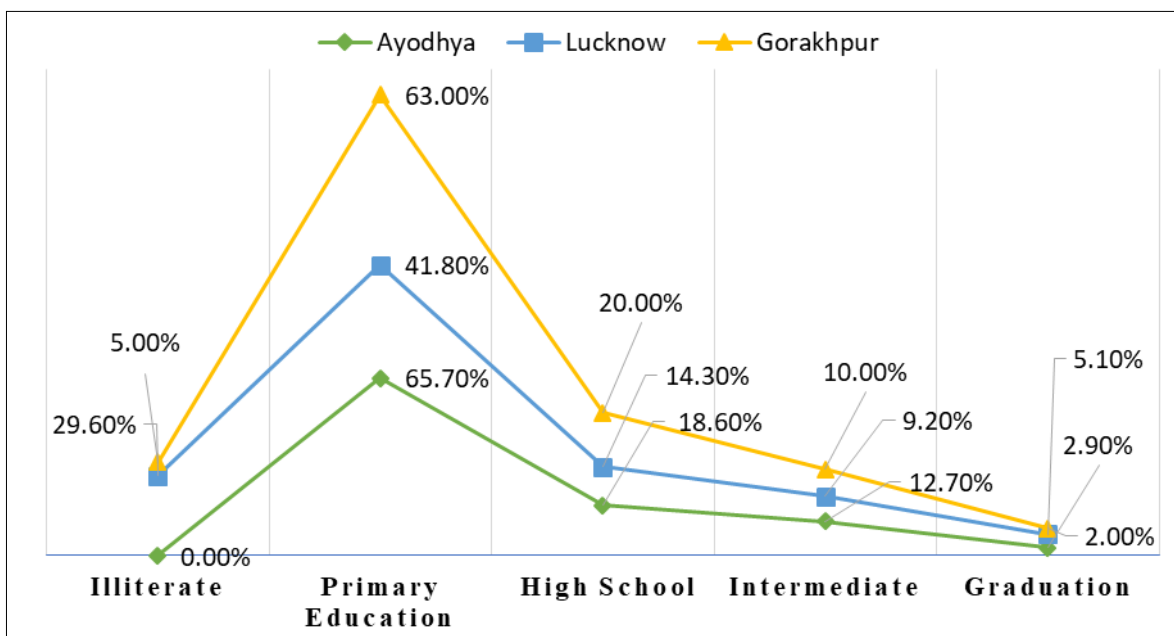


Fig 1 Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to their Fathers' Education

Table 2: Percentage and frequency distribution of respondents on their mothers' education

Education of Mothers * District Crosstabulation						
			District			Total
			Ayodhya	Lucknow	Gorakhpur	
Education of Mothers	Illiterate	Count	0	34	6	40
		% within District	0.0%	34.7%	6.0%	13.3%
	Primary Education	Count	81	43	74	198
		% within District	79.4%	43.9%	74.0%	66.0%
	High School	Count	11	11	9	31
		% within District	10.8%	11.2%	9.0%	10.3%
	Intermediate	Count	7	5	9	21
		% within District	6.9%	5.1%	9.0%	7.0%
	Graduation	Count	3	5	2	10
		% within District	2.9%	5.1%	2.0%	3.3%
Total		Count	100	100	100	300
		% within District	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

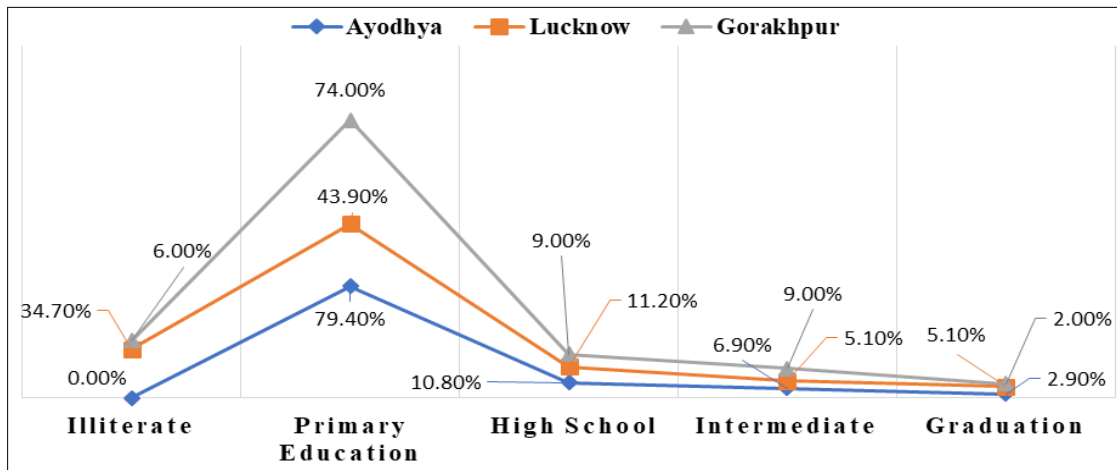


Fig 2: Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to their Mothers' Education

Table and figure No. 2 indicated that, majority (66%) of the respondents reported that their mothers' had primary education and 10.3 percent reported high school education. Whereas, 13.3 percent juveniles reported that their mothers' were illiterate whereas, 7 percent reported that their mothers' had intermediate education. Only 3.3 percent juveniles reported that their mothers' had under-graduated degree. On

deeper study it was observed that within this 66 percent majority (79.4%) of the respondents were from Ayodhya district who reported that their mothers' had primary level education. Whereas, within 10.3 percent juveniles who reported that their mothers' had high school education it was detected that majority (11.2%) were from Lucknow district.

Table 3: Percentage and frequency distribution of respondents on their Fathers' occupation

Fathers' Occupation * District Crosstabulation						
			District			Total
			Ayodhya	Lucknow	Gorakhpur	
Fathers' Occupation	Labour	Count	32	47	30	109
		% within District	31.4%	48.0%	30.0%	36.3%
	Farmer	Count	62	31	60	153
		% within District	60.8%	31.6%	60.0%	51.0%
	Contractor	Count	2	2	3	7
		% within District	2.0%	2.0%	3.0%	2.3%
	Driver	Count	3	5	3	11
		% within District	2.9%	5.1%	3.0%	3.7%
	Mechanic	Count	2	4	4	10
		% within District	2.0%	4.1%	4.0%	3.3%
	Teacher	Count	1	0	0	1
		% within District	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
	Bank manager	Count	0	2	0	2
		% within District	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.7%
	Supervisor	Count	0	2	0	2
		% within District	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.7%
	Railway Worker	Count	0	1	0	1
		% within District	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%
	Sweeper	Count	0	1	0	1
		% within District	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Army personnel	Count	0	1	0	1	
	% within District	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%	
Lawyer	Count	0	1	0	1	
	% within District	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%	
Clerk	Count	0	1	0	1	
	% within District	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%	
Total		Count	100	100	100	300
		% within District	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table and figure No. 3 indicated that, majority (51%) of the respondents reported that their fathers' were farmer. Whereas, 36.3 percent juveniles reported that their fathers' were labours. On deeper study it was observed that within this 51 percent majority (60.8%) of the respondents were

from Ayodhya district who reported that their fathers' were farmers. Whereas, within 36.3 percent juveniles who reported that fathers' were labours it was detected that majority (48%) were from Lucknow district.

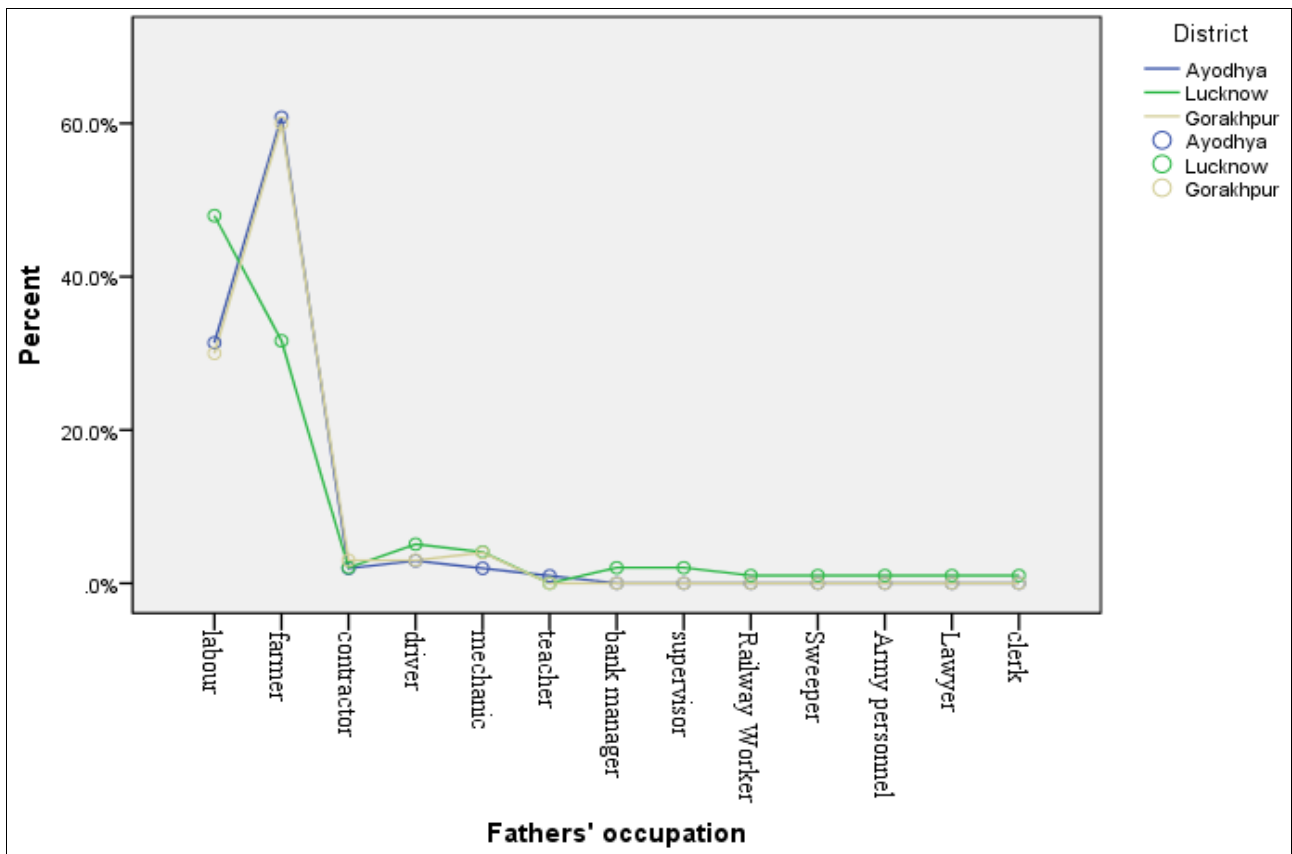


Fig 3: Percentage distribution of respondents on their Fathers' occupation

Table 4: Percentage and frequency distribution of respondents on their mothers' occupation

Mothers' Occupation * District Cross tabulation						
			District			Total
			Ayodhya	Lucknow	Gorakhpur	
Mothers' Occupation	Housewife	Count	98	93	100	291
		% within District	96.1%	94.9%	100.0%	97.0%
	Labour	Count	2	2	0	4
		% within District	2.0%	2.0%	0.0%	1.3%
	Principal	Count	1	0	0	1
		% within District	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
	Sweeper	Count	1	0	0	1
		% within District	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
	Siksha- mitra	Count	0	1	0	1
		% within District	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%
	Guard	Count	0	1	0	1
		% within District	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%
	Asha bahu	Count	0	1	0	1
		% within District	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Total		Count	100	100	100	300
		% within District	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table and figure No. 4 indicated that, majority (97%) of the respondents reported that their mothers' were homemaker. Whereas, 1.3 percent juveniles reported that their mothers' were labours. On deeper study it was observed that within this 97 percent majority (100%) of the respondents were

from Gorakhpur district who reported that their mothers' were homemaker. Whereas, within 1.3 percent juveniles who reported that mothers' were labours it was detected that majority (2%) were from Lucknow district.

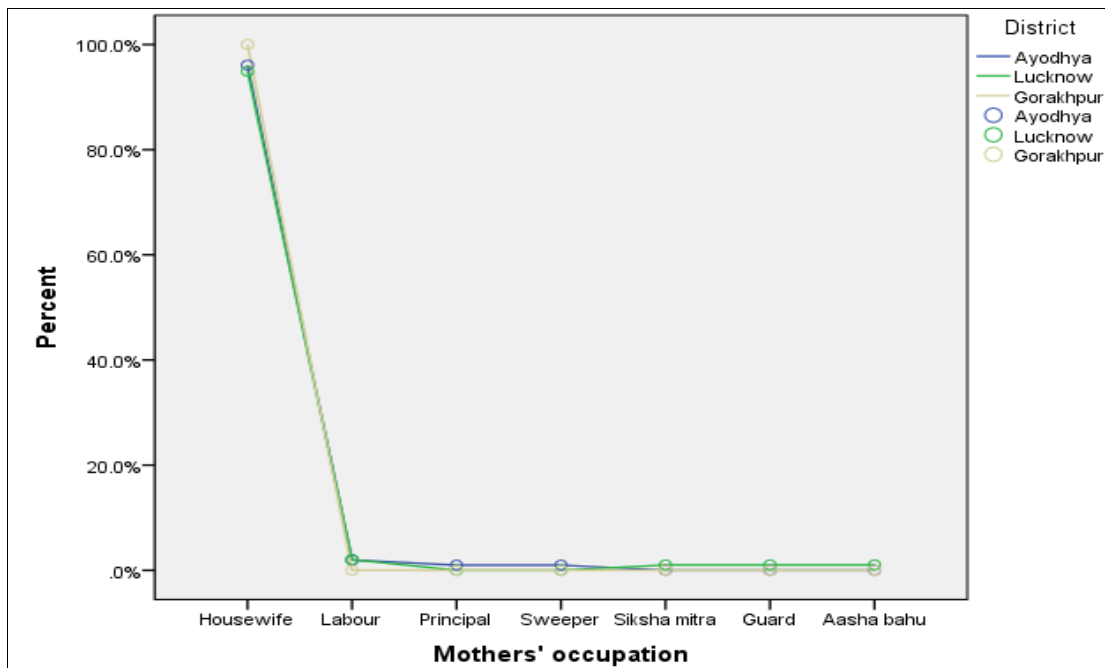


Fig 4: Percentage distribution of respondents on their mothers' occupation

Table 5: Percentage and frequency distribution of respondents on their household income

Total Family Income * District Crosstabulation						
			District			Total
			Ayodhya	Lucknow	Gorakhpur	
Total Family Income	Below poverty line	Count	96	68	92	256
		% within District	94.1%	69.4%	92.0%	85.3%
	Above poverty line	Count	6	30	8	44
		% within District	5.9%	30.6%	8.0%	14.7%
Total		Count	100	100	100	300
		% within District	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table and figure No. 5 indicated that, majority (85.3%) of the respondents reported that their family income was below poverty line. Whereas, 14.7 percent juveniles reported that their family income was above the poverty line. On deeper study it was observed that within this 85.3 percent majority

(94%) of the respondents were from Ayodhya district who reported that their family income was below poverty line. Whereas, within 14.7 percent juveniles who reported that their family income was above the poverty line it was detected that majority (30.6%) were from Lucknow district.

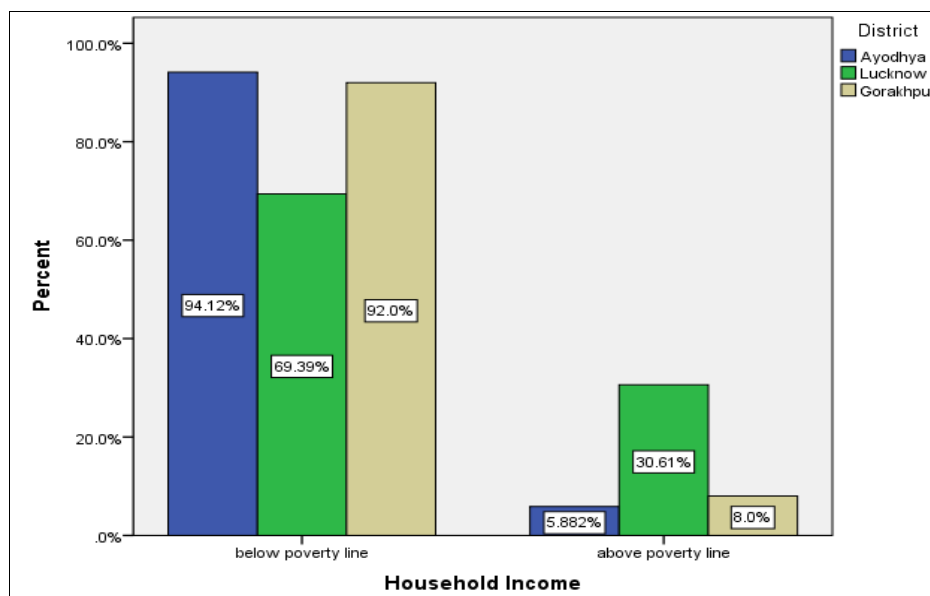


Fig 5: Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to their Family Income

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents According to their Family Type

<i>Family * District Crosstabulation</i>						
			District			Total
			Ayodhya	Lucknow	Gorakhpur	
Family	Joint family	Count	81	58	83	222
		% within District	79.4%	59.2%	83.0%	74.0%
	Nuclear family	Count	21	40	17	78
		% within District	20.6%	40.8%	17.0%	26.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	300
		% within District	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

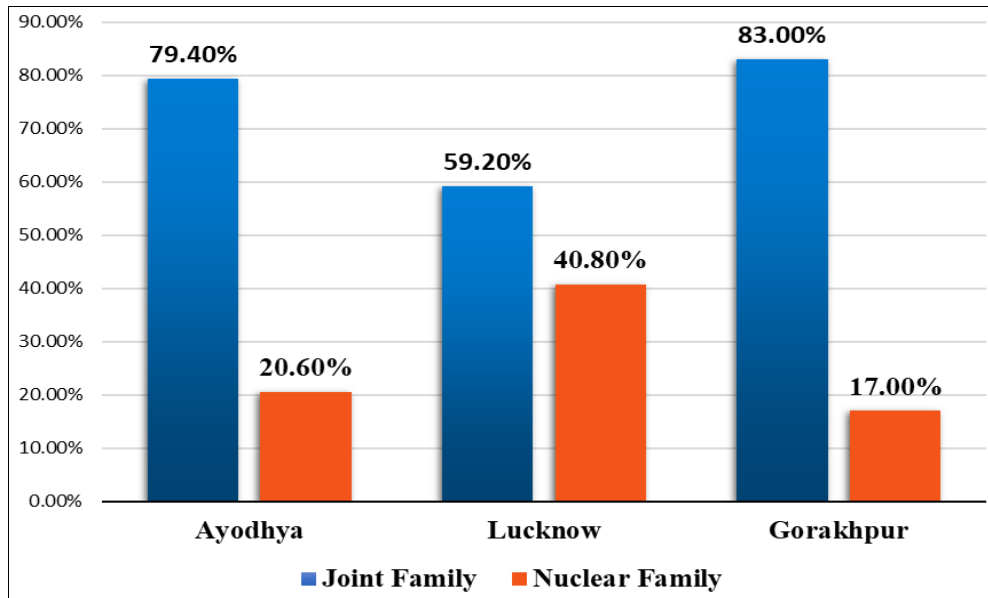


Fig 6: Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to their Family Type

Table and Fig.6 indicated that majority (74%) of the respondents were reported to have joint families whereas, 26 percent reported to have nuclear family. On deeper study, it was observed that within 76 percent majority (83%) respondents from Gorakhpur were reported to have joint

family than the respondents from Ayodhya (79.4%) and Lucknow (59.2%) district. On the contrary, majority (40.8%) respondents from Lucknow district were reported to have nuclear family.

Table 7: Co-relation matrix of Aggression and family type of the juvenile offenders

<i>Correlations</i>							
		Family	Verbal Aggression	Physical aggression	Anger	Hostility	Total Aggression
Family	Pearson Correlation	1	-.028	-.134*	-.025	.030	-.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.629	.020	.666	.603	.387
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
Verbal aggression	Pearson Correlation	-.028	1	.684**	.825**	.523**	.871**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.629		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
Physical Aggression	Pearson Correlation	-.134*	.684**	1	.463**	.701**	.876**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
Anger	Pearson Correlation	-.025	.825**	.463**	1	.422**	.767**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.666	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
Hostility	Pearson Correlation	.030	.523**	.701**	.422**	1	.827**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.603	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
Total Aggression	Pearson Correlation	-.050	.871**	.876**	.767**	.827**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.387	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
 **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

When co-relation was done to explore the association between respondents' family type and aggression it was found that there is no significant correlation between family type and verbal, anger, hostility and total aggression which depicts it has no effect on verbal, anger, hostility and total aggression of the respondents. On the other hand, statistical analysis revealed significant negative correlation between family type and physical aggression (Table No.7). Which means that respondents from nuclear families showed more aggression in physical aspect than respondents from joint families. This finding also resonates with Ferdoos and Ashiq (2015) ^[11], who also found that that children from nuclear families showed higher level of aggression compared to those from joint families. No significant co-relation was found between respondents aggression and their family income.

Poverty and crime are closely associated. The vast majority of juvenile offenders come from families with unskilled laborers. Children from economically disadvantaged families also bear the weight of responsibility and face neglect in terms of their education. Young individuals who are employed are more likely to be involved in criminal activities compared to those who are unemployed. Indeed, adolescents living in impoverished conditions often harbor unmet aspirations, which drive them to resort to criminal activities in order to realize them. Poverty also engenders a feeling of discontent and inadequacy, which further fuels criminal inclinations. People actively seek employment to meet their economic demands, but they often struggle to find jobs due to high levels of unemployment. This unfortunate situation can result in individuals experiencing mental despair and frustration, which in turn can lead to social instability and delinquency within society. Furthermore, the families of these individuals may also become involved in criminal actions. When parents, particularly the father, are unable to provide the essential necessities for the family and children. His financial constraints prevent him from discerning right from wrong and anticipating potential consequences. As a result, he involves his family, including innocent children, in illegal drug activities such as drug trafficking and selling to sustain their livelihood. This not only contributes to criminality in society but also fosters juvenile delinquency (Chowdhury and Fahim, 2019) ^[7].

According to Ferdoos and Ashiq (2015) ^[11], adolescent delinquency has become a prevalent issue in many developed nations due to the swift urbanization and industrialization. The genesis of delinquent conduct is not attributable to a single cause or easily explained. It is influenced by various elements, such as family delinquency, physical factors, and biological factors.

Conclusion

Juvenile delinquency is a highly intricate problem observed in numerous places worldwide. However, the diversity of the country's environmental, political, cultural, social, and law-and-order situations has an effect on people's nature and behaviors, especially those of teenagers. In India, a growing country with one of the highest populations globally, the rate of delinquency among adolescents surpasses that of many other nations. The rate of juvenile criminality is rising daily due to a number of factors, including low educational

attainment, peer and sibling pressure, poverty, unemployment, strict parenting practices, substance abuse, high divorce rates, family strife, child abuse, broken homes, single-parent households, negative social media influence, and foreign cultural influences. The nation is deeply concerned about this problem. Additionally, the country's rate of juvenile delinquency is rising quickly as a result of urbanization and industrialization, which take the youth out of the workforce and away from their primary responsibilities in the areas of education, healthcare, sports, culture, and social and humanitarian work. Minors engage in a range of minor and serious criminal behaviors such as drug dependency, looting, human trafficking, harassment, and grave offenses including sexual assault, theft, armed robbery, abduction, homicide, and rape. It has diverse detrimental effects on minors, families, societies, and countries. It has the potential to ruin the professional prospects of a young person, disrupt familial harmony, and create turmoil within both the family and the community.

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