

**Original research paper**

**CHANGE IN SOCIAL PSYCHE, A TRIGGER TO COMMIT CRIME: A STUDY CONDUCTED ON PRISONERS OF SOUTHERN COASTAL INDIA.**

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**Abstract**

The highest probability of crime related cases and emergence of new vulnerabilities in southern coastal regions of India was the reason for undergoing this study in major prisons of multi hazardous region. A cross-sectional study was conducted on 70 prisoners with 22-35 years of age in three major prisons of southern coastal India in 2014. Interview method was designed and all collected data like age group, sex, educational standards, economic status, prisoner's relationship to victims, type of crime and triggering factors for committing crime were analyzed. All 70 prisoners were male and the crime committed by all was murder. Majority of prisoners (54.29%), related to the victims (65.63%) and non-related to victims (42.11%) were from Cuddalore prison. Among the overall prisoners, 44.28% completed their primary schooling and major factor to commit crime was due to their poor economic condition (37%). Low family income, unemployment and poverty are the major risk factors to commit crime. Parents must teach their children, positive social skills and to manage their problems effectively. More recreation programs should be implemented. Increasing more installation of surveillance CCTVs must be established. Physicians may initiate the use of anti-depressants. Effective laws and policies should be amended that can change the mindset of the society at large.

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**Introduction:**

Crime is an intentional act in violation of the criminal law committed without defense or excuse and penalized by the state. The present study reveals the significant variation in psyche in the society which is endangering the tradition, custom and a neglecting attitude towards law of the land. Deeply entrenched thoughts with respect to the modern day gadgets, brands, lifestyles, pseudo status, etc., triggering the incidence of increased crime. Every crime differs from country to country, region to region, state to state, society to society and also time to time depending on the various situations. So, it is too difficult to mention crime as a universally acceptable definition. According to K.C. Dubey, crime is a deviant behavior that violates prevailing norms cultural standards prescribing how humans ought to behave normally [1]. Our study brings out the complex realities in and around the world of crime and make us understand how changing political, social, economic conditions, educational standards and most predominant, the psychological illness had influence over the present day crimes and the amendments on the legal, law, policies, enforcement and penal codes designed by the society support the deflation of crimes. Crime control is a reconfigured complex of interlocking structures and strategies that are themselves composed of old and new elements, the old revised and reoriented by a new operation context [2].

The accepted social normal life of the people had been interrupted, which stands out as a universal phenomenon behind the terminology crime. Crime is an action that is against one of the public sanctions of any society. A criminal is a person who commits an action that is against

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formal regulations of a country. However, the extent, kind, purpose, motive and intensity of the crime differ from place to place. Being a relative phenomenon, depending on the time, places and occurrence of the crime, it varies widely from society to society. Crimes, theft, violence, addiction, prostitution, robbery and drug dealing are the reasons in causing social deviances [3]. Crime issues are politicized and regularly represented as an emotive aversion which is a cardinal sin in the sense of arguments against the use of human [4].

Research had shown that adolescents whose peers disapproved of delinquent behavior were less likely to report having committed delinquent acts, including sexual assaults [5]. The present work focused on the violent behavior of youngsters for the course of gaining independence from parents and developing a pseudo identity within the peer group. Study indicates that young people were more prone to commit violent behavior because of verbal coercion from friends due to their own personal desire to gain acceptance within their peer group. The career approach explores how criminal behavior progresses, not necessarily in a linear manner, from tentative flirtations with rule breaking, to more sustained involvement in crime and finally to a criminal role and identity [6].

The different criminal activities among the youth had become the most important economic and apolitical issues in the coming decades of southern India, especially when there is a negative impact to the economic growth and displaced lives and livelihoods of the public. The intention of committing crimes had led to decline in security and social capital which were the two main prerequisites for the development and progress of any society and lacking them may end up in recession and increased crime.

The transitional period from childhood to adolescence and adolescence to maturity, youth were generally imposed to face different socio-economic crises. Recent work on relationship between youth violence and crime had proved that teenage groups had major role in committing crime and its outcomes could be analyzed as an adaptive strategy which may provide healthy environments in the society. In this present study, an attempt had been made to study the different risk factors responsible for criminal behaviors of the prisoners and also the youth.

The social action at specific period of time and in a particular society can be regarded as a social deviance, it may be considered normal in a different cultural context or in the same society but within a different time span [3, 7]. The spread of social deviances in general and committing crimes in particular, impose the exorbitant costs on societies that reduces the social security and also by eroding the human resources of society's acts as a main obstacle in the way of development. That is because these social damages deprive individuals and societies from many socio-economic opportunities that form societies.

In this present study, it attempts to offer a sociological analysis of crime in Pondicherry state & Cuddalore prisons from 2010 to 2014. Prisons have long been associated with punishment, deprivation and poor conditions, but it is only recently that prisons have been linked to the treatment and human rights violations of mentally disordered prisoners [8]. Using data analysis method, the findings of the study demonstrate that the highest rate of crime is related to financial reasons and the lowest rate to cultural and political crimes. Our study also reveals the relation between age, lower educational status and the kind of crime. The crimes committed in south coastal regions were more violent, financial and juvenile, indicating the threat of organized and

cooperative crimes among the younger age groups. Since the rate of committing crimes in the target area of our study was dramatically increasing, leading to social damages, the major objective of the present article was to study the social factors that influence in committing crimes like poor economic conditions, peer group pressure, family situations, neighborhood, alcohol addiction and educational status.

### Objectives:

The main objectives of the study are given below:

- A. To analyze the criminality in terms of the theoretical background of criminology to find out the different motivational factors for their involvement in crime.
- B. To study the influence of modern lifestyle being the initiation for committing crime among the middle aged and young population in the modern society.

### Materials & Method:

The present study was concerned for examining the nature of criminality in both rural and urban background criminals lodged in three prisons of Southern-India namely Pondicherry, Karaikal & Cuddalore prisons. The study was conducted in 2014 and all the prison inmates are under the period of imprisonment from 2010 to 2014. Totally seventy (70) respondents had taken part in this study and the majority were under the age group of 22- 35 years. All prisoners willing to participate were included in the study and non-willing prisoners were excluded from the study. An interview method had been used to collect data from the responders from all the three prisons. All collected data and gathered information were presented and generalized in a tabular format and charts. Besides, respondent's age group, sex, educational standards, economic status and the type of crime, the triggering factors for committing crime were also analyzed.

### Results:

This descriptive cross sectional study was conducted on seventy prisoners in three major prisons of southern coastal India in 2014. The study revealed that all the convicted prisoners were male and no females had been jailed in these prisons for committing crime. The crime committed by all the male prisoners was murder and it was executed only for the sake of gain towards modern lifestyle. Every convict in all the prisons had accepted their crime committed and were found guilty of their murder. Those murders committed were not intentional and was accidental or incidentally homicidal during their faulty activity. Causal attributions vary along several dimensions. They may be: internal or external, intentional or unintentional, stable or unstable and controllable or uncontrollable [9].

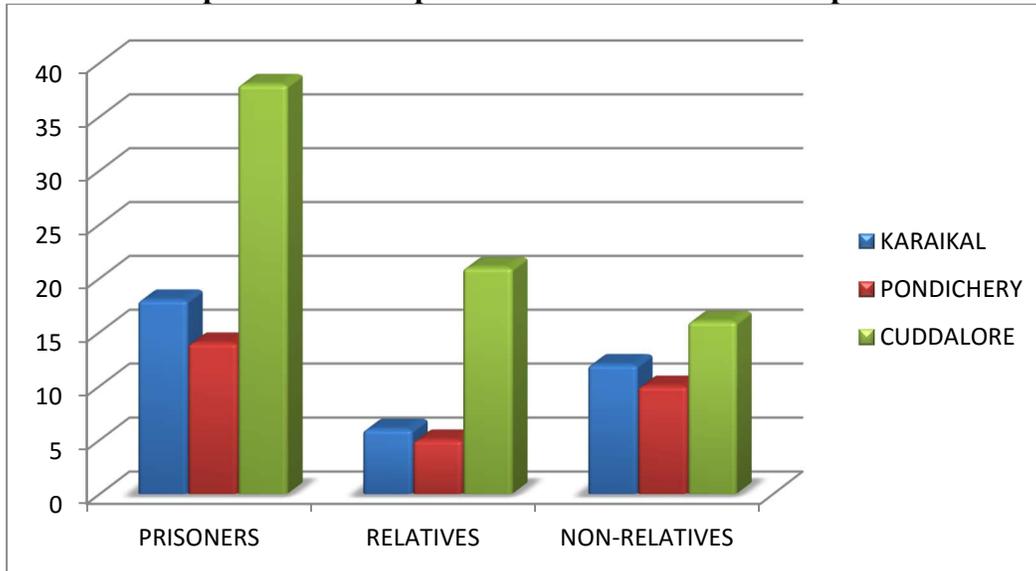
Prisons	Number of prisoners	(%)
Karaikal	18	25.71
Pondicherry	14	20
Cuddalore	38	54.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1: Number of prisoners in various prisons:

Prisons	Relatives		Non-relatives	
	No.	%	No.	%
Karaikal	06	18.75	12	31.58
Pondicherry	05	15.62	10	26.32
Cuddalore	21	65.63	16	42.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>45.71</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>54.29</b>

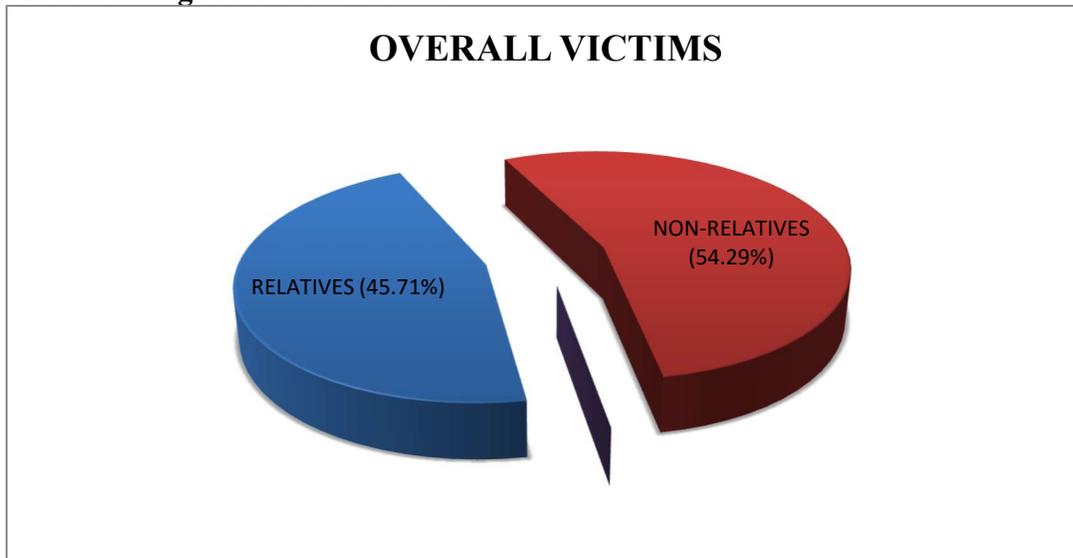
Table 2: Prisoner's and victim's relationship:

**Figure 1 : Number of prisoners in all prisons and victims relationship**



In our study, the Cuddalore prison had the maximum with 38 prisoners (54.29%) when compared to Karaikal and Pondicherry prisons with 18 and 14 prisoners (25.71% and 20%) respectively. These murders involved the relatives and the non-relatives of the convicts. Majority of murder was committed on non-relatives with 38 victims (54.29%) than the relatives with 32 victims (45.71%) (Tab. 1, fig. 1). Among all the prisons, Cuddalore prison had more number of convicts related to the victim (21) and non-relatives (16) as victim when compared to Karaikal with less relatives as victim (06) and non-relatives (12) followed by Pondicherry prison with least number of relatives (05) and non-relatives (10) murdered. The number of victims related to the prisoners in Karaikal and Pondicherry prisons were almost equal percentage and had a gross difference from the Cuddalore prison. This impact on the crime numbers stress on the crime rate occurring in different parts of the city jails (Tab. 2, fig. 2)

**Figure 2: Percentage of overall victims**

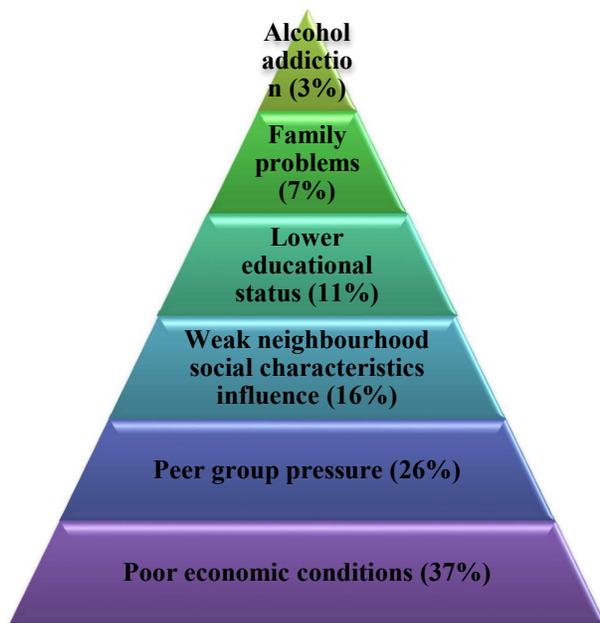


The majority of prisoners had completed their primary schooling (n=31; 44.28%), followed by illiterates (n=18; 24.71%) and higher secondary pass (n=15; 21.42%). None of the prisoners had

**Table 3: Prisoner’s educational status**

EDUCATION	NUMBER OF PRISONERS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Illiterate	18	25.71
Primary schooling	31	44.28
Higher secondary pass	15	21.42
Graduate	02	2.86
Post graduate	00	00
Unknown	04	5.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 3: Factors influencing crime rate**



Poverty had been found as an attribute to greater likelihood of involvement in crime and violence [13]. Self-reported felony assault and robbery have been found to be twice as common among youth living in poverty as among middle class youth [4]. Low family income predicted self-reported teen violence and convictions for violent offenses in several studies. Our study put forth, the poor economic conditions and the peer group pressure had been found responsible among the major factors that creates an impact for the youth and influencing them to commit crime, while alcohol addictions and family problems were the least influencing factors in committing crime.

Most offenders, excluding perhaps psychopaths are not immune to the moral constraints on behavior that influence all socialized beings [14]. The cause of such behavior may be the factors that are external, uncontrollable and unintentional [15]. Uses of anti-depressants can be helpful for the younger age groups in preventing them to commit crime. According to Yasmin amolero et al, although selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) & venlafaxine (serotonin–norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor), were widely prescribed, associations with violence was uncertain [16]. According to a Swedish Professor, more research is needed to confirm their

done their post-graduation studies (tab. 3). The poor economic condition (37%) of the prisoners was the major risk factor influencing the crime, followed by peer group pressure (26%) and influence of weak neighborhood social characteristics (16%). The least risk factor that was responsible for the crime was alcohol addiction (3%) (Fig. 3).

**Discussion & suggestions:**

As, it had been hopefully made clear that this article reveals the present day psyche of the individuals indulged in crime as an outcome of craving towards pseudo status lifestyle. To the best of our knowledge, in the past there were no studies done in south coastal India relating the prisoners and their mental psyche.

All the prisoners were male and these findings were consistent with the literature of Professor Frances Heidensohn, who described the gender crime gap as a robust and long-established finding [10]. The crime committed by all the prisoners was murder. Majority of victims were related to the prisoners; they were consistent with other study indicating that immediate relatives are most likely to be lost in murder [11].

The major risk factor influencing crime was poor economic condition which was consistent with another literature [12].

association. If it is proven, any decision to stop prescribing the drugs to young people would be weighed up against their good indication.

There is one potential solution to many of the problems set above is the installation of more private security services with increased numbers of surveillance CCTVs technologies on city streets which can reduce the severity of crime.

Parents must likely to teach positive social skills to their children, to deal with their problems and to improve their attitude effectively. High-quality mentoring programs, which are often beneficial must be implemented for target thinking, encourage learning, foster motivation, self-confidence and to bring about rehabilitation to the criminals. The importance of rural-urban conceptual framework is necessary that brings together the civil society, private, commercial, district and state sectors. The laws should be amended in such a manner that can change the mindset of the society at large.

Moreover, the significant difference between the various levels of education and committing crimes designates the social control theory that states the individual's commitment can reduce the crimes. Young people from remote backgrounds were often deterred from both entering full-time education and continuing their higher education and reach their full academic potential, which was not achieved because of the economic hardships they conquer, especially debt. More financial help, especially non-repayable bursaries from the government, would aid such people, particularly those enrolled in longer, more prestigious courses. To overcome their financial problems, various sources of income - particularly paid work and debt - must be budgeted against hardship and study time. Interestingly, it was often the fear of debt, rather than actual amount of debt which led to reduced education.

### **Conclusion:**

Low family income, unemployment and poverty are the major risk factors to commit crime and to overcome this, more self-employment among youths and more financial help, especially non-repayable bursaries from government may help them. Parents must teach their children, positive social skills and to manage their problems effectively. More recreation programs should be implemented to target and to change the attitude of youth towards crime. The conceptual rural-urban framework is necessary. Increasing more installation of surveillance CCTVs must be established. If required, physicians may initiate the use of anti-depressants after thorough investigations. Effective laws and policies should be amended in such a manner that can change the mindset of the society at large.

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