



# Effect of Personal and School Factors on Juvenile Delinquency

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*To the Editor:* National Crime Records Bureau 2013 states that 2.6% of juveniles are delinquent and juvenile delinquency accounts for 1.2% of cognizable crimes committed [1]. Multiple factors operate at individual, micro social and macro social levels leading to juvenile delinquency [2]. This study was done with the objective of understanding the effect of personal and school factors on juvenile delinquency.

In this case control study adolescents retained at the Government run Special observation home were cases, while boys of 10, 11, and 12 standards in a government school served as controls. Data on demographic details, offence committed, personal and school factors were collected using a structured proforma. Univariate and multivariate analyses were performed to determine which of the factors acted as risk factors for juvenile delinquency.

Total sixty juveniles and an equal number of school students were interviewed. All of them were boys. Majority of them were charged with theft (78%), while murder (15%) and causing hurt (5%) were other offences. Non vegetarianism, smoking, alcohol intake, substance abuse and history of seizures were significant personal factors while unwillingness to attend school, being aimless during school days, dismissal from school and school truancy were significant school factors identified in univariate analysis. Corporal punishment turned out to be a significant protective factor. Nonvegetarianism, alcohol intake, being aimless in school and school truancy emerged as significant risk factors in regression analysis.

There is scarcity of available literature on association between type of diet and juvenile delinquency. Vegetarianism may develop kindness towards other living things and thus

may have a protective effect. Unwillingness to attend school and lack of career goals are important risk factors for development of juvenile delinquency that were previously reported [3]. The surprising finding of corporal punishment having a protective effect may be explained by the hypothesis that the negative effect of corporal punishment was negated by the positive effect of goal setting which led to the punishment. It has been previously reported that presence of several risk factors has a multiplicative effect [4]. Studies like ours which identify risk factors, pave way for planning preventive strategies against juvenile delinquency.

## Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of Interest** None.

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