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Age and Accountability: Practical Recommendations and Analysis of Juvenile Justice in India

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ABSTRACT

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” These are the words of Franklin D. Roosevelt that stress the deep responsibility that society maintains in shaping the lives of the young, especially regarding juvenile justice. The system of juvenile justice is not only responsible for reintegrating young offenders but also for preventing them from being chronic adult offenders. The juvenile justice approach contrasts significantly with the punitive methodology of the adult justice system. It is restorative and prioritises education, psychological assistance, and community-based approaches that address the deep-seated causes of juvenile crime, such as poverty, trauma, and systemic neglect. Investing in early intervention and rehabilitation is not only a moral imperative but is also vital for society as a whole; it helps reduce recidivism, lowers the crime rate in the long run, and ultimately contributes to better citizens. This research paper argues that a juvenile justice system that is said to be effective supports the moral and pragmatic crime-prevention argument and the complex issue of whether underage offenders should be tried as adults depending on the gravity of the crime committed, consistent with Roosevelt’s vision for our youth: a system that enables young people to face future challenges instead of exacerbating cycles of harm. This research aims to fill that gap by evaluating the effectiveness of various rehabilitation models, policy evaluation and case studies, culminating in an argument for the joint-up redesign of juvenile justice as a vital consequence in utilising society’s instincts and social coherence to achieve meaningful and sustainable public safety.

KEYWORDS

*Juvenile, Justice, Rehabilitation, Prevention,
Recidivism*

*"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can
build our youth for the future."*

- Franklin D. Roosevelt

INTRODUCTION

The paper delves into the juvenile justice system of India, which is a cornerstone of the legal system in the country, as it deals with the youth and prioritises the "best interests of the child" and commits to rehabilitative measures instead of punitive methods. The way the justice system deals with juvenile offenders with processes like correctional homes, educative measures and vocationalisation. Recent reforms in the judicial system are related to the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015.

Children get less harsh punishment for offences than adults because they are often unaware of the consequences and lack malevolent intent. "Doli incapax," which means "incapable of doing any harm or committing a crime," is drawn from the Latin maxim. It is considered that a youngster cannot develop the necessary criminal intent to commit a crime. According to the data, the great majority of juvenile crimes are committed by children from underprivileged neighbourhoods with poor living circumstances, poisonous surroundings, a lack of educational possibilities, difficult survival situations, and more.

Unfortunately, the youngster unintentionally becomes embroiled in criminal behaviour and is arrested as a result. From this point on, the government and state authorities are responsible for the rehabilitation and development of adolescents who are in legal difficulties. However, the fairness and equity are still debatable when it comes to high-profile cases or cases involving marginalised communities with few or no representations. Dalits and Adivasis make up more than 55% of undertrial prisoners, according to the NCRB report of Prison Statistics of India 2015.

While India's JJ Act 2015 has provisions for trying 16-18-year-olds accused of serious crimes (e.g., rape, murder) as adults in extreme situations, it maintains a reformist mindset by mandating specialised Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees. In contrast to the United States, where transfer legislation and mandatory sentences frequently blur the distinctions between juvenile and adult systems, the United

Kingdom emphasises diversion programs and community-based initiatives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is of a descriptive nature, and the research is based on primary and secondary data for deeper analysis about the Indian Juvenile Justice System and its way of dealing with juvenile delinquency in comparison with Western developed nations.

In order to collect information for the paper, doctrinal research has been taken into consideration. Secondary data sources and references from renowned researchers, data from official government sources, websites and references from the Indian Constitution have been made. In order to examine data from many sources in a flexible and open-ended manner, a qualitative analysis of the available materials has been conducted; nevertheless, a personal interpretation of the data has also been created. Deductive reasoning techniques have been considered in order to develop a hypothesis for the subject and to arrive at an adequate reasoning from the relevant facts. Primary data of the survey has also been collected for research.

WHO IS A JUVENILE?

“Juvenile” comes from the Latin word “juvenis,” which means “young.” A person who has not reached the age of eighteen is referred to as a “juvenile” or “child.”¹ Children have several advantages for a nation, both social and economic. First, they are the country's future citizens from a financial perspective. As kids mature, they receive an education and develop the talents that make them valuable members of society and the economy. When they enter the workforce, they carry the information and skill sets required to support a nation's competitiveness in the international zone.² Different states have different ages set in their jurisprudence that define how someone is to be called a juvenile. For example, in India, the people from age 0 to 18 are called juveniles. The majority of states set their juvenile age limit to 18 years, which determines whether the individual will be tried in juvenile court or adult criminal courts. It is so because people of this age (0-18) are believed to lack the intention behind the act committed or lack knowledge of and even the consequences of

¹ “ILE LEGAL BLOG” <<https://blog.iledu.in/juvenile-justice-in-india-after-nirbhaya-rape-case/>>

² Bishnoi E, “NIRBHAYA - THE CAUSE OF THE CHANGE IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE LAW” [2022] Journal of Legal Research and Juridical Sciences 793 <<https://jlrs.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/105.-Eshita-Bishnoi.pdf>>

their actions.

Juvenile delinquencies are often the result of various psychological and environmental factors that mould the young brain in a certain way so that it commits specific acts that are against society or illegal in the eyes of the law. Research shows an emphasis on factors like poverty, personality disorders, history of abuse or violence, substance addiction, family dynamics, emotional dysregulation and also behavioural habits of aggression, lack of control over emotion, impulsivity and diminished capacity for sympathy. They are also often influenced by educational awareness and poor or negative school experiences, which result in frustration and anger, further leading to delinquent behaviour.

Higher rates of delinquency among the following demographics are widely confirmed by research: (1) Boys over girls, particularly for the most serious offences; (2) minority youths for major property and violent offences; (3) youths with delinquent peers; (4) youths who have dropped out of school or who struggle in school; (5) youths whose parents do not communicate with them or keep an eye on their activities; (6) youths who do not believe that the law and its representatives have moral authority; (7) youths who show little empathy or concern for the consequences of their actions on others; (8) youths whose parents have committed crimes or have exhibited violence in their family relationships; and (9) youths from high-crime neighbourhoods with few positive influences in their lives.

JUVENILE JUSTICE IN INDIA

Juvenile justice refers to an area of law and policies connected with criminal offenders who have not yet attained the legal age of adulthood. Broadly speaking, the goal of such laws and policies is to ensure that young offenders receive the legal punishments that they warrant while also providing the protections that they deserve as underage offenders. In this regard, the following are some of the differences and similarities between juvenile and adult justice.

Juvenile Justice has two aspects: Child in Conflict with Law and (CICL) Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP), respectively. CICL is for children who have not yet attained the age of 18 on the day the offence was committed. CNCP is for children, which mainly looks into factors like adoption, child labour and abuse where the child needs the State's care and protection to have a better and fair lifestyle. Individuals who were underage on the day of the commission of the offence are exempted from corporal punishments like the death penalty or life

imprisonment, unlike adult offenders, who are eligible for both of these severe punishments.

Over time, different communities and even different jurisdictions within countries have used different specialised procedures to administer juvenile justice. In the middle of the 19th century, courts in Great Britain gained the power to step in as *parens patriae* (Latin: "parent of the land") to defend children's property rights, which led to the establishment of the concept of delinquency, special trials, and institutions for containing and regulating young people. However, until the establishment of the Juvenile Court of Law in Chicago in 1899, minors were tried in the same courts as adults. Due to the success of the first court specifically designed to handle cases involving delinquent children, other states established juvenile courts, also referred to as family courts or children's court.³

EMERGENCE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE IN INDIA

*"We learn everything from adults. From people who take drugs, we learn to take drugs; from people who make bombs, we learn to make bombs. And that is what we will learn when you send us to jail. So, if you send us to jail, we will become like them."*⁴

Despite having numerous legal frameworks in place throughout India's historical periods, specific legislation preaching juvenile delinquency was notably missing. As cases of child abandonment and juvenile misconduct became more common, authorities increasingly acknowledged the requirement for dedicated legislative responses. During its colonial period, India adapted juvenile justice concepts from England, which had previously established its juvenile legal framework. In 1850, the Apprentices Act was India's first statutory attempt to create an official juvenile process. This statute directed that children aged between ten to eighteen years engaging in illicit behaviour be redirected into apprenticeship programmes as a rehabilitative measure. The Indian Penal Code was implemented 10 years later. While not exclusively focused on juvenile justice administration, it assimilated several provisions regarding youthful offenders. Notably, Section 82 created a complete exemption for children under seven years of age, exemplifying the *doli incapax* principle. Subsequently, a 1919 prison committee was established, whose recommendations led to the enactment of distinct juvenile

³ Jensen and others, "Juvenile Justice | Definition, Systems, History, & Debate" (Encyclopedia Britannica, October 15, 2007)
<<https://www.britannica.com/topic/juvenile-justice>>

⁴ From Arlene Manoharan and Swagata Raha, „Juveniles Need Reform Not Prison“ The Hindu, 24 April 2015.

delinquency legislation across various provinces, with Madras, Bengal, and Bombay pioneering these legal developments. As Professor B.B. Pande of Delhi University has observed, since those initial developments, the dual notions of juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice have undergone a persistent process of evolution and refinement.

HOW DOES THE INDIAN JUDICIAL SYSTEM DEAL WITH JUVENILE DELINQUENTS?

The juvenile delinquent legal system in India is governed by the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act of 2015, which provides a comprehensive legislative framework for dealing with juvenile offenders. The Indian justice system deals with juvenile delinquency in the following ways:

1. Juvenile justice matters involving minors are decided by Specialised Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs), which are district-level organisations. JJBs, which are made up of two social workers and a judicial magistrate, are responsible for ensuring that the child's best interests are always put first in all legal proceedings. Depending on the circumstances of each case, they can recommend appropriate dispositions such as probation, rehabilitation, or placement in a special home.
2. Child Welfare Committees (CWCs): These district-level organisations oversee the upbringing, care, and protection of vulnerable children, including young criminals. CWCs play an important role in monitoring and supporting juvenile justice operations, such as evaluating children who have broken the law and providing them with the necessary aid and therapy.
3. Reformation and Restoration: The Juvenile Justice Act places a heavy emphasis on assisting young people who have committed crimes to regain their footing and rejoin society. Counselling, education, vocational training, and skill development programs are among the rehabilitation options used to treat the underlying causes of delinquent behaviour and encourage juvenile offenders' social inclusion. The Act recognises the need for family-centered assistance and care throughout the rehabilitation process.
4. Procedure Protections: Throughout the judicial system, juvenile offenders are protected by a number of procedural safeguards designed to protect their rights and welfare, including the right to privacy, a timely trial, legal representation, and the right to be heard. To protect the identity and dignity of minor offenders, additional confidentiality measures are in place for juvenile hearings.

The amendment shed more light on the definition of what the Act looks into it brought two aspects that the Juvenile Justice Act takes care of: Children in Conflict with Law (CICL) & Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP). Before this amendment, the Act only stated “Children,” which was very vague and needed clarity. It changed the term from “Juvenile” to “CICL & CNCP” and also made the line between CICL and CNCP and also the Children in Conflict with Law that needed Care and Protection.⁵

The JJ Board is expected to pass judgements while keeping two aspects in mind-

1. Whether the child has committed the offence they are alleged of;
2. Best interest orders that enable rehabilitation and reintegration of the child, as envisaged in the Preamble and Fundamental Principles.

COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS OF INDIA AND WESTERN COUNTRIES

India vs. Germany

India, despite being a developing nation, has fewer juvenile delinquents compared to developed nations, and young people are not playing any criminal role which is great for a nation with such socio-economic diversity but it lacks in the processes of rehabilitation where the developed nations have an upper hand.

Countries like Germany focus more on rehabilitation, vocationalisation, and educational measures compared to punitive and deterrent measures in India. But there is an emergence of reforms in the Indian justice system when it comes to juveniles; the focus and methods have now shifted to rehabilitative measures instead of corporal punishments.⁶

Both nations lack the factor of accountability when it comes to juvenile regimes, introducing stricter laws and better clarity on what factors to be considered

⁵ Government of India, “The Juvenile Justice (Care And Protection Of Children) Act, 2015” (2016) <<https://cara.wcd.gov.in/pdf/jj%20act%202015.pdf>>

⁶ aklegal, “Comparative Analysis of Juvenile Justice Systems of India- an Adversarial System and Germany- an Inquisitorial System” (A.K. Legal & Associates, May 18, 2024) <<https://aklegal.in/comparative-analysis-of-juvenile-justice-systems-of-india-an-adversarial-system-and-germany-an-inquisitorial-system/>>

India vs. United States of America

In the American juvenile system, individuals can be tried as adults even at the age of 13 or 15 if the gravity of the crime committed is too much. Whereas, in India, juvenile offenders of the ages 16-18 can be tried as adults, and delinquents committing serious crimes will still be exempted from corporal punishments as their age on the day the crime was committed was within the age range of the Juvenile Justice Act, which only makes them eligible for severe punishment but not capital punishments.⁷

CHALLENGES

⁸Despite progressive legislation, India's juvenile justice system has substantial operational issues. The criminal justice system as a whole is plagued by large backlogs, with courts in India alone dealing with over 3.5 crore cases, more than 85% of which are in the district and subordinate court levels. This institutional inefficiency unavoidably affects juvenile situations as well.

A troubling component of India's criminal justice system is the disproportionate representation of marginalised populations in prison. According to the NCRB study on Prison Statistics of India 2015, Dalits and Adivasis account for more than 55% of all under-trial prisoners. This raises concerns about systemic biases and the equal application of juvenile justice principles across all socioeconomic strata.

The methods for rehabilitation for juveniles in India need certain reforms regarding transforming juvenile justice homes from custodial institutions into centres of genuine rehabilitation, addressing infrastructure deficiencies, ensuring legal protections, improving rehabilitation programmes, and establishing robust oversight mechanisms. Even though the main focus is on rehabilitation and correction the accountability is a factor that should be considered as severity of crime and evidences justifies the intention behind it.

System of Juvenile Justice Specialised Courts and Boards The establishment of specialised juvenile justice courts and boards

⁷ Rastogi P and Mandal S, "Justice System: A Comparative Study between India and the U.S.," vol 1 (International Journal of Policy Sciences and Law) <https://ijpsl.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Justice-System-A-Comparative-Study-between-India-and-the-US_Pragya-Rastogi-Shruti-Mandal.pdf>

⁸ Rastogi P and Mandal S, "Justice System: A Comparative Study between India and the U.S.," vol 1 (International Journal of Policy Sciences and Law) <https://ijpsl.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Justice-System-A-Comparative-Study-between-India-and-the-US_Pragya-Rastogi-Shruti-Mandal.pdf>

marked a departure from the traditional criminal justice system. These specialised authorities adhere to the principles of child welfare, protection, and rehabilitation so that they can make decisions about instances involving juvenile offenders.

Leniency of the Juvenile justice board in heinous crimes

In the Nirbhaya rape case, Mohammed Afroz was the juvenile defendant. The juvenile justice board used his birth certificate and school records to prove that he was 17 years and 6 months old on the day of the offence. A bone ossification test (age determination) was requested by the police to ascertain his precise age, but the JJB denied the request.

On January 28, 2013, the JJB concluded that Afroz would not be prosecuted as an adult. His trial was held separately in a juvenile court. After a prolonged trial, he was pronounced guilty of rape and murder under the juvenile justice act on August 31, 2013. He was sentenced to three years in a rehabilitation facility, including the eight months he was incarcerated while the trial was underway. He was released on December 20, 2015.

His comparatively lenient conviction, despite the gravity of the act, provoked a heated debate about whether the juvenile justice system was appropriate for dealing with such terrible transgressions.

This incident sparked widespread calls for reformation, including demands from Nirbhaya's parents and the general public to amend the Juvenile Justice Act so that juveniles who commit particularly serious crimes can be prosecuted and sentenced as adults. The government responded by revising the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, which now allows minors aged 16 to 18 to be tried as adults in cases involving exceptionally violent crimes like rape and murder. The modification required a case-by-case examination of the juvenile's mental and physical competence to conduct the offence, intending to ensure that the penalty better reflected the gravity of the act.

The co-accused Afroz was 17 years and 6 months old when he committed the crime, and despite the severity of the offense, he was not tried as an adult simply because only six months remained until he became one, as if those six months would have made him significantly more mature in his decision-making.

Challenges faced by bringing this change in the regime

- 1) May lead to premature sentencing, which will ultimately lead to injustice and violation of fundamental rights as well as the principle of “innocent until proven guilty”.
- 2) Lack of standardised assessment techniques, as maturity cannot be standardised everyone is capable of thinking on a different scale, irrespective of their age.
- 3) Juvenile justice’s main focus relies on reformatory methods of correctional homes, education and counselling instead of punitive methods like severe sentences, bringing this change would destroy this principle.

SUGGESTIONS⁹

1. The concept of rehabilitation and reintegration is at the core of the response that the Indian legal system takes to the issue of juvenile delinquency. Instead of just punishing juvenile criminals, the objective is to treat the underlying causes of delinquent behaviour. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to provide them with the resources and assistance they require in order to get back into society as law-abiding members.
2. The protection of the rights of juveniles The Indian judicial system has played a significant role in protecting the rights of juvenile offenders, including the right to legal representation, the right to confidentiality, and the right to a fair trial. Interventions by the judicial system have been undertaken with the intention of ensuring that juvenile offenders are treated with dignity and are provided with the opportunity to behave in court.
3. Emphasis on Restorative Justice: India's juvenile justice system has adopted restorative justice concepts, which focus on healing both victims and offenders and repairing the harm caused by criminal behaviour. Restorative justice strategies such as victim-offender mediation and community conferences allow juvenile offenders to accept responsibility for their actions, make amends, and reintegrate into their communities.
4. Integration of Mental Health Services: Juvenile offenders, many of whom have undergone trauma or mental health issues, have mental health needs that the judiciary has recognised as crucial. As part of the rehabilitation process, courts have the jurisdiction to order mental health assessments and offer access to psychiatric care, therapy, and counselling. Integrating mental health services into the juvenile justice system guarantees that juvenile offenders

⁹ Kadam S, Bhume PR and Jagtap RB, “A Research Study On The Juvenile Justice System And Its Impact on Juveniles” (Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission, 2023) report.

receive the necessary assistance to address the underlying issues that contribute to their delinquent behaviour.

Why is pre-release planning important?

When minors who have encountered legal issues are placed in rehabilitation facilities or correctional institutions, they are distanced from the adverse living circumstances that contributed to their unlawful actions. This division results in a transformation within them; nonetheless, should they be reintegrated into the same surroundings, they would likely re-establish the detrimental ties, influences, or previous traumas that led to their unlawful actions. This may lead to a resurgence in criminal behaviour, along with a projected rise in the incidence of offences. Moving ahead, strategic planning prior to release is implemented to ensure that recidivism does not emerge as an issue once the rehabilitation process has concluded.

CHANGES THAT CAN BE BROUGHT

In India, juveniles commit severe crimes but are often released or introduced to reformative methods but is that really serving justice and regard to national safety?

The Juvenile Justice Act can incorporate few changes or provisions that can lead to better functioning, stricter laws, more accountability and as a result a better and safe citizen of the country.

Changes that can be brought-

- a. Instead of the fixed age range of 0-18 for juvenile offenders, the mindset and severity of offences can be considered. This would give the area to understand mental and physical maturity, which obviously had a role when the crime was committed.¹⁰
- b. An equilibrium between rehabilitation and accountability of juveniles. As the regime suggests reformative methods instead of punitive methods, but for juveniles who show maturity and severity in crime and have firm intentions should be treated accordingly.¹¹

¹⁰ Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, "Paying Lip Service to the Silenced: Juvenile Justice in India," vol Vol. 21 (2008) <<https://journals.law.harvard.edu/hrj/wp-content/uploads/sites/83/2020/06/21.1HHRJ155-Rickard.pdf>>

¹¹ Hingorani A, "Juvenile Justice Law: Person with Maturity Must Not Get Blanket Immunity from Criminal Process" *The Indian Express* (November 28, 2022) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/offender-vs-offence-juvenile-justice-bill-8293489/>>

- c. Critics also state that preliminary assessment violates Article 21 and Article 14, as they inform a form of sentencing before the guilt is proven. But the process also helps evaluate the accused on a psychological level, as adolescents of different ages show distinct levels of maturity.
- d. Evaluation outside of the absolute age blanket will also rule out the possibility of arbitrariness of age limit set as maturity is not co-related with age.
- e. It permits the legal system to discern between adolescents who truly lack maturity and those who possess the understanding to be held criminally liable as adults, thereby harmonising with the notion of individualised justice.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS THAT CAN BE INCORPORATED AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL

UN and UNCRC (UN Convention on The Rights of the child), can incorporate judicial assessment as the main object of exercise which can practically aid in reducing the number of young offenders coming in the juvenile justice system with more better and faster methods which can have a long lasting impact on the individual.

To reinforce this approach, India may create standardised, evidence-based protocols for maturity evaluations that draw on developmental psychology and neuroscience to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency. This would resolve concerns about the subjective character of present evaluations and accord with worldwide best practices.

CASE LAWS

1. *Barun Chandra Thakur v. Master Bholu & others.*¹²

The case involved a class 2 youngster in Haryana who was found killed with his throat slit in a school washroom.

- The CBI accused the suspect, who happened to be a class 11 student.
- Because the suspect was over the age of 16, Section 15 of the Juvenile Justice Act of 2015 would be used in this case.
- The JJ Board conducted a preliminary examination of the juvenile in conflict with the law to determine whether the juvenile should be tried as an adult or a juvenile.

¹² 2022 SCC OnLine SC 870.

Issue: The assessment procedure under section 15 of the act depended significantly on the psychologist's IQ score, which was considered good. The concern was whether such a preliminary assessment could be relied upon.

The Court's Decision: The Board and the Children's Court appear to have agreed that mental capacity and the ability to understand the consequences of the offence were synonymous.

If the youngster had the mental capacity to conduct the act, he was also capable of understanding the consequences of the offence. Thus, it considered the judgement that it was a major error made by them.

As a result, a preliminary examination might be performed in order to test the adolescent as an adult.

2. *Sheela Barse and Others v. Union of India (UOI) and Others*¹³

The petitioner, Sheela Barse, submitted a petition to the court under Article 32 of the Constitution of India, seeking:

- Comprehensive information regarding children incarcerated in jails;
- The release of children under the age of 16 years detained in various state jails;
- An order for State Legal Aid Boards to appoint duty counsel to provide legal assistance to these children as needed;
- An order for District Judges to inspect jails and sub-jails within their jurisdiction to ensure proper care for the children;
- Information pertaining to the existence of juvenile courts, homes, and schools.

The sole concern voiced pertained to the treatment of minors under the age of 16, specifically about their appropriate care and management by the authorities in the jails where they were housed.

The court ruled that all states must implement the Children's Act without delay. All states where the Children's Act is in effect must ensure its appropriate administration. The Jail Manuals must be rigorously adhered to, and every District and Sessions judge is required to inspect the district jail at least once every two months to guarantee compliance with

¹³ (1986) 3 SCC 596.

regulations.

The Union Government was required to deposit a payment of Rs. 10,000 within two weeks in the Court Registrar, which the petitioner may use to cover her fees.

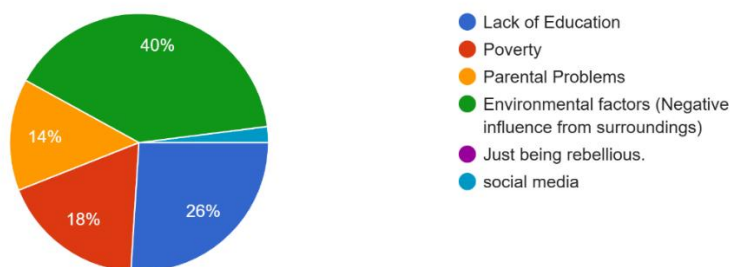
SURVEY & REPORTS

A survey was conducted through online forms; it was circulated through messaging, social media and word of mouth. Which gave us primary data, and what does the general public think about the juvenile justice system in India, and is there enough awareness about the system within the general public or non-legal individuals?

A questionnaire was constructed for the purpose of the survey. The sample size was of 50 respondents. The responses were taken through online survey through social networking sites and also, from few offline surveys.

According to you, what might be the reason behind juveniles committing offences?

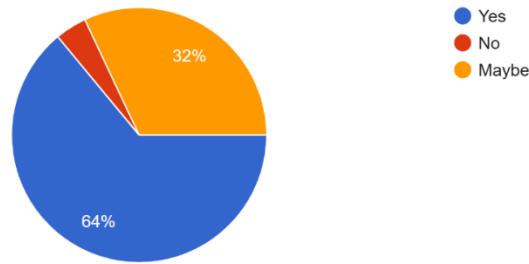
50 responses



- According to 26% respondents, the primary reason behind juveniles committing crime is Lack of education.
- According to 18% respondents, the primary reason behind juveniles committing crime is Poverty.
- According to 14% respondents, the primary reason behind juveniles committing crime is Parental Problems.
- According to 40% respondents, the primary reason behind juveniles committing crime is Environmental Factors.
- According to 2% respondents, the primary reason behind juveniles committing crime is Social Media.

According to you, juveniles who have committed heinous crimes should be tried as adults?

50 responses



- According to 64% respondents, the children in conflict with law should be tried as an adult.
- According to 32% respondents, the children in conflict with law maybe tried as an adult.
- According to 4% respondents, the children in conflict with law should not be tried as an adult.

In your opinion, what should be the main goal of the juvenile justice system in India?

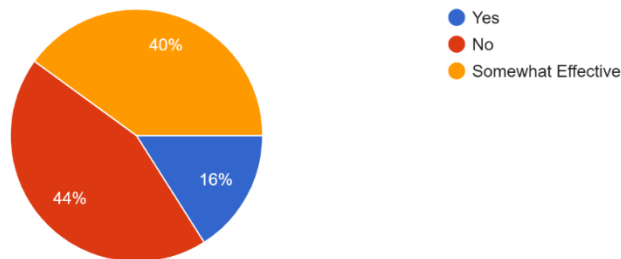
50 responses



- According to 22% respondents, the main goal of the juvenile justice regime should be, to punish young people so they learn a lesson.
- According to 54% respondents, the main goal of the juvenile justice regime should be to help young people change their behaviour and become good citizens.
- According to 20% respondents, the main goal of the juvenile justice regime should be, to make sure victims of young people's crimes get justice
- According to 4% respondents, the main goal of the juvenile justice regime should be, to keep the community safe from young offenders.

Do you think the current laws in India are effective in dealing with young people who commit crimes?

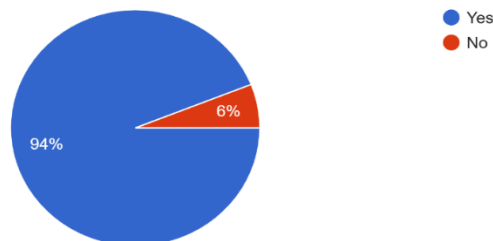
50 responses



- According to 44% respondents, the current laws in India are not effective in dealing with young people who commit crimes.
- According to 40% respondents, the current laws in India are somewhat effective in dealing with young people who commit crimes.
- According to 16% respondents, the current laws in India are effective in dealing with young people who commit crimes.

Do you think that the system has certain biases when it comes to high-profile cases of juveniles?

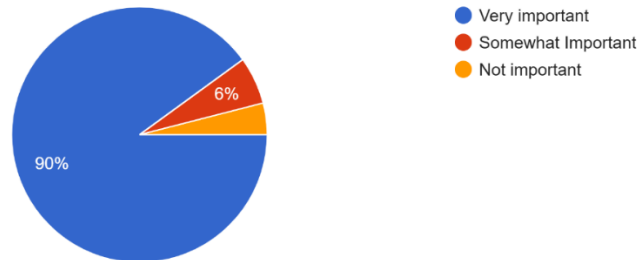
50 responses



- According to 94% respondents, the system has certain biases when it comes to high-profile cases of juveniles.
- According to 6% respondents, the system does not have certain biases when it comes to high-profile cases of juveniles.

How important do you think it is to provide education and job training to young people who have been in the juvenile justice system?

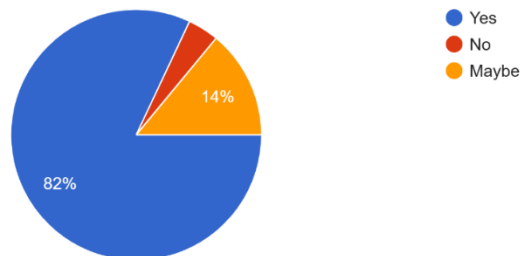
50 responses



- According to 90% respondents, it is very important to provide education and job training to young people who have been in the juvenile justice system.
- According to 6% respondents, it is somewhat important to provide education and job training to young people who have been in the juvenile justice system.
- According to 4% respondents, it is not important to somewhat important provide education and job training to young people who have been in the juvenile justice system.

Do you think that legal and educational awareness can help reduce juvenile crimes in India?

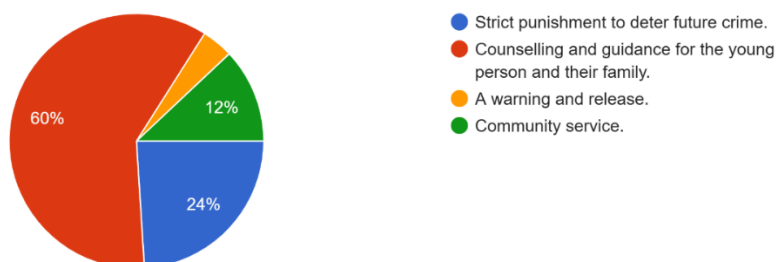
50 responses



- According to 82% respondents, legal and educational awareness can help reduce juvenile crimes in India.
- According to 14% respondents, legal and educational awareness can maybe help reduce juvenile crimes in India.
- According to 2% respondents, legal and educational awareness can not help reduce juvenile crimes in India.

If a young person commits a minor crime for the first time, what do you think should be the most appropriate response?

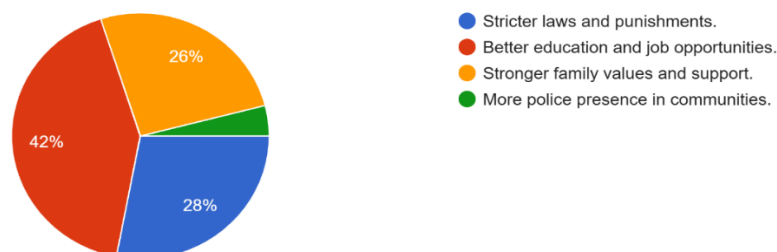
50 responses



- According to 24% respondents, strict punishment to deter future crime should be the most appropriate response.
- According to 60% respondents, Counselling and guidance for the young person and their family should be the most appropriate response.
- According to 4% respondents, A warning and release is the appropriate response.
- According to 12% respondents, Community service should be the most appropriate response.

In your opinion, what is the most important thing that can prevent young people from getting involved in crime in the first place?

50 responses



- According to 28% respondents, Stricter laws and punishments can prevent young people from getting involved in crime in the first place.
- According to 42% respondents, Better education and job opportunities can prevent young people from getting involved in crime in the first place.
- According to 26% respondents, Stronger family values and support can prevent young people from getting involved in crime in the first place.
- According to 4% respondents, more police presence in communities can prevent young people from getting involved in crime in the first place.

CONCLUSION

India evolved its juvenile justice system, but it certainly lacks in a few areas that raise certain questions, like whether there are enough facilities to rehabilitate delinquents. Should they be tried as adults even after being underage? Or are they capable of committing such crimes and should be eligible for corporal punishments under the name of justice?

The regime should focus on developing its rehabilitative measures with better facilities that help make or change an individual and reach their true potential instead of creating a criminal background from a young age due to various factors like lack of education, poverty, and negative influence.

Even though the system is in place, there are provisions guarding rights of juvenile and also bringing a change into the society but it certainly raise some questions when it came to severe crimes that were committed by Juveniles and it was pictured as the law protecting them instead of reformative measures or correction in their behaviour and actions.

The controversy over prosecuting juveniles as adults continues, as some crimes require harsh punishment yet, numerous studies show that juveniles are more receptive to rehabilitation than adults, who are frequently less reformable and more likely to reoffend. Developing a standardised strategy is difficult since there is no scientific way for precisely determining an offender's maturity, and balancing rehabilitation, justice, and responsibility is extremely complicated in a varied diveresified culture that of India.

Researchers are of the opinion that policies should address the root causes of juvenile crime and increase legal and educational awareness to prevent offenses. Effective implementation and possibly a standardized evaluation method for minor offenders are needed. By prioritizing rehabilitation, the Indian Juvenile Justice System can offer young offenders a better chance at redemption and reduce recidivism.