

# Reading Habits of Juveniles in the Observation Homes of Tamil Nadu, India

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**Abstract** - We all understand that the children are the life deposits of the society, supports of the nation building processes and clearly stated energy stored basins of any realm and the builders of the upcoming world. They are the superlative resources of any country and hence every effort should be made to provide them equal opportunities for their development. Some children who conflict with laws by committing crimes are keeping on increasing in the recent times. The reason behind this situation is poverty prevailing in the families, poor educational status of the parents and nature of dwelling places. But beyond all these features, the government machineries are trying to do something for the children who already have committed crimes whether petty or major and keep them in the observation homes to correct them on the one hand and to impart certain value-based education and vocational activities on the other hand. Reading is a powerful tool for people in every walk of life, but it takes on special significance for inmates. Reading books not only builds their knowledge and vocabulary, but it also develops their capacity for internal reflection - a crucial skill often lacking among delinquents. The present study is an attempt to analyse reading habits of Juveniles in the observation homes of Tamil Nadu.

**Keywords:** Juveniles, Observation Homes, Reading Habits, Knowledge, Criminals

## I. INTRODUCTION

Every society establishes some social and moral norms to maintain harmony and order in its structure. Such norms and standards of the society determine the activities of the individuals, which can be considered normal or permissible. The society persuades its members to follow them strictly by framing legal laws and codes. Any deviation from these norms is an abnormal behavior and is referred to as an antisocial behaviour or a crime. If abnormal acts are pronouncedly deviant, if they pose threat to communal order, and if they are inimical to social peace and harmony, this adversely affects the social stability. Antisocial behaviour or criminal tendency is not only found among the adults or grown-ups, but also among children and adolescents, who are minor in age.

Juvenile can be defined as a child who has not attained a certain age at which he, like an adult person under the law of the land, can be held liable for his criminal acts. The juvenile is a child who is suspected to have dishonored

some law which declares the act or omission on the part of the child as an offence. Juvenile in lawful terms is used in different contexts. Juvenile is used when orientation is made to a young criminal offenders and minor relates to legal capacity.

There is quote which says, "Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope". This implies that reading good books can make a person be right and do right. Juveniles in observation homes are isolated from their family, friends, and the society. When such children are inclined towards reading good books that opens their gate to life. Hence, books can be rightly called as tools to sculpt future.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kierkus and Bauer (2002) discover that delinquents have been viewed as individuals who come from less-intact families often referred to as broken homes. In common, the term "broken home" has been operationally defined to mean children residing in single-parent households or any type of household other than a household in which both biological parents are present. In contrast, an intact family usually refers to a nuclear family arrangement in which both biological parents reside in the household with their biological children. Unbroken family arrangements vary from other modern day family arrangements including single-parent arrangements, two-parent arrangements involving a step-parent, extended family arrangements, and the adoptive or foster family arrangement.

Hooper-Greenhill, E. (2004) through their research say that the family's dysfunction is the crucial factor for criminal offending. In part because parents monitor and provide nurturance to children, it is thought that the loosening of bonds among family members may result in more criminal involvement.

In recent years, an increase in the number of juvenile delinquents has sparked interest and concern about juvenile delinquent behaviors and effectiveness of the juvenile justice system. Many researchers and policy makers regard juvenile delinquency as one of the world's most critical social issues.

Maruna, S., & Le Bel (2010) explain that the variables of socioeconomic position, the level of parental control, parental attachment, relative dispossession, hopelessness, anomie, personality, and self-alienation are significantly related with the intensity of delinquency. As there are fewer welfare schemes and facilities available to the lower social classes' adolescents, they are prone to frustration because they view the society dominant values and norms as obstacles to achieving their goals. Aggression is the usual reaction to the disturbance and deprivation. Therefore, the children tend to engage in violent activities, and they confront with the societal norms. On the other hand, if they find that all legal ways to reach their goals are blocked, they will lose their hope and will prefer isolation, solitude, and seclusion. Therefore, since these adolescents find that the possibilities and facilities are unfairly distributed by the dominant society structure they tend to rebellion and revolt and/or seclude themselves from others and both cases would lead to deviance from norms and values of the society.

Trounstine, J., & Waxler (2006) reveal that the family faithfulness, family cohesiveness, and family flexibility

affect explicitly on adolescent misconduct among auxiliary school understudies in Uyo city. 32% of the respondents that demonstrated side effects of misconduct are from in place families rather than 15% from single-guardian families and 53% from other non-in-place family plans. Therefore, family security has a huge impact on adolescent misconduct among auxiliary school understudies

Warr, J., (2016) portrays the attention that the pattern of the relationships between social relations and personality is interesting. While restraint primarily relates to peer characteristics, distress and its subscales primarily relate to family characteristics. These data suggest that the family environment leaves an impact on these delinquent youths emotionally. Distress, a personality trait also previously shown to be related to criminal historical factors, was most strongly associated with a history of abuse, the most robust family variable. Child abuse has been associated with multiple psychological sequelae, including emotional distress.

TABLE I OBSERVATION HOMES SELECTED FOR THE STUDY

Sl. No.	Name and Address of the Observation Homes in Tamil Nadu
1	Government Observation Home for Boys and Girls, Chennai-600 010
2	Government Observation Home for Boys and Girls, Tirunelveli-627 003
3	Government Observation Home for Boys Thanjavur-613 007
4	Government Observation Home for Boys and Girls, Tiruchirapalli-620 002
5	Government Observation Home for Boys and Girls, Salem-636 007.
6	Government Observation Home for Boys and Girls, Cuddalore-607 001.
7	Observation Home for Boys and Girls under Madurai Children Aid Society, Madurai-625 009.
8	Observation Home for Boys and Girls under Discharged Prisoner's Aid Society, Coimbatore-641 037

### III. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

A child is absolutely born innocent but certain social and environmental factors in a negative aspect diverge their minds towards criminal tendencies, whose removal might mould them into a person of stature and excellence. We all know that Children are the assets and wealth of any nation. A healthy environment should be provided to all children so that they become civilized citizens who are physically fit, socially active, and mentally conscious, equipped with all skills and active participation required by the society.

For reducing inequality and ensuring social justice an equal opportunity for development to all children should be given, which consecutively would work as an effective measure to prevent children from becoming delinquent in any society. There is a general attitude towards children to behave obediently, show respect towards others and imbibe

behaviour having high moral values but due to various circumstances children are being diverted from social and general command.

Recently, juvenile delinquency has become an important aspect of criminology. Juveniles have got serious forms of delinquent behavior which may hamper the stability and social command of our society. The deviant behavior of the juveniles has created social disorder and destruction of moral values which is creating an alarming position in organized society. Hence the juveniles are pushed into observation homes when they commit a crime or act against law. So paving way for them to move towards discipline, morals etc., is a vital task and good books are the only tool that serves this purpose. The present study analyses the reading habits of juveniles in the observation home.

#### IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the reading habits of Juveniles in the observation homes of Tamil Nadu.
2. To scrutinize the obstacles in reading for Juveniles in the observation homes of Tamil Nadu.
3. To give suggestions for enhance the reading habits of Juveniles in the observation homes of Tamil Nadu.

#### V. NULL AND ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

$H_0$ : The demographic variables of Juveniles are not influencing their reading habits in the observation homes.

$H_1$ : The demographic variables of Juveniles are influencing their reading habits in the observation homes.

#### VI. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Juvenile means a person who is very young, teenager, adolescent, or underage. In other words, juvenile means children who have not yet reached the age of adults in the sense that they are still childish or immature. Sometimes the term “child” is also interchangeably used for the term “juvenile”. a juvenile can be defined as a child who has not attained a certain age at which he can be held liable for his criminal acts like an adult person under the law of the country.

Juvenile is a child who is alleged to have committed certain acts or omissions which are in violation of any law and are declared to be an offence. In terms of law, a juvenile is a person who has not attained the age of eighteen years. It has a legal significance. As per the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015, a juvenile shall not be treated as an adult even if he/she is involved in any criminal acts for the purpose of trial and punishment in the court of law.

#### VII. METHODOLOGY

Sampling is the process by which a relatively small number of individuals or measures of individuals, objectives or event is selected and analyzed to find out something about the entire population from which it was selected. The study adopted the descriptive type of research approach for analyzing the reading habits of juveniles in the observation homes of Tamil Nadu. The researcher selected ten respondents from each home and totally eighty respondents are selected by adopting simple random sampling technique.

The researcher built a strong questionnaire for collecting information about the reading habits of juveniles and problems in reading. The researcher the same was discussed with subject experts, lawyers, and officers of home to improve in such a way that the respondents could easily understand the items and get the better results. The researcher collected data from the respondents with the help of the officials of the observation home.

#### VIII. LIMITATIONS

1. The researcher is unable to interview the respondents as per his agenda because the children have been kept under the custody of the office-bearers concerned.
2. Empirical study results depend on the truthfulness of responses given by the respondents.

#### IX. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE II RESPONDENTS BY AGE

Sl. No.	Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Less than 15	37	46.25
2.	16 and above	43	53.75
Total		80	100

Source: Primary data

The table II says that among the 80 respondents, who have been interviewed, a sizable proportion (53.75%) belongs to the age group of 16 and above and the remaining 43.25% represents the age group of less than 15.

TABLE III RESPONDENTS BY RELIGION

Sl. No.	Religion	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Hindu	53	66.25
2.	Islam	15	18.75
3.	Christian	12	15
Total		80	100

Source: Primary data

The table III explains that out of 80 children who are in the observation home due to the involvement of criminal activities, more than three-fifth (66.25%) are Hindus, 18.75% are Christians and the rest (15%) hail from Islam religion.

TABLE IV RESPONDENTS BY COMMUNITY

Sl. No.	Communities	Frequency	Percentage
1.	O.C	5	6.25
2.	B.C	25	31.25
3.	M.B.C	31	38.75
4.	SC/ST	19	23.75
Total		80	100

Source: Primary data

The table IV brings out the information that the community and caste-wise distribution of the respondents. Among the 80 juveniles who have been kept in the observation homes in Tamil Nadu, more than one-third (38.75%) come from Most Backward Community, around one-third 31.25% belong to Backward Communities, 23.75% represent Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes and the remaining 6.25% are O.C.

TABLE V RESPONDENTS BY EDUCATION

Sl. No.	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Primary	9	11.25
2.	Middle	17	21.25
3.	High School	31	38.75
4.	Higher Secondary	23	28.75
Total		80	100

Source: Primary data

The table V reveals that 11.25% of the respondents have studied in primary schools, 21.25% have gone to middle school for the education, 38.75% have high school level education and 28.75% of respondents have a higher secondary education.

TABLE VI RESPONDENTS BY FAMILY INCOME PER MONTH

Sl. No.	Family income per month	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Below `10,000	38	47.50
2.	`10,000 – `25,000	27	33.75
3.	Above `25,000	15	18.75
Total		80	100

Source: Primary data

The table VI explains the most of the respondents' families (47.50%) earn below `10,000 per month as monthly income, 33.75% earns from `10,000 – `25,000 as monthly income

TABLE IX PROBLEMS OF JUVENILES IN READING

Sl. No.	Variables	Mean	S.D	C.V	“t” value	Rank
1	Adequate reading materials are not available in the home	3.6250	0.718	19.813	45.144	II
2	Home environment is not suitable for reading	3.5875	0.822	22.915	39.033	V
3	I feel Insecurity and loneliness.	3.4625	1.232	35.578	25.140	XII
4	Sufficient time is not available	3.4125	0.706	20.692	43.227	III
5	I Missed my family	4.4375	0.777	17.509	51.085	I
6	No freedom	3.7000	0.863	23.317	38.359	VI
7	I lost my happiness	3.6500	0.781	21.400	41.795	IV
8	Home officials inspires the reading	3.2625	0.964	29.563	30.255	X
9	My friends encourage me to read the dailies	3.5625	0.855	23.987	37.288	VII
10	I know books are good friends	3.5500	0.940	26.478	33.780	VIII
11.	I have language difficulties	3.8875	1.114	28.648	31.221	IX
12.	I am not interested	3.5875	1.110	30.949	28.900	XI

Table IX reveals the problems of Juveniles in reading. The most important problem is “I Missed my family” with the mean value 4.4375, S.D 0.777, C.V 17.509 and “t” value 51.085, next important problem is Adequate reading materials are not available in the home with mean value 3.6250, S.D 0.718, C.V 19.813 and “t” value 45.144, third important problem is Sufficient time is not available, fourth

and the rest (18.75%) get more than `25,000 as monthly income.

TABLE VII NATURE OF PARENTS EXISTING FAMILIES

Sl. No.	Parents existing	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Both parents exist families	42	52.50
2.	Single parent families	38	47.50
Total		80	100

Source: Primary data

The table VII explains that most of the respondents (52.50%) hail from the families where father and mother alive, 47.50% have only one parent either father or mother.

TABLE VIII RESPONDENTS BY LEVEL THEIR READING

Sl. No.	Level Reading	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Very Much	27	33.75
2.	Somewhat	31	38.75
3.	Never	22	27.50
Total		80	100

Source: Primary data

The table VIII reveals that maximum of 38.75% of the respondents somewhat like reading, 33.75% of the respondents very much like reading and 27.50% of respondents never like the reading never like the reading.

rank for “I lost my happiness”, fifth one is Home environment is not suitable for reading and last ranking given to the problem “I feel Insecurity and loneliness”. Then the researcher applied the path analysis or studying the problem factors are influenced by demographic variables of the respondents.

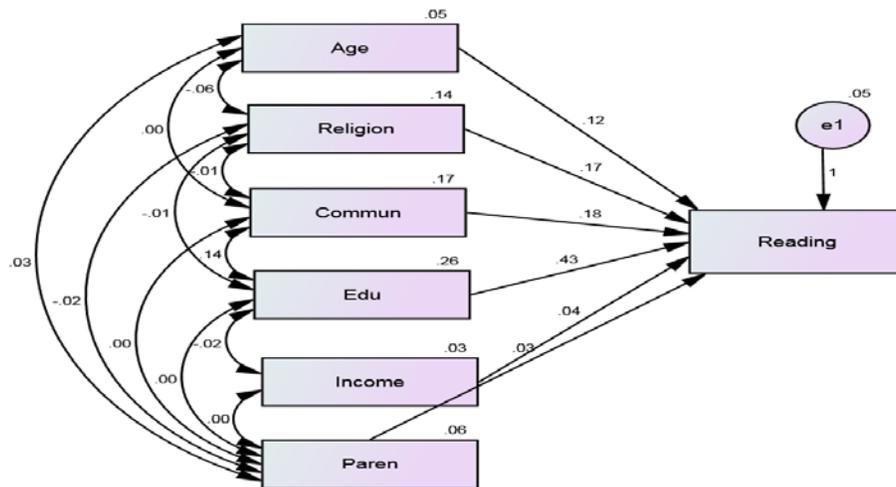


Fig. 1 Path Analysis by Demographic Variables of the Respondents

TABLE X RMSEA

CMIN Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
	24	38.196	4	.000	9.549
Saturated model	28	.000	0		
Independence model	7	99.864	21	.000	4.755
Zero model	0	276.500	28	.000	9.875

TABLE XI RMR, GFI

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.446	.862	.033	.123
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.486	.639	.518	.479
Zero model	.498	.000	.000	.000

TABLE XII REGRESSION WEIGHTS

Depend		Independent	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Reading	<---	Age	.120	.857	.140	.889	N.S
Reading	<---	Religion	.173	.514	.336	.737	N.S
Reading	<---	Community	.177	.089	2.003	.045	Significant
Reading	<---	Edu	.431	.191	2.257	.024	N.S
Reading	<---	Income	.044	.735	.059	.953	N.S
Reading	<---	Parents	.026	.117	.225	.822	N.S

The above path analysis table reveals about the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. In the first variable of the relationship between resources and Age and reading habit, the p value is more than 0.05 and therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. Moreover, Religion, Educational qualification, Monthly income, and parents the significance value is more than the confidence level at 95 percent. Hence it is concluded that the independent variable except community is not influences the problems in reading of Javelins.

**X. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

1. The researcher found that proportion 53.75% respondents belong to the age group of 16 and above and the remaining 43.25% represents the age group of less than 15.
2. It is understood that more than three-fifth (66.25%) are Hindus, 18.75% are Christians and the rest (15%) hail from Islam religion.

3. It is observed that more than one-third (38.75%) come from Most Backward Community, around one-third 31.25% belong to Backward Communities, 23.75% represent Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes and the remaining 6.25% are O.C.
4. 47.50% of respondents earn below `10,000 per month as monthly income, 33.75% earns from `10,000 – `25,000 as monthly income and the rest 18.75% get more than `25,000 as monthly income.
5. 52.50% of respondents’ hail from the families where father and mother alive, 47.50% have only one parent either father or mother.
6. It is known that maximum of 38.75% of the respondents somewhat like reading, 33.75% of the respondents very much like reading and 27.50% of respondents never like the reading never like the reading.
7. The most important problem is “I Missed my family”, next important problem is Adequate reading materials are not available in the home, third important problem is Sufficient time is not available.

8. The demographic variables are not influencing the problem factors of juveniles in reading.

### XI. SUGGESTIONS

1. The parents of the Juveniles must come to the observation home regularly to see their child.
2. Adequate reading materials should be maintained in the observation home.
3. Reading environment should be created for the Juveniles.
4. The observation home authorities give more freedom to Juveniles for reading.
5. The home authorities may arrange seminars and workshop to explain the impact of reading and enhance the reading habits of Juveniles.

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