



IJSRM

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An Official Publication of Human Journals



Human Journals

Research Article

May 2020 Vol.:15, Issue:3

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Use of Finger Print Record Slips for Analysis of Involvement of Indian Youth in Narcotic and Violent Crimes



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Submission: 23 April 2020

Accepted: 30 April 2020

Published: 30 May 2020



HUMAN JOURNALS

www.ijsrm.humanjournals.com

Keywords: Youth, Fingerprint Record Slips, Convicts, Violent crimes, NDPS Act of 1985

ABSTRACT

This study tends to gauge the relationship between youth and their involvement in narcotic & violent crimes, using 10-digit fingerprint record slips. A total of 1001 slips of convicted persons, aged between 18 to 35 years were scrutinized to understand whether there was any link between demographic attributes like age, habitation of individuals and their level of participation in crimes. The contribution of subjects in crimes in the age group 18-23 was 347, while the number was 370 for those in the age bracket of 24-29. The tally was significantly low and it stood at 284, for the youth of 30 to 35 years of age. Out of the total, 82 % of the youth were involved in violent crimes, while 18 % were found to be associated with Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act related crimes. Unlike western studies of past, which suggested that the rates of delinquency and crime rise in teenage years and then decline after reaching a peak at about 18-20 years, our study on Indian subjects exhibited that crime was at peak amongst the youth in the age group of 24-29. Such findings indicate that regional or country specific factors definitely influence the participation of youth in crimes.

INTRODUCTION

Violence by young people is one of the most visible forms of violence in society. Homicide and non-fatal assaults involving young people contribute greatly to the global burden of premature death, injury and disability (Reza, 2001) (WHO, 1996). In 2000, an estimated 199000 youth homicides (9.2 per 100000 population) occurred globally. In other words, an average of 565 children, adolescents and young adults between the ages of 10 and 29 years die each day as a result of interpersonal violence. Homicide rates vary considerably by region, ranging from 0.9 per 100000 in the high-income countries of Europe and parts of Asia and the Pacific to 17.6 per 100000 in Africa and 36.4 per 100000 in Latin America. The problem of youth violence cannot be viewed in isolation from other problem behaviours. Violent young people tend to commit a range of crimes. They also often display other problems, such as truancy and dropping out of school, substance abuse, compulsive lying, reckless driving and high rates of sexually transmitted diseases. However, not all violent youths have significant problems other than their violence, and not all young people with problems are necessarily violent (WHO, 2001).

Differences in classification of youth

Conventionally, period from adolescence to middle age is termed as youth. Age constitute as one of the determining characteristics in the definition of youth by various agencies. UN adopted the age group 15 to 24 for defining youth (Curtain, 2000). While WHO in World Report on Violence and Health 2002, Chapter 2, Youth Violence, for the purpose of their report defines youths as people between the ages of 10 and 29 years (Krug, 2002). The National Youth Policy of India 2003, defined the youth as those in the age group 13-35. However, in 2014 it was modified to define 'youth' as persons in the age group of 15-29 years (MYA&S, 2014). According to the Census of India 2001, the total population of India was 1,028.61 million. Nearly 40 percent of the population was in the age group of 13 to 35 years. The number of youths aged 15 to 24 years was 195.07 million, which accounted for 19.0 percent of the whole population. India contributes about 33 percent of youth population in the developing Asian countries (ADB, 2008). In this study, we have adopted 18-35 years as youth with reference to 'Youth in India-2017', a publication of Central Statistics Office, Govt. of India so as to widen the scope of the study and draw as many inferences as possible (CSO, 2017).

Youth violence in developing countries

The life experiences and perspectives of young people in the 21st century differ greatly. About 87 percent of young women and men living in developing countries face challenges brought about by limited and unequal access to resources, healthcare, education, training, and employment as well as economic, social and political opportunities (*World Bank*, 1999). In recent years India is also witnessing an escalation in number of cases of violent protests by political, social, religious, and student groups. Protests led by students nearly doubled between 2014 and 2018, and a lot of it moved to north Indian states. Kerala continued to lead the charts with 214 incidents of “rioting” by students alleged by the police under Sections 147-151 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), (*Crime in India*, 2018).

Youth and drugs related crimes

Young people in almost all countries tend to use these substances to a greater extent and in riskier ways than do older people, and this behaviour can result in significant problems in the short and long terms. The level of understanding of youth substance use worldwide is better than ever, but many gaps still remain. A few countries are conducting broad-based school surveys using methodology that allows comparison; however, a much greater number are using methods and measures that make comparison difficult. Some countries carry out broad population drug-use surveys of persons aged 15 years and above, and this allows analysis of use among at least a portion of youth (*United Nations*, 2003).

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

India is the country of world's largest youth population; it's having an estimated over 34.00 % of its populace consisting of the individuals i.e. between the age of 15 to 34 years. The majority of youth in developing countries strive for better opportunities for improving their living conditions. Moreover, the involvement of their young people in violent and drugs related crimes is also not a latent phenomenon. Even for the governments who understand their social responsibilities, owing to numbers of youngsters involved in crimes, reforms and rehabilitation is not an easy task. The reasons could be many, including the very basic i.e. lack of in-depth research and reliable statistics or data, for guiding the policymakers in the right direction. If we evaluate data collection techniques, interviewing although is a frequently used method for sociological or criminal research, nevertheless the reliability of the respondents can never be beyond doubt. So, our idea was to collect information or data,

from a validated source, for conducting a study on the youths and their involvement in violent and NDPS Act of 1985, related crimes. Our study uses a technique which is inexpensive, and where the authenticity of the selected information or data is also already validated by the Courts of law. This method of research can pave a way for other developing nations of the world, which due to financial constraints or lack of required resources, are not able to gather reliable data.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To use of 10-digit fingerprint record slips to study the involvement of youth in violent, and Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act of 1985, related crimes.
2. To revalidate the effectiveness of novel but inexpensive and authentic tool for criminal research, using 10-digit fingerprint record slips achieved in the Finger Print Bureaux of India, developed and used by the lead author in the year 2004.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The ten-digit fingerprint slips on record at Central Finger Print Bureau (CFPB) assist the law enforcement agencies in gaining access to the criminal antecedents of convicts in India. Such slips carrying rolled and plain finger impressions are prepared on conviction of a person for crime with a punishment of rigorous imprisonment for a year or more. These fingerprint slips are then forwarded to CFPB, through State Finger Print Bureaux (SFPBx), and the Courts of Law. CFPB is a Govt. organization, assigned with the task of maintaining these records, for reference in future, both in physical/paper as well as electronic form on computer. Along with finger impressions and sentence awarded for the crime, fingerprint record slips in India, possess demographic details of the convicted persons, such as name, aliases, parentage, age, gender, religion, residential (sometimes both local and native) address etc. The analysis of such variables/attributes can provide an insight into the pattern of crimes committed by the youth.

Sections of the IPC selected for study as violent crimes

The pertinent sections of IPC falling in violent category have been categorized as per 'Crime in India-2016', and are consolidated in Table-1, for ready reference (*Crime in India*, 2016).

Table No. 1: Sections of the IPC selected for the study as violent crimes

Violent Crimes Affecting:	Major Head of Crime	U/S
Life	Murder, Attempt to Murder, Culpable Homicide not amounting to murder, and Attempt to C.H	(302, 304, 307, 308 IPC)
	Dowry Death	(304-B IPC)
	Feticide and Infanticide	(313-316 IPC)
	Grievous Hurt	(325,326 IPC)
	Kidnapping and Abduction	(363/364 IPC)
	Rape and Attempt to Rape	(376/511 IPC)
Public Safety	Riots	(147-151 IPC)
	Arson	(435-436,438 IPC)
Property	Dacoity and Robbery	(392-398 IPC)

Though the rest of the crime heads mentioned in Table-1 are comprehensible, however, the offence of dowry death is essentially non-existent in the western world and finds mention in IPC only.

In Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, 'dowry' means any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly: (a) by one party to a marriage to the other party to the marriage; or (b) by the parents of either party to a marriage or by any other person, to either party to the marriage or to any other person; at or before or any time after the marriage in connection with the marriage of said parties but does not include dower or mahr in the case of persons to whom the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) applies. Explanation II.-The expression 'valuable security' has the same meaning as in Sec. 30 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) (MW&CD 2020).

Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act of 1985

The Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances Act of 1985, commonly referred to as NDPA Act, in India, prohibits a person to produce, manufacture, cultivate, possess, sell, transport, store and/or consume any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance. This Act is designed to fulfil

India's treaty obligations under single Convention on NDPS, and United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in NDPS (*Wiki* 2017).

The term 'narcotic' in the legal sense is quite different from that used in the medical context which denotes a sleep-inducing agent. Legally, a narcotic drug could be an opiate (a true narcotic), cannabis (a non-narcotic) or cocaine (the very antithesis of a narcotic, since it is a stimulant). The term 'psychotropic substance' denotes mind-altering drugs such as Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD), Phencyclidine, Amphetamines, Barbiturates, Methaqualone, and designer drugs like 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), dimethyltryptamine (DMT), etc. (*NICFS* 2017).

Research Methodology

The following methods were used for collection and data selection for this study:

Sampling of fingerprint slips

Search and Record (S&R) section of CFPB, New Delhi maintains 10-digit FP slips of convicted persons in 72 trays in per cabinet. Approximately 350-400 FP slips are filed in each tray for record. Each 10-digit fingerprint slip carries a unique Personal Identification Number (PIN) along with personal details (demographic details), conviction particulars, and rolled as well as plain finger impressions. The important details present on the slips, like name, age, gender, religion, address, court's name, date & number of convictions, section under which individual is convicted, sentence, jail no. etc., were taken into consideration. A total of 66 trays were selected randomly from 33 cabinets, then the slips which fulfilled the criteria were sorted for sampling, and entry of details in tabular data collection sheets.

Criteria for selection & rejection of slips

In this study, 10-digit fingerprint record slips of convicted persons, falling in the Pre-determined criteria i.e. youth in the age group of 18-35 years, involved in violent and NDPS related crimes, were selected for sampling. A tabular data collection sheet or form was prepared for initial consolidation of information given on selected fingerprint slips. The tabular data collection sheet or form carried, serial number, cabinet/tray number, state (Province), PIN, gender, religion, region (urban/rural), age group (18-23, 24-29, 30-35), categories/divisions of violent and NDPS related crimes. But in this paper, we will

emphasize more on age groups of the convicts and their participation in violent and NDPS Act related crimes, to keep the study more focused and precise. Incomplete slips in any aspect of the set criteria were rejected.

Data selection

Although all slips in 66 trays from 33 cabinets were scrutinized for data selection, but only 14 trays holding a total of 5866 slips, led us to find 1001 subjects or slips fulfilling our criteria. The information collected through the data collection sheets or forms, from the selected 10-digit fingerprint record slips of the convicts, fulfilling the set criteria, was consolidated on the computer in the form of a final table carrying attribute wise figures, for further analysis.

Period of study

This study was conducted over a span of 6 months from May to October 2018.

RESULT

The consolidation of result in tabular form (Table-2) was done for the ease of comprehension and analysis of personal attributes of the subjects, like age, habitat/place of residence (urban/rural) etc., versus involvement in Violent / NDPS Act related crimes. The youth have been divided into three age groups in this research/study.

Table No. 2: Consolidated attribute wise data of the study

S. No.	Cabinet /Tray No.	Rural (R)	Urban (U)	Age Groups (In Years)			Violent Crimes	Crimes under NDPS Act
				18-23	24-29	30-35		
1.	1/6	69	29	29	42	27	96	2
2.	2/28	28	3	9	10	12	30	1
3.	3/12	41	10	23	17	11	49	2
4.	4/26	37	28	34	21	10	51	14
5.	5/12	115	13	44	58	26	120	8
6.	9/53	75	12	42	34	11	82	5
7.	6/6	14	22	16	9	11	29	7
8.	10/1	32	29	19	22	20	56	5
9.	19/5	42	34	32	14	30	65	11
10.	20/62	64	15	18	32	29	62	17
11.	21/7	35	36	20	26	25	44	27
12.	18/43	17	84	28	38	35	75	26
13.	22/7	18	32	12	22	16	34	16
14.	14/46	54	13	21	25	21	29	38
Total (14 trays 5866 slips)		641	360	347	370	284	822	179
Total slips fulfilling Criteria: 1001/5866		1001		1001			1001	

Division of convicts based on the type of crime (Violent/NDPS related crimes)

Out of a total of 1001 slips of all three age groups of subjects, 822 i.e. 82% were of those involved in violent crimes, whereas the number of persons convicted under NDPS Act 1985, were found to be 179 or 18 % only.

Age group wise division of convicts and their involvement in violent and NDPS Act related crimes

Out of a total of 1001 youths studied, their participation in violent and NDPS related crimes in the age group of 18 to 23 years was 347 i.e. 34.66 %, while in the age bracket of 24 to 29 years, the tally rose to 370, which was 36.96 in percentile terms. Whereas youths in the age slot of 30 to 35 years, showed significant decrease in their contribution in violent and drugs related crimes, the number came down to 284, percentage wise it stood at 28.37 only (Table-3).

Table No. 3: Age groups wise and participation of youth in total crimes

S. No.	Age Group (in years)	Participating individuals out of 1001 in total crimes (Violent & NDPS Act related)	Participation percentage of youth (age group wise) in total crimes
1	18-23	347	34.66 %
2	24-29	370	36.96 %
3	30-35	284	28.37 %

Division on the basis of major crime head and habitation of the convicts

The dwelling status of the total of 1001 convicts was also analyzed through our data, it was found that 646 individuals were found to reside in rural habitat, which meant 63.89 of the subjects studied, whereas 365 belonged to urban habitat, which was 36.10 percent of the whole, which seems to be in sync with the Indian census report of 2011, which found Indian urban population to be at 31.16%, and the rural at 68.84 % (Table-4).

Table No. 4: Major crime heads and habitat of subjects

S. No.	Major Head of Crime	U/S	Urban	Rural
1	Murder, Attempt to Murder, C.H not amounting to murder, and Attempt to C.H	(302, 304, 307, 308 IPC)	209	224
2	Dowry Death	(304-B IPC)	0	24
3	Feticide and Infanticide	(313-316 IPC)	0	0
4	Grievous hurt	(325,326 IPC)	38	98
5	Kidnapping and Abduction	(363/364 IPC)	2	14
6	Rape and Attempt to Rape	(376/511 IPC)	6	38
7	Riots	(147-151 IPC)	2	10
8	Arson	(435-436, 438 IPC)	0	0
9	Dacoity and Robbery	(392-398 IPC)	4	36
10	NDPS Related Crime	NDPS Act, 1985	104	192
	Total		365	636

DISCUSSION

A study by Baldwin *et.al.* in 1985, and Blonigen *et.al.* in 2008, suggested that rates of delinquency and crime rise during the teenage years, and then decline after reaching a peak at about ages 18-20 (Baldwin, 1985) (Blonigen, 2008). But unlike their suggestion, we have observed in our study on Indian youths, that their participation in violent and NDPS related crimes was not at peak in the age group of 18 to 23, rather it was highest in the age bracket of 24 to 29 years. Moreover, there was a definite decline in numbers of participating Indian youths, in the age group of 30 to 35 years. The difference in the results of western studies and our study on Indian youth, indicate that regional or country specific factors definitely influence the participation of youth in crimes. India specific societal factors seem to have influenced the youths in the age group of 30 to 35 years, to either reduce their involvement, or altogether quit criminal activities.

Correlation of Employment, Education or Training, and involvement of youths in crime

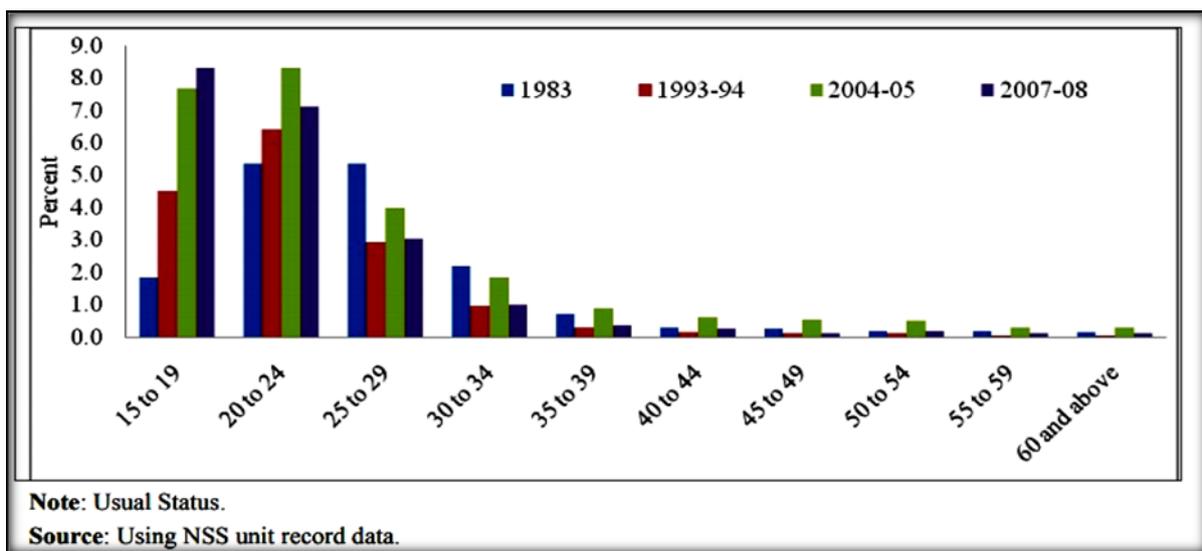
As per Census of India-2011, over 30 % of youth aged 15-29 in India were not in employment, education or training. This is more than double the Organization for Economic

Co-operation and Development (OECD) average and almost three times that of China. Though declining, rural populations still forms the majority share of Indian population. (Census of India-2011).

Although we have not included subject below 18 years in this study, but if we analyze our first two age groups of youths i.e. 18-23 and 24-29, their number stood at 717 or 71.62 % of the total 1001 subjects involved in violent and NDPS Act related crimes. As per the Census of India-2011, a total of 30.83% of youths in the age group of 15 to 29, were neither employed nor taking any training, or education. In the light of such data or information we can more or less infer that there is a direct correlation between unemployment of Indian youth from 18 to 29 years, and their involvement in violent and NDPS Act related crimes. We would not be able to comment on correlation of unemployment, lack of education and training of youths between the age of 15 to 17 years, with violent and drugs related crimes, as our subjects were in the age bracket of 18 to 35 years. Research has shown links between economic growth and violence, and between income inequality and violence (Messner, 1988).

Decrease in incidences of crimes with progression of age, and availability of employment

The unemployment rate by five-year interval age groups shows that it is the highest among the younger cohorts especially 15 to 24 years age cohorts.



Graph-1: Unemployment Rate in India by Age Group (Dev & Venkata Narayana 2011)

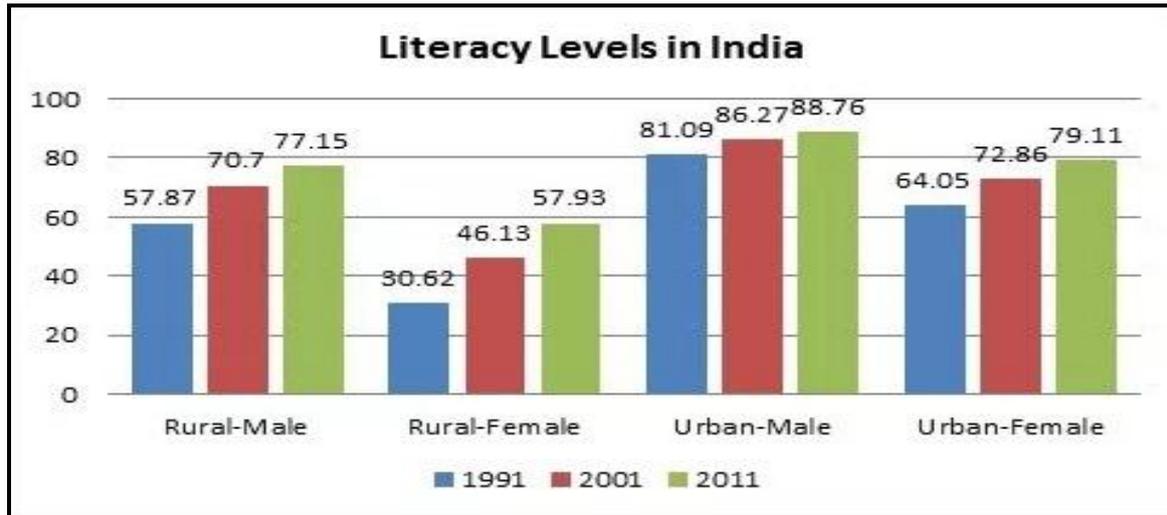
In other words, the incidence or instances of those who are willing to work and available for the labour market but unable to find the work or employment is higher among the young (below 30 years) when compared to their seniors (30 + age). It is highest among the 20 to 25 years age cohorts. The situation of young jobseekers in comparison to adults seems to be hard (Dev & Venkatanarayana, 2011). In Graph-1 we see that the average percentage of unemployment was comparatively higher between the age of 15 to 29 years, afterwards there was a progressive decline in unemployment rates. From the age group of 30 to 60 and above, there was a constant decline in unemployment rates. Our finding, that the incidences of violent and NDPS Act related crimes were least in the age group of 30 to 35 years, can be correlated with decrease in unemployment with progression of age.

Literacy, dowry deaths and other violent crimes

The contribution of convicts under murder, attempt to murder, culpable homicide not amounting to murder, and attempt to commit culpable homicide, was highest by rural habitants with the number 224; whereas 209 crimes were committed by those from the urban backgrounds. Contribution to dowry death, grievous hurt, kidnapping and abduction, rape & attempt to rape, riots, dacoity & robbery, and NDPS related crime was higher by rural convicts than their urban counterparts.

The values of our study are further close to 2017 World Bank report findings holding Indian Urban Population at 34.00% and Rural at 66.00%. We found 36.00 % of convicts from urban dwellings, and 64.00 % of them represented rural habitation. Such proximity of numbers in our findings and the available recent values of urban/rural population can be an indicator of validation of our tool of study. The offence of Dowry death, as per our study, has been completely accounted for by the rural inhabitants.

Rabby *et. al.* (2013) found that though against the law, Dowry has been a socially accepted in India both in an Urban or Rural Set up. The cultural institution of dowry as practiced in India engenders substantial violence toward women. This takes the form of interfamilial harassment for additional payments of goods and money which can culminate in the murder or suicide of the bride. However, killing somebody for dowry has not been as evident in the urban conglomeration as it is explicably observed in rural areas. Family tradition, poverty, unemployment, mass illiteracy and lack of consciousness may be discerned as the significant factors of this evil issue. (Rabby *et. al.* 2013).



Graph-2, depicts that the rural population has a strikingly low percentage of literacy as compared to their counterparts. (Census of India-2011).

Due to lower literacy rates amongst rural youth in India, idea of social discipline and law, which may get imbibed through formal or informal system of education, might be deficient in the rural population of India. The enhanced participation of youth residing in rural areas in offences such as robbery, dacoity, rape and kidnapping may have some correlation with lower literacy rates or lack of education. But when it comes to participation in heinous crimes such as murder and culpable homicide, the difference between the individuals of rural and urban habitations is not very significant, showing that violent animal instinct of humans cannot be cocooned forever solely by the layer of literacy and education. No convicts were found from both urban & rural areas, in the cases of arson, feticide and infanticide out of the 1001 subjects selected for this study.

CONCLUSION

1. Unlike the previous studies conducted by teams of two different western scientists, first in the year 1985 by John D. Baldwin *et. al.* and in 2008 by Daniel M. Blonigen *et. al.*, suggesting that rates of delinquency and crime rise during the teenage years, and then decline after reaching a peak at about ages 18-20, our study on Indian youths showed that crime was at peak amongst the youths in the age group of 24 to 29 years, and not in those in their teens or nearing 20. This suggests that there is no universal criterion which govern the youth of different ages groups involved in crimes, regional or country specific factors also influence their level of participation.

2. The most influential reasons for involvement of Indian youth in crimes were found to be the lack of education, training and unemployment, which also stood valid for our subjects involved in violent and NDPS Act or drugs related crimes.

3. The effective use of 10-digit fingerprint record slips for this study, and their successful use in similar studies in 2004 and 2005 by the lead author, proves that fingerprint record slips stored in the Finger Print Bureaux of India can be safely used as a reliable tool for criminal/sociological research. (Singh, 2004), (Singh, 2005).

4. The results of this study should have substantial value for all authorities concerned in framing a long-term strategy to mitigate the incidences of youth participating in violent and narcotic drugs related crimes.

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