



A Study on Socio-economic Aspects of Criminals in Tiruchirappalli City, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

This article is an attempt to study the socio-economic characteristics of criminals in Tiruchirappalli city like the investigation of family size of the criminals, residential location, gender, age, religions, education, occupation, income and motivation of crimes. The socio-economic characteristics reveal that 84% of the criminals were in the age group of 20 years and above, 50% of the criminals indulged in criminal activity for 2- 4 years, thieves and automobile thieves were high with 43% while motives of criminals were drinking, drug-habits and thirst for leading a luxurious life with 54.3%. Moral education with the co-operation of parents, counselling and guidance by social reformers and psychiatrists will help the criminals to improve their characters and change their behaviour which will in return reduce the occurrence of crimes of various types.

Keywords: Criminals; Socioeconomic characteristics; Crime occurrences Moral education; counselling

Introduction

The new worldwide socio-economic order in the recent past has accelerated the crime rates and raised the obligation to learn innovative ways to manage statistics regarding criminality. Overpopulation, migration, poor standard of living, poverty, unemployment, low income and inequality in the distribution of resources create more criminals. This may be due to the social lives they live. There have been limited studies concerned on socio-economic characteristics of criminals, such as Khan, N., et al (2015) examined the economic and social background of individuals' in Pakistan to understand

the crime rate and unemployment; Rathi, S., & Rai, C. G. (1989) have correlated the characteristics of socio-psychological and socio-economic status of murderers, assailants and thieves; Mahmut, M. K., et al (2008) have discussed the differences between non-criminal and criminal psychopaths of interpersonal and antisocial features; Mazzella, R., & Feingold, A. (1994) have assessed the effects of socio-economic status, gender of culprits to recommend punishment; Schuessler, K. F., & Cressey, D. R. (1950) have investigated the differences between criminals and non-criminals of personality elements; Buonanno, P. (2003) has outlined the

determinants of criminal behaviours; Goudriaan, H., et.al (2006) have suggested that neighbourhood social structure and socio-economic disadvantage influence the probability that victims report crime to the police; Chiricos, T. G., & Waldo, G. P. (1975) have given an empirical investigation between socio-economic status and demographic defendant's characteristics; Ragatz, L., & Fremouw, W. (2010) have critically reviewed the demographic and psychological characteristics of white-collar criminals for further treatment performs; O'Riordan, C., & O'Connell, M. (2014) have suggested that social class has only a minor role in predicting criminal activity; Ogunkan, D. V., & Fawole, O. A. (2009) have analysed the socio - cultural and socio - economic characteristics of beggars problem on different weekdays at different wards in Nigerian cities; Nieuwbeerta, P., et al (2008) have studied the relationship between characteristics of neighborhoods socio-economic disadvantage, social cohesion of likelihood of homicide victimization; Sinha, S. (2016) has studied the personality traits and behaviour of criminals for future recidivism; Buonanno, P., & Montolio, D. (2008) have studied the socio-economic and demographic determinants of crime rate in Spain; Marzbali, et al (2012) have developed a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) model to explore the socio-economic variables for residents' victimization; Melossi, D. (2000) has represented the crime and criminalities relationship are not random and unpredictable in the society; Smith, D. A., & Jarjoura, G. R. (1988) have examined the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and rates of violent crime and burglary criminal activity; Karami, J., & Sharifi, K. (2016) have explained the psychological causes of (homicide, strife) violence using ANOVA test; Radović-Stojanović, J. V., & Tomić, M. J. (2019) have attempted that the social and economic status of perpetrators of crimes in relation to the total population in the Republic of Serbia. Spatial behavioural theories also help to explain the characteristic of criminals were developed by P.L Brantingham and P.J Brantingham in the year 1981 on environmental criminology, the routine activity theory developed by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson in 1979 and the rational choice theory developed by Clarke and Cornish in 1987 and Malm, A (2010). Therefore, this study intends to help the police administration of Tiruchirappalli city to have proper knowledge of the socio-economic and behavioural aspects of the criminals to prevent crimes and to respond appropriately to tackle crimes and criminals' behaviours in the future.

Study Area

Tiruchirappalli city's base map had been framed from the Survey of India (SOI) Toposheets Nos. 58 J/9, 10, 13 and 14. The city lies between the latitudes 10° 43' 40" - 10° 53' 00" North and the longitudes 78° 38' 14" - 78° 48' 50" East (Figure 1). The Cauvery delta begins to form 16 km west of the city where the river splits into two; the Cauvery and

the Kollidam to form the island of Srirangam.

The topography of Tiruchirappalli city is relatively flat and its average elevation is 88 metres from mean sea level. Some isolated hillocks grow beyond the surface, the topmost of which is the Rockfort. Its projected age is 3,800 million years and it is marked as one of the ancient rocks in the world. Other prominent hillocks include the Golden Rock, Khajamalai, Uyyakondan Thirumalai and Thiruverumbur.

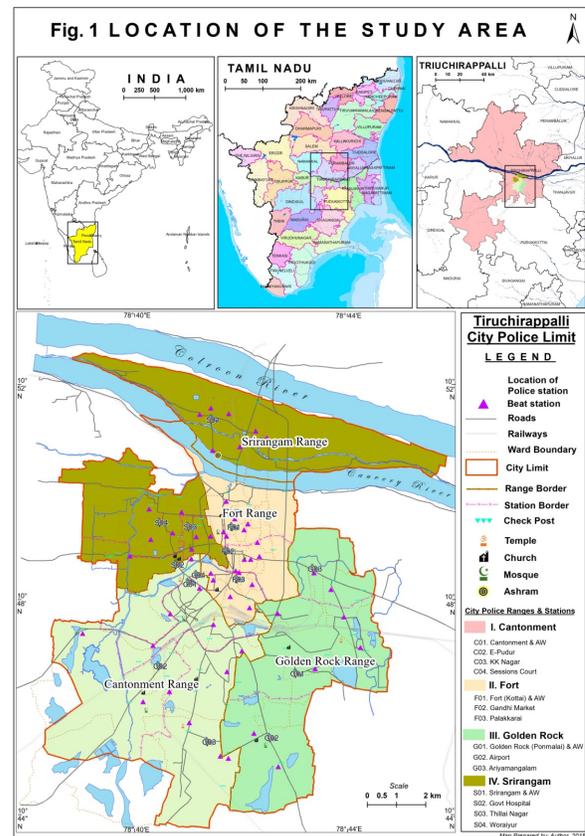


Fig. 1. Location of the study area

The river Cauvery and its distributary Kollidam facilitate Tiruchirappalli city also the city is fertilised by the Uyyakondan, Kudamuritti and Koraiyar canal. The land closely adjoining the Cauvery River, which crosses Tiruchirappalli city from west to east, consists of fertile alluvial soil deposits on which crops like paddy, banana and sugarcane are cultivated and in dry soil, finger millet and maize are cultivated nearby. Further south, the surface is enclosed by poor quality black soil. A belt of cretaceous rock known as the Trichinopoly group runs to the northeast and the southeast of the city there are layers of Achaean rocks, granite and gneiss covered by a thin bed of conglomeratic laterite.



Methodology

To know the causes and the reasons behind the occurrence of crimes in Tiruchirappalli city, information regarding the socio-economic status such as the family size of criminals, residential location, gender, age, religions, education, occupation, income and motivation of criminals were collected from the confession statements that were obtained by the police officials during the arrest of the accused in each police station. In total, 703 criminals arrested during 2016 were considered for the illustrative sample of the criminals for the present investigation to show the direct influence of socio-economic and behavioural aspects of the criminals in the incidence of crimes in Tiruchirappalli city.

Results and Discussion

Family size of criminals

The family size of the criminals given in table 5.3, shows that about 83% of the criminals had more than 4 persons in their family. 49% out of 83% of the criminals had 4 to 6 persons (Table 1 & Figure 2).

Nearly, 34% of the criminals had more than 6 persons in their family. Only 14% and 3% of the criminals were with 2 to 4 persons in their family. The large size of the family with unemployment and poverty was the core explanation for the criminals committing more crimes in the city.

Table 1. Family Size of Criminals in Tiruchirappalli City- 2016

Sl.No	Family Size	Number	Percentage (%)
1	2	21	3
2	2-4	98	14
3	4-6	345	49
4	6-8	148	21
5	More than 8	91	13
Total		703	100

Source: Compiled by the Investigator

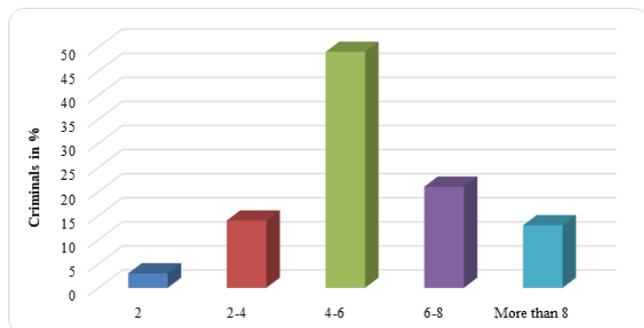


Fig. 2. Family Size of Criminals

Gender of criminals

Both male and female offenders were arrested in the year 2016. The male offenders were much more than female offenders in the city (Table 2 & Figure 3).

Table 2. Gender of Criminals in Tiruchirappalli City - 2016

Sl.No	Sex	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Male	675	96
2	Female	28	4
Total		703	100

Source: Compiled by the Investigator

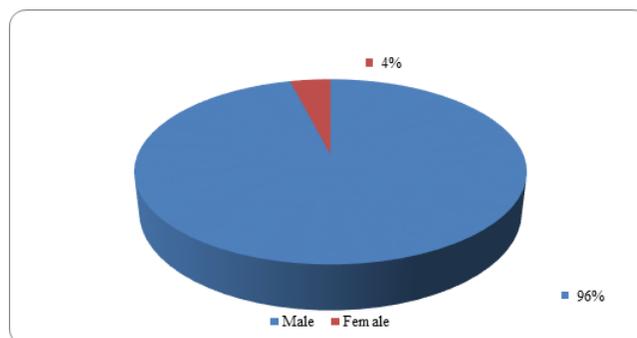


Fig. 3. Gender of Criminals

Nearly 96% of the total criminals were male and only 4% were female who were mostly involved in snatching or theft in buses and isolated places. Most of the female offenders were house servants who committed theft in their masters' houses.

Age structure of criminals

The age structure of criminals shows that 52% of the criminals were in the age group of 20-30 years. As per table 5.5, 16% of the criminals were in the age group of less than 20 years, who were mostly youth. Nearly 32% of the criminals were in the age group of above 30 years, and they were mostly unemployed men and women who involved in housebreaking and thefts in the city (Table 3 & Figure 4).

Table 3. Age Structure of Criminals in Tiruchirappalli City - 2016

Sl. No.	Age structure	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Less than 20	113	16
2	20-30	365	52
3	30-40	148	21
4	More than 40	77	11
Total		703	100

Source: Compiled by the Investigator



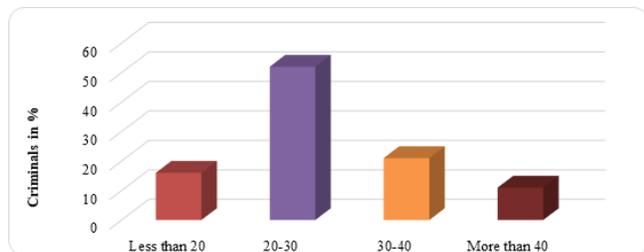


Fig. 4. Age Structure of Criminals

Religion of criminals

The religion of the criminals (Table 4 & Figure 5) reveals that 79.5% of the criminals were Hindus, 15.5% Muslims and 5% Christians. It depends on the populations of the city too.

Table 4. Religion of Criminals in Tiruchirappalli City - 2016

Sl. No	Religion	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Hindus	559	79.5
2	Muslims	109	15.5
3	Christians	35	5.0
Total		703	100

Source: Compiled by the Investigator

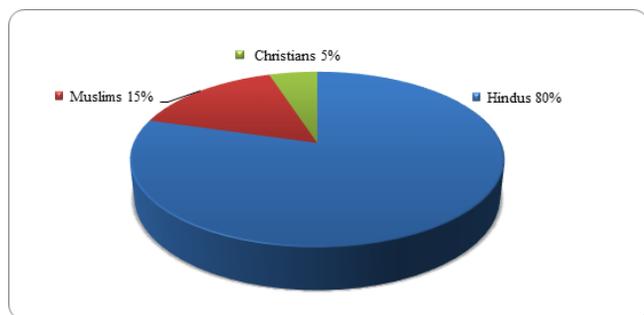


Fig. 5. Religion-Wise Offenders

Educational level of criminals

The educational level determines the standard of living and economic status of the people.

Nearly, 83% of the criminals had education up to Class 12 and only 7% of them were graduation level. Only 10% of the criminals were illiterate (Table 5 and Figure 6). This low literacy level among the criminals was also the core cause of various crimes in the city.

Table 5. Educational Level of Criminals in Tiruchirappalli City - 2016

Sl.No	Educational Level	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Illiterates	70	10
2	Upto V Std	106	15
3	V – X Std	316	45
4	X – XII Std	162	23
5	Graduates	49	7
Total		703	100

Source: Compiled by the Investigator

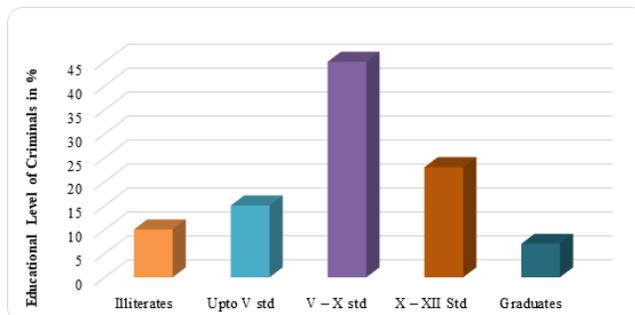


Fig. 6. Educational Level of Criminals

Occupational structure of criminals

The occupational structure of criminals reveals that most of them were coolies and thieves. Nearly, 25% of the criminals were coolies, who took on loading and unloading of commodities in commercial areas and were involved in house constructional works. About 19% of the criminals, had theft as their main occupation in the city.

Table 6. Occupational Structure of Criminals in Tiruchirappalli City – 2016

Sl.No	Occupational Structure	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Coolies	177	25
2	Drivers	91	13
3	Workshop/goldsmiths	119	17
4	Salesmen/women	63	9
5	Thieves	134	19
6	Students	42	6
7	House servants	56	8
8	Businessperson	21	3
Total		703	100

Source: Compiled by the Investigator

Almost 17% worked as labourers in workshops and as goldsmiths. About 13% of offenders were drivers, who worked in houses, companies and schools. Only 6% of the criminals were students and most of them were undergraduates. 20%



of the criminals were salespersons, house servants and businesspersons. Joblessness and low income were the core causes of the crimes in the commercial and residential areas of the city (Table 6 and Figure 7).

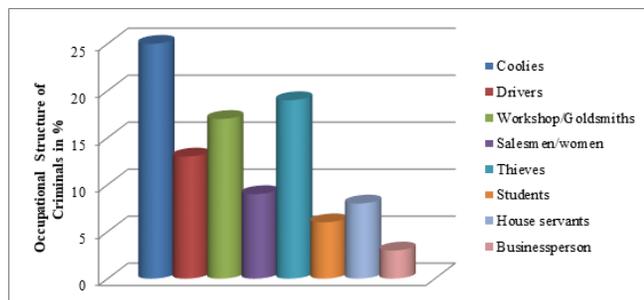


Fig. 7. Occupational Structure of Criminals

Years of experience in criminal activity

The years of experience in criminal activity varies from 1 to more than 5 years. About 50% of the criminals had involved in criminal activities from 2 to 4 years (Table 7).

Table 7. Years of Experience in Criminal Activity – 2016

Sl.No	Years of experience	Number	Percentage (%)
1	< 1	49	7
2	2	99	14
3	3	133	19
4	4	119	17
5	5	140	20
6	> 5	163	23
Total		703	100

Source: Compiled by the Investigator

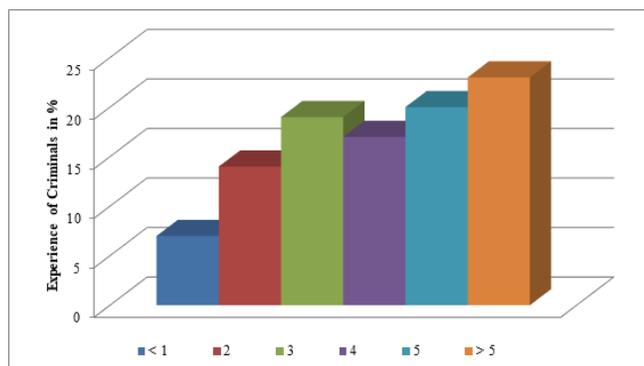


Fig. 8. Years of Experience in Criminal Activity

About 43% of the criminals had more than 5 years and only 7% had less than 1 year of experience in various crimes in the city. Most of them were students who studied in the colleges

and worked as helpers, in shops and houses (Figure 8).

Types of criminals

The offenders were grouped on the types of crimes committed. In total, 703 crimes were reported and detected during the year 2016. Out of this, nearly 50.4% were thieves and automobile thieves. About 19.5% were cheaters and housebreakers, 15.2% crime against women offenders while 9.7% were involved in dacoity, robbery and snatching. Nearly, 3.1% were fraudsters and kidnappers and only 2.1% were murderers (Table 8 and Figure 9).

Table 8. Types of Criminals in Tiruchirappalli City – 2016

Sl. No	Types of Criminals	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Robbers	61	8.7
2	Dacoity offenders	1	0.1
3	Thieves	150	21.3
4	Automobile thieves	204	29.1
5	Snatchers	6	0.9
6	Cheaters	68	9.7
7	Kidnappers	12	1.7
8	Housebreakers D/N	69	9.8
9	Counterfeit Currency (fraudsters)	10	1.4
10	Crime Against Women offenders	107	15.2
11	Murderers	15	2.1
Total		703	100

Source: Compiled by the Investigator

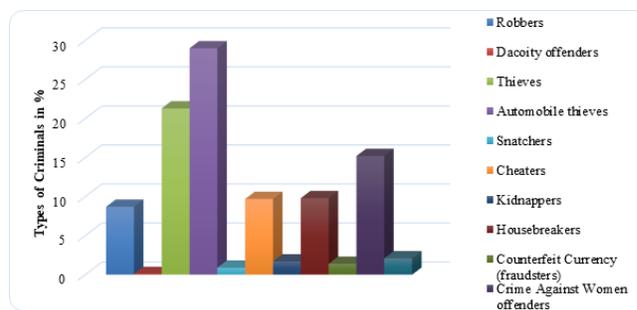


Fig. 9. Types of Crimes

Motives of criminals

About 54 % of criminals had committed crimes only to enjoy life by taking drugs and drinking. About 24% of the criminals had committed crimes because of low income and joblessness. About 17% of the criminals wanted to meet the family expenditure, the congested residential and commercial areas and the peer group influences were among the main



reasons for the various criminal offences in the city. 2.7% of the criminals committed offences to take acts of vengeance from their enemies and only 2% of the criminals to repay the debt borrowed from various sources (Table 9 and Figure 10).

Table 9. Motives of Criminals in Tiruchirappalli City- 2016

Sl.No	Reasons	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Drinking, Drugs + Luxurious life	383	54.3
2	Family conditions + Peer group	119	17.0
3	Revenge	19	2.7
4	Debt	14	2.0
5	Unemployment + Poverty	168	24.0
Total		703	100

Source: Compiled by the Investigator

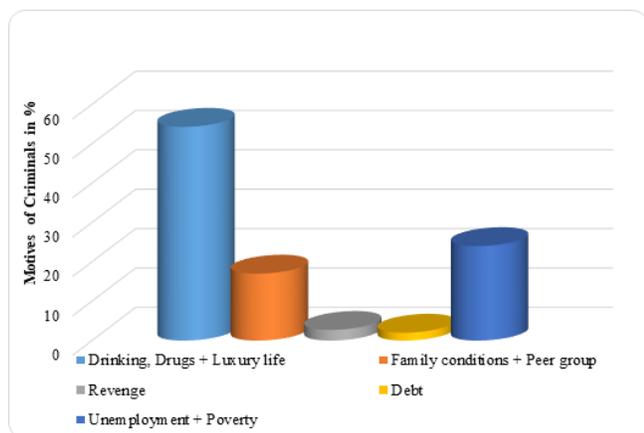


Fig. 10. Motives of Criminals

Conclusion

The socio-economic characteristics of criminals in the study area reveals that 83% of the criminals have more than 4 members in their family, 96% of male offenders, 84% of the criminals were in the age group of 20 years and above, 79.5% of Hindus involved in criminal activities, 83% of the criminals had education up to Class 12, 50% of the criminals were coolies, 22% were businesspersons, drivers and students, 50% of the criminals indulged in criminal activity for 2-4 years, 43% of thieves and automobile thieves were high, the motives of criminals were drinking, drug habits and thirst for leading a luxurious life with 54.3%. In addition to the above-stated problems, unemployment, poverty, family conditions and peer group were the main causes for the offenders to commit various crimes in the city.

Early childhood moral education with the co-operation of parents plays a vibrant and active role in the mental health development of children. Nothing would work better than counselling by social reformers and psychiatrists. If people are mentally corrected and morally improved, the occurrence of crimes will automatically be reduced, if not completely eradicated.

Acknowledgment

We express our sincere thanks to the Commissioner of Police and the police personnel of Tiruchirappalli city for providing the necessary data for this study.

