

For the last few decades, the family and its environs have become areas of centralised interest to the social scientists. It has been increasingly felt that the family plays decisive and moulding roles in the processes of socialisation and personality development, especially during the formative period. For this reason the criminologists too, with all the empirical reasoning at their command, have tried to confirm it as the 'raison d'être' of criminogenesis. The families of delinquents, thus, have been subjected to subtle analysis in regard to structural incongruities and dysfunctional propensities.

In almost all the eclectic explanation — the popular trend in criminological research — the home environment has been given a place of major significance. Burt found that all his delinquents had about 9 to 10 subversive circumstances that developed susceptibilities in them. Carr had found the causes of delinquency in "deviation pressures". Among the foci of deviation pressures the home was the prime factor. Gluecks in their study have emphasised the role of family in structuring criminogenic personality traits or serving as a catalyst in rendering neutral traits criminogenic.

The present paper is an endeavour to scrutinise the structural aspects of family circumstances of the subjects with a view to estimating possible deviant pressures operating on them. The sample of two hundred adolescent property offenders — pocket pickers, house breakers and pil-

ferers—was selected through a pilot survey. The subjects were observed and interviewed in Gwalior and Indore in Central India. The present paper is part of an extensive work on these offenders.¹

Physical structure

Our analysis indicates that 51 per cent of the subjects were living in rented houses, whereas 49 per cent came from families which had their own houses. (The latter percentage also includes five subjects who were without parents or near relatives. However, they had distant relatives to claim their care and protection and the possession of the house but because of the social and emotional distance between them, the subjects very frequently remained out of their own houses).

The construction, the number of apartments and the maintenance obviously reflected the economic background and status of the parents. The construction pattern of the home/house varied from Kachcha ones 44.5 per cent (with solid walls or wooden walls with a muddy paste over them) or a hutment; to pakka ones 27.5 per cent and mixed types 28.0 per cent. Of these 55 per cent had one to two rooms, 36 per cent had three to five rooms, while 9 per cent had six or more rooms. (The kitchen, bathroom latrine, store room etc., if they were in the house premises have been counted as rooms). Dilapidated surroundings, incomplete construction and congestion were generally

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1 For further details please see another article of the author in the Journal, Police Research and Development, Vol. V, No. 1, 1976, pp. 1 to 10.

present. In most of the houses, there was no space for a kitchen or a bathroom. In some cases, surprisingly, even the latrine was not in the premises, although there were four to five rooms in the house.

Most of the subjects, therefore, could be called slum dwellers (especially those who were living in huts or kachcha or mixed type of houses), living in two or even less than two rooms with unwholesome economic background (Table-2). The overcrowding in such houses was, therefore, implicit.

The following table gives an idea regarding the extent of overcrowding. A majority of the subjects along with their family members had to live in single or two roomed apartments. The inhabitants in all the categories of houses were 6 to 9 members in a house.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF ROOMS AND NUMBER OF MEMBERS
IN THE HOUSE

Number of rooms	Number of members				
	Below 5 %	6-9 %	10-13 %	14 and above %	Total
2 or below 2 rooms	29.5	22	2.0	0.5	108
3-5 rooms	10.5	18.5	5.5	1.5	72
6 and above	1.0	5.0	2.0	2.0	20

The repelling structural home-conditions could be verified by many a study made in the West. Burt (1952: 87) found that 21 per cent of his delinquents lived in such over-crowded tenements, as against 16 per cent in the control group and 11 per cent in whole of the county of London. Carr-Saunders, Mannheim and Rhodes (1944: 77-83) found that over-crowding was

somewhat more in cases of the delinquents.

Lander (1954), however, could not conclude that bad housing and overcrowding were a casual nexus, although the high delinquency areas had been shown to have both these characteristics. A similar view was put forward by Peterson and Becker (1965: 67) who pointed out, "the homes of delinquents are often disorderly and cluttered; personal routines are weakly fixed, physical space is at a premium, and privacy can best be had by leaving the home."

As could be seen from the following table the income level of the parents of these subjects who were living in one or two roomed apartments was low. In some cases the earnings were not even being pooled up.

TABLE 2
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME OF THE FAMILY AND
NUMBER OF ROOMS IN THE TENEMENTS

Income Rs.	Number of rooms			Total
	Below 2 %	3-5 %	6 and above %	
Below Rs. 100	7.5	2.5	—	20
101-200	23.0	6.0	0.5	59
201-300	11.0	12.0	2.0	50
301-500	10.0	10.0	2.5	45
501 and above	3.5	5.5	4.0	26

Material Facilities

The preceding table shows the nature and type of dwelling of the subjects. It also gives an idea regarding the type of essential* and subsidiary** facilities that were available in the house. The available facilities were largely conditioned by the socio-economic conditions and cultural standards of the parents.

* Essential: Latrine, bathroom, stores, box rooms etc.

** Places for keeping personal belongings, cosmetics, toys, furnishing, materials for reading, sports and entertainment—radio etc., (clothes, hearth and utensils, which are the minimum necessities of a house hold have been excluded).

TABLE 3

FACILITIES IN THE HOUSE

None	30.5%
Few	60.5%
Some	9.0%

In 30.5 per cent of cases the homes were devoid of any facility except providing shelter in a single room, some clothes, a few utensils and two meals per day. The 60.5 per cent subjects had a few facilities while only a meagre percentage of subjects (9%) belonged to houses having full essential and subsidiary facilities.

Every adolescent and adult member-male or female — had to go far away for nature's calls and ablutions. Public latrines mostly remained unusable and full. The children exploited this situation as an excuse for their unwarranted absences from homes. This process itself had led to all sorts of surreptitious indulgences involving sex or money. For want of these necessities the subjects remained out for most of the time and were exposed to unwholesome influences throughout the day. These circumstances turned out to be conducive factors in attenuating the family control. Gluecks comment "that the homes that lack proper space or are overcrowded, provide little recreation to the children, and whatever enjoyment a child may seek is usually found outside."

The Home Structure

Differing views have been expressed regarding the significance of this factor in delinquency causation. Some studies have found a high correlation between the home structure and delinquency, while others

could not observe any relationship between the two.*

As the table shows a majority of our subjects (60%) came from the physically intact homes; 13 per cent lived with their step-mothers and 5 per cent with step-fathers. Among the broken families 19 per cent were broken due to the death of fathers, 13 per cent due to the demise of mothers and in the case of 8 per cent, both the parents were not alive. As regards the time of parental separation, 10.5 per cent

TABLE 4

HOME STRUCTURE OF THE SUBJECTS

Physically intact homes: (both parents living)	Real parents	120	200
	Step-mother	26	
Physically broken homes:	Step-father	10	
	Both absent	16	
	Mother dead	26	
	Father dead	38	
Time of the death of the parents	Since infancy—		
	Both	1	
	One	4	
	Childhood—		
	Both	4	
	One	16	
	Early Adolescence—		
	Both	5	
	One	21	
	Late Adolescence—		
Both	6		
One	23		

	Both dead %	Mother dead %	Father dead %	Both alive %	Total
Professionals	0.5	3.0	5.0	21.0	59
Habituals	3.5	6.0	8.5	28.5	93
Occasionals	4.0	4.0	5.5	10.5	48
	8.0	13.00	19.00	60.00	200
Pocket-pickers	1.0	4.5	5.5	23.5	69
House-breakers	6.5	6.0	11.0	32.0	111
Pilferers	0.5	2.5	2.5	4.5	20
	8.0	13.0	19.0	60.0	200

* See Monahan (1957), Wootton (1959) for further reference on family status and delinquency.

of the subjects had lost either of the parents or both in childhood, 15.0 per cent in early adolescence, 16.5 per cent had lost them in late adolescent period and 2.5 per cent of the subjects were living without both the parents since infancy. These subjects were being brought up by their near relatives. The table further describes the period of separation vis a vis the mode of the offence.

Further questioning indicated that the intact homes, despite their completeness, were conspicuously marked by constraints and unwholesome situations justifying their sub-cultural characteristics and criminogenic propensities. These conditions apparently were more grave in the case of subjects who had to interact with step-mothers or step-fathers. Such conditions were more predominant in the homes of the house-breakers, thereby giving an idea for inference as if house-breaking is a symbol of breaking one's own home in some cases.

A significant proportion of the subjects were pushed from the homes where either of the parents or both parents were not alive, because, in the opinion of the subjects, these families failed to exercise adequate supervision and control over children. Although, in some cases, the guardians had taken up the parental roles, yet they lacked emotional effectiveness over the children, more specifically on the subjects. In addition, the subjects who had lost their parents at a later stage were found to be more prone to delinquency. It could be inferred that adolescence being an age of emotional craving, the role of parents or sincere guardians is vital in stabilisation of personalities. In their absence, possibilities of disharmony, frustra-

tions and insecurity increase. The study of Bagot (1941) has indicated that in 1934, 54.9 per cent of his girls and 37.7 per cent of his boys came from broken homes; the corresponding figures in 1936, were 44 per cent and 36.2 per cent of his war-time and 34 per cent of his pre-war cases. He further comments that, 'it may be regarded as a well-established fact that, on an average almost one-third of all the juvenile delinquents in English towns came from broken homes'. Among Rose's 500 boys, information was available in 471 cases, and of these almost exactly half came from families which were broken by death, desertion or separation (1954 : 55), the Gluecks (1950 : 76) found that their delinquents largely came from homes which were for one reason or another broken or distorted, whereas the probability that non-delinquents have so high an incidence of inadequate homes is remote. Healy (1915), Healy and Bronner (1926) Slawson (1926) and Monahan (1957) state that one large minority in the population consistently shows twice the average rate of socially broken homes and twice the average rate of delinquency. Other groups with strong family cohesiveness show below average rates of delinquency.

Family Size

The families* of the subjects, in general, were exceptionally large. This magnitude is an indicator of the economic and living space pressure immanent. Although very little work is available in relation to family type-joint or single — and size in relation to delinquency, yet earlier studies have shown to have had a high co-relation with

* Single family: Only two generations (parents and children) are the incumbents of the house.

Joint family: two or more generations with immediate relatives living in the same household, sharing the meals and pooling up the income with the head of the family.

the large families and mal-adjustment in the house. Fisher and Hayes (1945), Damrin (1949), Nye (1959) and Wootton concluded that more delinquents came from the larger families than non-delinquents. The deteriorating influence of the largeness of the family, however, was minimised in the case of families which could overcome this shortcoming by their sound economic condition, and this might be the reason that only a few delinquents turn difficult in still larger families (families with membership of more than 10 persons).

The type of the families was found related to the type of criminality of the subject. A majority of the pilferers and pocket-pickers came from joint families. On the other hand, the house-breakers were more the product of single families. The joint families produced more professionals, whereas the single families nurtured more occasionals, and habituals. The pocket pickers and the professionals were more from joint families.

Total Number of the Siblings

The largeness of the family testified to the fact that the subjects had large number of siblings to live and adjust with. Of the total population, 73 per cent of the subjects were from families where the sibling number was four or more. The problems of the sibling mal-adjustment and jealousy were obvious. Twentyseven per cent subjects had up to three or four siblings, 42 per cent had to keep up companionate relations with four or five siblings, 21 per cent had to deal with six to seven siblings and 10 per cent had to interact with more than seven siblings.

While relating the criminality of the subjects with sibling number it was found that a larger group of the pocket-pickers, house-breakers and of the pilferers came from the families with four or more siblings. The families with below three sibling number (small families) produced 27.9 per cent of the house-breakers, 25 per cent of the pilferers and 20.3 per cent pocket-pickers. Among the remainder.

TABLE 5

TYPES OF FAMILIES OF THE SUBJECTS

Family	Professional		Habitual			Occasional		Total
	P.P. %	H.B. %	P.P. %	H.B. %	Pilf. %	Pilf. %	H.B. %	
Type of families:								
<i>Joint:</i>								
Below 5	6.5	1.0	3.5	3.0	—	1.0	1.5	33
6-9	6.0	1.0	2.0	5.0	—	2.0	1.0	34
10-13	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.5	1.5	1.0	11
14 and above	—	—	—	0.5	1.0	—	0.5	4
<i>Single:</i>								
Below 5	3.5	0.5	2.5	8.5	—	1.0	8.5	49
6-9	5.0	3.5	2.5	12.0	—	1.5	4.0	57
10-13	1.5	—	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.5	—	8
14 and above	—	—	—	1.5	0.5	—	—	4

40 per cent pilferers, 18.5 per cent house-breakers and 14.5 per cent pocket pickers' of their individual totals, were pushed from homes where the sibling number was six to seven.

The study revealed that on an average the delinquents came from homes with 5.2 siblings in the house. The findings in this aspect matched with quite a few studies undertaken in Great Britain. These studies showed that the number of children in the family of delinquents were 4 to 6 approximately while the control group average was three. The studies of Bagot, Norwood East, Car-Saunders *et al.*, Gibbs, Mannheim. Mannheim and Wilkins, Rose, Bagot (1944), and Ferguson respectively, found that on an average all delinquent families had more than four children, while in the control group the sibling number ranged from 2 to 5.

Gluecks in their study (1934) found that average number of children in the delinquents families was 4.94 which they contrasted with a figure of 4.5 persons per family derived from 1920 census and in their earlier study found 5.3 children per family as compared to 1910 census figure 4.6 children. In a parallel investigation of reformatory women, made in Massachusetts, the figures were 6.43 children in the offender's families and 4.4 persons in

average normal family. These investigations however, could not find a significant difference in the number of children in the family of offenders and control groups.

Sibship Position

Slightly more than half of the subjects (53.5 per cent) were the intermediate child, 21.5 per cent were the first born and 19 per cent were the last child. Only 6 per cent were the only children of their parents. Typologically a larger number of the pilferers were intermediate children. Amongst these about 3/5 were of the professionals and habituals. No significant difference could be observed in respect of other categories, except that most of the only children turned out to be house-breakers.

The intermediate children, therefore, were found relatively more susceptible to demoralisation.

The findings get support of the findings of Chinn, Muthayya and Bhaskaran, Shukla and Jatar, McCords *et. al.* Alfred Adler, applying his concept of inferiority complex maintained that second born children always found themselves in a position inferior to their first born sibs and had to fight for recognition becoming hostile and aggressive in the process.

TABLE 6
NUMBER OF THE SIBLING

No. of siblings	T Y P E S							Total
	Professional		Habitual			Occasional		
	P.P. %	H.B. %	P.P. %	H.B. %	Pilf. %	Pilf. %	H.B. %	
Below 3	5.0	1.0	2.0	12.0	—	2.5	4.5	54
Below 5	11.0	2.5	8.0	10.5	.5	2.0	7.5	84
Below 7	4.0	2.0	1.0	6.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	42
8 and above	3.0	1.0	0.5	4.0	—	1.0	0.5	20

TABLE 7
SIBSHIP POSITION

Sibship Position	TYPES							Total
	Professional		Habitual		Occasional			
	PP %	H.B. %	P.P. %	H.B.	Pilf.	Pilf.	H.B.	
Only	1.0	—	—	3.5	—	—	1.5	12
First	5.5	2.0	3.5	6.0	—	1.5	3.0	43
Intermediate	14.0	2.5	6.5	17.0	2.5	3.5	7.5	107
Last	2.5	2.0	1.5	6.0	—	2.5	4.5	38

Literacy Level of the Parents

The literacy level of the parents, in general, was low; a majority of the female parents were illiterate. The schooling level of a large majority of the fathers, mothers and about one-fourth guardians was below the eighth standard. However, the male parents had a little higher schooling than their female counterparts. The 2.5 per cent were matriculates and only 1.5 per cent continued their education beyond matriculation. The guardians of the subjects (uncles — paternal or maternal — elder sisters, or other near relatives) not only were more literate but also showed the typical relationship of age with literacy — the younger the age, the higher the education. More than half of the living fathers and mothers of the pocket-pickers, and the pilferers were educated below the fourth standard. In general, the educational level of the father, mother or guardians of the house-breakers was higher than that of other groups. It could, therefore, be inferred that in a greater probability the pocket-pickers and the pilferers are drawn from the houses where the educational attainments of parents/guardians are low.

The Profession of the Parents or Guardians

The profession of the breadwinners in the present study could be broadly divided into four categories: cultivation, business, service and the labour. Labour comprises wage earners on the monthly, weekly or daily basis. The results indicated that a very meagre percentage of the breadwinners were cultivators, about one-third were businessmen out of this 30 per cent were small shopkeepers with stable income — hawkers, cycle-repairers, barbers, carpenters, basket-makers, weavers, vegetable-sellers, fruit-sellers, milkmen, drink-sellers, petty stationers betel-sellers, etc. and 4.5 per cent had slightly larger business establishments. About half the parents/guardians* were serving in various organisations as skilled workers, 12 per cent as factory mechanics, motor mechanics or drivers, masons, painters, printers, etc. and 33.5 per cent were unskilled employees (domestic servants, shop assistants, peons, gatekeepers, chowkidars, petty clerks, etc.).

Some of the breadwinners were making a living by working as labourers (tonga-drivers, rikshawpullers, vendors in cinema

* The profession of the parents here denotes the profession of the breadwinner, irrespective of the sex of the parent. Parents is used for either of the parent — mother or father or both.

TABLE 8

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

		Illiterate			Primary			Middle			Matriculation (11th Standard)			More than Matri- culation		
		Father	Mother	Guardian	F.	M.	G.	F.	M.	G.	F.	M.	G.	F.	M.	G.
Professionals	PP.	1.5	10.5	—	7.0	2.5	2.0	5.0	3.0	3.0	1.5	1.0	—	—	1.5	1.0
	H.B.	—	3.0	—	1.5	1.5	1.5	2.5	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	—	—	—	—
Habituals	P.P.	2.0	6.5	0.5	3.5	2.0	1.0	3.0	—	2.5	0.5	—	—	—	—	1.0
	H.B.	5.0	18.0	1.0	3.5	4.0	2.0	8.5	1.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	—	—
	Pilf.	—	2.0	0.5	1.5	0.5	—	—	—	—	0.5	—	—	—	—	—
Occasionals	Pilf.	1.5	3.5	—	1.5	—	2.0	1.0	—	—	0.5	—	—	—	—	—
	H.B.	1.5	7.0	1.0	1.5	3.5	4.0	4.0	—	1.0	0.5	—	1.0	0.5	—	0.5
Total		23	101	06	40	28	25	48	10	18	14	05	06	05	03	05

TABLE 9

THE PROFESSION OF THE CHIEF OF THE FAMILY: (BREADWINNER)

Profession	Professionals		Habituals			Occasionals		Total
	P.P. %	H.B. %	P.P. %	H.B. %	Pilf. %	P.P. %	H.B. %	
Cultivation	—	—	.5	1.5	—	0.5	2.0	9
<i>Business:</i>								
Small	9.5	2.5	4.0	8.5	0.5	2.0	3.0	79
Large	1.5	—	—	—	—	—	1.0	
<i>Service:</i>								
Skilled	6.5	2.5	3.0	10.0	1.5	3.5	6.5	91
Unskilled	4.0	0.5	2.5	3.0	0.5	0.5	1.0	
Casual Labour	1.5	1.0	1.5	7.5	—	1.0	3.0	31

Families with stable income:	... Cultivators	09	} 42
	... Monthly skilled employees	24	
	... Stable businessmen	09	
Families with unstable income:	... Unskilled employees	67	} 158
	... Daily paid workers	31	
	... Petty traders	60	

houses, poster carriers, porters etc.). A large group of the professionals, occasionals and habituals belonged to families where the parents had either a small shop or were unskilled workers. Similarly a large majority of the pilferers, pocket-pickers and house-breakers came from families where parents were either petty traders

or were serving as unskilled hands. In about 79 per cent of the cases the economic inadequacy of the family was discernible. The subjects were living under conditions of stress and beguilement to extra normative sources of income seemed to be the normal consequence.

TABLE 10

THE INCOME OF THE FAMILY AND PROFESSION OF THE BREADWINNERS

Profession	Income Rs.					Total
	Below 100 %	101-200 %	200-300 %	301-500 %	500 and above %	
Cultivation	—	1.0	1.0	0.5	2.0	9
<i>Business</i>						
Large	—	—	—	1.5	3.0	9
Small	2.0	11.0	10.5	5.0	1.5	60
<i>Service</i>						
Skilled	0.5	3.5	2.0	3.0	3.0	24
Unskilled	2.5	9.5	5.5	12.5	3.5	67
Labourers	5.0	4.5	6.0	—	—	31

In 10 per cent cases, where the father was either dead or his income was insufficient, the mother was supposed to work outside and support the family — through legitimate or illegitimate means. The nature of the mother's employment varied from menial service to regular employment (sweepers, petty labourers, maid-servant, teacher, nurse, *etc.*) on nominal salary. Only one mother had a job with some remunerative status in a private firm. Some of these mothers were even hawkers. The earnings of the mother, therefore, were scanty and could not compensate for the harm caused to the family by her absence from the basic duties of the household.

Delinquency in children or other members of the family seemed to be conspicuously related with the state of occupational instability and uncertainty of income of the household. The findings fall in line with the work of the earlier researchers like Ferguson (1952), who found that in his "ordinary" boys, delinquency was relatively infrequent among the children of skilled workers and more frequent among the children of unskilled workers. Slawson (1926) published comments on the preponderance of unskilled workers among fathers of delinquent boys as compared to those un-selected population. Gluecks (1940) found in their study of a reformatory men, that 16.6 per cent of the fathers of the delinquent population were unskilled workers, 23.4 per cent were from the semi-skilled occupational group and 40 per cent. were unskilled. From their parallel study of delinquent women (1934) (from whom particulars were obtained in all but 28 cases) they conclude that clearly the occupational status of the fathers of our

girls is far below that of general population.

In respect of mothers' employment and criminality among the offspring, the earlier researchers have been diverse and inconclusive (Wootton, 1959).

The Total Monthly Income in the House

In the majority of cases (64.5%) the total monthly income of the entire household was below Rs. 300/-. Ten per cent of the cases could not earn more than Rs. 100/- a month, 25 per cent earned something between Rs. 101 to Rs. 201 and 29.5 per cent could stretch their income beyond Rs. 200/- to Rs. 300/-.

In 35.5 per cent cases the income of the parents was more than 300 rupees in a month. In 22.5 per cent of the cases the parents were earning three to five hundred rupees, while in 13 per cent they could manage to earn more than five hundred rupees in a month.*

The result, however, indicated that all income groups produced delinquents. Yet economic adversities were manifest. The figures of the pocket-pickers had slightly more apparent variation in regard to low and high income groups.

The economic pressure on the children obviously was more conspicuous in the families where about 8 to 9 members were to live on an average monthly income of 200 rupees or even less and where the female members as well, worked to supplement the family income. The following table gives an account of the amount of income and number of persons dependent on it.

* The statement of income made here pertains only to the income gained through the legitimate means. The subjects were either hesitant to divulge or were ignorant of facts regarding other pecuniary sources the family had.

TABLE 11

TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME OF THE ENTIRE FAMILY

Income group in Rs.	Professional		Habitual		Occasional			Total
	P.P. %	H.B. %	P.P. %	H.B. %	Pilf. %	Pilf. %	H.B. %	
Below 100	2.5	—	0.5	1.5	—	1.5	4.0	20
101—200	8.5	1.5	1.0	9.5	1.0	2.5	5.5	59
201—300	4.5	1.5	3.0	9.0	1.0	10.0	3.5	50
301—500	3.5	0.5	5.5	8.0	0.5	2.0	2.5	45
500 and above	4.0	2.0	1.5	4.5	—	—	1.0	13

TABLE 12

TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME AND NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN THE FAMILY

Income	Number of Members				Total
	Below 5 %	6-9 %	10-13 %	14 and above %	
Below					
100 rupees	6.5	3.5	—	—	20
101—200	21.0	8.5	1.0	—	59
201—300	7.0	16.5	1.5	—	50
301—500	4.0	12.5	4.0	2.0	45
501 and above	2.0	5.0	3.0	2.0	26

Taking stock of the entire economic situation, it was seen that out of the whole sample 10 per cent subjects came from poor homes where it was difficult for the parents even to manage the necessities of life. In 29.5 per cent of the cases the parents were managing their family expenses with difficulty. Twenty-five per cent of the parents came from economic groups which had fairly tolerable income; and 22.5 per cent belong to nominally well to do families which were economically sound. In thirteen per cent of the cases the parents were earning more than Rs. 500/- per month and, therefore, could

have comfortably catered to a variety of needs of the children. To sum up, it may be concluded that 60.5 per cent subjects came from favourable income groups and 39.5 per cent from very poor homes. The findings here are more akin to the findings of Gluecks (1934:34), Healy and Bronner (1936: 28-31), Shaw and McKay (1942), Bagot (1941: 44), Kvaraceus (1944: 51-54), Merrill (1947: 64-70), Cletus Dirksen (1948: 29-41), Burgess (1932), Miller (1958-59), and Myernoff and Myernoff (1964), who concluded that the sub-standard economic condition of the family was a major factor. Bagot (1941: 43) concludes that no less than 85.7 per cent of the delinquents' families would have been below standard as against 30 per cent of the Mersey side families. Healy and Bronner's data indicate that 33 per cent families were living on a comfortable income or better, while 51 per cent existed on-marginal income and 16 per cent were dependent on aid at the time that the child was seen. Others like Nye, Short and Oslon (1959), Warner and Lunt (1941: 373-77), Barron (1956: 52), and Porterfield (1943: 46) although could not find a high correlation between economic condition and

delinquency, yet they could not deny its influence altogether. For more details see Barbara Wootton (1959: 107-113).

Conclusion

The subjects in general, had inadequate housing facilities. A majority belonged to the segment having two room houses, a few came from houses having three rooms and only very few lived in the houses having more than six rooms. Sixty per cent of the subjects were pushed out of homes which had few essential and subsidiary facilities.

The literacy level of the parents of the subjects, in general, was low. The literacy level of the male parent was higher than that of the female parent.

Above 40 per cent of the subjects were thrown out of the families where the parents had unstable income, e.g., unskilled employees, petty traders, labourers etc.

The majority of subjects (64.5%) came from the economically inadequate families where the total monthly income of the parents was below Rs. 300/- and where the parents/guardians, either had no education or just a smattering of education. Because of poor education, the parents had to take to professions of cheap prestige value and poor economic return. The economy of these vocations was far from being satisfactory. Only a few exceptions were found. The earner, therefore, had to go for unskilled jobs, petty trading and casual labour. The nature of these occupations required the breadwinner to spend the major hours of the day outside the house.

Because of educational and monetary inadequacies the parents could not arrange for wholesome housing and necessary facilities — essential and subsidiary. Very few families could meet these necessities.

It is possible that availability and accessibility of these facilities may keep the parents in the homes and prevent them from seeking these outside. Recreational facilities were almost non-existent. The limited space and large number of members to share it resulted in congestion. A larger percentage of the subjects were drawn from homes where there were 6 to 9 members in the house. As has been indicated earlier, the breadwinner had no spare time left at his disposal to attend to other obligations vital for family stability.

The physically intact homes were more in number. Of these 13 per cent had step-mothers and 5 per cent had step-fathers. The subjects had large number of siblings. The problems of adjustment and jealousies were obvious among them.

Slightly more than half of the subjects (55.5%) were intermediate children, 21.5 per cent were the first born and 19 per cent were last children. Only 6 per cent were the only children of their parents.

The families, by and large, were large and, therefore, charged with impersonalizing tendencies. Everyone was relatively indifferent to others and to the set up, particularly the activists, including the subjects, were more conspicuous in this regard, as they were unmindful of their social relations. Frequent stealing at home and long absence were symptoms of impersonality. Sibling jealousies and inter-personal conflicts' made home life distressing.

Traditional indifference towards education was tantamount to proper cultural assimilation process. Moreover, the low prestige occupations of the parents and the subjects were prone towards insecurity. In this situation, the possibility of non-conforming self-image increased.

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