

## Fingerprint Record Slips: Use as Authentic Tool for Criminal Research

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### ABSTRACT:

The aim of the present paper is to look into possibilities for use of Fingerprint Record Slip database as authentic tool for criminal research. The 10-digit record slips stocked in bureaux in different parts of India carry rolled impressions and plain prints for verifying the sequence on the face with a unique Personal Identification Number (PIN) and / or classification formula, on the reverse are the personal variables (attributes) and conviction details. The author researched 200 slips of women offenders, and found that these slips can perhaps be used to study and analyse in-depth a convict's personal variables (attributes) i.e. age, religion, state of residence, locality (urban/rural), marital status etc. Conviction details of the offender include court, district/state, court case number, date of conviction, section under which sentenced, jail and admission number, police station FIR number etc., which can help in studying other aspects of criminality like pattern of IPC crimes etc. The results of the study revealed interesting findings about women criminality in India, out of 200 women convicts studied, 5 per cent were juvenile delinquents; the youngest entered into the world of crime at the age of 10 years. 70 % of the juvenile delinquents were from Tamil Nadu, 20 % from Punjab and 10 % from Rajasthan. Surprisingly one of the offenders was 71 when she joined hands with criminality. Maximum participation of women criminals was from Tamil Nadu; with 59 numbers, they topped the tally. West Bengal and Kerala State had 1-1 offender each. Religious affiliation of the offenders too was analyzed, 89.5 per cent of the convicts were Hindus. Out of the total subjects studied 134 were from rural areas, and 66 represented urban habitation. 183 were married when they committed their first crime, which is 91.5 per cent of the women criminals included for study and 17 were unmarried at the time of their debut in the arena of crime. The present method of using fingerprint record slip database is perhaps a source of authentic information, and can be successfully used as a novel and trustworthy tool for criminal research. The new research methodology has aided us in the present study to clearly visualize the contemporary scenario of women criminality in India.

### INTRODUCTION

The ten-digit fingerprint record slips archived in the Central Fingerprint Bureau at New Delhi or other State Fingerprint Bureaux spread all over India form a database not just of the impressions of the top phalange of the fingers of both hands, but they can also serve as an important source of information about personal variables (attributes) i.e. age, religion, marital status, residence etc., of the convicts. Apart from this the backside of these slips carry conviction details, including section under which the crime was

committed along with the sentence or punishment rendered by the court. These slips are sent to the CFPB, by the courts, Senior Superintendent of Polices' office or State Fingerprint Bureaux (1).

The author has tried and tested the same methodology for studying the involvement of women in violent crimes in one of his papers, in which it was concluded that out of the total 200 records studied 19 females were found to have been involved in violent crimes, that is 9.5 percent of the total subjects considered for the study. And

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those convicted of murder (302 IPC) were 11 in number, that is 5.5 percent of total cases studied, which is 57.89 percent of the women involved in violent crimes. The women involved in Attempt to Murder (307 IPC) cases were found to be 3 in number, that is 1.5% of total subjects studied; it is 15.78% of total number of females involved in violent crimes. The number of subjects involved in cases of Culpable Homicide not amounting to Murder (304 IPC) was 16, which is 8.0% of total no of cases studied, or 84.21 percent of total number of subjects involved in violent crimes (2).

But collection of other types has been used successfully in recent past too as a tool for research; database maintained in the Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) was compared with total expense. It appears that the Medical Examiner's system is offering Manitobans a cost efficient system of death investigation (3). The present method of using fingerprint record slip database can be used successfully as source of authentic information, and as a novel and trustworthy tool for criminal research.

### **Rationale of the Study**

In India, which is a land of more than 1000 million people, reforms and rehabilitation of criminals is a daunting task, for various reasons including lack of in-depth research and reliable statistics or data. We need to develop an inexpensive, but extremely reliable tool for research on important aspects of criminality. Analysis of variables (attributes) and conviction details of all those involved in petty to heinous crimes can give us an insight into the problem areas. Any or many of the variables (attributes) could be related with the conviction details i.e. section

under which crime was committed to infer about crime pattern.

### **Operational Definitions**

- o Women Criminal: A woman who has been found guilty of criminal behavior convicted under Indian Penal Codes/ Special and Local Laws (SLL) and sentenced by the court.
- o Indian Penal Code (IPC): The Indian Penal Code is general penal code of the country. It identifies the acts of omissions and commissions that constitute the offences and makes them punishable under this Act. It provides punishment for offences committed with in India; punishment for offences committed beyond, but which by law may be tried within India and also extends applicability of the Act to extra-territorial offences (4).
- o Convict: A person found guilty of crime and serving sentence for its commission.
- o Violent Crimes: The following IPC crimes, which are reported to Police Authorities, have been grouped as 'Violent Crimes' for the purpose of crime analysis in the study. They are:
  - o Violent Crimes Affecting Life: Murder, Attempt to murder, Culpable Homicide not amounting to Murder, Dowry Deaths, and Kidnapping & Abduction
  - o Violent Crimes Affecting Property: Dacoity, Preparation & Assembly for Dacoity and Robbery
  - o Violent Crimes Affecting Public Safety: Riots and Arson

*Note:* Violent Crimes Affecting Women i.e. rape, has not been considered in the study, as we have emphasized on crime by women, and not against them.

### IPC (Indian Penal Code) sections for violent crimes (5).

- o Juvenile Delinquent: The Juvenile Justice Act of 1986 defines a juvenile delinquent as a male below 16 year of age and female below 18 years of age. The Act was amended in 2000 and as per new Act the age of juvenile delinquent males and females was brought at par i.e. below the age of 18 (6). We have made calculations in the study as per the Un-amended Act, because majority of female offenders included in the study committed crimes well before the year 2000
- o Fingerprint Slip for Record: The form containing 10-digit rolled impressions and plain prints taken in proper sequence for record with particulars regarding name, parentage, residence, conviction etc. of a convict is called a fingerprint slip for record (7).

- o Variable: The variable is a central idea in quantitative research. Simply defined a variable is a concept that varies. The language of quantitative research is a language of variables and relationships among variables. Two type of concepts- those that refer to a fixed phenomenon (e.g., the ideal type of bureaucracy) and those that vary in quantity, intensity, or amount (e.g., amount of education) are common in our day-to-day life (8).

The second type of concept and measures of the concepts are called variables. Variables take on two or more values. Once you begin to look for them, you will see variables all over. For example, gender is a variable; it can take on two values, male or female. Marital status is a variable; it can take on the values of never married/single, married, divorced, or widowed. Type of crime committed is a variable: it can

**Table-1: Violent Crime Affecting Life**

S. No.	Major Head of crime	IPC Sections
1	Murder	302, 303
2	Attempt to Murder	307
3	Culpable Homicide not amounting to Murder	308
4	Dowry Death	304B
5	Kidnapping and Abduction	364, 364A, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369

**Table-2: Violent Crime Affecting Public Safety**

S. No.	Major Head of Crime	IPC Sections
1	Arson	435, 436, 438
2	Riot	143-158 (Except Sec. 157)

**Table-3: Violent Crimes Affecting Public Property**

S. No.	Major Head of crime	IPC Section
1	Dacoity	395-402

take on values of robbery, burglary, theft, murder, and so forth.

The values or the categories of a variable are its attributes. It is easy to confuse variables with attributes. Variables and attributes are related, but they have distinct purposes. The confusion arises because the attribute of one variable can itself become a separate variable with a slight change in definition. The distinction is between concepts themselves that vary and conditions within concepts that vary. For example, 'male' is not a variable; it describes a category of gender and is an attribute of the variable 'gender'. Yet, a related idea, 'degree of masculinity', is a variable. It describes the intensity or strength of attachment to attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with the concept of 'masculine' within a culture. 'Married' is not a variable; it is an attribute of the variable 'marital status'. Related ideas such as 'number of years married' or 'depth of commitment to a marriage' are variables. Likewise, 'robbery' is not a variable; it is an attribute of the variable 'type of crime'.

'Number of robberies,' 'robbery rate', 'amount taken during a robbery', and 'type of robbery' are all variables because they vary or take on a range of values. In brief, a concept, which can take on different quantitative values, is called a variable (9).

### **Objectives of the Study**

To develop and establish a novel, efficient, cost effective tool for crime and criminal research, using fingerprint record slip database archived in the bureaux.

To study personal variables (attributes) and conviction details to understand, analyze and highlight the criminality of Indian women offenders. Only female criminals were taken into

considerations, as to test the precision, specificity, and authenticity of the new tool.

### **Period of Study**

The study was conducted during January-March 2005.

### **Research Methodology**

Following methodology was adopted and used for collection and analysis of data:

- o Review and analysis of relative literature (books, research papers, newspaper articles and reports etc)
- o 10-digit fingerprint slips of female convicts filed in the Record Section of the Central Finger Print Bureau of the National Crime Records Bureau New Delhi, India, carrying personal and conviction details on the back side provided a source for collection of raw data. The face of the fingerprint slip also contains a unique Personal Identification Number or PIN. All these slips are also stored in computer-based system, and can be accessed to, through this unique PIN. Only record slips were taken into account for the research. Records slips of foreign nationals were not considered, as the study concentrates on Indian women offenders.
- o 200 subjects were randomly selected and studied.

### **Results**

**Juvenile Delinquents:** Out of 200 women convicts studied for research, 10 were Juvenile delinquents at the time of committing first crime of their life, and the youngest was a 10-year-old girl from Tamil Nadu; eldest was 17 years from Punjab. Juvenile delinquents were calculated to be 5.0 percent of the total number of female offenders included for study. 70% of the juvenile delinquents were from Tamil

**Table-4: Number of Juvenile delinquent Convicts**

PIN	State of Residence	Locality	Yr. of Birth	Yr. of 1st Crime	Age at 1st Crime
113613	Tamil Nadu	R	1976	1986	10
113656	Tamil Nadu	R	1976	1988	12
164841	Tamil Nadu	U	1986	1998	12
238584	Tamil Nadu	U	1986	1999	13
113615	Punjab	U	1966	1979	13
113603	Tamil Nadu	R	1976	1989	13
113601	Tamil Nadu	R	1968	1981	13
113805	Tamil Nadu	U	1982	1998	16
157538	Rajasthan	R	1978	1994	16
113789	Punjab	R	1978	1995	17

Nadu, 20% of them represented Punjab, and juvenile delinquents from Rajasthan had 10% share. 60% of the juvenile delinquents were from the rural background, whereas 40% dwelled in urban zones.

**Above 65 years of age:** One of the convicts committed her first crime at the age of 71, which is 0.5 percent of total number of convicts included for the study. She represented Uttar Pradesh.

**Religion of convicts:** We also studied religious affiliation of women criminals; Hindus were 179 in numbers, which would mean that their share was 89.5 percent. Nine Sikh women were found to have been involved in criminal activities; their percentile comes out to be 4.5. The number of Christians and Muslims convicts was 6-6 respectively, which means their share in crime was 3.0 percent each.

**Locality/Habitation:** When we analyzed the locality of the convicts, 134 were found to have dwelled in rural habitation, which means 67.0 percent of the total 200 subjects studied. 66 were from urban background, which is 33.0 percent.

**Marital Status of the Convicts:** Marital status of the women criminals was also taken into consideration, 183 of total number of convicts studied were married at the time of their debut into the arena of crime, which is 91.5 percent. 17 of the total number of convicts were single/un-married when they initiated with their criminal behavior, which is 8.5 percent.

**State (Province) of Residence:** 15 States/Union Territories have been found to be represented by the women criminals. Tamil Nadu had highest participation with 59 convicts, whereas West Bengal and Kerala had 1-1 convict

**Table-5: Convict above 65 years of age**

PIN	State of Residence	Locality	Yr. of Birth	Yr. of 1st Crime	Age at 1st Crime
113662	Uttar Pradesh	R	1916	1987	71

**Table-6: Religious affiliation of the convicts**

Religion	Number of Convicts
Muslim	6
Christian	6
Sikh	9
Hindu	179

**Table-7: Locality/habitation wise distribution of the convicts**

Locality	Number of Convicts
Rural	134
Urban	66

**Table-8: Marital status of the convicts**

Marital Status	Number of Convicts
Married	183
Single	17

belonging to these States respectively. Tamil Nadu showed to have 29.5 percent share in terms of involvement in crime. The percent share of West Bengal and Kerala was just 0.5 percent each.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study revealed interesting findings about women criminality in India, out of 200 women convicts studied, 5.0 percent were juvenile delinquents; the youngest entered into the world of crime at the age of 10 years. 70 % of the juvenile delinquents were from Tamil Nadu, 20 % from Punjab and 10 % from Rajasthan State. Surprisingly one of the offenders was 71 when she joined hands with criminality. Maximum participation of women criminals was from Tamil Nadu; with 59 numbers they topped the tally. West Bengal and Kerala state had 1-1 offender each.

**Table-9: State (Province) of residence of the convicts**

State of Residence	Number of Convicts
West Bengal	1
Kerala	1
Orissa	2
Himachal Pradesh	2
Goa	2
Haryana	3
Andhra Pradesh	3
Maharashtra	7
Gujarat	7
Rajasthan	12
Uttar Pradesh	19
Delhi	26
Punjab	27
Madhya Pradesh	29
Tamil Nadu	59

Religious affiliation of the offenders too was analyzed, 89.5 percent of the total convicts were Hindus. Out of the total 200 subjects 134 were from rural background, 66 dwelled in urban areas. 183 of the total convicts were married when they committed their first crime, which is 91.5 percent of the women criminals included for study and 17 were single/unmarried at the time of their debut in the arena of crime.

It seems that the aim to develop an authentic, precise, cost effective, tool for research in various aspects of women criminality, using fingerprint record slip database, has been fulfilled. Moreover, the science of fingerprints is the safest and absolute means of identification of individuality determined by comparing it's papillary ridges present

over epidermal as well as dermal layer of glabrous skin of hands (10).

Other methods of data collection specially involving extraction of information from established criminals can have many apprehensions. The respondents may not be candid and sincere. Convincing them to share details about the crime committed by them in the past may require establishment of rapport and acquainting them with importance of program, assuring anonymity of their answers, albeit in disguised manner etc (11). The present method of using fingerprint record slip database is perhaps a source of authentic information, and can be successfully

used as a trustworthy tool for criminal research.

The study of variables (attributes) like state (province) of residence, sex, marital status, habitation type (rural/urban), religion, age etc. can throw sufficient light on the crime pattern or other related aspects of criminality, which makes it a useful source of data that could be utilized as handy tool by researchers. The findings of present study can help the correctional workers, scholars of sociology, criminology, anthropology, social work, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), police, prison reformers, and all others interested in rehabilitation of the misguided women.

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