

# End of innocence

The government's decision to amend the juvenile justice law will do little to address the root cause of juvenile crime, most of which is owing to poverty and low education levels. By **RAMESH CHAKRAPANI**

The government's recent decision to amend the juvenile justice law, which will now allow people between 16 and 18 years of age to be tried as adults for heinous offences, has ignited much debate in the country on how to deal with juvenile crime.

Latest data for 2014 released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), under the Ministry of Home Affairs, showed that the number of cases of juveniles in conflict with the law under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) reached 33,526, up 5.7 per cent from 31,725 in 2013, while 5,039 cases were recorded under various Special and Local Laws (SLL) crimes, up 21.8 per cent from 4,136 in 2013.

The share of IPC crimes registered against juveniles to the total number of IPC crimes in India was 1.2 per cent in 2014, which has remained more or less the same since 2001. (Males below 16 and females below 18 were considered juvenile until the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986, was amended in 2000 and the age of juveniles was redefined so that all males and females below 18 were considered juveniles.)

For 2014, theft saw the highest number of cases, at 6,717, accounting for 20 per cent of all IPC cases. There were 1,989 cases of rape (5.9 per cent) and 1,591 cases of assault on women with intention to outrage modesty (4.7 per cent). Other major

heads were criminal trespass and burglary with 2,546 cases (7.6 per cent), grievous hurt with 1,568 (4.7 per cent) and kidnapping and abduction with 1,455 (4.3 per cent). The minor heads were robbery (1,024 cases) and riots (1,092), while there were 841 murder and 728 attempted murder cases.

The year saw Gujarat emerge as the worst offender under SLL crimes, with 2,785 cases, followed by Tamil Nadu (604), Bihar (327), Maharashtra (232) and Chhattisgarh (188).

Under SLL crimes, the highest share of cases was for crimes under the Prohibition Act, accounting for 41.3 per cent of all SLL cases for the year.

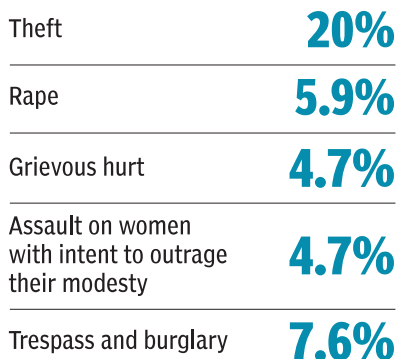
The worst offender among the States was Madhya Pradesh, which recorded 6,346 cases under IPC crimes, followed by Maharashtra (5,175), Bihar (4,044), Rajasthan (2,174), Delhi (1,946), Chhattisgarh (1,611) and Gujarat (1,595). These seven States together accounted for 68.3 per cent of all IPC cases.

Madhya Pradesh has held the top spot every year since 2001, except in 2009 when it was second to Maharashtra.

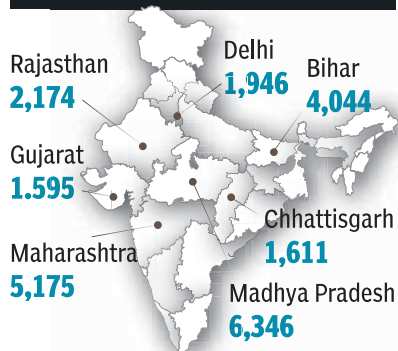
Out of the 46,638 juveniles apprehended for various crimes in 2014, 10,530 were illiterate and 15,004 had only primary-level education. These two categories together accounted for 52.9 per cent of all juveniles apprehended during the year. Of the

total, children living with parents (38,693) accounted for 80.2 per cent, while homeless children (1,632) who were involved in various crimes accounted for just 3.4 per cent.

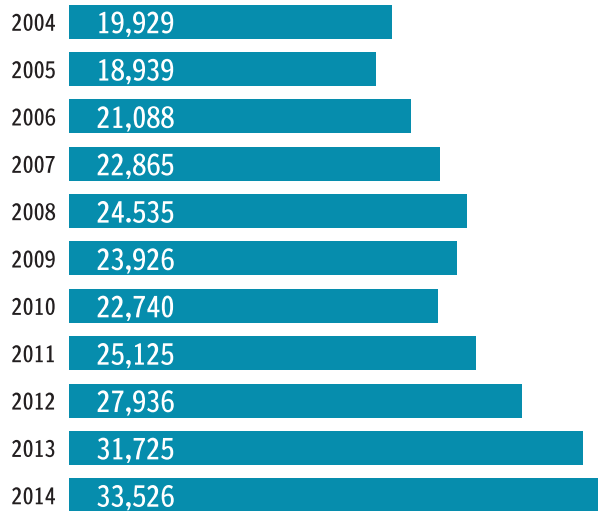
### Cases under major crime heads against juveniles 2014



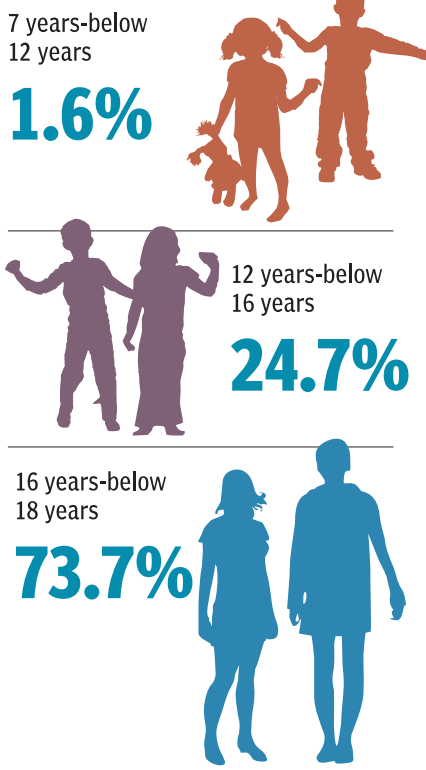
### Top States in distribution of cases under IPC 2014



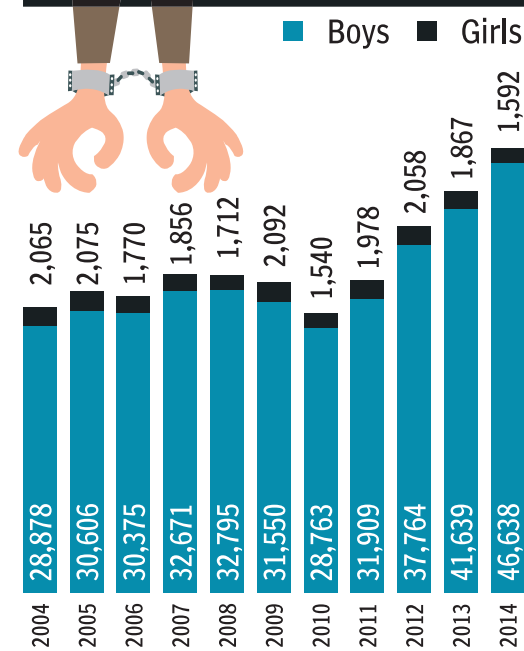
### Cases registered against juveniles under IPC 2004-2014



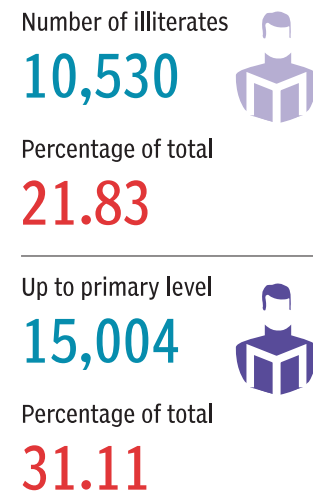
### Classification of apprehended juveniles by age group 2014



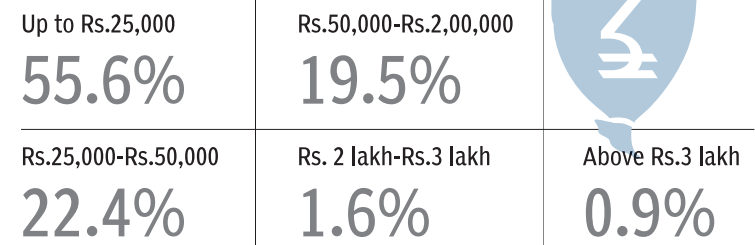
### Juveniles apprehended under IPC and SLL crimes 2004-2014



### Education level 2014



### Annual family income level 2014



### State-wise distribution of cases under SLL 2014

