



Juvenile Crime and Delinquents

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Juvenile, Delinquents, Crime.

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ABSTRACT *Delinquent and criminal behaviour among young people is increasing day by day. The intensity and severity of juvenile offences are generally determined by the social, economic and cultural conditions prevailing in the country. There is evidence of a universal increase in juvenile crime taking place concurrently with economic decline, especially in the poor districts and large cities. The problem of juvenile delinquency is becoming more complicated and universal, and crime prevention programmes are either unequipped to deal with the present realities.*

Introduction

For many young people today, traditional patterns guiding the relationships and transitions between family, school and work are being challenged. Social relations that ensure a smooth process of socialization are collapsing; lifestyle trajectories are becoming more varied and less predictable. The restructuring of the labour market, the extension of the maturity gap (the period of dependence of young adults on the family) and the more limited opportunities to become an independent adult are all changes influencing relationships with family and friends, educational opportunities and choices, labour market participation, leisure activities and lifestyles. It is not only developed countries that are facing this situation; in developing countries as well there are new pressures on young people undergoing the transition from childhood to independence. Rapid population growth, the unavailability of housing and support services, poverty, unemployment and underemployment among youth, the decline in the authority of local communities, overcrowding in poor urban areas, the disintegration of the family, and ineffective educational systems are some of the pressures young people must deal with.

Young people who are at risk of becoming delinquent often live in difficult circumstances. Children who for various reasons – including parental alcoholism, poverty, breakdown of the family, overcrowding, abusive conditions in the home, the growing HIV/AIDS or the death of parents, housing and other basic necessities are at greatest risk of falling into juvenile delinquency. The number of children in especially difficult circumstances is estimated to have increased from 80 million to 150 million between 1992 and 2000. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shows that cases of juvenile delinquency under the total cognisable crimes committed under the Indian Penal Code have risen from 581 in 2001 to 751 in 2011-29.25% increase in 10 years. Most of the crimes are committed by those in the age group of 16-18 years. Notably, the minor accused in the Delhi gang rape, who was allegedly the most brutal among the six accused, is 17 and a half years old.

According to NCRB data for 2011, 64% of all juvenile criminals are in the age group of 16-18. A total of 33,887 juveniles were apprehended during 2011 out of which 31,909 were boys and 1,978 were girls. In 2011, 33,887 juveniles were arrested for 25,178 instances of crime. Of these, 1,211 juveniles are in the age group of 7-12 years, 11,019 fall in the 12-16 years age group while 21,657 fall in the 16-18 years age group. In Delhi itself, of the 925 boys arrested for juvenile crimes in 2011, 567 were in the 16-18 years age group.

Causes of Juvenile Delinquency

The intensity and severity of juvenile offences are generally determined by the social, economic and cultural conditions

prevailing in a country. There is evidence of a universal increase in juvenile crime taking place concurrently with economic decline, especially in the poor districts and large cities. In many cases street children later become young offenders, having already encountered violence in their immediate social environment as either witnesses or victims of violent acts. The educational attainments of this group are rather low as a rule, basic social experience acquired in the family is too often insufficient, and the socio-economic environment is determined by poverty and under or unemployment.

Broken Homes and Families

British and American investigations reveal that nearly 50% of the delinquents come from broken homes. The home may be broken up by the death one or both of the parents, or by prolonged illness, absence of a loving mother in the childhood or an affectionate mother substitute, lack of family ties, parental irresponsibility and desertion or divorce and separation are all contributory factors to delinquency. Interaction in home is a very important for socialising the child. Broken homes and families invariably lead to delinquent behaviour on the part of the children. According to NCRB data for 2011, only 5.7% all juveniles arrested were found to be homeless. 81.4% of juveniles stayed with their parents or relatives.

Poverty and Beggary

Poverty compels sometimes both of the parents to be outside the home for a very long period to earn their daily bread. Children may consciously or unconsciously join hands with gangsters and become delinquents. Beggary is often the cause of juvenile delinquency. Child beggars mostly come from either very poor families or broken homes. These children are betrayed of the needed love and affection of the parents. They crave for the satisfaction of their inner impulses, desires and ambitions. They choose to become beggars for the same. As beggars they get annoyed to see others enjoying life. Some of them may become rebels. They realise that only through deviant practices, they can satisfy their desires and meet their needs and they become delinquents.

Urbanization

Geographical analysis suggests that countries with more urbanized populations have higher registered crime rates than do those with strong rural lifestyles and communities. This may be attributable to the differences in social control and social cohesion. Rural groupings rely mainly on family and community control as a means of dealing with antisocial behaviour and exhibit markedly lower crime rates. Urban industrialized societies tend to resort to formal legal and judicial measures, an impersonal approach that appears to be linked to higher crime rates.

The ongoing process of urbanization in developing countries

is contributing to juvenile involvement in criminal behaviour. The basic features of the urban environment foster the development of new forms of social behaviour deriving mainly from the weakening of primary social relations and control, increasing reliance on the media at the expense of informal communication, and the tendency towards anonymity. These patterns are generated by the higher population density, degree of heterogeneity, and numbers of people found in urban contexts.

Peer influence

Youth policies seldom reflect an understanding of the role of the peer group as an institution of socialization. Membership in a delinquent gang, like membership in any other natural grouping, can be part of the process of becoming an adult. Through such primary associations, an individual acquires a sense of safety and security, develops knowledge of social interaction, and can demonstrate such qualities as loyalty or leadership. In "adult" society, factors such as social status, race and ethnicity are of great value; however, all members of adolescent groups are essentially in an equal position and have similar opportunities for advancement in the hierarchical structure. In these groups well-being depends wholly on personal qualities such as strength, will and discipline.

School violence

Violence is a serious problem, especially in schools. Improving the quality of education is difficult without addressing school violence. School violence wears many faces. It includes gang activity, locker thefts, bullying and intimidation, gun use, assault—just about anything that produce a victim. Violence is perpetrated against students, teachers, and staff. School violence is a broad term, which includes, but is not limited to assault, threats of force, bomb threats, sexual assault, bullying or intimidation, arson, extortion, theft, hazing, and gang activity. Youth violence is a broader public health problem. It refers to harmful behaviours that may start early and continue into young adulthood. Victims can suffer serious injury, significant social and emotional damage, or even death. The young person can be a victim, an offender, or a witness to the violence or a combination of these.

Violence in Films and Television

Television can be a powerful influence in developing value systems and shaping behaviour. Unfortunately, much of today's television programming is violent. Television and movie violence can affect subsequent displays of aggression by modelling and glorifying violence, triggering aggressive impulse in some people, and decreasing feelings of empathy for victims. Television indicate that perpetrators of gun violence typically are depicted as using guns to protect themselves, which gives the impression that guns are important for self-protection. Furthermore, perpetrators are seldom held accountable for their actions. Death and physical injuries from gun violence are usually glossed over or totally overlooked.

Violence in Video Games

Violence in video games can also act as a gateway to more serious forms of violence. The combination of technological advances and a growing demand for intensity and arousal has substantially altered video game content. If a child who has no interest or knowledge in guns and weaponry begins to play a 'shoot-me-up' video game where the sole purpose is to kill other people that child could become interested in guns and weapons. Violent video games can foster an interest in guns and violence in children, which can lead them to more realistic violence. Video game companies are continuously releasing more and more realistically violent video games into the market in order to sell more copies. Most of the popular video includes a violent main theme. Many games include very real –life scenarios with existing weaponry that were created to be as close to the real thing as possible. This can teach children all about the way gun works and how to use it. Violence in video games for any medium is

a dangerous thing to children who are at an age where they are easily influenced by the subjects around them.

Emotional Problems of the Individual

Mental troubles and emotional maladjustments are strong factors in delinquency. Emotional problems of inferiority, jealousy and anger are very common among the delinquent children. The psychological point of view "Delinquency is a rebellion and an expression of aggression which is aimed at destroying, breaking down or changing the environment. This rebellion is mostly against the social conditions which deny the individual basic rights and the satisfaction of fundamental needs. Thus, delinquents are not born, but they become due to social circumstances and personal deficiencies. They are mostly maladjusted persons.

State-wise Distribution of Juvenile Delinquency: Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special Local Laws (SLL)

The states of Madhya Pradesh (19.9%), Maharashtra (19%), Chhattisgarh (8.7%), Andhra Pradesh (7.3%), Rajasthan (7.3%) and Gujarat (6.4%) have reported high incidence of juvenile crimes under IPC. Out of the total 888 juvenile murder cases reported in the country in 2011, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh reported 16.3% and 12.6% cases. The highest incidence of the juvenile rape cases in the country was reported from Madhya Pradesh (23.6%) followed by Uttar Pradesh (12.7%) and Maharashtra (10.9%) in the country. The highest incidence of the juvenile cases under Special Local Laws was reported from Tamil Nadu (672) which accounted for 23.7% of total juvenile crimes under SLL followed by Chhattisgarh (514, 18.1%), Gujarat (464, 16.4%), Maharashtra (296 cases, 10.4%) and Madhya Pradesh (276 cases, 9.7%). These five states taken together have accounted for 78.3% of total juvenile delinquency cases under SLL reported in the country (NCRB, 2011).

Summary and Recommendations

The problem of juvenile delinquency is becoming more complicated and universal, and crime prevention programmes are either unequipped to deal with the present realities or do not exist. Many developing countries have done little or nothing to deal with these problems, and international programmes are obviously insufficient. The current situation with regard to juvenile crime and delinquency can be characterized by the following basic facts and trends:

- There has been an observed increase in violent and aggravated crimes among youth.
- The number of drug-related crimes is growing
- The process of globalization and the greater mobility of large population groups have led to an increase in criminal activity associated with intolerance towards members of the other countries.
- Criminal behaviour is positively portrayed in the media, creating a confused picture of acceptable societal norms.
- Children in difficult circumstances constitute ready reserves for organized crime, participation in armed conflicts, human and drug trafficking, and sexual exploitation.
- The disintegration of families, poverty, and the death of parents or from HIV/AIDS has led to the forced independence of many young people around the world.
- There has been an observed increase violence in schools, violence in video games, peer influence.

If delinquency policies are to be truly effective, higher priority must be given to marginalized, vulnerable and disadvantaged young people in society, and issues relating to youth in conflict with the law should be central focus of national youth policies. The administration of juvenile justice should be decentralized in order to encourage local authorities to become actively involved in preventing youth crime and reintegrating young offenders into society through support projects, with the ultimate aim of fostering responsible citizenship.

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