
A Study of Causal Factors of Juvenile Delinquent in Society: Social Work Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The threat of widespread juvenile delinquency in society is a worldwide occurrence that has an impact on people's families, communities, and individual lives. In today's world, there are severe social issues that have persisted for many years and have a detrimental impact on society as a whole. This paper investigates the causes of juvenile delinquent behaviour from a social work perspective. As a result, a number of causes, including those related to family, friends, and peers, financial difficulties, motivation and interest, neighbourhood, mass media, mental illnesses, etc., have been researched. According to the study, a variety of primary and secondary social work methods, including social casework, social group work, community organization, social work research, social welfare administration, and social action, should be used to reduce the problems associated with juvenile delinquency in society. Since the United States Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention offers five essential principles for preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency, these methods align well with

them. Additionally, the research project employs a secondary method of data collection from various credible sources.

INTRODUCTION:

Juvenile crime has been rising along with all other types of crime. Reports, especially in urban areas, increasingly show that young offenders commit violent crimes. Some of these offenders are psychotic, and their offenses can range from suicide to mass murder. Others are antisocial and prone to small acts of defiance. The more obvious causes of crime include easy access to weapons, drug abuse, unemployment, and economic motivations; however, contemporary social stressors like family dissolution, deviant role models, nuclear war threats, and values confusion that leads to unstable emotions and warped ideas all exacerbate youth violence.

Judging the extent of juvenile crime is difficult. Numerous nations have reported a marked rise in the number of juvenile convictions following World War II. Boys outnumber girls as offenders by a ratio of roughly 10 to 1. A higher overall technological and economic level as well as a variety of social change scenarios may lead to an increase in juvenile delinquency rates. As a result, the rates of juvenile delinquency are high in Western Europe, the USA, and Japan. There are also reports of youth gangs in Taiwan, Yugoslavia, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Poland, and the USSR. There has been a noticeable rise in juvenile delinquency in fast developing countries like Ghana and Kenya. Property-related crimes are by far the most common kind of offense. These include car theft, shoplifting, and unlawful car theft, the latter of which is typically done for joyrides. It appears that younger offenders are more frequently linked to theft. Crimes against the person (assaults, fights, violent robberies), sexual offenses, and, in industrialized nations, traffic offenses, rank lower and are more prevalent among individuals between the ages of 17 and 21. While not always crimes, narcotic addiction and other forms of drug dependence are a relatively recent and unsettling type of deviance that appears to be spreading quickly (U. I. A, 2022).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Today, juvenile delinquency is a worldwide problem that has an impact on human society. It affects communities that are developed, developing, or underdeveloped, and it affects people of all social classes, religious backgrounds, sexes, and socioeconomic statuses. The issue is one that both

governmental and non-governmental stakeholders with a pluralistic stakeholder base are calling attention to. Furthermore, the issues are getting worse quickly in spite of the previously mentioned stakeholders' intervention through the provision of child and youth welfare instruments and mechanisms.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to achieve the following:

To explore the causal factors of juvenile delinquent behavior;

To explore the causal factors of increasing rampant delinquent behavior.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

What does it mean to be a juvenile delinquent?

What are the causes of juvenile delinquent behavior?

Why is juvenile delinquent behavior on the rise in today's society?

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Juvenile delinquency, also known as juvenile offending, is the act of participating in unlawful behavior as a [minor](#) or individual younger than the statutory [Age of majority](#).

These acts would otherwise be considered crimes if the individuals committing them were older.

DELINQUENT

The term delinquent usually refers to juvenile delinquency, and is also generalized to refer to a young person who behaves in an unacceptable way.

SOCIAL WORK

Social work means helping profession that uses theories and skills developed by social sciences and environment to prevent, remediate and resolve social problems affecting individual, groups and general communities so as to enhance the quality of social functioning and bring about social development (NCSW, 2022)

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several reasons why young people become delinquent (Dambazau, A. B 2009) a plethora of factors contribute significantly to the delinquencies of young people. These elements can be categorized into three groups: situational, individual, and group factors. Personality traits such as emotional conflict, fear, impulsivity, defiance, submissiveness, and lack of self-control are examples of individual factors. Family is a situational factor. Moving, work environments, school environments, and companions. The new paradigm and approach of contemporary criminology divides the causes of juvenile delinquency into two categories: social and internal. According to Kumar, D. (2009), social factors are among the external factors. Internal factors include psychological and physical aspects.

Even though there are many different factors that contribute to juvenile delinquent behavior, the following are taken into account.

1. Family unit.

In a larger social context, children's moral, emotional, and physical development is largely the responsibility of the family, which is essentially an institutional unit. (Russell. W 2006), a number of theorists believe that the most important element in the development of juvenile delinquency is family. Peer relationships, class mobility, and so forth are also connected to the family environment, either directly or indirectly. ..

Theorists of psychology such as Irving Kaufman, Sidney Burman, August Aichhem, etc. Connect early life events, emotional deprivation, parenting techniques, etc. to the causes of delinquency which have an impact on how personalities are formed as well as how attitudes, values, and lifestyles evolve. As per the psychologist, these factors lead to the abnormal expression of behavior in an antisocial form. The sociologist is more interested in an individual's social environment, whereas the psychologist is more interested in identifying individual variables like motivations, derives, values, and needs. The elements of the institution's operation and the social system that influence delinquencies. .. A psychologist claims that these factors lead to the abnormal expression of behavior that manifests as antisocial behavior. Whereas sociologists are primarily interested in an individual's social environment, psychologists focus on identifying individual variables such as needs, values, and motivations. The institutional dynamics and social system el

So, while sociologists concentrate on external control, psychologists concentrate on internal control. Conversely, the field of social work is concerned with biopsychosocial aspects. A broken home, family conflict, parental rejection, parental control, and family finances can all contribute to delinquent behavior. A family is considered normal if all of its members are still alive and their structural completion. The family is sound psychologically, economically, and operationally. If a family didn't have any of these traits, it would be considered abnormal. A broken family is one in which one parent isn't there because of parental separation, divorce, or death and doesn't show the children affection or authority. A rejected or neglected child will frequently join a group of deviant people outside of his family if he doesn't receive love and affection, support, and supervision at home. According to studies, when a parent and child reject each other, it significantly damages their good relationship and may even lead to delinquent behavior. It has an impact on the moral development and maturation of the child. Aggression results from a lack of a sufficient conscience along with resentment over rejection. (tusharshukla,v. 2019)

2. Peers and friends.

Bartol (2009) found that juvenile delinquency is also significantly predicted by peer rejection during childhood. The child may find it difficult to adjust to society and may even become attracted to antisocial groups as a result of this rejection. Violent, aggressive, and abnormal behaviour is frequently encouraged by affiliation with antisocial groups. According to Sharma (2019), hanging out with friends is one of the main things that encourages teenagers to participate in a wide range of activities. Spending time with friends while engaging in an activity boosts the chances that the adolescent will continue to enjoy it.

Research, both theoretical and empirical, indicates that an adolescent's choice of activities is influenced by their friends. Peer literature has repeatedly demonstrated that teenagers prefer to be friends with people who are similar to them. In general, teens with a greater number of positive influence friends e. g. Friends who respect education and don't defy their parents are more likely to engage in a greater range of activities. The traits and interests of a friend seem to have an impact on whether or not an adolescent participates in organized sports, and if they do, what kind of sports they choose. The renowned criminologists' Differential Association theory. Edwin H. Sugarland suggest that social interaction is the source of criminal behaviour (Kumar 2009). This theory examines how peer pressure and the presence of gangs may influence young people to



commit crimes in a group setting. It implies that juvenile offenders serve as role models for delinquent peers and teach them criminal skills.

3. The financial catastrophe. Another significant factor that contributes to delinquency is family economics. A family's incapacity to meet their children's ongoing material needs can lead to insecurity and have an impact on the degree of control the family has over the child. Peterson and Biker (1965) discovered that delinquents' homes are frequently physically deteriorated, which can affect the delinquent's perception of himself and act as a repellent driving him away from the home. This is because they frequently seek out material support and security outside the home. Therefore, in a family with multiple problems, material possessions and economic status may be contributing factors. Furthermore, low socioeconomic status is thought to be one of the biggest predictors of juvenile delinquency, according to Laurence Steinberg's research (Steinberg L 2008).
4. Inadequate chances for education. Children's life chances and personal development are shaped by their education. Early childhood education, such as preparing young children to succeed in school by supporting the development of necessary skills. The percentage of young people who are neither employed nor enrolled in school is a gauge of how likely it is that their future opportunities will be limited. All young people experience stress in the educational system, but those who are poor, belong to racial or ethnic minorities, or are recent immigrants or migrants are more at risk. Youths are willing to participate in this harmful behaviour because they are at risk during the most stressful period of their lives.
5. Motivation and interest. Adolescents' interest and motivation are key factors in their decision to sign up for and continue participating in organized activities. Theorist contends that adolescents' beliefs about their aptitudes and interests in a given activity, as well as the impact of recreational activity participation on the accomplishment of behaviors and objectives, should be the best indicators of activity participation.
6. The impact of a child's neighborhood is more significant in urban areas compared to rural areas. Children often spend a significant amount of time with their neighborhood peers after their family. The neighborhood can either contribute to delinquency by hindering basic personality needs, creating cultural conflicts, and promoting antisocial values, or it can enhance the influence of the home in preserving social values. Overcrowded neighborhoods with limited recreational



resources may suppress children's natural instincts and give rise to delinquent groups, as well as venues like cinema houses, cheap hotels, and video halls, which can become hubs for immoral behavior and criminal activities. Certain places are inappropriate for a child's development, according to the findings of the Shaw, Clifford R., and Henry D. McKay social disorganization theory. It is well known that a child's neighborhood has a significant impact on them. (Kumar, 2009).

7. The media in mass. A large audience can receive impersonal communications through the use of mass media. Numerous communication mediums, including books, magazines, radio, television, and movies that feature extensive human research, are included in the mass media. It has a significant impact on our mindset and actions, particularly with regard to aggression. It plays a significant role in the socialization process and has a significant impact on an individual's personality. Children and adolescents are negatively impacted by stories and films that depict violence, drinking, smoking, and immortality. A number of minors are being detained across the nation for allegedly committing theft, break-ins, abduction, and other crimes using movie theater tactics. They assert that they have witnessed such a procedure in movies. This film is also actively conducive to delinquent behavior by generating fantasies of easy money, endorsing dubious means of achieving them, fostering an attitude of toughness and adventure, igniting sexual urges, and provoking daydreaming (Ahuja, ram 2023:114-115).

8. Mental illness.

In numerous studies, many of which involved criminals, other criminologists have attempted to prove a concrete connection between mental illness and criminality. There were also some mentally ill people discovered. This point of view holds that a criminal is a type of mentally ill person who requires both treatment and punishment. A few neurologists and psychiatrists think that criminal behaviour stems from psychopathic personalities. Families with nearly no love, affection, or control over their psychopathic child tend to give birth to psychopathic children. According to Tappan's writings, he is extremely socialized agitated, harsh, stubborn, suspicious, self-centred, lonely, and filled with resentment. He also exhibits retrograde and hypersexual or uncontrollable sexual behaviour. He has very little remorse for his cruel actions and other people's suffering. This kind of psychotic child experiences an unwelcome guest in his own home. It makes sense that the child would experience feelings of unrestrained stubbornness and suicidal thoughts in response to such behaviour. (kumar ,2019)

Individual psychological or behavioural risk factors that can increase the likelihood of offending include restlessness, aggression, low IQ, impulsivity, lack of empathy, and the inability to delay gratification. (Farmington D.P 2002). Aggressive or problematic behaviour, language delays or impairments, an inability to control one's emotions, including anger, and animal cruelty are other risk factors that may be apparent during childhood or adolescence (Bartol, 2009)

It is more likely for kids with low intelligence to perform poorly in school. Because low educational attainment, a lack of attachment to school, and low educational aspirations are all risk factors for offending in and of themselves, this may increase their likelihood of offending. Robert J. Sampson, as played by David Kirk. 2012) students who do poorly in high school are also more likely to be truant, and truancy is a status offense that is associated with repeat offenses.

Some believe that the primary personality trait that best predicts a child's likelihood of offending is impulsivity. Studies of adolescent development revealed that teenagers are more prone to taking risks, which may account for the high disproportionate rate of offending among adolescents. However, it is unclear whether these aspects of personality are the result of a deficit in the executive function of the brain or a result of parental influence or other societal factor (Graham, Jay Bowling B 1995). Steinberg L. (2008).

Psychological Component

Juvenile offenders are frequently diagnosed with various disorders; 2–9% of female teens and 6–16% of male teens suffer from a conduct disorder. These can range from antisocial personality disorder, which is diagnosed in psychopaths, to oppositional defiant disorder, which is not always violent (Hare 1991). A conduct disorder may start in childhood and become apparent in adolescence.

Due to their persistent disregard for their own and others' safety and/or property, juvenile delinquents who have recurrent run-ins with the law, also known as life-course persistent offenders, may be diagnosed with conduct disorders. One of the main criteria used in diagnosing an adult with antisocial personality disorder is a persistent history of conduct disorder before the age of fifteen. If the juvenile keeps exhibiting the same behavioral patterns and returns to the age of eighteen, he is at risk of being diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder and is much more likely to become a serious criminal offender (Delisi, Matt 2005). The unpredictable and violent behaviours of these two personality disorders are similar.

Because of this, juvenile offenders who have a history of misconduct and have been diagnosed with conduct disorder are more likely to display early and later signs of antisocial personality disorder. These young people occasionally mature into career criminals or persistent offenders throughout their lives. Career criminals are diverse in that they participate in a variety of harmful behaviors, commit crimes at a high rate, and are less likely to give up as they get older (Delisi, Matt 2005). They also start acting antisocially before they start elementary school.

RECOMMENDATION

With the rise in children and young people committing juvenile delinquent acts worldwide, juvenile delinquency is becoming a global concern. A number of global, regional, and national policies and procedures have been put in place to stop juvenile delinquent behaviour and to assist in the rehabilitation, reformation, and reintegration of young people. In order to prevent juvenile delinquent behaviour in society, the following strategies should be recommended: strengthen families. Unfortunately, the problems are still growing geometrically. The social work approach is primarily concerned with the welfare of the individual delinquent, where supportive services are rendered by preventive and rehabilitative intervention dot. Encourage social Core organizations. Encourage preventative tactics and initiatives; promptly and successfully intervene when delinquent behaviour arises. Determine and manage the small subset of violent, violent, and persistent juvenile offenders.

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