
Juvenile Delinquency in Society: Preventive and Reducing Strategies in Social Work Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The global phenomenon of widespread juvenile delinquency poses a threat to individuals, families, and the community at large. With detrimental effects on society as a whole, it is one of the major social issues facing modern society and has endured for many centuries. Since preventing juvenile delinquency is crucial to preventing crime in society, this paper presents pertinent data and emphasizes key preventive measures. Furthermore, the study employs a secondary data collection method from various credible sources, and it ends with a summary of the primary idea covered thus far.

Introduction:

Juvenile delinquency has been significantly rising in many countries since the Second World War, according to official records. Juvenile delinquent behaviour is not limited to developing nations; it can also occur in settings with varying social change and a higher overall technological and economic level. Therefore, there is increasing juvenile delinquency 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, Nigeria, Kenya, and others. 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 people (assaults, fights, violent robberies), sexual offenses, and, in industrialized nations, traffic offenses, rank lower and are more prevalent among young people with narcotic addiction and other forms of drug dependence, though they are not always crimes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Like all other categories of crime, juvenile criminality has been on the rise. There is an increase in violent crime among young offenders, according to reports, particularly from urban regions. Suicide and mass murder are among the misdeeds committed by some of these insane offenders. Some people are prone to tiny acts of rebellion and are antisocial. Although easy access to weapons, drug abuse, unemployment, and economic motivations are among the more obvious causes of crime, youth violence is also exacerbated by modern social stress, family breakup, abnormal role models, nuclear war threats, and values confusion that leads to unstable emotions and distorted ideas.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives

1. To investigate the modern trend juvenile delinquency.
2. To determine various agents that cause deep light delinquent behaviour.
3. To investigate ways to stop the threat of juvenile delinquency.

Research Questions:

We may use the following goals to direct our investigation.

1. What is the current juvenile delinquent trend?
2. What is the reason behind juvenile delinquent behaviour?
3. What are the steps being taken to stop the threat posed by young offenders?

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

JUVENILE

Depending on whether a person fits into a child or young person legal category, their age determines whether they are considered a juvenile. According to the child and young person acts, a child is anyone under the age of 14, and a young person is anyone between the ages of 14 and 17. (2019, Danbazau)

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Juvenile delinquency, sometimes referred to as juvenile offending, is the act of engaging in illegal activity as a minor or someone under the legal majority age (Siegel, Larry J., Welsh, Brando 2011). The word "delinquent" is typically used to describe juvenile delinquency, although it can also be used more broadly to describe any young person who exhibits inappropriate behaviour (Cambridge dictionary, 2024).

SOCIAL WORK

According to Nigerian Council of Social Work (2022), social work means helping professions that uses knowledge and skills developed from social sciences and environment to prevent, remediate and resolve social problems affecting individuals, group and communities so as to enhance the quality of social functioning and brings about social development.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of data collection for this study is secondary sources, such as data collected from various international organizations, various instruments and mechanisms of juvenile justice administration, Human rights as well as library, achieves, journals etc.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

All human cultures, whether established, developing, or underdeveloped, are impacted by the worldwide threat posed by adolescent misbehaviour. In Africa, unemployment, hunger, poverty, and malnutrition are the primary causes of criminality. These elements add to the marginalization of youth in a demographic already deeply disadvantaged. A complete complement of individuals lives in half of all African households as a result of the continent's fast population growth. Many urban poor people live in slum and squatter colonies. The housing was small, dirty, and devoid of basic facilities. The majority of our youth and kids live here. (UMP 2000)

One of the most urgent problems is the vast number of street and orphaned children, which has been rising as a result of recurring and continuous armed conflict, the spread of HIV and AIDS, and the

dissolution of long-standing social institutions and cultural norms. Juvenile criminality and delinquency are on the rise; this tendency is also linked to the recent rapid and profound social, political, and economic changes that have taken place in Africa. The most common crimes committed by young people include smuggling, theft, robbery, and prostitution.

Types of juvenile delinquency

Delinquency manifests itself in many ways across all domains of behaviour. Every pattern has a specific social setting. The purported causes of it as well as the types of treatment or prevention that are most frequently recommended as suitable for the particular pattern in question. The four categories of delinquencies have been referred to by Howard Becker (1966:226-38).

1. Individual delinquency:

Is defined as delinquency in which a single person is responsible for the delinquent act and the reasons behind it are found within the individual delinquent. Psychologists provide the majority of the justifications for this delinquent behaviour. They contend that psychological issues arising mainly from a flawed, faulty, or pathological pattern of family interaction are the root cause of delinquency. Researchers like Helen Whitner, Harry Mayer, Albert Bandura, Richard Walter, Healy and Bonner, etc. are founded on this methodology. Healy Bronner (1936) examined the distinctions between juvenile offenders and their non-delinquent siblings. Their most significant discovery was that, in comparison to 13% of their non-delinquent siblings, over 90% of the delinquent siblings reported having unhappy homes and being dissatisfied with their living conditions. Different people experienced different types of unhappiness; some felt inferior, jealous, or caused by their siblings, while others experienced mental conflict. They turn to delinquency as a way to deal with these issues because it either made their parents notice them, gave them peer support, or made them feel less guilty.

2. Groups supported delinquency:

This type of misbehaviour is done in groups, and the main contributing factor is not the offender's personality or family but rather the culture of the offender's home and neighbourhood. Research on this type of delinquency is covered by Thrasher, Shaw, and McKay. Their relationship or affiliation with other delinquent people provided the most important clue as to the causes of their delinquency. This was

later expressed quite concisely by Sutherland, the man who invented the theory of differential association. Unlike psychogenic theories, this set of concepts focuses on what is learned and from whom, as opposed to the problems that could inspire delinquent behaviour.

3. Organized delinquencies:

Delinquencies of this type are those committed by groups that are formally organized. In the 1960s, the idea of a delinquent subculture was created in the United States after these delinquencies were examined. This idea refers to a set of standards and values that direct group members' behaviour, promote delinquencies, grant status based on these deeds, and outline typical relationships.

4. Situational delinquency:

The three sorts of delinquencies that were previously discussed have one thing in common. It is believed that each of them has a long history of delinquency. The social structure is the foundation of organized and in-group delinquencies, according to the sociogenic explanation, which places emphasis either on the ecological regions where the delinquency is most prevalent or on the deliberate ways in which the social structure puts some people in a disadvantageous position to compete for success. The psychogenic explanation of individual delinquencies maintains that the problem originates essentially in the individual.

Situational delinquency provides an alternative perspective, operating under the assumption that delinquency has shallow origins and that control measures are often rather simple. Due to his lack of a strong commitment to criminality and the fact that he has little to lose even if he is discovered, A young man may act in a delinquent manner without fully realizing the repercussions. He could also be impulsive. David Matza was one scholar who brought up this type of irresponsible behaviour. Despite this, the concept of situational delinquencies is not well understood. David Matza was one scholar who brought up this type of irresponsible behaviour. However, the concept of situational delinquencies is poorly established and given scant consideration when it comes to the question of the causal relationship between delinquencies. It is a supplement to existing resources, not their replacement (Ahuja, R.2023).

Any attempt made to keep young people away from crime or other negative behaviour is referred to as "delinquency prevention". Preventive measures include things like drug treatment and education, family counselling, youth mentorship, parenting workshops, education support, youth sheltering, and making family planning services more widely available and used (Dishion, M. 1999). Wilson, J.; John J. Five (5) important guidelines for preventing and lowering juvenile delinquencies were presented by D and James

C Howell of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, United States Department of Justice, in their research "A comprehensive, strategy for serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offender," published in July 1993.

Prevention techniques

1. Strengthening family institutions
2. supporting core social institutions
3. Encouragement of preventative tactics and initiatives
4. Prompt and efficient intervention in cases of delinquent behaviour
5. Determine which small group of violent, serious, and persistent delinquents needs to be under control.

PRINCIPLES OF PREVENTING AND REDUCING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN SOCIETY

The ensuing broad guidelines offer a structure to direct the fight against delinquent behaviour and lessen the involvement of young people in severe, violent, and persistent delinquency.

1. Strengthening family institutions

It is our primary duty to install moral values in children and to offer them support and direction. In cases where a family is not functioning, it is recommended to designate and support a family surrogate to provide guidance and nurturing for the child.

2. Supporting core social institutions

Schools, religious institutions, and community organizations all should play important roles in helping young people grow into effective, responsible adults. Every one of these institutions of society ought to make it a priority to give kids the chance and assistance they need to grow up to be law-abiding, productive adults. The active involvement of core social institutions in the lives of young people is necessary for a healthy community environment. Both public and private youth service groups are examples of community organizations. Businesses and commercial organizations, as well as neighbourhood associations, offer youngsters significant economic options such as training and jobs.

3. Encouragement of preventative tactics and initiatives

The family and other key societal institutions should be the focus of early intervention efforts under the purview of system authorities (police, intake, and probation) in order to successfully prevent delinquent offenders from becoming chronic offenders who gradually commit more serious and violent crimes. The authorities in charge of the juvenile justice system must make sure that the right reaction takes place and must move swiftly and decisively in the event that official system adjudication and consequence are required.

4. Prompt and efficient intervention in cases of delinquent behaviour

Determine and handle the small number of juvenile offenders who have committed felonies or who have not responded to the non-secure community-based treatment and rehabilitation programs offered by the juvenile justice system. These individuals may also be violent, persistent, and violent. When delinquents become a threat to public safety, measures to deal with them can involve putting them in training programs and other secure juvenile facilities, or safe community-based institutions, if necessary. .

5. Determine which small group of violent, serious, and persistent delinquents needs to be under control

Families, schools, religious organizations, community organizations, citizen volunteers, and the private sector must be involved in the country's delinquency prevention efforts because this is the most economical way to address juvenile delinquencies. When children engage in "acting out" behaviour, such as status offenses, the family and community, working with child welfare agencies, must take primary responsibility for responding with appropriate treatment and support services. Communities must also take the lead in designing and implementing comprehensive prevention approaches that address known risk factors and target other youths at risk of delinquency. These fundamental socialization institutions must be strengthened and assisted in their efforts to ensure that children have the opportunity to become capable and responsible citizens.

RECOMMENDATION

This study's discussion of the issues surrounding juvenile delinquency in society concluded. In the paper, causes, types, classifications, and preventive measures have all been critically examined. Since more focus has been placed on family and child welfare, community organizations, and 3RS supportive

services—rehabilitation, reformation, and reintegration of juvenile offenders into society as productive members—the comprehensive strategies and guiding principles for preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency are social work-based preventive strategies. In order to properly develop a child's or young person's personality, social work research is essential to identifying juvenile delinquency as a social problem. Both qualitative and quantitative social welfare administration serve as preventive measures for all social problems at the individual, family, and community levels. The government should focus more of its efforts on addressing social problems in general and juvenile delinquency issues in particular by giving the community opportunities for social action.

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