# Psycho-Social Factors of Juvenile Delinquency and Intervention Strategies

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## Abstract

The population of young people is growing faster in India and the problem of Juvenile delinquency is more acute in society. A child does not just go badly and suddenly without cause. It is a long term process starting from early childhood. Delinquency is a social and psychological problem. The major psycho-social factors are a) Family background, b) Relations in family, c) Intelligence, d) Personality pattern, e) Urban-Rural setting, f) Perceptual pattern, g) Sex differences, h) Effect of mass media, i) Mode of Socializations, j) Psychopathy, k) Working mothers, l) Socio-Cultural impacts, m) Emotional Stability, n) Interpersonal relations and o) Social networking sites and mobiles. The development and growth of adolescents are pivotal for the development of the society and nation at large. To enhance the well-being of the adolescents, intervention strategies are need of the hour. Some vital intervention strategies are 1) Family oriented Interventions, 2) School-based intervention strategies and 3) through NGOs. At present, adolescence needs guidance from the family and community in all aspects. The school environment should also be supportive, non- threatening and safe. Effective acts, policies and programs are very crucial for the development of the youths.

## Keywords

Juvenile delinquency, Adolescence, Psycho-social factors, Interpersonal relations, Socialization, Intervention strategies.

## Introduction

Rapid Industrialization has brought Juvenile Delinquency to Indian Life, like all developing countries. The population of young people is growing faster in India and now to educate these growing millions and to give them a purpose in life are some of the challenges. Large urban areas create anonymity which in turn hides antisocial behaviour. Due to urbanization and industrialization, large numbers of people are now migrating from the villages to the towns and the industrialized cities. Bureau of Delinquency Statistics and Research has stated that there is a

loosening of emotional support they were getting from their communities.  In fact, the emotional support, more than economic and Social Support, is a great conduct stabilizer for all members of the family.  The problem of Juvenile delinquency is more acute in the lower stratum of society.   Some families, which settle down in the cities, are economically hard-pressed and socially outcast.

The study of Juvenile delinquents is, therefore, the most promising field for checking adult criminality. These studies have shown that delinquency is a heavy burden upon the societies, even in advance countries like the USA, UK and Germany. A child does not just go badly, suddenly and without cause.  It is a long term process starting from early childhood.  Delinquency is a social and psychological problem.  It may be a consequence of primary factors like 1) Disorganized social family, 2) Limited opportunity in the face of high aspiration, 3) Criminality in Parents, 4) Bad companionship and 5) Faulty parental attitudes in the treatment of children.

The secondary factors are 1) Broken homes, 2) Death or desertion of parents, 3) Poverty and overcrowding, 4) Unemployment and 5) Lack of adjustment in school.  In the Indian social context, the factors like poverty, Illiteracy and lack of opportunities for personal development seem to be direct determinants of delinquent behaviour.

**Magnitude of the problem**

According to the Indian Penal Code (2016), no act committed by a child less than 7 years of age is an offence. There is a general tendency to regard all children between the ages 7 to 21 as juvenile though in India the age range of Juvenile delinquent has been fixed between 7 to 18 years.          Some types of activities, which are considered as delinquent behaviour are stealing, lying, gambling, truancy from home and school, burglary, begging, forging, swindling, cruelty to animals and children, destructiveness or mischievous damage to property, incorrigibility, sexual offences, attempt to suicide and attempt of murder.

According to NCRB, a) the number of juveniles in conflict with the law increased from 31,725 in 2013 to 33,526 in 2014.

b) 52.9% of juvenile apprehended in 2012 belonged to families with an annual income of less than Rs.50, 000 and the percentage went up to 55.6% in 2014.

c) Juvenile offenders have gone up by 18% and 2876 minors were tracked down in 1,946 criminal cases registered in 2014.

d) Between 2010 and 2016, there was a 233% increase in juvenile getting apprehended on rape charges in Tamil Nadu.

e) A majority of 2,949 juveniles lived with their parents at the time they committed their offences (2017).

Crimes committed by Juvenile saw an increase in the capital in 2016.  From 1,671 cases in 2014 and 1,981 in 2015, the figure rose to 2,368 in 2016, making Delhi the number one ranked among metropolitan cities with 35.6% of crimes committed by minors across the country (Dec-2017, Times of India).

## Psycho-Social factors

The major psycho-social factors are a) Family background, b) Relations in family,  c) Intelligence, d) Personality pattern, e) Urban-Rural setting, f) Perceptual pattern, g) Sex differences,   h) Effect of mass media,  i) Mode of Socializations,  j) Psychopathy,  k) Working mothers,  l) Socio-Cultural impacts, m) Emotional Stability, n) Interpersonal relations and o) Social networking sites and mobiles.

## Family Background

As a group, the family members recognize the fact that they have certain common goals, which they all strive to achieve within their limits of responsibility.  A psychologically broken home, with disharmony, quarrelling and the use of the child as a buffer between parents in far more important in determining attitudes conducive to delinquency.  There is an actual physical breakdown in the makeup of the family.  As compared to a normal family, psycho pathogenic families have a different bearing on the development of the child.

## Interpersonal Relations

The psychological atmosphere consisting of lack of affection between the parents contribute to the enhancement of the essential constitutional trait of destructiveness as well as of destructive statistic trend.  There should be cooperation and good interpersonal relations among the parents and siblings.  Through Interaction with parents, the child becomes able to identify himself with the parents.  Lack of affection of parents plays an important role in delinquency. Mother or father who is extremely rejecting over protecting, over gratifying, ambivalent, sadomasochistic, irresponsible, indifferent or grossly inconsistent tends to develop a disturbing parent-child relationship. Father-Child relationship is still more disturbing where the father does not support the family.  The lack of attachment of siblings may contribute to delinquent behaviour.

## Personality Pattern

The importance of early home experiences and parental attitudes in shaping the child's personality and behaviour even as an adult has been recognized.  Interpersonal relationships with family members are important for the development of child's personality.  Basic patterns of personality are determined mainly through the interaction of parent and child in the earliest years and that the factors which determine personality are related to the child's needs. The emotional deprivation of the child stems from family tension, which tends to create delinquents.  From a psychological standpoint, emotional deprivation as a result of a lack of parental love has much to do with Juvenile delinquency.

## Working Mothers

Studies reveal that working mothers contribute to the onset of delinquent behaviour.  If the mother is at work, she cannot properly look after her home and rear her children satisfactorily.  Such children show stringer tendencies towards delinquent and become prone to antisocial behaviour.  Mother who is industrially employed often has neglected their children and deprives them of many common aspects of family life. When the mother is away from home all day, not only the children suffer from the basic functions of the family, but their future is also endangered by the high expectancy of their own delinquent conduct.

## Effect of Mass Media

The press, movies, comics, radio, television and internet websites keep behind their impact on the minds of readers, listeners and viewers.  It has been found that movies and television pornography play a distinct role in the creation of anti-social behaviour among teenagers.  As a result of television, students spend less time on their studies and reference work.  It is a fact that delinquents show much more interest in movies than non-delinquents.

## Intelligence and Academic Performance

The intelligence of delinquents as assessed by the Wechsler intelligence scales was in the normal range when measured by perceptual-motor tasks; and in the high dull normal range, when measured by the large verbal scale. Intelligence in itself has hardly any bearing on the behaviour difficulties which are the reactions of the whole personality.  Many research found that the intelligence of retarded delinquents was below average.  It was also noted that they performed poorly in school and had low verbal fluency, inadequate cultural background and certain personality factor.

## Perceptual patterns

Greater differences as related to perceptions of fathers than mothers were found among delinquents as compared to non-delinquents.  The analysis of the perceptual responses of delinquents revealed that they were not close to their fathers.

## Urban-Rural Social Setting

Urban delinquency rates vary with may condition like general educational level, average rental costs, rate of population level, percentage of owner-occupied homes and frequency of standard housing.  It has been found that rural boys display significantly less skill and knowledge in the commission of their offences and urban boys appear in court more frequently than rural boys.  The problem of Juvenile delinquency is a part of the general rural and urban setting concerning – health education and welfare of all men inhabiting a certain geographical area or region.

## Male-Female differences

Among boys, delinquency consists mostly of stealing, disorderly conduct, burglary, destruction of property, acts of mischief and carelessness, traffic violations, drug addiction and injuries to persons.  For girls, by contrast, the most common offences are sexual irregularities, running away, petty stealing, ungovernability and incorrigibility.  On the whole, boys' behaviour is of a more serious nature in that it is harmful to others, while that of girls, it is more harmful to themselves.

## Mode of Socialization

The family particularly the mother-child relationship is held to be extremely important in early development occurring as a result of living in the family and is described as primary socialization.  The factors like broken home, family tension, parental rejection, parental emotional instability, family economic and disturbed family relationships are conductive to delinquent behaviour.  The socialized delinquent is not motivated by deep-seated anxieties or unresolved conflicts, but rather by a simple desire to conform to the norms of his gang.  And he is produced by a frustrating and inconsistent familial background.

## Psychopathy

The psychopath's distinguishing traits are a) his inability to form an emotional relationship with other human beings and b) his almost total lack of guilt ad inhibition.  Their environments indicate that they have been raised in homes.       Characterized by extreme parental brutality, neglect, discord and intensely severe discipline many have come from foster homes.  They suffer from a neurological disorder, perhaps of a type that decreases his ability to inhibit impulses.

## Social networking sites and mobiles

Communication drives adolescents from a very early age.  They are highly becoming addicted to cartoons, Facebook, Youtube, WhatsApp which is actually shadowing their capacity of imagination and their connection with reality.  This often makes them disinterested in their academic responsibilities and physical activities of different games.  For some adolescents, the attraction of this virtual community becomes such that the real world becomes meaningless and the engagement becomes highly abusive and stressful.  Delinquents use the internet a) to carry out illegal activities such as selling fake products or offensive pornographic materials, b) to bully others (Cyberbullying), c) to cheat others and d) to perform illegal gambling.

## Intervention Strategies

The development and growth of adolescents are pivotal for the development of the society and nation at large.  To enhance the well-being of the adolescents, intervention strategies are need of the hour.

a) Family-oriented Interventions:

The family plays a crucial role in controlling the behaviour of adolescents. Family therapy intervention is an established practice to deal with addictive behaviour. It includes,

- Educate the family to understand the situation of the adolescent.
- Reduce blame on the addict (Internet or Drug) for behaviour
- Improve open communication about the pre-morbid problems in the family
- Helping the adolescent to find new hobbies
- A strong sense of family support is required to enable the delinquent to recover from his negative behaviour.

b) School-based intervention strategies: It includes,

- Referral in cases of higher-order mental health needs
- Creative and expressive activities and learning
- Student enrichment program
- Life skills education for the students
- Counselling session for the students
- PHC doctors in school sensitization
- Students participation in mental health extension camps
- Promotion of cultural activities
- Sports activities for the overall development
- Helpline for students for suicide prevention

c) Reaching the unreached through NGOs: It includes,

- Literacy campaigns
- Informal education centres
- Skill-building training for school dropout adolescents
- Entrepreneurship skill building
- Institution-based program for Juvenile Delinquents

**Conclusion and Implications**

Childhood is the most crucial stage of human development, which is the foundation of later life and has to be supervised with almost care. If a child is exposed to good family culture and gets proper guidance, the child will grow with good values and will become a responsible citizen. At present, adolescence needs guidance from the family and community in all aspects. The school environment should also be supportive, non- threatening and safe. Effective acts, policies and programs are very crucial for the development of the youths.

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