

PREVENTION OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY-THE NEED OF THE HOUR

M.SRAVANI*

INTRODUCTION:

The lack of discipline among the under-aged has indeed contributed to this problem. Children on the edge of adulthood can easily acquire illegal substances, which also have led to even more crimes. Many schools do not even have a proper form of punishment for crimes such as vandalism. Their parents and in general the whole community, usually choose to ignore these crimes because they refuse to believe that such acts are being committed.

Though there is a lack of discipline among adolescents, many people don't tend to recognize it as a prime reason. The lack of hope, trust, and happiness in the teens' lives has also lead to this. Nowadays, many teens suffer from depression, abuse and social pressure. Though many believe they're ignorant children, they survive problems that many adults are scared to face. However, these problems of their daily lives have taken a great toll on them. Consequently, they turn to the world of crime for comfort.

Another major reason for Juvenile Delinquency is, perhaps, the delineating value system among youth. Every individual's behaviour is based on the actions and responses of given situation(s). In recent era, due to the changes of severe magnitude in lifestyle, the behaviour of individuals is changing. In particular, if we observe in the Adolescent and Teenage, either they are going into depression or tend to commit crimes. Both kinds of attitudes are not acceptable, but the later is very dangerous as it can change not only the person(s) who did that, but also the entire acquaintances. Only punishment may not change their minds, even though it is essential.

* Asst Professor, Krishna University, Machilipatnam

Representatives of today's world i.e. youth, are, somewhat, paying a deaf ear to the value system which is the backbone of the attitude and behaviour of the individual.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

The term 'Juvenile Delinquents' or 'Children in Conflict with the Law' refers to any person below the age of 18 who has come in contact with the justice system as a result of committing a crime or being suspected of committing a crime. It may be kept in mind that, the figures for juvenile delinquency till 2000 were collected as per the definition of Juvenile justice Act, 1986. Male below the age of 16 years and female below the age of 18 years were considered as Juveniles in this Act. The Act was amended in 2000 according to which, the age of juvenile male and females was brought at par as below the age of 18 years.

CAUSES OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

FAMILY:

Family is the basic socialization agency for the children. Children learn basic concepts about good and bad from their family; they make their values and set the norms of society. Family can make or break the personality of the children. In family the most important role is played by the parents and siblings. Broken families, single parent families, separated families, frequent parents fight, lack of trust and confidence among the parents, criminal parents or psychological problems in parents can be the most important reason behind juvenile delinquency. The other reason can be siblings' rivalry or unequal treatment between children. Parents and elder siblings have the responsibility to mould the personality of the children. When parents or siblings do not show moral behavior or they commit crime, children or younger siblings also get motivation to do something bad a delinquent behavior.

- **Economic problems in family**

Children of families belonging to poor economical status easily get involved in criminal activities. Children want to improve their status and for this purpose they use negative path, in this regard often people do not support teenagers who belong from poor status and they go for criminal activities.

- **Psychological problems in family**

Psychological problems in parents or siblings can also be a risk factor of juvenile delinquency. Mental illnesses or other psychological problems like depression, frustration, aggression or hyper behavior showed by the parents can make the child feel deprived and inferior among friends. Sometimes children adopt depression and anger from parents or elder siblings.

- **Social problems in family**

In many families parents or elder siblings face various social problems. There can be various problems like gender discrimination, age discrimination, racial discrimination, child labour and etc. Children and youth learn what they see in their family, in many rich families parents do not feel shame in child labor and children could not understand that child labor is against society and against morality. Social problems cause stress and due to stress teens get involved in violence.

- **Moral problems in family**

. Teens should know how to respect family and other people. They should give due respect to everyone they know and meet. Some parents do not take care of their elders, and it is a known fact that such children who see their parents disrespecting their elders, their children never respect their parents and elder siblings. So morality is of concern for the children of today.

- **Parenting style**

Parenting style also matters and many researchers say that it is one of the biggest reason why teens commit crime. Parents are some time very harsh and they punish their children for small issues. This makes the children aggressive and develop hatred towards their parents and start disrespecting their parents and they become violent.

PERSONAL REASONS:

Sometimes personal reasons are responsible for the delinquent behavior. Sometimes the adolescent faces hardship in life due to some psychological or physical problem that he is going through. Society is often cruel towards a handicap and this unequal and unjust attitude of the society develops negative feelings in the person. The negative feelings make the person commit crime even if he belongs to a good family. This is a very common reason for committing crime in adolescence. Those adolescents who are suffering from some psychological or physical problem want to take revenge from society, friends, family or peer group. In modern society racial differences are also a very strong reason behind juvenile delinquency. Racial differences can cause several big crimes by the adolescents as adolescents become

aggressive and they want to take revenge from the society for the unequal treatment that the society shows to them. Drug use is also a very common cause of juvenile delinquency. Those juveniles who use drugs usually get involved in criminal activities as most of their friends belong to criminal class.

- **Social concerns**

Teenage boys and girls go through several social problems when they are not well socialized human beings. Some teens are very harsh and rude to talk and they cannot control their anger or aggression as it is in their nature. Most of the gender biased boys talk to the opposite sex like they are slaves and they do not respect them. Their violence and aggression make them commit crimes that other boys will never do.

- **Psychological concerns**

Psychological and mental concerns are also important when talking about juvenile delinquency. Mental disability is another big cause of juvenile delinquency. Mentally ill boys or girls can commit any crime without knowing the consequences of it. Statistics show that mental illnesses are one of the biggest reasons behind juvenile delinquency in America and other developed countries.

- **Drug use**

Drug use has become widespread among teenage boys and girls. Drugs use is prohibited by laws in many societies. Drug use in youth can be dangerous as they can commit violent crimes when they take drugs.

- **Physical concerns**

Physical disabilities can also cause juvenile delinquency. Juveniles that are physically or mentally handicap usually want to take revenge from other people for their complexes. They want to achieve success in life using negative means.

PEER GROUP INFLUENCE:

Peer group is a very strong force that can cause delinquent behavior in the adolescent. When friends commit crime adolescents often learn to do it and they cannot understand the consequences of the crime. Peer group rejection can also be the cause of juvenile delinquency. Adolescents can also show delinquent behavior when they cannot get similar resources as their friends have. Parents should ensure that their children are hanging out with friends who belong to

their class as this will prevent adolescent jealousy which can cause several crimes in adolescents. Parents should also see that their children are going out with good friends that belong to respectable families. They should not become part of any gang.

- **Gangs and cliques**

Youth can easily become part of a gang or clique during their age they think it appropriate to be powerful and to be part of a large group. Often strong groups and gangs are ones that are indulged in negative actions. Peer group influence can be positive and it can be negative.

- **Abusive behavior**

Abusive behavior is the first step towards committing crimes. When teens become part of a clique that is abusive and that does not know how to behave the teen also get involved in negative means.

- **Peer group rejection**

Sometimes youth do not get acceptance in any group as they do not have a strong personality and due to peer group rejection they commit crimes.

SOCIETY:

Society itself sometimes become very negative and creates difficulties for the youth. Society is a strong force in developing personality of the teens. Developing negative feelings from society can become a reason behind juvenile delinquency.

- **Labeling**

Labeling can destroy the personality of the youth and make the teen a criminal forever. Labeling means that society labels a teen criminal once he commits a crime, though this is his first time but due to the tagging he will perceive himself a criminal. He will repeat similar crime or other crimes in future. He will no longer feel any embarrassment in committing crimes.

SHARE OF JUVENILE CRIME: INDIAN PENAL CODE (IPC) AND SPECIAL LOCAL LAWS (SLL):

The juvenile IPC crimes in 2011 have increased by 10.5% over 2010 as 22,740 IPC crimes by juveniles were registered during 2010 which increased to 25,125 cases in 2011. Major Juvenile crimes were under 'Theft' (21.17%), Hurt (16.3%) and Burglary (10.38%) in 2011. The highest

decrease in Juvenile delinquency was observed under the crime head 'Preparation & Assembly for Dacoity' (35.3%), 'Death due to negligence' (25.6%) and 'Criminal breach of trust' (14.0%) in 2011 over 2010. The highest increase in the incidence of juvenile crimes was observed under the heads 'Counterfeiting' (81.8%), 'Dowry deaths' (63.2%), 'Arson' (57.6%) and 'Kidnapping & abduction of women & girls' (53.5%). Juvenile delinquency under SLL crimes has increased by 10.9% in 2011 as compared to 2010 as 2,558 cases of juvenile delinquency under SLL were reported in 2010 which increased to 2,837 in 2011, while there was substantial decrease of 40.8% in 2010 as compared to 2009. A large number of Juvenile crimes (SLL) were reported under Gambling Act (14.77%) followed by Prohibition Act (10.7%). Cases under 'Indian Passport Act' and 'Forest Act' have registered a sharp decline of 66.7% each, while cases under 'Prohibition of Child Marriage Act' and 'Immoral Traffic (P) Act' registered sharp increase of 200% and 50% respectively. (Children in India-2012, A Statistical Appraisal, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2012 and (source: National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), 2011)

CLASSIFICATION OF JUVENILES BY ATTRIBUTES

It is highly disturbing to observe that, out of the total juveniles involved in various crimes, 81.4% are children living with parents, whereas the share of homeless children involved in various crimes are 5.7% and the remaining are children living with guardians. Out of the total juveniles involved in various crimes 6,122 (18.1%) are illiterate and 12,803 (37.8%) had education up to primary level. 31% juveniles belonged to the education level of above primary but below secondary category and 13.11% are with secondary/ higher secondary & above education. A large chunk of juveniles (57%) belonged to the poor families whose annual income was up to Rs. 25,000/-. The share of juveniles from families with income between 25,000/- and 50,000/- was 27%. The share of juveniles hailing from middle income group (50,000- 2,00,000) was 11%. (National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), 2011)

MEASURES TO REDUCE JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

- Since the percentage of juveniles who have education up to primary level (37.8%) and the percentage of juveniles who have education above primary level and below secondary level is around 31%, it is necessary that value based education need to be provided to the children right from their schooling.
- Ethics and moral values need to be taught by incorporating in the syllabus in every class of primary and secondary levels of the study.
- As it was observed that, out of the total juveniles involved in various crimes, 81.4% are children living with parents, parental care and parental monitoring is a key aspect in reducing delinquent behaviour in children.
- Government should take enough measures to provide proper education and support to children of families with less annual income because less family income leads to less attention of parents towards their children and low parental care as the parents are more involved in earning for their livelihood rather than focusing on their children. This may lead to delinquent behavior of children as there is no one to care, monitor and control them.
- Technological advancements are very much useful to the society for its progress and development. Parents should closely monitor their children while they use technology. Otherwise there is a possibility of misuse of technology by children which causes delinquent behaviour or wrongful behaviours in children.
- Both teachers and parents should play active role in educating children and creating awareness about the consequences of delinquent or wrongful behaviour which makes the children avoid committing crimes for fear of punishments.
- Elder members in the family should inculcate values and should teach about the importance of truth, non violence and other moral values in life through stories from mythology and etc.
- Teachers should take necessary measures in educating children with different IQ levels. Teachers should follow appropriate methods in teaching so as to reach the understanding levels of students which reduce frustration and stress in children.

- Parents should seek for proper medical care and attention when psychological problems like aggressive behavior and other problems were observed in the children for the first time.
- Children should not be given severe punishments for their wrongful acts by parents and teachers, which worsens the situation, instead gradual change in behaviour need to be obtained in children through love and affection.
- Teachers and parents should make the children to participate in extracurricular activities like painting, musing, dance, sports and games which enable the children to bring their skills out and prevent their attention towards wrongful acts.
- Greater educational and employment opportunities need to be provided by the government for the families with low incomes which enables them to rear their children with more love and affection, proper attention and care.
- Government should also take necessary measures towards proper implementation of family planning programmes in the country as increased family size leads to less/no attention towards all the children in the family. Less number of children in a family leads to more care and attention towards them and hence good society.
- If the parents are habituated to drugs(alcohol, smoking and etc), there is a chance that children may mimic their parents, so parents should quit those bad habits and raise their children in clean environment.
- As children don't have more self control as adults have, for gratification they may get addicted to drugs and other bad habits. It is the responsibility of the society to keep our children healthy by taking proper measures. Children should be educated about the ill effects of drugs.
- Also film stars should avoid consuming alcohol and smoking in movies and advertisements for the purpose of protecting children as children will get inclined towards these habits easily as their favourite stars are doing the same.
- Good parenting is that which enables the children to develop impulse regulation and empathy which is very much useful for the rest of the life. Children with delinquent behavior lack these skills. Hence parents should take necessary measures in developing these skills in their children which will be helpful for their lives.

- Government should also take necessary measures to provide proper housing facilities to poor and extremely poor people as lack of proper housing leads to slums, children will be reared in a unhygienic and unfriendly environment, children being trapped by gangs and forced to indulge in criminal activities for the purpose of earning their livelihood.
- A family with good socio economic status will raise their children in a good environment provides good education which ultimately reduces delinquent behavior in children. So it is the responsibility of the state to improve the socio economic status of its people by implementing suitable programmes.
- Those children who were raised by distressed and unsupportive caregivers in unstable families had a greater chance of developing problem behavior than did children who had nurturing caregivers and grew up in supportive homes; hence families should develop and nurture love and affection among themselves so as to have healthier and happier generations.
- Mentally retarded and physically handicap children need to be given extra attention and care by the family, teachers and the society as a whole.
- Parents should continuously monitor their children, should closely watch their children's friends, and also the people with whom the children mingle with so that if they find deviance in their children's behaviour can take proper action to bring them back in to right condition.

REFERENCES

Koffman, Stephen, et al. "Impact of a Comprehensive Whole Child Intervention and Prevention Program among Youths at Risk of Gang Involvement and Other Forms of Delinquency." *Children & Schools* 31.4 (2009): 239-45. *Academic Search Premier*. EBSCO. Web. 8 Nov. 2009.

National Crime Research Bureau. 2010. *Crime in India Compendium*, New Delhi.

National Crime Research Bureau. 2011. *Crime in India Compendium*, New Delhi.

Children in India-2012, A Statistical Appraisal, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, New Delhi, 2012.

Nation, Maury, et al. "What Works in Prevention." *American Psychologist* 58.6/7 (2003): 449-57. *Academic Search Premier. EBSCO*. Web. 8 Nov. 2009.

Statistics on Women in India, National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, New Delhi, 2007.

Welsh, Brandon C., and David P. Farrington. "Save Children From a Life of Crime." *Criminology & Public Policy* 6.4 (2007): 871-79. *Academic Search Premier. EBSCO*. Web. 9 Nov. 2009.

Zagar, Robert John, Kenneth G. Busch, and John Russell Hughes. "Empirical Risk Factors for Delinquency and Best Treatments: Where Do We Go from Here?" *Psychological Reports* 104.1 (2009): 279-308. *Academic Search Premier. EBSCO*. Web. 8 Nov. 2009.

Zigler, Edward. "Early Intervention to Prevent Juvenile Delinquency." *Harvard Mental Health Letter* 11.3 (1994): 5-8. *Academic Search Premier. EBSCO*. Web. 9 Nov. 2009.

Zigler, Edward, and Cara Taussig. "Early Childhood Intervention." *American Psychologist* 47.8 (1992): 997-1007. *Academic Search Premier. EBSCO*. Web. 9 Nov. 2009.

Zigler, Edward, and Susan Muenchow. *Head Start: The Inside Story of America's Most Successful Educational Experiment*. New York: BasicBooks, 1992. Print.