

Causes of Juvenile Delinquency in Bangladesh and Its Preventive Measures: A Review

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Abstract

This study was conducted to find out the major causes of juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh and to suggest its preventive measures as well. Documents review and content analysis were used to collect and analyze data of this study where data were collected from several secondary sources like scholarly journal articles, books, survey reports, and internet sources. In this study, the major causes of juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh were found to be broken family, peer group influence, electronic media, economic condition, child labor, genetic factors, surrounding environment, lack of proper recreation, cultural factors, and psychological factors. Several preventive strategies of this problem were also found as well. These strategies incorporates improvement of parental relationship, overcoming economic challenges, parental supervision, positive use of media, proper accommodation, proper recreation, and undertaking psycho-social programs.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquency, socio-economic conditions, family, prevention.

Introduction

Juveniles are the most significant segment not only in Bangladesh but also to the global society. They are regarded as the leaders of tomorrow, so when they are treated well in a bona fide way, in a manner that even the society will feel comfortable for the betterment of future generation. While if the society fails to accommodate them and give them such care or sometimes when they feel segregated, they react sharply to any antisocial activity in the sense that they stand for their own right. Indeed, lack of parental attention, scarcity of basic needs and any other social feelings of unhappiness, worry and disappointment that they might experience at their tender age touches them so deeply. Many of them cannot cope with the abnormal situation. They respond to social anomalies in ways that are not approved by social norms and law. At times the elderly one's who are well experienced in crimes misguides the young folks by forming them a gang in order to commit the type of crime they want either individually or collectively (Goodhart, 1953).

Moreover, we can also consider the juvenile delinquency as a blameworthy child, blameworthy minor, culpable youth, derelict adolescent, derelict inexperienced person, derelict junior, immature youngster, misbehaving teenager, miscreant, misguided teen, misguided young person, neglectful fledgling, offending immature person, violator underage, young wrongdoer (Eadie & Morley, 2007). In India Juvenile delinquency is the participation by a minor between the ages of 10 and 17, in illegal activities. When an individual deviates from the course of abnormal social life his behavior is called Delinquent (Phogat, 2017). When a juvenile, below an age specified under a statute exhibits behavior which may prove to be dangerous to

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society and or for him, he may be called a juvenile delinquent. Juvenile delinquents are those offenders including boys and girls who are under 18 years of age. A Juvenile delinquent is a young person incorrigible or habitually disobedient (Phogat, 2017).

Juvenile delinquency indicates to a variety of misbehavior of juveniles which are hazardous to society and some sort of penalty and reformative measures are there. At present the juveniles are not only confined in traditional offences like running away from school, telling lies, stealing stationeries but they are engaged in numerous suspicious activities which constitute serious violation of law and order of the country. Different types of offences such as kidnapping, gambling, drugs addiction, theft, vagrancy, drug peddling, murder, teasing, smuggling and sexual harassment are often alleged to be committed by juveniles. These delinquencies by juveniles have got different patterns because some of these offences are committed by individual delinquent, some are by companionship and some are by situational delinquent.

According to the developmental research of Moffitt, two different types of offenders emerge in adolescence (Moffitt, 2018). One is the repeat offender, referred to as the life-course-persistent offender, who begins offending or showing antisocial/aggressive behavior in adolescence and continues into adulthood; and the age-specific offender, referred to as the adolescence-limited offender, for whom juvenile offending or delinquency begins and ends during their period of adolescence (Phogat, 2017).

Many kinds of delinquencies such as picketing, mugging and human trafficking, theft, teasing, sexual violence, homicide, gang formation other similar criminal activities are very common in Bangladesh. Like Bangladesh, juvenile delinquency also prevails in other countries. It is a notable social problem worldwide. In this article, it was tried to find out the major causes and suggest significant preventive actions of juvenile delinquencies in Bangladesh. This article will play a vital role in eradicating juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh.

Objectives

The broader objective of this study was to know the causes of juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh and find out the preventive measures.

Specific Objectives:

The specific objectives of this study were:

- To explore the causes of juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh.
- To suggest the preventive measures of juvenile delinquency.

Methods

This study was based on qualitative research methods. More specifically, documents review and content analysis were used to collect and analyze data. The data were collected from several secondary sources such as scholarly journals, books, survey reports, and internet sources. Final findings of this article were found out by analyzing and comparing the contents of the sources mentioned. Contents were selected in accordance with the objectives of this study.

Results and Discussion

Causes of juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh

In today's global village juvenile delinquency is treated as one of the most ominous and touchy offences mischievous for the social order of a country. The trend of juvenile crimes is sharply rising in Bangladesh like many other countries of the world. Due to socioeconomic circumstances like absence of proper guidance from family, poverty, situation of residential area, non-accomplishment of basic needs, misuse of social media and internet, both male and female teenagers are getting involved in various types of anti-social activities like ragging, carrying illegal arms and drugs, killing, sex offences, engaging in gangs, smuggling, criminalized politics and many other delinquent actions. These issues are serious anxiety for the entire nation and immediate solution must be sought out to save youths of the country (Chowdhury & Fahim, 2019).

Interdisciplinary observations uncover that there are different causes for juvenile delinquency. Non-fulfillment of basic needs, crime in residential area, lack of family control, internal conflict in family, negative impact of internet, involvement in child labor, absence of proper recreation etc. are some of the fundamental causes of juvenile delinquency (Chowdhury, 2019). Sociologists give emphasize on social causes while economists, biologists and psychiatrists give emphasize on economic, physiological and psychological causes. In general all these causes are responsible for juvenile delinquency (Chowdhury, 2019).

Broken Family

Juvenile delinquency is greatly contingent upon the family pattern of a child. In Bangladesh the divorce rate is increasing considerably at present time. As a result, the number of broken families is increasing accordingly. The impact of a broken family can never be good on a child. One child needs the care of both of one's parents for one's proper development. But, the children of a broken family do not get that care. As a result, their development becomes hampered. At one stage children become frustrated and involve in several deviant activities which renders juvenile delinquency in future (Khuda, 2019). This picture does not only prevail in Bangladesh but also in neighboring countries like India (Phogat, 2017), Pakistan (Alamgir et al., 2018), Malaysia (Alpattani, 2015) and so on. The children of broken families of these countries are often seen to be involved in Juvenile delinquency.

Peer Group Influence

Juveniles have the tendency to be influenced by their companions. They often become involved in several criminal activities like drug addiction, hi-jacking, burglary, eve-teasing, etc. being influenced by their peer groups. Many researchers believe these juveniles may abandon school mates in favor of criminal gangs, since membership in gang respect and status in a different manner (Khuda, 2019). In gangs, antisocial behavior and criminal activity earn respect and street credibility (Khuda, 2019). In Malaysia the habit of imitating a certain culture, for example the punk and skinhead cultures, without evaluating the good and bad of those cultures, can also lead adolescents to involve themselves in social deviance. They are more

inclined to be influenced by their peer group and treat advice and criticisms from their family as something that restricts and bores them (Alpattani, 2015).

Electronic Media

Electronic media is very available now-a-days. Children have an easy access to several electronic media like smart phone, tablet, computer, television, etc. The media cast several programs or share several contents like videos, audios, text etc. Many of these contents do not have similarities with the real world. Moreover, many have negative messages. Juvenile are not matured enough to make proper decisions. Ultimately, many juveniles get influenced by the negative contents of the electronic media and get involved in juvenile delinquency. Action movie and satellite channels have a negative impact on the mindset of the young folk. The violence and sex depicted in the movies incite juveniles to go brothel and to commit unauthorized activities (Khuda, 2019).

Economic Condition

Another important cause of juvenile delinquency is economic condition. It is noticed that there is a positive correlation between poverty and juvenile delinquency (Chowdhury, 2019). A great number of people in Bangladesh still live below the poverty line. The juveniles of those families cannot fulfill their basic needs properly. As a result, being frustrated, the juveniles of poor families get involved in delinquent activities like murder, stealing, pick-pocketing, and so on (Chowdhury, 2019). On the other hand in Malaysia Poverty is closely connected with criminal misconduct. The strain of financial burdens is often used as an excuse by offenders to commit crimes such as stealing and snatching. The experience and observation of young prisoners and juveniles who are serving prison sentences shows that a majority of them come from families with a monthly income below RM1000 and with four to seven siblings (Alpattani, 2015).

In Pakistan, poverty is a critical issue which led the people to kill each other for their survival. Economy of Pakistan is considered as under developing and almost 50% of the population is living below the poverty line i.e., without or less than 1.5 US\$ (175 Rs) per day income (Dar, 2013). This 50% of the population is suffering from its survival and every morning the father/ mother thinks from where he/she can earn to feed his children? Other 50% is also facing many economic problems and find it difficult to resolve all economic issues within their earnings. For instance, service sector accounts for 58.1% of GDP and the average salary of this sector is about Rs. 16256 (Dar, 2013). This leads that almost all the citizens are suffering from lack of money to fulfil their basic necessities of life like food, clothing and housing etc., the fulfilment of which should be on behalf of the state (Shibli et al., 1978).

Child Labor

Child labor has been treated as a serious factor that operates juvenile delinquency. Almost majority of juvenile delinquents lead their life by hard working. Many delinquents take part in killing operations, robbery and bank looting in exchange of money. Underworld godfathers are often alleged to use juveniles for fulfilling their criminal missions. These juveniles earn money by getting involved in smuggling, hijacking, pick pocketing and drug selling to fulfill their basic needs. Juveniles of rich

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family receive liberal amount of money which incites them to make wrongful use of that money. They get easily involved in gambling, visiting porn websites, political sabotage, buying illegal drugs and arms etc (Islam, 2015).

Genetic Factors

Genes play very important roles to determine human behavior. In fact, a major part of our entire behavior pattern is due to genes coming from our ancestors. So there is a huge probability to obtain delinquent characteristics from genetic factors. Many vital hormonal changes take place inside the body of juveniles which are responsible for impassioned and disobedient behavior. Some kind of illness and incomplete growth may also be liable for juvenile delinquency (Chowdhury, 2019).

Surrounding Environment

One child's development depends on one's place of residence. It is generally seen that the children who are raised in slum areas tend to get involved in delinquent activities as because the adverse environment of the slums has a substantial negative impact on the children and juveniles to behave in delinquent way. Due to such nasty condition of residential area the number of female delinquents beside male is also alarmingly rising. It is well established that if the residential area is very effective for the development of socialization among the juveniles, the rate of juvenile delinquency automatically reduces (Chowdhury, 2019).

Children tend to imitate others easily. They imitate people around them and imitate their behavior very quickly, especially negative behavior. If they are raised in a delinquent neighborhood it affects them much. As a result, they become delinquent too. If a child feels that he has no food to eat, and his ego is about to be tainted in the society, and his neighborhood is charming, so strong as compare to his family set up, here the teenage can feel the idea to get wealthy. So most of the time he chooses the wrong way because of an individual, it is impossible to be wealthy in a short time. In this condition, the person joins the gang group and becomes delinquent (Alamgir et al., 2018).

Lack of Proper Recreation

Recreation refreshes us. Proper recreation energizes us and makes us more enthusiastic for work. But, lack of proper recreation can direct a child in wrong direction. Majority of the children in Bangladesh fail to get proper recreation from their home, educational institution and other social institutions. In such situation they do not grow up mentally which leads them to engage in various offences. In many families both the parents are service holders. They work outside of their home and sometimes they fail to spend reasonable time with their growing children. These children feel lonely in house which induces them to find their happiness outside. Frequently spending time outside and mixing with bad company increases the risk of deviation in the behavior of children as they do not hourly get their parents beside them to share their feelings. Furthermore, present world is the world of technology with both blessing and fatality for mankind. Juveniles in Bangladesh are seen to be always busy in using smart phones, watching action movies, chatting with friends through internet etc. which deter them from learning some social values as well as continuous use of these technologies have severe negative impact on their brain

functioning. Very few numbers of movies are now produced with good social lesson but mostly are full of action, fight, sexual and breath-taking scene and many other anti-social activities which make deep psychological knock on juveniles (Chowdhury, 2019).

Cultural Factors

The prosperity in the field of industrialization helps to strengthen the economy of a country. But the running industrialization and urbanization are repeatedly breaking the joint families and reducing family influence over the children. Many families are continuously migrating to urban area for want of service and education but making it over crowded. In some regions of Bangladesh river erosion has become a major problem. Residents of those areas are losing their homeland and coming to urban areas in search of accommodation and job. The cost of living as well as slum dwellers are uniformly rising. Poverty, illiteracy and unemployment have added more sufferings to these people. At the end the children of these families having no other occupation get involved in massacre, smoking, drug business, prostitution, snatching and many other delinquent acts and even some politicians also use these juveniles to sustain their dominance within their locality. Some unjust cultures from neighboring countries have exceedingly intruded and diminishing the local cultures (Chowdhury, 2019).

Psychological Factors

Juveniles are mostly adolescents. Adolescence is a critical transition period of life for a person. This period incorporates rapid physiological and psychological growth and development. Emotional states of adolescents are stays very unstable. They go through several mental conflicts and indecisions in this period. They cannot easily decide between right and wrong. Moreover, they become easily and emotionally influenced by several negative issues. Consequently, being emotional, they become involved in several delinquencies (Chowdhury, 2019).

In Malaysia, the individual factors, namely attitude, low self-esteem, mental and physical health problems, a low level of education, the inability to cope with stress and to solve problems, drug abuse and pornography are contributing factors to social deviance among adolescents. This is due to the fact that adolescents require guidance and support in the process of developing their identity and in determining their goals in life (Alpattani, 2015). On the other hand in Pakistan few persons are identified as mentally ill, therefore, they commit illegal acts as the juvenile delinquent, because they tend rather to commit inaccurate activities than the right one, because such types of persons are often depressed one, and they eventually tend to do the inaccurate activity (Alamgir et al ., 2018).

Prevention of juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh

For ensuring the fruitful treatment of the juvenile delinquents, following recommendations can be made to deal with the issue of juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh: Researches show that the children of broken families tend more to be involved in delinquencies.

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Improvement of Parental Relationship

There is no substitute for parental love. So, we must focus on the improvement of parental relationships and ensure that families do not break easily. If we can give healthy family patterns to our children that will lead a child to achieve proper psycho-social wellbeing which will minimize crime-rate. We can develop and increase psycho-social services which provide several counseling or parent education programs to improve relationship between husbands and wives (Khuda, 2019). Same sceneries are seen in India. Child needs unconditional, immediate and true love, care and protection of his mother and father. On account of deprivation of such love and care the child may develop frustration and dissatisfaction leading to crime. So parental love, care and protection is necessary for the child to prevent him for committing or doing the crime. Family factors which may have an influence on offending includes the level of parental supervision, the way parents discipline a child, parental conflict or separation, criminal parents or siblings, and the quality of the parent-child relationship. Many studies have found a strong correlation between a lack of supervision and offending, and it appears to be the most important family influence on offending (Phogat, 2017).

Overcoming Economic Challenges

There is an intimate relationship between economic condition and criminal tendencies. Different researches show that the children of poorer families commit more crimes than the children of richer ones. Programs like, "poverty alleviation program", "social safety net" etc. can improve the economic conditions of people and minimize the crimes. Besides, we can involve them into some vocational and economic activities where they can "learn and earn". The government should design strategies for economic empowerment of the urban poor like providing basic training on starting and managing a business and creating accessible financial support with low interest rate (Khuda, 2019).

Parental Supervision

Children are very susceptible to being influenced by their peers. In this case, parents have an important role to save their children from the negative influence of their peers. Parents can monitor their children and their peers and their activities so that they can prevent them from any delinquent tendency (Khuda, 2019). In addition, establishment of 'Child Affairs Desk' at every police station headed by a Child Affairs Police Officer (CAPO) must be ensured. CAPO must be well trained up particularly on the matters relating to lockup, monitoring and supervision of adolescents (Chowdhury, 2019).

Positive Use of Media

We have to give positive message through media to our children. Media controlling authority has to be more conscious of casting proper programs for the children. Moreover, it is to ensure that the media will cast more intellectual and educational programs so that our children can learn effectively (Chowdhury, 2019). In India, the newspapers, magazines, radio, television and motion pictures etc. should show the juvenile delinquency in proper perspective honestly and should also present real reports about the various wrong done by the juveniles and analyze its true causes and also protect the juvenile against false and misleading reporting. The actual

position should be presented and produced before the society about their delinquent behavior so that they may be properly assessed (Phogat, 2017).

Proper Accommodation

It has been seen that there is a negative correlation between “the quality of the place of residence” of a child and “criminal tendency. Children of slums, for instance, commit more crimes than that of high-quality residential areas. Several government and non-government organizations can take several initiatives so that the children of poorer residential areas can improve their lifestyle. Proper monitoring system must be ensured by setting up a special cell in the Department of Social Service under the Ministry of Social Welfare. In the Divisional Headquarters, some branch offices may also be opened (Chowdhury, 2019).

Proper Recreation

Juveniles sometimes find recreation from several delinquent activities like eve-teasing, drug addiction, etc. Lack of proper recreation can lead them to be delinquent. So, society has to ensure proper recreation for the children. It may include play-field, Recreation Park, etc. Moreover, several intellectual recreation programs like cultural programs, debate club, literature-society, public libraries can also be taken to involve them into healthy recreational activities. In India the establishment of recreational agencies like sports, playgrounds community centers, concerts drama, puppet shows are very necessary for preventing the delinquency and developing social group work and youth groups. In rural areas, recreational agencies should provide open air meeting halls, playgrounds for sports and cultural activities. Youth organizations and groups/agencies should take and assume the responsibility for organizing these programs so that Juvenile may be kept away from delinquency (Phogat, 2017).

Undertaking Psycho-Social Programs

Juveniles are so emotional. Sometimes, being emotional, they cannot decide between right and wrong and commit several crimes. “Psycho-social counseling service” and ‘child reformation programs” may help to reverse them on this issue. Besides, mandatory educational programs and several skill-based training programs can also be helpful in prevention of juvenile delinquencies. Both government and non-government organizations can take these types of initiatives to prevent juvenile delinquencies. Sufficient number of child friendly institutions with all facilities such as food, medical care, educational and training management should be formed. Proper health care and social education shall be maintained for those juveniles victim of neglect and violence (Chowdhury, 2019). In India, the impacts of educational institutions are very significant in the countries where almost every child going to school and preventive program can be launched in an effective manner through the schools. Teachers should not discriminate among the students; they should be treated equally and provided the moral education which is very helpful to the students for their life stand. Moral education is a significant factor for the students, which decide their life. They should be able to understand the difference between right and wrong ideas which are favorable for them and which are no (Phogat, 2017).

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Same scenery is also seen in Pakistan. It is necessary that the teachers should behave with the students in civilized manners rather than abusing and beating them. Children should be engaged in creative activities through a disciplined and civilized system of education. Professional child care workers and trainees should be appointed at schools and colleges to treat the delinquents (Naseem, 2020). To deal with the administration of juvenile justice more efficiently, professional training and courses must be arranged for personnel such as judicial officers, lawyers, police officers and probation officers (Chowdhury, 2019). In Pakistan, it is also suggested that trained probation officers should be inducted in these centers which provides that probation officers would assist the juvenile court by making a confidential report on the social and economic background and character of the child if the child offender released on probation under provisions of the Probation of Offenders Ordinance, 1960 (Naseem, 2020).

Conclusions

Interdisciplinary observations uncover that there are different causes for juvenile delinquency. Non-fulfillment of basic needs, crime in residential area, lack of family control, internal conflict in family, negative impact of internet, involvement in child labor, absence of proper recreation etc. are some of the fundamental causes of juvenile delinquency. There is no substitute for parental love. So, we must focus on the improvement of parental relationships and ensure that families do not break easily. Child needs unconditional, immediate and true love, care and protection of his mother and father. On account of deprivation of such love and care the child may develop frustration and dissatisfaction leading to crime. So parental love, care and protection is very necessary for the child to prevent him from committing or doing the crime. Family factors which may have an influence on offending includes the level of parental supervision, the way parents discipline a child, parental conflict or separation, criminal parents or siblings, and the quality of the parent-child relationship. Many studies have found a strong correlation between a lack of supervision and offending, and it appears to be the most important family influence on offending. Children of slums, for instance, commit more crimes than that of high-quality residential areas. Several government and non-government organizations can take several initiatives so that the children of poorer residential areas can improve their lifestyle.

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