

Association Between Family Socioeconomic Status and Juvenile Crime

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Abstract- *This research explores the link between family socioeconomic status and juvenile crime, a pressing issue in contemporary Indian society. Juvenile delinquency, influenced by complex social, economic, and psychological factors, has become increasingly visible, with youth participating in crimes ranging from petty theft to serious offences like homicide. This study aims to identify how elements such as poverty, broken homes, peer pressure, and beggary contribute to juvenile misconduct. Using a mixed-method approach involving doctrinal research and primary data collected through structured questionnaires from individuals aged 18–30 in Punjab, the study provides both statistical and interpretive insights. The findings reveal that peer pressure and poverty are among the most significant factors influencing juvenile crime. Respondents emphasized the importance of counselling, parental involvement, and educational programs in preventing delinquency. The research concludes with recommendations focused on community-based reform, improved family support systems, and awareness programs to curb the growing threat of juvenile crime.*

Indexed Terms- *Juvenile Delinquency, Socioeconomic Factors, Youth Crime, Peer Pressure, Poverty and Crime.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Delinquency has always been considered as a social problem over and above the fact that it is a legal problem. It is also a psychological problem. Hence to avoid this social evil one has to tackle the complex problem of delinquency from the social psychological and to familial angles.

Although laws regarding Juvenile delinquencies have been formed long since, they are also being changed

from time to time. Currently, in all the progressive and civilized countries of the world the laws with regard to the Juvenile delinquents have been changed.

Special courts are established with specially trained Magistrates for the trial of the delinquents. Today delinquency is being considered as a misbehaviour, a social nuisance than a crime. So, in every state the children's Act (1944) required custody, control and punishment of young offenders.

It also provides for the establishment of reformatory schools for them. But the revised Bombay children's Act of 1948 provided not only for custody and control but also for treatment and rehabilitation of young offenders.

Crime committed by children and adolescents under the age of 18 years, is called delinquency. The maximum age limit and also the meaning of delinquency varies from country to country. But it is always below 18 years of age which is the statutory age for delinquency.

In India any person between the age of 7 and 18 years, who violates the provisions of the children's Acts, the IPC and the CPO will be considered as delinquent. Persons above this age are considered as criminals.

Juvenile delinquency is defined by the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Act as "A delinquent child is one who violated any laws of the common wealth ordinance of the city, a child who by reasons of being way ward or habitually disobedient is uncontrolled by his parents, guardian, custodian or legal representative, a child who is habitually truant from school or home or child who habitually so deports himself is to injury or endanger the moral or health of himself or others". Delinquency includes all sorts of crimes committed

by children. Starting from the business and use of illegal drugs and homicide murder, it may include various types of dangerous criminal offences.

Delinquency undoubtedly is a social evil. It is a socially unacceptable behaviour committed by boys and girls below the age of 18 years. Instead of giving these delinquents punishment, they are kept in Juvenile jail and correction homes where various corrective measures are taken to change their behaviour in the positive direction. It is observed that crime and delinquency are increasing day by day with the increase in population and complexity of culture. As population increases the small societies become bigger ones and are found in the form of mass society. In mass societies there is less scope for mutual interaction and face to face contact. The family bonds and community bonds thus become weak to weaker. Now a days no one knows or cares to know who is staying next door. Parents and children do not meet.

In India, juvenile crime is a grim reality. A juvenile is a child who has not reached the age at which they may be held accountable for their criminal activities in the same way that an adult can. When referring to a young criminal offender, the term juvenile is used. As a result, a juvenile is a child who is accused of doing certain acts or omissions that are illegal and have been classified as such by penal laws. Juveniles have recently been proven to be involved in the most terrible crimes, such as murder and gang rape. Although the causes of criminal conduct in children are complicated, delinquency is fairly foreseeable early in the lives of certain youngsters. Many experts feel that the current law is insufficient to cope with the problem and that it has to be changed so that minors can be prosecuted and sentenced as adults for severe crimes. However, there are opposing viewpoints that do not share this thought.

No one is born with the potential to be a criminal. Circumstances have shaped them into who they are. The socio-cultural environment, both within and outside of one's household, has a big influence on one's life and general personality. The causes of juvenile crimes, according to Healy and Bonner, are bad company, adolescent instability and impulses, early sex experience, mental conflicts, extreme social

suggestibility, love of adventure, motion picture, school dissatisfaction, poor recreation, street life, vocational dissatisfaction, sudden impulse, and physical conditions of various kinds. However, in India, it is poverty and the impact of the media, particularly social media, that encourages youths to engage in illegal activity. Poverty is one of the leading factors of a child's involvement in criminal activity. Also, the current function of social media, which has a more destructive impact on young brains. The main socio-economic reasons for juvenile crime are as follows

1. Broken homes

According to one of Uday Shankar's research in India, 13.3 percent of the 140 juveniles came from broken households. Death of one or both parents, chronic sickness or insanity, desertion, or divorce can all break up a family. Interaction at home is a critical component of a child's socialisation.

2. Poverty

A substantial percentage of delinquent youngsters originate from low-income families. They perpetuate their crimes as gang members. According to Uday Shankar's research, 83 percent of youngsters originate from low-income homes. Poverty forces both parents to work outside the home for lengthy periods of time in order to earn their daily bread. There will be no one to look after the children. Such youngsters may join up with gangsters, either knowingly or unconsciously, and become criminals.

3. Friends and companions:

As the child grows older, he/she ventures out into the neighbourhood and joins a playgroup or peer group. He/ she will very certainly become a delinquent if he/she joins a group or gang that supports delinquent tendencies. Adolescents also commit crimes as a result of poor friendships. Shaw examined 6000 youths involved in criminality in Illinois Crime Survey of 1998. In 90% of the instances, he discovered that two or more youths were involved in the crime.

4. Beggary

Juvenile misbehaviour is frequently caused by beggars. The majority of child beggars originate from either very impoverished backgrounds or shattered

homes. These youngsters are robbed of their parents' much-needed love and attention. They realise that the only way to satisfy their wants and meet their requirements is to engage in deviant behaviour. As a result, they become delinquents.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The author, Steven D. Levitt in his work, *Juvenile Crime and Punishment*¹, defined the relation between the two and discussed how crime has evolved with time and so have the punishments for the same.

In the journal article, *Age and Crime*², the author, David P. Farrington discussed the factors and the conditions at a young age which lead young children and individuals towards crime and the consequences they have to suffer for such misdeeds.

The journal article, *Juvenile delinquency and Crime Prevention*³, the author, Frederic M. Thrasher defined the meaning of juvenile crime and how juvenile crimes can be prevented in the future with the correct measures.

The article, *Adolescent Crime and the Regulation of Youth Crime*⁴ discussed the meaning of juvenile crime and how adolescents fall toward crime and how such crimes can be curbed at a young age by education the youth and the youngsters.

The author, albert H. Burrows in the journal article, *The Problem of Juvenile Delinquency*⁵ discussed the factors leading to crimes among youngsters and how in the present times juvenile crime has become a huge problem for the society.

III. IMPORTANCE OF TOPIC

The problem of juvenile crime nowadays is a deeply rooted problem in the society. Juvenile delinquency can impede the development of girls' and boys' innate gifts and abilities, as well as their academic and employment experiences and overall life possibilities. The adolescents get distracted at a young age towards crime and commit misdeeds which can have a long term negative effect on their future and their whole lives.

IV. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To understand what juvenile delinquency is.
2. To understand how socio-economic factors lead to delinquency.
3. The effect of juvenile delinquency on the society.
4. To understand ways to curb the problem of juvenile delinquency.

V. HYPOTHESIS

1. Socio-economic factors such as poverty increase the chances of delinquency among the juveniles.
2. Some deeply rooted problems, like beggary can lead to delinquency among the adolescents.
3. There is a need for proper education to mitigate the problem.
4. Children from a young age should be educated about the negative effects of juvenile delinquency to reduce this problem.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs the doctrinal research approach, which includes the utilisation of research papers, journals, and books to get the relevant knowledge. This study was likewise written using journals as a source of information. A few web sites and blogs have also been used to gather information, and the appropriate acknowledgment has been provided.

VII. AREA OF STUDY

The area of study of this research is based on the existing reports of juvenile crimes due to socio-economic reasons and how they impact the society as a whole.

VIII. RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher plans to do a quantitative study limited to the state of Punjab. A survey will be conducted online, by sending out a questionnaire inquiring how the reports and news of juvenile crime exist in their society and locality.

IX. SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The research will include 20 interviewees from the age groups of 18 to 30, which will include teenagers to people of early middle age.

X. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Both primary and secondary gathering methods were used to complete this research work. The needed information is gathered using a questionnaire. Data was gathered from prominent writers' publications, journals, and books. The necessary information has also been gathered from reputable websites and blogs written by specialists in the industry. The questionnaire will include questions such as is youth crime a major issue in today's society and their opinions on the effects of certain socio-economic factors on juvenile crime.

XI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

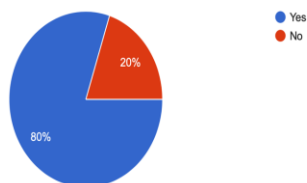
After collecting the primary data, the researcher will verify the collected data, afterwards the data will be edited and coded and all the responses will be summarised and the collective information will be prepared, for the research.

XII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

After gathering all of the relevant facts and information, the data is analysed using statistical techniques. Data interpretation is done both manually and with the aid of a computer.

1. Have you heard about juvenile delinquency before or are familiar with the concept?

Have you heard about juvenile delinquency before or are familiar with the concept?
20 responses

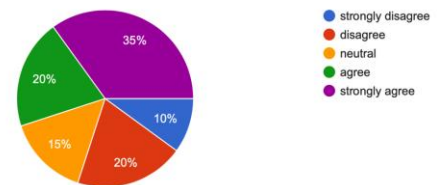


Sr. No.	Response	No. Of Responses	Percentage
1	Yes	16	80
2	No	4	20
Total	NA	20	100

According to the table, the researcher observed that 80% of the respondents were familiar with the concept of juvenile delinquency while 20% were not.

2. Youth crime is a major issue in today's society.

Youth crime is a major issue in today's society.
20 responses



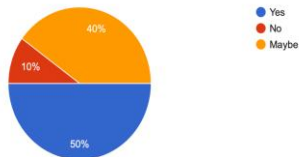
Sr. No.	Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
1	Strongly disagree	2	10
2	Disagree	4	20
3	Can't say	3	15
4	Agree	4	20
5	Strongly agree	7	35
Total	NA	20	100

Sr. No.	Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
1	Strongly disagree	2	10
2	Disagree	4	20
3	Can't say	3	15
4	Agree	4	20
5	Strongly agree	7	35
Total	NA	20	100

According to the table, the researcher observed that 20% of the respondents disagreed with youth crime being a major problem in today's society while 35% strongly agreed.

3. In your opinion, are youth more prone to commit crime?

In your opinion, are youth more prone to commit crime?
20 responses

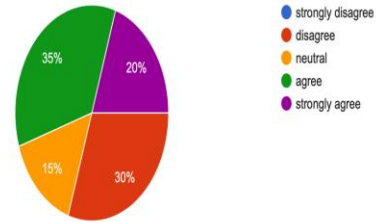


Sr. No.	Response	No. Of Responses	Percentage
1	Yes	10	50
2	No	2	10
3	Maybe	8	40
Total	NA	20	100

According to the table, the researcher observed that 50% of the respondents believed that youth are more prone to crime while 40% could not say.

4. Poverty can give rise to delinquency among the youngsters.

Poverty can give rise to delinquency among the youngsters.
20 responses

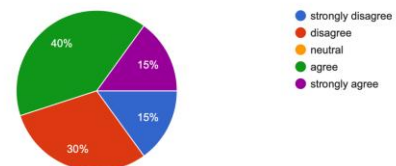


Sr. No.	Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
1	Strongly disagree	0	0
2	Disagree	6	30
3	Can't say	3	15
4	Agree	7	35
5	Strongly agree	4	20
Total	NA	20	100

According to the table, the researcher observed that 30% of the respondents believed that poverty can give rise to delinquency among youngsters, while 35% agreed with the same.

5. Peer pressure (friends and their influence) can increase juvenile delinquency.

Peer pressure (friends and their influence) can increase juvenile delinquency
20 responses

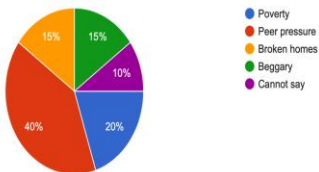


Sr. No.	Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
1	Strongly disagree	3	15
2	Disagree	6	30
3	Can't say	0	0
4	Agree	8	40
5	Strongly agree	3	15
Total	NA	20	100

According to the table, the researcher observed that 30% of the respondents disagreed with peer pressure being a major reason for juvenile delinquency while 40% agreed with the same.

6. In your opinion, which socio-economic factor is more responsible for juvenile delinquency?

In your opinion, which socio-economic factor is more responsible for juvenile delinquency?
20 responses

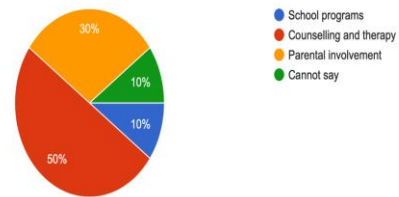


Sr. No.	Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
1	Poverty	4	20
2	Peer pressure	8	40
3	Broken homes	3	15
4	Beggary	3	15
5	Cannot say	2	10
Total	NA	20	100

According to the table, the researcher observed that 40% of the respondents believed that peer pressure was the biggest socio-economic reason for juvenile delinquency and poverty was the second biggest reason.

7. What could prevent juvenile delinquency?

What could prevent juvenile delinquency?
20 responses

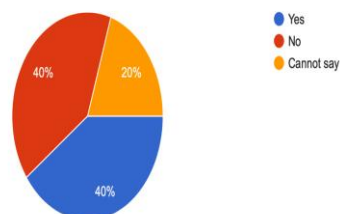


Sr. No.	Response	No. Of Responses	Percentage
1	School programs	2	10
2	Counselling and therapy	10	50
3	Parental involvement	6	30
4	Cannot say	2	10
Total	NA	20	100

According to the table, the researcher observed that 30% of the respondents believed that counselling and therapy can help prevent juvenile delinquency and 30% believed it needs parental involvement.

8. In your opinion, should juvenile delinquents be given another chance?

In your opinion, should juvenile delinquents be given another chance?
20 responses



Sr. No.	Response	No. Of Responses	Percentage
1	Yes	8	40
2	No	8	40
3	Cannot say	4	20
Total	NA	20	100

According to the table, the researcher observed that the equal number of respondents (40%) said yes and no as to should juvenile delinquents be given another chance and 20% could not say.

CONCLUSION

Through the questionnaire circulated by the researcher among the respondents, it has been observed there is a general opinion among the respondents that socio-economic factors are a major reason leading the delinquency among juveniles and amongst them, peer pressure is the most integral component leading to juvenile crime. It was also observed that the respondents believed that such delinquents should be given another chance to lead a normal life again. Along with, it was also observed by the researcher that a majority of the respondents believe that peer pressure is a major reason for juvenile delinquency. As observed by one of the questions in the questionnaire it was noted that if provided with therapy and counselling, it can prevent juvenile delinquency. The researcher will provide suitable recommendations and opinion for methods to

control and mitigate the problem of juvenile delinquency in the further part of the research paper.

REPORT WRITING

A report provides us with an organised knowledge of comprehension as well as the factual foundation for developing policies and strategies relating to the study issue. In the research paper, the researcher has dealt with the issue of gender stereotypes existent in the society at the present. After analysing all the facts observed from the sources and surveys, it has been observed that education can assist families and children by providing them with information. Some programs inform parents on how to raise healthy children; some teach children about the effects of drugs, gangs, sex, and weapons; and others aim to express to youth the innate worth they and all others have. All of these programs provide youths with the awareness that their actions have consequences. This is particularly important in an era where youth are barraged with sexual and violent images. Educational programs have the underlying intent of encouraging hope and opening up opportunities for young people. Recreational activities can also help prevent such crimes. One of the immediate benefits of recreational activities is that they fill unsupervised after-school hours. Recreation programs allow youths to connect with other adults and children in the community. Such positive friendships may assist children in later years. Youth programs are designed to fit the personalities and skills of different children and may include sports, dancing, music, rock climbing, drama, karate, bowling, art, and other activities. Inferiority complex, fear, apprehension may sometimes lead the child to commit crime under wrong and misplaced belief/impression of proving himself. Children deserve encouragement to become confident and good spirited person. Discouragement pulls them behind in their life. They should be properly to face various good and bad phases of life and their failures should not be criticized. Praise cheer, sympathy and love should be showered to banish inferiority complex. 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. 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. 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.

Exploitation of children has been a long-standing practice. These delinquents go through a lot of abuse which vary in nature as physical, sexual, or psychological or as a combination. The abuse has a long lasting and profound effect on a child's life. The problem of child abuse is a serious one and it is unlikely that it gets solved any sooner. Also, the reason why this has prolonged is that the society has affected the children in a negative way and in the society there are factors such as family influence, social environment, mental disorder and sexual abuse. This develops in young people low self-influence, social environment, mental disorder and sexual abuse. This develops in young people low self-esteem, and they go through mental trauma which later correlates with delinquent behaviour.

What needs to be done is the question that arises before us. We cannot uproot this menace but there are solutions to keep a control on the problem of Juvenile Delinquency. In the best interest of the delinquent, he or she should be rehabilitated as early as possible and integrated back in the society. Also, the State must protect the rights of these children and come up with reformatory methods and instil in them values that can socially uplift them and give them a

newfound confidence so that they can play a constructive role in the society.

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