

Surprise Rise in Juvenile Delinquency in India and Reasons Behind It

Anubhav Sharma, Student – Law College Dehradun, Uttarakhand University, Dehradun

Abstract

This study aims to reveal the factors responsible for rise in juvenile delinquency in India which apparently has increased in recent years. The child who has not completed the age of 18 years is called juvenile. India is a developing country but the rise of juvenile crimes are hurting and dragging the country's development in ground. The government has introduced various laws in years like in 2000 the first juvenile justice act was introduced which replaced the previous act of 1986 but this act contained proper rulings but as the years goes by several amendments took place in the year of 2006 and 2011. But after the brutal Delhi gang rape case the government replaced the juvenile justice act, 2000 by introducing new juvenile justice act in 2015 which introduced a major change that the children between the ages of 16 to 18 years involved in heinous offences to be tried as adults which resulted a lot of turmoil. But in the end the great efforts and measures taken by the government are not looking good. The child experiences a lot in his childhood and every aspect of that experience can act as catalyst to reduce or escalate future delinquency. The factors mentioned in this study are very much responsible for occurring of any juvenile crimes in India and this study helps us to understand those factors well. As India faces an unpredictable enemy it is the prime duty of the citizens also to fight against it and help any child who has been dragged into this juvenile delinquent world.

Keywords: Juvenile Delinquency, Child, Psychology,

Introduction

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken man” – Frederick Douglass

No child is a born criminal or meant to be a criminal. No parent in the world will agree to send their child in the dark side of a criminal world. The psychology of a child is very simple. The brain of the child is like a white sheet of paper on which u can write anything and the child will grasp that for his whole life. Until the child becomes a man or attain such an age, he or she lives under the shadow of others and learn about the world like a baby elephant which always remain under the protection of his mother and learn the rules of the jungle. As said in

the above mentioned quote that it's easy to build a strong child because their mind is like a molten glass it can take any shape of the structure because the mind of a child learns first then judge on its own. But the mind of a man is like a full-fledged building which cannot be mould in any other direction until and unless he wishes. The psychology behind a person plays a very vital role in his actions.

Children are the bright future for any country and whenever that future gets hurt, the development of that country's also get hurt. The worst part is that when the children walk on the path of criminal world which leads to more destruction of future of the country.

In the last decade the authorities in India have noticed that many crimes occurring in the society involves large number of juvenile. First there were just 16 to 18 years of children who were committing criminal acts but in recent years it has been observed that children under the age group of 5 to 7 years are used as tool for committing the crime because at this stage they have a very innocent mind and can easily be manipulated by others. India is one of the unfortunate country which is dealing with this problem on huge scale. The Children are the most essential part of any country and they can be proved as blessing and as well as the curse. There can be many reasons behind the rise of juvenile delinquency in India.

Factors Responsible for Juvenile Delinquency

The most important part to look on the factors responsible for Juvenile Delinquency. There are many factors to look upon like Illiteracy, Poverty, Peer Pressure, Family, Internet and Substance Abuse. In all these factors not one factor is more crucial than other as countries have different problems to face so, different factors have diverse affects and results but all factors are important to analyse the problem.

One of the basic thing to understand is who is juvenile. As there are many definitions of juvenile or child given under different laws and acts but in the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 defines the child as a person who has not completed 18 years of age.

First, the Illiteracy factor plays a vital role in Juvenile committing crime. Any country who faces a problem like this is in a grave danger, because any child without a good education is like a sword without a master which does not know where to swing and whom to cut and in the end cut its own master. In the recent survey of September, 2018 by Max Roser and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina revised their research on literacy rate around the world and many countries were below 50% or just above that bar. The Countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, and South Sudan, Niger etc. now the countries like Pakistan or Afghanistan are the most terrorized countries. The citizens of these countries constantly faces the terrorism on regular basis and the terrorist groups also kidnaps the children and white wash their minds to use them to spread more terrorism. These countries lacks the basic education also for the children. India also have only 69% of literacy rate which is also low because the country with the population of 1.3 billion,

there are 400 million people still illiterate. The illiteracy is the curse which has been wandering on India from many years. The illiteracy in India can be observed through child labour, child marriage and other fractions of the country. The illiteracy plays a decisive role in rise of juvenile crimes in India because a bad education system produces bad results. Many policies have been made by several governments but none of them work efficiently as the result of corruption the education system takes a beating which drives the children far from education to criminal path. Even when the Indian law states that still the children are not getting better education, Under Article – 21A the education becomes a fundamental right to children of age of 6 to 14 years, in this article the education becomes free and compulsory but still there are some areas in the country in which this right is not exercised. In the modern era of technology the juvenile are not getting the education they deserve which makes them less respectful towards the education and move towards the negative aspect of the world. The knowledge comes within the education enlightens the child and teaches him about the rights and wrongs of the world and pushes him to do something good for the society rather destroying it. No education drives the child to the negative aspect of the world and he is not able to comprehend that whether the act done by him is a crime or not. There are several incidents reported in which children are caught smuggling alcohol and drugs or begging or selling tickets in black etc. they are not aware about that these acts are punishable. To improve the literacy rate at better stage the education system of India needs to be improved which will result in diminishing of Juvenile Delinquency in India.

Second, the most influential factor for juvenile delinquency in any country is poverty. It was perfectly said by Marcus Aurelius “Poverty is the mother of crime”.

Poverty pushes the country back in its developing stages as the money grows the country grows in the means of development, the cycle of economy doesn't stop, and the money flows at good rate. Every person gets better education and every person has a job but when poverty strikes no job and no education can hurt the country's development. Any person is determined as below poverty person (BPL) when he or she doesn't have the money to even meet his or her daily basic needs like food, shelter, or clothes etc. The poverty rises due to many reasons like citizens not paying taxes or government not functioning properly so, whatever the reasons are the poverty strikes more on the juvenile. As the children raise under the poverty who have been denied of education and jobs some children live a life of small man or some rises above their zones and become an influential man for the poor people in society. But then comes some other children who takes the path of criminal world and hurt the society in the way. India has been fortunate to fight against poverty as it was mentioned in the article written by Joanna Slater in 2018 for Washington Post. For years India was on the top of the list of countries facing poverty but in recent 10 to 15 years India has grown but still the world poverty clock shows that there are still 70 million people who are living in extreme poverty and many of them are juvenile and the Indian government has to reach them and help them so they don't turn their back to the society and enters into the criminal world.

Third, Peer Pressure also plays a crucial role in a child's life as he commits any delinquent act. Peer pressure means when a child hangs around with a group and other children of that group are committing a delinquent act which at first seems wrong but as the child may feel pressured to do the same to be accepted in that group. So, if all of their friends are committing a delinquent act the fear of losing that group of friends forces the mind of that child to do the same. There have been incidents it can be seen that in the group of children there always one or two children who did not want to commit that act but did it anyway to be accepted by that particular group. This factor plays on the mind of a child and sometimes children of smaller age of less than 12 years comes under the influence of bad people and commit some illegal act. As the world is growing day by day the knowledge is spreading like water in the world, sometimes it becomes a curse and used by the criminals in their favour.

Fourth, Family is one of the factor in which it clarifies that it is not important that whether the child belongs to a poor family or rich family or any other background, the parental influence is the most important factor in deterring delinquency. When any adult in a family interacts with the child and teaches them what is right and wrong or what behaviour is acceptable and what act is considered wrong, so the mind of a child gets prepared to decide the right and wrong in an act and behaves more in non-delinquent way. Any interaction of the child with a good adult and his influence is important as slowly that adult becomes a model in the child's life and takes the child far away from the criminal aspects.

It is also observed that the child psychology is very delicate, it can be affected very easily in a good way or bad way. If a child commits a delinquent act so that doesn't mean the life of that child is over, because as the adult in family or as a caretaker they have the chance to turn that road and show them how to change their lives in many ways they don't even realize. If after that delinquent act the respective child's family does not support or show the right way to that child so that child drives towards the black alley of criminal world.

The above mentioned factor is very much related to this one because the part the family plays in the life of a child because whatever the child learns, he learns from the environment around him. The family needs to know that in what type of group the child is involved or with what type of people the child is friends with. This type of involvements can save the child from the concept of peer pressure and delinquent acts.

One of the major sub-factor is violence at homes which means that if the child is exposed to violence in home, it creates a great chance that the child will also turn into violent people. Lashing out at others in violence at home is very common and especially in India where domestic violence is a story in every other house. When children are subjected to violence or witnesses it, are more likely to act out their fears and frustration and then there is a great chance that those children creates a "don't care" attitude which drives them into various troubles and finally falling into the pit of criminal world.

Fifth, Internet/Online Games is one of the major factors responsible for today's juvenile delinquency. In the days of modernisation where India has been introduced to social networking and internet on large scale ever and where most of the users are children who have been introduced to this world in their lives in a very early stage. In recent events occurred in India also highlighted this problem as many children in India on internet were taken by the online games like PUBG or Fortnite which created a havoc in country. Many children were asking their parents to buy them high priced phones or stealing money from their parents for these games. On Feb 3, 2019 a Mumbai boy of age 18 year committed suicide because his parents declined to buy him a high priced phone. There have been many incidents when children were caught stealing money from their parents for gaming purposes. The violence in these games also affects the psychology of the child as in result children grows more violent in behaviour. After 2015 the era of internet was boosted like the waves of an ocean and people got more and more addicted to their phones and the world on internet which especially affected the children from age 8 to 18 years old on a large scale as they came to know various and different things about the world. Free access of internet hurt the country more than we can imagine. The parents have to be more alert because we don't know when a child can stumble onto something which poses a negative threat to his mind and life and can drive to delinquent acts. As the government is taking lot of initiatives for protecting the children from the negative aspects of internet, the parents also have to play their role in fair share.

Sixth, the last factor for juvenile delinquency is Substance Abuse. Now days the substance abuse has become a serious problem in the nation because it has spread throughout the nation and mainly in the children and youth of the nation. Substance abuse in a home or by the children is a very common cause for juvenile delinquency in India. Children who are exposed to substance abuse do not have the means they need to thrive and are forced to find different ways in which some of them are not legal. This situation can make the children's self-worth to deteriorate and then they commit those acts which they would not consider in their right mind. In the survey done by Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights in the year of 2016, it was observed that 100 per cent of children who were in the conflict with law consumed drugs. The survey also revealed that 93 percent of street children consumed drugs and 88 per cent of children consumes drugs due to "Peer Pressure". In early 20's states like Punjab suffered a huge problem of drug abuse among the teenagers and youth of Punjab but in recent years the drug abuse problem has been spread throughout the cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, or Bangalore etc. but the main problem occurred when the children below the age of 18 years got addicted to drugs and abused even more dangerous drugs like Synthetic drugs which includes LSD, Cocaine, or Injected substance etc. The problem of drug abuse has been increasing day by day in the country even after various acts have been introduced by the government but still many children are getting attracted towards this health hazard and life spoiling addiction.

Conclusion

Juvenile Delinquency in India has been increasing day by day which is a major concern for the country. The children who are supposed to be the future of the country are going in dark criminal world which is hurting the development of the country as well as ruining the lives of people around them. Although the government has taken various steps to stop these juvenile crimes like introducing new acts, new committees and organisations which are responsible for rehab of children also or juvenile correction centres but these precautions are not creating any deterrent effect on the juveniles and thus the intentions are positive but the objectives behind these precautionary measures are not getting accomplished which put this country into a grave danger.

