



Analysis of Familial Factors behind Children's Involvement in Delinquent Acts in Mardan, Pakistan

Asif Khushhal^{1*}, Muhammad Zahid² and Azizullah Jan¹

1. Department of Sociology, University of Peshawar, Peshawar Pakistan.
2. Department of Sociology, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Pakistan.

Abstract

The study is aimed to investigate familial factors responsible for pushing children toward delinquent acts. Data is collected through interview schedule from 150 respondents while the total population of the study is 250. Purposive sampling technique is used in this study as the researcher intended to consult an age group 12 to 18 years of delinquent children. Data is analysed through SPSS (Version 20). Chi-square test is used for the identification of hypothetical association between dependent and independent variables. Among the variables criminal behaviour/tendency influenced by family environment, offenses committed due to no check of the parents, strict and harsh disciplining method, parental criminality as a reason of juvenile delinquency, get involve in delinquent acts due to separation of parent, children living with a single parent, children of drug addicts, improper socialization, anti-social behaviour of parent and violence in the family are found to be significantly associated with juvenile delinquency. Findings show lack of a peaceful environment inside family a proper check on a child's activities which cause the minors to develop delinquent behaviour. Strict and harsh disciplining methods used by parents should be stopped, children should be socialized in a well-organized manner, and drug addict's parent should be rehabilitated.

Keywords: Familial Factors, Juvenile Delinquent, Delinquency, Families, Socialization

1. Introduction

Crime exists almost everywhere around the globe and is a major social problem of huge fear. Generally, crimes are committed by people of any age, whether a person is old or young. Besides there are certain kids who violate the established norms of a society and come in contact with the justice system by the infringement of the law of the state and then those children are called juvenile delinquents (Young, Greer, & Church, 2017). The issue of juvenile delinquency can be translated in connection to the discovery or acknowledgment of adolescence as a different phase of life and to the possibility that delinquent behaviour of children is something different from adult crime. As a concept juvenile delinquency recommends a tactful method for measuring, examining, and ordering of adolescent guilty parties; and even the treatment of juvenile misconduct (Sweeten, Piquero and Steinberg, 2013). The term juvenile delinquent is defined by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as, "Children who come in contact with the law and it demonstrates individuals who are of eighteen (18) years and have formal contacts with the Justice Department and are accused for

committing a crime. Hence, these conflicted children expose themselves to petty events such as minor offenses from home breaking to other anti-social activities early in their lives. Children who are involved in "status offenses" are not considered as criminals. Most often these delinquent children are manipulated by adult offenders (UNICEF, 2008).

Everyone is not a born criminal and if socialized with gentle care and veneration, he/she raises as a constructive member of the society. It is a clear fact that no one is a born crook. It may be the influence of the environment, peer group, inadequate socialization, or absence of paternal care and attention which make a child delinquent. Child development and proper socialization not only require that parents must look after the primary/basic needs of the children but they must try to socialize/socially integrate their children in a well-organized manner to make them constructive members of society. To avoid delinquent conduct of the children, parents must provide protective shelter not by strictness but through proper socialization and care (Sahmey, 2013). Most children with delinquent tendencies have limited developmental chances due to rigorous law and inflexible attitude. After entering the legislated/Penal system (institution) it becomes easier to avail further chances to commit the crime of its own sort. The conflicted children often lack surveillance received from their family or from other legitimate authorities and have abusive superiors, lack of social support and are economically deprived. In providing care to these conflicted children, our society merely needs to accurately provide them good nurturing and other related requisites. A child lawbreaker has characteristics distinguishable from adult or fully mature individuals; and must be treated differently (JJRC, 2007)

Not only developing countries but developed countries are likewise confronting the problem of adolescent delinquency. Due to new burdens on adolescents encountering the change from youth to independence, the reduction in the character of neighbourhood gatherings, being in poor urban zones, the wearing down of the ménage, and deficient education systems are the problems which youngsters may face and oversee today (Lee, 2001). Juvenile criminal offenses are not just grass rooted in our general public because of destitution and survival, nevertheless it is an aftereffect of social issue which wins in every facet of our psyche. It is a social dilemma of our society, where we cannot shape our group to higher ethics and the worthiness of other's rights. In Pakistan, juvenile delinquent acts are particularly high in urban arenas, in light of the fact that urban areas are an amalgam of all societal strata, where the poorest to the wealthiest subsists, and this disparity/conflict of wealth gives birth to criminal tendencies among children (Fatima, 2009; Khan, Rehman, & Muhammad, 2017).

Besides the above-mentioned reasons, there are too many other reasons which predispose children to crimes who find themselves in conflict with the justice system. Most of the time, they have perpetrated offenses such as burglary or truancy (Wasserman et al., 2003) carelessness and unawareness of the parents, bad company, the absence of parental attention and inadequate child rearing are variables which brings adolescents to a more serious peril of coming in strife with law (Anderson, 2012; Khan, Khan, & Ali, 2017). For some youths today, regular illustrations coordinating the associations and moves between family, school and work are being debated. Social relations that ensure a smooth technique of socialization is giving way; lifestyle courses are ending up noticeably more assorted and less unsurprising. The change of the work feature, the prolongation of the improvement gap (the season of dependence of energetic adults in the family) and apparently, the more limited opportunities to wind up discernibly an independent adult are all movements influencing relationship with family and friends, educational open entryways and choices, work publicize venture, unwinding activities and lifestyles. Brisk masses augment, the inaccessibility of lodging and support organizations,

desperation, unemployment and underemployment among youth, the diminishing in the quality of neighbourhood gatherings, pressing in poor urban zones, the breaking down of the family, and deficient educational systems are the problems which youngsters may face and oversee today (Lee, 2001, Vitulano, Fite & Rathert, 2010)

The expansion of crime rate in Pakistan has lifted up the significance of researching the clarification for the intellects (and whether these are switching) for misconduct and violations keeping in mind the end destination to assist policy makers, law enforcement agencies and additionally, the psychological wellness specialists (Bano, et al., 2009). Family is the first place where human learn and interact with fellow human beings. In family parents and sibling play a significant role in the socialization of children. It is believed that most of personality is developed in initial stages of life in family. Either good or bad, it solely depends on the way children are brought up by their parents and home environment. Familial factors and its influence on children/juvenile delinquents are observable. Factors that bring children to the brink of collapse and get involve in delinquent acts are large families where parents are unable to give proper attention and care to children, violence in the family and abuse of children, including harsh disciplining methods, broken homes and poor parenting skills are the reasons that put children at risk. The current study is to document and empirically study these familial factors. The objectives of the study are twofold i.e., to find familial factors which leads children towards juvenile delinquency and to ascertain association of familial factors with juvenile acts.

2. Literature Review

Juvenile crime is the liberal-based term given to children who transgress the established norms of the smart set and encounter the justice system. Juveniles are characterized as those individuals who have not gone on to the age of maturity or puberty. What determines the historic period of majority or adulthood in a court framework might be foreordained by law, specifically for small crimes? Delinquency can be defined as the stocking out of those acts considered violations of the nation, albeit reprobate can likewise mean giving up (Brown & Esbensen, 2010). Juvenile delinquency is a serious social event that is at present influencing individuals everywhere throughout the globe (Fakhar, 2014). The inconvenience of youth in cutting-edge social club is both a noteworthy inner and universal concern and an imperative branch of knowledge of scholarly study. This study focuses on one region of special concern: delinquency or criminal behaviour committed by minors (Siegel & Welsh, 2012).

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the factors that put children at risk to get involve in delinquent acts. The primary factors identified which lead to juvenile delinquency were large families, violence and ill-treatment of parents, including harsh punitive discipline, peer pressure, family characteristics such as inadequate parenting skills, broken homes and antisocial parents are the elements that trigger juvenile delinquency (Ancheta-Templa et al., 2004; Derzon & Lipsey, 2000; McCord, 1979). A considerable amount of literature has been published on juvenile delinquency in Pakistan. These studies reported that in Pakistan sexual attack or rape, lack of education, honor killing, old enmity and drug addiction are the key reasons triggering juvenile delinquency (Nadeem, 2002). However, another study that identifies the factors that makes a child delinquent is family disorganization, resulting from desertion, death and divorce of parents. Similarly, families which are facing multiple problems and are generally large, having criminal history and headed by parents of poor health are held to be significantly associated with juvenile delinquency (Jillani, 2003).

There have been a number of longitudinal studies involving juvenile delinquency that illustrates that a couple of elements are thought to be associated with juvenile delinquency and are responsible for the occurrence of negative stimuli in a child's life that can possibly lead to delinquency. In any case it is assumed that environment inside home, school condition and peer groups are the most noticeable components shown since they can bring about negative strain and impact children to commit delinquent acts; consequently, this supposition makes these three the leading causes of juvenile misconduct (Hay, 2001; Brisman, 2012; Unnever, Cullen & Agnew, 2006; Farrington, 2003; Mulvey et al., 2010; Wright & Beaver, 2005). Furthermore, some research studies reports that in the history of offenders the main contributing factor which was found to be strongly associated with juvenile delinquency is family as family is the first place where a child learn how to behave. Family relationships and home environment greatly influence a child behavior and the decision he/she takes to participate in delinquent acts (Mulligan, 1958; Hoare, 2001). Be that as it may, but the significance of family factor was missed amid the previous years of criminology. The role of family factor, specific parental supervision and relationship with family are considerably influential in juvenile delinquency (Chung et al., 2002; Hoeve et al., 2008).

Research has demonstrated that there is an undeniable connection between family basic conditions and family social processes such as meager observation, harsh discipline and weak parental affection are the strong factors responsible for the delinquent behavior of a child. A child spend most of their time around their family members and it has a huge impact on a child behavior and the decisions that he or she makes. In other words, how guardians treat their youngsters can influence how a child acts and how he or she turns out. If the environment inside the family is not good for a child rearing and a child's vulnerability is combined with negative family conditions, then there is a potential danger of life course persistent offending (Sampson & Laub, 2003). Another study carried out concluded that a child's decision how to act and what he or she prefers to do is highly influenced by family stability. Further this research study confirmed the relationship between matrimonial and family disruption and juvenile delinquency. As observed the increase in juvenile delinquency is due to marital and family trouble which decrease informal social control and positive social relations. Family is the primary place where a child learn how to behave and his or her thoughts about the world get develops. The impact of family size and the number of siblings, delinquent and nondelinquent. It was acknowledged that there is a greater possibility of juvenile delinquency in large families due to the inability of parents who are not able to give quality time to all of their children (Grogger, 1998).

Single parent family is also cited as a gene that contributes to the juvenile delinquency. Various studies show that majority of the children involved in criminal activities come from a home in which either one or both the parents are missing. For a child's normal growth parents are of immense importance. However, it is not the only responsibility of parents to provide food and shelter to their children. They should also concentrate on their children's emotional well-being and safety. This is because the parents are a child's first teachers and role models. If the parents would neglect or deny any of these facilities to their children, it may create significant behavioral problems among their children (McCord, Widom, & Crowell, 2001).

The study of Rutter & Giller (1983) shows a strong association between the large family and juvenile delinquency. Their findings show that children who are raised in family of four or more children are a higher risk of juvenile delinquency. It has been shown over the years that inadequate or poor disciplining and supervision of children are all associated with family size.

The larger the family size, more will be the chances of juvenile delinquency as it become hard for parent to give quality times to their children and socialize them in a well-organized way (Farrington and Loeber, 1999). A number of research studies have found a significant association between juvenile delinquency and weak parental supervision and improper disciplining. Inability of the parents to characterize clear desires for children's conduct, conflicting control, excessively serious or harsh disciplining, and lacking observing and keeping an eye on children more often than not prompts reprobate conduct (Clarke, et al., 1995; McCord, 1979). Another study exhibits a strong association between killing and juvenile delinquency and claims that killing of a family member of a child is the leading cause of committing violent crimes in most of the children now a days and since 1988 and in 1991 the rates of homicide have been raised up (Elliot, 1993; Synder & Sickmund, 1995). Numerous works have proven that children living with a single parent or their parents are absent give birth to other various troubles. Some children get into drug addiction or start consuming alcohol before they reach the legal age for drinking due to missing parents. It has also been noticed that children harm themselves by using their freedom when their parents are not around to keep a check on their activities (McLanahan, 1999).

Throughout the account of the juvenile justice, the criminologists and other interested in the deviant behaviour have tried to explain why certain people or group of people play in certain ways at the certain times. A number of theories about deviant behaviour has been developed significantly in the course of recent years as the subject of criminology has advanced and the level of research has moved forward. As indicated by Social Learning Theory of Bandura (1977) adolescents figure out how to take part in crimes similarly they figure out how to take part in confrontational behaviour; through relationship with or introduction to others. Primary or significant others group like the family and peer group have a particularly huge effect on what we discover. In fact, relationship with delinquent peers is the best indicator of delinquency other than earlier misconduct. However, one does not need to be in direct contact with others to find out from them; for instance, I may figure out how to take part in violence from perception of others in the media. This framework was adopted to test its possibility that how primary or significant others group like family affect the behaviour of children. This theoretical model is more relevant to the present study as compared to other theoretical frameworks like Strain Theory and Social Disorganization Theory as it is related to familial causes of juvenile delinquency.

3. Research Methodology

This study is conducted at district Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The main aim of the study is to find and analyse the potential social factors that contribute to the delinquent behaviour of children. The sample includes 40 juvenile delinquents from district jail Mardan and 110 those juvenile delinquents who were arrested on different charges and later released from jail after having exhausted sentences from various times. Their addresses and other details were taken from jail authorities. It is restricted to those inmate children whose age is between 12-18 years, as below 12 a child is unable to understand the nature of crime and the question related to the study. Purposive sampling technique is used in this research study. A sample size of 150 targets children is selected in this study while the total population was 250 through Sekaran magic table (2003). Tool of data collection is interview schedule. Data analysis and presentation is done through SPSS version 20 while chi-square test is used to find out the association between dependent and independent variables.

4. Results and Discussion

For a clearer depiction and understanding of familial factors the variable was limited to statements like criminal behaviour was influenced by family environment, offenses were committed due to no check of the parents, strict and harsh discipline of parent leads toward juvenile delinquency, unhappy relations with siblings leads to delinquency, old enmity of family's leads to delinquency, behaviour shaped by homicide, get involve in delinquents acts due to failure in school, adolescents who don't attend school regularly tend to show delinquent behaviour, dropped out children more prone to delinquent behaviour, children with low academic grades tend to show delinquent behaviour, get involve in delinquent acts due to anti-social peers and projection of violence on media causes juvenile delinquency. To measure the association both the dependent and independent variables were cross tabbed.

The Chi-square results in the below table show that a highly significant association ($P=0.022$) was found between influence of family environment on criminal behaviour and juvenile delinquency. The possible reasons for this could be broken homes, children brought up in large families, and weak parental attachment. Family environment was found to be a major factor that influences the behaviour of children. These findings were in consonance with the findings of the studies conducted by Mulligan, (1958), Hoare, (2001); Chung et al., (2002); Hoeve et al., (2008); Farrington & Loeber (1999), who found out that a child decision to participate in delinquency was highly influenced by his/her family environment. The findings of these studies found a significant association between influence of family environment and juvenile delinquency.

Likewise, a highly significant association ($P=0.013$) was found between the juvenile delinquency and the offenses are committed due to no check of the parent. Parent who do not keep their children under proper check and balance and are unaware of their children activities which may affect the children adversely. Such children usually get involved in delinquent acts due to poor supervision of parents. Parental check and association with children was in significant association with prevalence of criminal acts among children as argued by Sampson and Laub, (2003). The findings of this study were also in line with the findings of the above mentioned study.

Similarly, a highly significant association ($P=0.013$) was found between strict and harsh discipline of parents and juvenile delinquency. Parents who uses strict and harsh methods to discipline their children are doing no good to them instead they are trying to inculcate in their children that strictness, harshness and violence is acceptable and it can be used for what they want to be achieved. Disciplining children in a well organized manner yields positive results while using strict and harsh disciplining approach may lead them toward delinquency as indicated by Ancheta-Templa et al. (2004), Derzon and Lipsey (2000), and McCord (1979). The findings of these studies reveal that harsh and punitive disciplinary measures used by parents is the factor that triggers juvenile delinquency. It shows a significant association between harsh and punitive dedisciplinary methods of parents and the juvenile delinquency.

Association between delinquent behaviour is the result of parental criminality and juvenile delinquency was found to be highly significant ($P=0.012$). Children consider parents as role model and their behavior is mostly learnt from parents. What their parents do in front of them they try to imitate them. So, If parents commits criminal acts in front of their children they will surely to adpot it. It is also argued over the years that alcoholics are often the children of

alcoholics and juvenile delinquents are usually the children of criminals. The findings of this study were in line with the studies of McCord (1979), and Derzon & Lipsey (2000) which reported that parental criminality was strongly associated with juvenile delinquency.

Table No. 1: Association of Familial Factors with Juvenile Delinquency

Statement	Juvenile Delinquency			Chi Square	
	Yes	No	Don't Know	P Value	
Criminal behaviour/tendency is influenced by family environment	Yes	110	31	0	$X^2=19.687^a$ $P=0.013$
	No	0	6	2	
	Don't Know	0	0	1	
Offenses are committed due to no check of the parent	Yes	121	9	2	$X^2=16.616^a$ $P=0.013$
	No	0	15	3	
	Don't Know	0	0	0	
Strict and harsh discipline of parent leads to delinquent behaviour	Yes	121	13	2	$X^2=16.408^a$ $P=0.012$
	No	0	11	3	
	Don't Know	0	0	0	
Delinquent behaviour is the result of parental criminality	Yes	124	3	1	$X^2=15.805^a$ $P=0.574$
	No	7	12	1	
	Don't Know	0	0	2	
Unhappy relations with siblings lead toward delinquency	Yes	88	19	12	$X^2=3.725^a$ $P=0.843$
	No	13	15	2	
	Don't Know	0	0	1	
Old enmity of family's leads to delinquent behaviour	Yes	57	25	7	$X^2=2.663^a$ $P=0.938$
	No	24	12	6	
	Don't Know	9	4	6	
Delinquent behaviour shaped by homicide	Yes	24	6	5	$X^2=1.754^a$ $P=0.012$
	No	54	41	13	
	Don't Know	3	1	3	
Get involve in delinquent acts due to divorce of parent	Yes	113	9	6	$X^2=18.596^a$ $P=0.020$
	No	12	7	0	
	Don't Know	0	0	3	
Children who are living with a single parent are more exposed to misconduct	Yes	125	11	5	$X^2=18.203^a$ $P=0.012$
	No	4	3	2	
	Don't Know	0	0	0	
Children of drug addicts are more prone to delinquent behaviour	Yes	122	14	6	$X^2=18.596^a$ $P=0.023$
	No	4	2	2	
	Don't Know	0	0	0	
Children who are not socialized properly tend to show delinquent behaviour	Yes	107	10	5	$X^2=19.992^a$ $P=0.022$
	No	18	2	1	
	Don't Know	3	3	1	

Association between unhappy relations with siblings leading toward delinquency and juvenile delinquency was found to be non-significant ($P=0.574$). The reason for this could be that relations with siblings doesn't affect the behavior of a child whether a child has good relations with their siblings or not. Moreover, relations with siblings doesn't influence the behavior of a child. Likewise, the association between old enmity of family's leading to delinquent behavior and juvenile delinquency were found to be non-significant ($P=0.843$). This non-significant association may be due to the social background of the respondents they belong to. Further,

children took revenge when they become adult and were able to do so. Therefore, such condition is termed as criminality not juvenile delinquency. The findings of the current study opposed the findings of the study of Nadeem (2002).

Similarly, delinquent behaviour shaped by homicide were found to be non-significantly ($P=0.938$) associated with juvenile delinquency. The possible reason for this non-significant association between delinquent behavior shaped by homicide and juvenile delinquency may be due to the difference in the universe of both studies as the present study was conducted in a different environment as compared to the previous studies such as the study of Synder and Sickmund (1995) which found a significant association between homicide and juvenile delinquency. Besides, it was also important to consider that in the current study, children were more involved in minor criminal acts as compared to major such as killings etc.

5. Conclusion

This study has been an effort to find the causes of juvenile delinquency with a special focus on familial factors behind children's involvement in delinquent acts. It is noted that various familial factors contribute to juvenile delinquency and are significantly associated with it. Some of the familial factors that predispose children to come in contact with the justice system and to break the established norms of a society are influence of family environment, no proper check on children's activities by parents, strict and harsh disciplining methods used by parents, children living with a single parent, children of drug addicts. Parental criminality and antisocial behaviour are all the elements that worsen this problem. However, it has been suggested that a peaceful and healthy environment should be provided to the children inside home so that minors couldn't develop delinquent behaviour, parents should keep a proper check on their children activities, strict and harsh attitude and disciplining methods should be stopped immediately, parents needs not to display aggressive attitude in front of kids, they should try to inculcate in their children positive values and concentrate on their socialization whole heartedly to make them constructive members of the society.

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