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Impact of social factors responsible for Juvenile delinquency – A literature review

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Abstract:

BACKGROUND: Juvenile delinquency appears to be the most widespread social issue in comparison to other social issues. Social factors and conditions have a significant impact on the prevalence of delinquency. Individuals who engage in criminal behavior before reaching the age of 18 are commonly referred to as juvenile offenders. The aim of this study is to comprehensively elucidate the research and work carried out on juvenile offenders, with a specific focus on the critical role played by social factors in all facets of juvenile delinquency. Additionally, this research seeks to investigate the social roots and influences that contribute to the criminal behavior of young offenders.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: This article uses a literature review methodology to analyze research on social factors influencing juvenile delinquency. It synthesizes and evaluates prior findings to understand the complex interplay between social factors and young individuals' involvement in delinquent behaviors. The study analyzed 80 articles from reputable online databases, focusing on juvenile delinquency, offenders, crime, and social factors. Out of the 80 articles, 53 were cited, meeting inclusion criteria, including publication within 2000–2023, rigorous peer-review, and reputable database indexing.

RESULTS: As per the findings of the research, it has been observed that children who grow up in households that exhibit affection, hospitality, and encouragement are comparatively less susceptible to the manifestation of societal maladies. Children who have experienced parental abandonment are at heightened risk of developing delinquent behaviors.

CONCLUSION: The presence of negative family dynamics and associations with delinquent peers are widely recognized as significant contributors to the development of drug abuse behavior. It is imperative for policymakers and preventive initiatives to have a comprehensive understanding of this complex relationship. Therefore, this literature review presented a distinct overview of the influence of social factors on juvenile offenders in India.

Keywords:

Crime, delinquent behavior, juvenile, juvenile delinquency, offenders, social factors

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Introduction

The negative behavior of some people within a society is one of the difficulties in nation-building because it can ultimately have an impact on a country's infrastructure, financial stability, cultural identity, and overall societal progress.^[1] There exist multiple categories of societal issues, among which is the issue of adolescent delinquency.

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Researchers in various fields such as criminology, psychology, and philosophy have been attempting to understand the reasons behind individuals' immoral behavior for a considerable period of time. The primary focus of researchers and theorists has been to identify risk factors that may contribute to delinquency, such as individual, social, and environmental factors that can increase the likelihood of criminal behavior.^[2,3] However, this review study was performed to profile the different

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social factors and their causes of juvenile delinquency, which will be presented in this article. Worldwide, more than three-quarters of the population lives in countries with higher levels of criminality. Particularly in Asia, there are the highest levels of criminality, whereas India holds a criminality score of 5.53 and is placed in rank 64 among all countries.^[4] In many countries, violent crimes were committed by the younger generation and were increasing rapidly. Delinquency is typically brought on by poverty, difficult familial circumstances, and a lack of education.^[5] India is home to a significant number of 444 million children who are aged 0 to 18 years and a 253 million adolescent population in the age group of 10 to 19 years, and there is a growing concern about juvenile delinquency in the country.^[6,7] This includes involvement in various illegal activities such as robbery, burglary, riots, murder, rape, possession of illegal weapons, drug use, and participation in gambling activities.^[8-11]

The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency is nothing new.^[12] In other terms, it refers to a set of actions that are antisocial and illegal when carried out by an individual who has not yet reached the age of 18 (i.e. who is not an adult). These actions contradict existing criminal codes and laws.^[13] The antisocial acts, which include begging, dropping out, insults, hanging out, stealing, drinking, and lying around, were socially unacceptable at any given moment and consisted of unethical and opposing behavior.^[14,15]

Juvenile delinquency in India

The topic of juvenile delinquency in India has emerged as a significant worry for both the community and the government. Efforts have been made by the Indian government to address the issue. As per Section 2 of the Juvenile Justice Act of 2000, a person who is under the age of 18 is referred to as a "junior." Two significant terminologies have been introduced in the field: juveniles in need of care and protection and juveniles in conflict with the law. A juvenile offender is an individual who has engaged in conduct that is considered a violation of the law and subject to legal punishment. A juvenile in need of care and protection includes individuals who are street kids, lack a guardian, are neglected, are at risk of mistreatment by a guardian, are terminally ill, are abandoned, or are in similar circumstances.^[16]

The amendment of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, was a response to the Nirbhaya Gang Rape Case. The amendment permits the trial of a juvenile over the age of 16 as an adult, but it cannot be subsequently applied. The amendment has categorized in the offences committed by a juvenile into three distinct categories, namely, "heinous, serious, and petty offences." Individuals between the ages of 16 and 18 who have committed serious crimes are to be

regarded as adults and face trial in regular courts.^[17] In 2021, as per the report, there were 31,170 cases of juvenile apprehension in India, indicating a 4.7% rise from the previous year. The data show that a significant number of juveniles, specifically 32,654 under the IPC and 4,790 under SLL crimes, were apprehended within the age range of 16–18 years old.^[18]

Leading causes of juvenile delinquency

Family Factors: The deterioration of juvenile reprobate behavior is a solid illustration of the familial circumstances associated with it. These home circumstances include a lack of proper parental guidance, a lack of constant monitoring of the children, growing conflict between the parents, and parental neglect or abuse, whether it be psychological, mental, or physical.^[19] Children with parents who do not respect the law or societal norms are likely to be intelligent. Homes have severed links with one another and ruined close interactions. A major contributing factor to youth crime could be shattered households.^[20] It could prove challenging for foster parents, stepparents, or guardians to support a kid's sustainable integration if indeed the youngster resents the fact that they are required to become his adoptive parents, stepparents, or guardians. This may cause him to stand out from the other children and cause further problems. This resentment makes it harder for them to have an impact on children through their profession or example. It is not possible to use the child's inherent suggestibility to lead him painlessly and unintentionally down the path to an excellent behavior. If a teen does not feel loved and is constantly yelled at, he may become so angry and frustrated that he tries to leave home and turns to a life of crime. The following factors may contribute to inadequate love and care from their parents: inadequate knowledge and curiosity, a mother who engages in household work, and inadequate family support.^[21] Like a child's body, their emotions need the right food to work well. When a youngster lacks empathy and compassion at home, he or she misses out on learning from a positive role model how to treat someone else with respect and kindness. He loses the short break from certain responsibilities that is both refreshing and necessary for him to do his fair share of social duties, both as a child playing with his friends and as an adult. Even tangential factors in the family could contribute to crime. Parents influence the child's psychological and physiological state as a result of their reactions, and that in turn significantly influences how he behaves. It is possible that elements that have a greater impact on a student's emotional well-being and familial dynamics can have a greater impact on misbehavior than those that primarily influence their physiological health.^[22] Although hailing from a similar family, one youngster may develop criminal tendencies, whereas his sibling can develop into a brilliant leader.

Individual Factors: Following the importance of a child's home environment is the significance of their social circles. If parents are too restrictive, their children may seek solace in the wrong crowd and violate the rules in order to feel better about themselves. In a similar vein, if a kid's parents are not there and the youngster is unable to distinguish between wrong and right, the child may choose to go with a circle so that they may feel in charge and protected. The child may have to conform to the behaviors of the group that they want to associate with in order to be accepted into that group, whether those behaviors include drug use or criminal activity.^[23]

School factors: A child's poor performance in school, whether measured by attendance or grades, is a major contributing factor in the commission of juvenile offences. The person in charge is the one who is responsible for taking care of something. Learning is just one benefit of attending an educational institution. A youngster who attends school is more likely to have a lifestyle that is beneficial to their health, including waking up, getting dressed, riding the bus to school, studying, and going home. The establishment of good habits and self-discipline is facilitated by these routines. If a student does not consistently attend school, they will have extra time on their hands, which might lead to their participation in risky behaviors. If the kid disobeys fundamental norms as they grow up, such as going to school on a consistent basis, they will eventually become an adult who has little regard for other restrictions that society imposes. In addition to this, a child's learning skills are also a contributing factor. Those students who have difficulty meeting the academic standards at their schools report feeling alone. If the youngster is motivated, even when they are not doing well academically or otherwise, it is unlikely that they would turn elsewhere to feel good about themselves or to be acknowledged. Bullying may be a significant contributing factor in and of itself, producing feelings of social exclusion and ultimately leading to participation in illegal activities.^[24] An excellent school cares more for its students, especially its younger ones, and maintains a discipline that is helpful for them. The majority of our underfunded and overcrowded schools do not have the necessary level of control. In these types of environments, when there is a lack of law and order, the youngster feels the need to take matters into their own hands in order to defend themselves. In addition, the degree to which the kid's parents and instructors are involved in their child's academic success is another aspect that plays a role in deciding how the child will feel about education. Due to the frequent inspections, the kid will eventually acquire a feeling of accountability since they are aware that they will be questioned about their work and their advancement.^[25]

Substance abuse Factors: Some youngsters are unable to function as regular members of society because they are exposed to harmful substances either at home or in their surroundings. Long-term use of such substances can lead to dependency as well as the development of unhealthy coping mechanisms to manage cravings. In the vast majority of the time, these people wind up committing crimes that they never would have considered committing otherwise. In situations like these, children seek the assistance of therapy professionals so that they can reclaim their sense of self-worth and value.^[26]

Socio-economic factors: Although criminal activity may be found in every neighborhood, the incidence of unlawful behavior is significantly higher in economically disadvantaged regions. Children who live in these neighborhoods are more likely to engage in illegal behavior, such as shoplifting or getting into violent altercations, simply because they believe they have no other choice but to do so. It is possible that youngsters living in such regions may not feel the need to turn to criminal activity in order to make ends meet if they are given access to an appropriate education and the essentials for survival.^[12]

Materials and Methods

This article utilizes a comprehensive literature review methodology to critically examine and analyze the existing body of research pertaining to social factors influencing juvenile delinquency. By synthesizing and evaluating the findings from prior studies, this article aims to contribute to the understanding of the complex interplay between social factors and the involvement of young individuals in delinquent behaviors. The present study aims to offer a comprehensive analysis of the research outcomes while also highlighting any existing deficiencies in the current body of knowledge. A thorough and extensive search was undertaken to identify pertinent articles from reputable online databases including PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The search terms employed encompassed various aspects of the topic, such as juvenile, offenders, crime, juvenile delinquency, delinquent behaviour, and social factors. A comprehensive analysis has been conducted on a total of 80 articles that have been systematically collected and compiled for the purpose of this study. In due course, the present study successfully referenced a total of 52 scholarly articles out of the 80 articles that were gathered for analysis. The inclusion criteria for the selection of articles encompass the following specifications: the articles must have been published within the time span of 2000 to 2023, they should have undergone a rigorous peer-review process, and they must be indexed in reputable databases. Furthermore, only articles will be considered for inclusion in this study.

Social factors responsible for Juvenile Delinquency *Family, peers, school and neighborhood*

The importance of the family unit in the process of bringing up children to adulthood is frequently disregarded, despite the fact that this factor can play a considerable part in determining whether a kid will engage in antisocial behavior. Factors such as traditional family values, child-rearing practices, mass media, parental responsibility, and a lack of parental supervision have been found to contribute to juvenile delinquency.^[9] However, the probability of juvenile delinquency is influenced by multiple factors rather than a single factor, such as inadequate household finances, familial status (nuclear or joint families, homeless persons), and parenting indifference towards kids' well-being. Recently, there appears to be a substantial correlation between criminal activity and a variety of socioeconomic and demographic factors, including dysfunctional family dynamics, drug addiction, and unpleasant experiences.^[27] Children who grow up in loving, accepting, and supportive families are much less likely to experience the ills of society.^[28] As a direct consequence of this, children who have been rejected by one or both of their parents are the ones who are most likely to develop antisocial behaviors. The child's family is one of the most essential and influential factors in their social development, which in turn has a significant impact on how the child will behave and how their personality will develop. The breakdown of the traditional nuclear family unit is another factor that can play a role in the maturation of criminal conduct. Family violence has a major influence on the growth of children's personalities and self-concepts, making it an essential component in the construction of these aspects of the children's identities.^[29] Earlier studies show peers encourage delinquency since they appreciate and emulate nonconventional social behavior, whereas parents limit it because they respect the conventional.^[30] It is considered that peer groups are mostly responsible for the development of deviant behavior.^[31]

In our contemporary age, juvenile delinquency has gradually begun to develop into a significant problem that has to be addressed. Because of this, there is a significant threat to the community. The criminal activity of young people is steadily on the rise, mirroring the overall trend in the country. It is vital to have an understanding of the primary factors that contribute to the development of juvenile delinquency.^[32] This is the only way to prevent younger people from engaging in illegal, unethical, and damaging activities. There are still a great many ways in which all of these literature evaluations might be enhanced in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of how these structures connect to the factors that contribute to criminal behavior and its various components.^[33] Even though society's

methods, which are concentrated on rehabilitative compliance with the objective within the judiciary, have a larger influence on conformity, educational institutions are increasingly using severe parenting practices to govern school discipline.^[34] This is despite the fact that the purpose of the judiciary is to rehabilitate in accordance with the goal. The field of criminal science has attempted to determine whether environmental factors are responsible for increases or decreases in crime rates by utilizing concepts such as social disorganization, collective efficacy, and social investment.^[35]

Mass media and substance use

The number and impact of the media have both grown significantly throughout the course of history. Newspapers were the first form of mass media to receive widespread use throughout history, and then came radio, television, and ultimately computers. In the modern, linked world, information is simple to obtain by just pressing a button, which creates the impression that the entire globe has been shrunk down to the size of a town.^[36] Today, children's lives are dominated by a variety of forms of media, including both classic media such as television and new media such as mobile devices, iPads, the internet, and social media.^[37,38] New technologies are becoming more common among children and teenagers, and a lack of self-regulation has resulted in a significant increase in criminal activity and aggressive conduct, which results in the emergence of juvenile crime.^[39] The use of illicit substances is yet another significant contributing factor. There is a rising public health issue over the incidence of drug use among adolescents in India. According to earlier studies, there is a correlation between increased levels of engagement in the use of substances and more significant levels of involvement in criminal activity. It is possible that factors such as poverty, dysfunctional households, and a family history of criminal activity might serve as predictors of criminal behavior and substance use among juveniles.^[26] Teenagers may resort to illegal activities such as theft, robbery, prostitution, or assault in order to get the funds necessary to purchase a narcotic. Furthermore, adolescents may commit violent crimes connected to the trafficking and sale of the substance.^[40] It is said that the use of illegal substances such as alcohol and marijuana, in particular, has a substantial influence on criminal activities such as theft, deceit, and robbery.^[41]

Poverty and socioeconomic conditions

Children from low-income homes have a higher risk of becoming juvenile delinquents. Being poor can lead to feelings of inadequacy, unhappiness, and even criminal behavior. When parents are unable to purchase basic necessities, they may get their children engaged in the drug trade, which in turn causes criminality and young delinquency.^[12] When it comes to a child's whole

physical, social, psychological, and moral growth, the function that society plays is absolutely essential. The effect of social standards and values on the behavior of a youngster can sometimes result in delinquency in that child. Children who were not properly watched over by their parents, who failed to teach them how to recognize good and bad, who failed to keep an eye on their activities, who were disciplined in a manner that was inconsistent and harsh, and who witnessed some level of violence in the home, are more likely to develop into delinquents. Children who were not properly watched over by their parents are more likely to become delinquents.^[19]

Children who display immaturity or who have difficulties distinguishing between right and wrong are more likely to be affected by detrimental societal practices and ideals, which in turn increases the possibility that these children will engage in antisocial activity. In this scenario, education plays a significant role in the effort to reduce the number of illegal activities. It is possible for there to be an increase in the rate of juvenile delinquency in a society when there is an inadequate supply of educational opportunities.^[42]

Psycho-social conditions

There are a few potential psychosocial factors that may lead to juvenile delinquency, which might raise the chance of juveniles engaging in antisocial activity. Being male, having a lower intellectual capacity, belonging to a specific race, being an adolescent, suffering from immigration and poverty, interacting with delinquent friends, experiencing child abuse, having poor academic accomplishment, and not having appropriate assistance from their parents are some of these risk factors. In delinquent youths, the commission of more severe crimes is associated with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and conduct disorder (CD), among other psychiatric factors.^[43-45] Individuals with ADHD commonly experience comorbidities such as substance use and personality disorders.^[46] Some of the factors, like psychological stress and depressive mood disorder, are usually found in juvenile delinquents and mainly result in stress, anxiety, and depression.^[47]

Results

In this review, our aim was to present an updated summary of the research that has been conducted on social factors and their impact on involvement in delinquency. This review also emphasizes significant areas that should be taken into account for future research. Several potential areas for future research have been identified but have not yet been extensively explored. It implies that the associations are far from straightforward and that the impact of these conceptions depends on a range

of personal, societal, and environmental factors.^[40] One of the findings of this review is that family factors are the most powerful socializing factors in children's lives. Children who come from homes with negative family characteristics, such as a lack of parental supervision, are thought to be at a greater risk of becoming delinquents or criminals than children who do not come from such homes.^[48] Peer groups have been widely acknowledged as a significant factor in determining youth problem behaviors. Numerous studies have demonstrated the negative impact of peer influence on youth behavior, including academic dishonesty, illicit drug use, underage drinking and smoking, teenage pregnancy, and criminal activities.^[49] It is important for future research to consider the role of self-control and the changing nature of attachment among parents and delinquent peer relationships in predicting criminal behavior.

Discussion

Further investigation is required to ascertain the effects of commitment and attachment to school, parents, and delinquent peers.^[50] The key findings of this review suggest that preventative measures aimed at improving the well-being of children can effectively reduce juvenile delinquency. Additionally, it is important to avoid placing blame solely on the child and instead consider the role of their environment in shaping their behavior. Furthermore, the approach to averting juvenile delinquency in children involves the utilization of rehabilitation programs or rehabilitation centers for children. These facilities provide instruction on appropriate behavior and how to react in similar circumstances.^[51] It is suggested that providing proper direction, schooling, and guidance both in school and at home can help prevent children from engaging in criminal behavior.^[52] Children who commit crimes are not only the perpetrators of the crime but also the wounded of this broken society. If proper precautions are taken or guided at home and at school, juvenile offenders will be controlled and stopped at an early stage. Children's attitudes and minds must be shaped and nurtured by their parents and teachers. The consequences of actions must be implemented and performed to allow young offenders opportunities for correction rather than designating them as offenders.

Conclusion

Social factors play an important role in juvenile offenders' behavior in India. Juvenile offenders are when a child or teen does something erroneous and is younger than the legal minimum age in India. Juvenile offenders who defy the law are vagrants who persistently ignore orders and engage in behavior that puts their own and their families' morals in jeopardy. Social factors significantly contribute

to juvenile offenders in India, and one that has attracted the attention of Indian society is adolescent misbehavior. It is well understood that the deprived child of today may grow up to be a habitual criminal tomorrow. So, it is mandatory to organize and regulate juvenile offenders financially and socially in India.

In conclusion, this review highlights the ways in which social factors have contributed to a better understanding of the underlying causes of juvenile delinquency. Simultaneously, it is apparent that in each of the corresponding fields of study, there exist significant subjects of investigation that necessitate further examination. With this objective in mind, it is our aspiration that this analysis motivates upcoming researchers to further unravel the diverse mechanisms through which social factors hinder or encourage engagement in delinquent behavior.

Suggestions and implications

The results of the study show that preventative interventions are needed to halt juvenile misbehavior before it begins. One of the suggested preventative methods is to identify young people who are at risk or who may become involved in juvenile delinquency by looking at the major risk factors. When choosing their friends and interacting with technology, teenagers should exercise prudence. Their parents and teachers can and should encourage strong relationships and open communication in order to create a happy environment at home and at school.

The researcher came to understand the precise research gap where he is going to investigate and extend his subsequent study as a result of the review, which forms the only basis of this work. Through this study, recommendations for further protecting children from all societal ills may be made.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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