Juvenile delinquency in all countries today reflects a heavy investment of initiative and youthful energies but not for social-spiritual purposes. The overflow of energy hints strongly of the vast reservoir of unused power that is available. This source of youthful power and initiative could be readily tapped for social, civic, cultural and economic betterment, and youth, aware of this potential for energetic participation in challenging activities, are bursting out against the frustration and repression stemming from so many social and economic forces. To prove themselves and to be heard, they have frequently followed the delinquency routes in the various parts of the world.

In India, the problem of juvenile delinquency is mainly regarded as a western phenomenon, a product of affluence and different set of values and traditions. There is no denying the fact that with the loosening of the joint family structure, the rapid industrialisation, the speedier means of communication and transport, the rising migratory trends and urbanization, the problem has acquired much longer proportion. Hence any study on the problem of delinquency in the country would not be a futile attempt.

Though considerable research work is being done in the area of delinquency, there is haze of vagueness and confusion surrounding the definition of juvenile delinquency and there is no single definition that may be acceptable to all. The “Hidden delinquency” further aggravates the problem by distorting statistics and thus making them unreliable. Most statuses point out that delinquent behaviour constitutes a violation of the law by a young person under a certain age. Even this age is not consistently set, however in many states it is eighteen, but states vary in their age distinction. In the juvenile justice act of India (1986), male below the age of 16 and female below the age of 18 years were deemed as juveniles but the act was amended in 2000 and the age of juvenile males and females was brought at par as below the age of 18 years. Under section 82 of the Indian penal code, nothing is an offense, which is done by a child under seven years of age, who has not attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequences of his conduct. Therefore, legally speaking, a juvenile delinquent is one who commits an act against criminal code and who is adjudicated delinquent by an appropriate court (Bartol and Bartol, 2004).
Social definitions of delinquency encompass a broad gamut of youthful behaviours considered inappropriate, such as aggressive behaviour, truancy, petty theft, vandalism, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, and even incorrigibility. The behaviour may or may not have come to the attention of police. Thus the term delinquency has numerous definitions and meanings. A delinquent is defined as an adolescent who is “deemed to be in need of care and protection, or who is proved to be beyond the control of his/her parents as well as one who has been found guilty of committing an offence.” Resnick (1955) defined delinquent as “a minor who has committed an unlawful act for which he would be sent to prison, if he were an adult.” While Paranjape (2004) defines delinquency as a large variety of disapproved behaviours of children and adolescents which the society does not approve of and for which some kind of admonishment, punishment or corrective measure is justified in public interest.

On the other hand, psychological or psychiatric definitions of delinquency include the symptom based labels of “conduct disorder” or “antisocial behaviour”. Conduct disorder (CD) is a diagnostic designation used to represent a group of behaviours characterized by habitual misbehaviour, such as stealing, setting fires, running away from home, skipping school, destroying property, fighting, being cruel to animals and people, and frequently telling lies. Under this definition, the “delinquent” may or may not have been arrested for these behaviours. In the psychological term, antisocial behaviour is usually reserved for more serious habitual misbehaviour involving actions that are directly harmful to the well being of others. It is to be distinguished, however, from antisocial personality disorder, a psychiatric diagnostic label reserved primarily for adults at least 18 years of age who display conduct disorders as children or adolescents and who continue serious offending as well into adulthood.

Although many psychologists do subscribe to the designations of conduct disorder and antisocial behaviour, a growing number of psychologists also approach the issue of crime and delinquency with an emphasis on developmental and cognitive processes. Thus the psychology of crime and delinquency is the science of the behavioural and mental processes of the adult and juvenile offender (Bartol, 2002). Research in crime and delinquency has discovered that chronic violence usually develops when children do poorly in school, do not get along with peers, have abusive
parents and attend schools that cannot control disruptive and violent behaviour (Crawford, 2002). Thus like the nondelinquent, the delinquent is the product of the influences of specific conditioning circumstances. So the psychologist, in approaching the young delinquents, does not indulge into the investigation of offense like a policeman or detective. Rather his or her efforts are primarily focused on examination of the offender’s behaviour i.e., why does a child or an adolescent break a taboo, a social sanction or law? In an attempt to answer this ‘why’, various theories have been advanced which can be classified into three categories: Sociogenic, Psychogenic and Biogenic approaches.

1.1 SOCIGENIC APPROACHES TO DELINQUENCY

Sociologists view criminals and delinquents as normal individuals who react to the deficiencies of social organisation in which they find themselves. Major sociological theories of delinquency are:

(a) Differential Association Theory

Propounded by Sutherland (1937), the theory of differential association sets out to explain how criminal behaviour develops, and in what circumstances. Its central emphasis is on learning, as the following nine statements suggest:

1. Criminal behaviour is learned.

2. Criminal behaviour is learnt in interaction with other persons in the process of communication.

3. The principal part of the learning of criminal behaviour occurs within intimate personal groups.

4. When criminal behaviour is learnt, the learning includes both the techniques of committing the crime and also the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations and attitudes.

5. The specific direction of motives and drives is learnt from definitions of the legal codes as favorable or unfavorable.

6. A person becomes criminal because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of law.
Differential association may vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity.

The process of learning criminal behaviour involves all the mechanisms involved in any other learning.

While criminal behaviours is an expression of general needs and values, it is not explained by those general needs and values, since non-criminal behaviour is an expression of the same needs and values.

Though Sutherland’s theory systematically explains the way, criminality is learnt and transmitted, it does not adequately handle the problem of why some persons in the same environment incorporate criminality as a mode of behaviour while their peers do not. Role theory provides a part of the explanation and adds another piece to the puzzle of delinquency causation.

(b) Self Role Theory

George Herbert Mead (1918), in his self role theory gave a new insight into why criminality is incorporated into an identity and perpetuated as a role. He opines that the associations have to be meaningful to the individual and supportive of a role and self concept. Thus, role theory helps explain why only a limited number of people assume criminal identities while majority of people remain law abiding. Hence, becoming delinquent and assuming a criminal identity involves more than mere associating with law violators. The associations must be in congruence with individual’s role expectations.

(c) Anomie Theory

Primarily focusing on suicide and the differential rates of its occurrence, Durkheim’s investigations led him to conclude that a feeling of not being a part of community and isolation from the mainstream of interaction and positive peer support can lead to some sort of deviant behaviour. His technical terminology for this phenomenon was anomie a feeling of isolation, or more specifically, normlessness.

Robert Merton (1938) extended Durkheim’s significant contribution and conceived of anomie as a “disjuncture between the cultural goal of success and the opportunity structure by which this goal might be achieved.” Thus discrepancy
between the institutionalized means available within the environment and the goals to be aspired to by the individuals leads to strain or frustration which further results into norms breakdown and deviant behaviour.

Merton points out that criminal behaviour is heavily concentrated in the lower social group. Since the lower strata were discriminated against in educational and occupational market places, this was the group to realize the “American Dream” through deviant activities.

(d) **Gang Theory**

Exploring the subject of group delinquency, Frederick Thrasher (1963) suggested that the gang is an important contributing factor facilitating the commission of crime and greatly extending its spread and range. The organisation of gang and the protection which it offers, especially in combination with a ring or syndicate, makes it a superior instrument for the execution of criminal enterprises. Its demoralizing influence on its members arises through the dissemination of criminal techniques and a propagation through mutual excitation of interests and attitudes which make it easier (less inhibited and more attractive).

(e) **Control Theory**

Differential association theory is concerned with the positive learning of criminal behaviours, while control theory (Hirschi, 1970) is concerned both with positive learning and with learning not to offend. It starts with the question: “Why don’t we all break the law?” It argues that the law is kept only when special circumstances exist so that there is no need for motivational account which assumes strain. The success of social training is considered to depend on attachments, commitments and beliefs.

Control theory is, in large part, a reward-cost approach to the performance and maintenance of deviant behaviours, but says nothing about their acquisition. Norm containment theory considered next is another sociological version of reward-cost approach.
(f) **Norm Containment Theory**

Given by Reckless (1962), this theory has a double aspect: the capability of groups to transmit norms effectively and hold their members within bounds and retention of norms by the individual as an inner control over behaviour. Two constraints on deviant behaviour are postulated: External and Internal. External controls are those exerted by the police and other agents of the legal system. Internal controls are those within the individual, his total set of attitudes against carrying out deviant behaviours. Both reduce the probability of such behaviours. Individuals classified as strong-strong (both in external and internal containment) will have a very low probability of committing crime and delinquency, whereas weak-weak individuals will have a very high probability of committing crime and delinquency.

1.2 **PSYCHOGENIC APPROACHES TO DELINQUENCY**

Psychogenic approaches to delinquency explicitly address intra – individual or psychological factors. In this respect, differences in personality as well as cognitive and developmental factors are hypothesized to be conducive to recurrent participation in crime and delinquency. Various psychogenic theories of delinquency are:

(a) **Psychoanalytic Theory**

The central psychoanalytic proposition about adolescence that makes delinquency more characteristic of this stage than any other is that the onset of adult genitality requires that the adolescent withdraws his/her erotic attachments from the parents and reestablishes them with extra familial peers. In this transition entailed by this requirement, the adolescent is especially prone to act out for several reasons. Thus diminished attachments to parents weaken the internalized social control that they have established. In psychoanalytic terms, withdrawal of cathexis from psychological representations of the parents weakens the force of the superego. This leaves the individual more free to express forbidden wishes in behaviour.

“Delinquent or predelinquent behaviour is ordinarily regarded as neurotic, the effort of a defective ego to strike back at society, i.e., adults and peer, for personal failures. Delinquency is relevant strictly to the individual; the group and the
community are only backdrops or peripheral forces contributing to the problem” (Spergel, 1966).

While Erikson’s theory (1968) attributes delinquency primarily to the failure to resolve role aspects of identity. Young people whose formative experiences have somehow incapacitated them for acceptable roles in their society or for whom the obligations laid on them are excessively demanding may choose a “negative identity.” Some of these adolescents may choose the role of the delinquent, immersing themselves in the darkest currents of the youth culture then available to them.

(b) **Cognitive and Moral Development Theory**

How people acquire, internalize and develop personal values is a key question in the study of delinquent and criminal behaviour. The Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget (1952) was a pioneer in studying how we symbolise and organise social rules and make judgements based on the organisation. Later on, Kohlberg (1984) revised Piaget’s theory substantially and revived research interest in moral development.

Like Piaget, Kohlberg postulates that moral development evolves in stages and the sequence in invariant. He identifies three primary stages: Pre-conventional, Conventional and Post conventional morality. During the pre-conventional stage, the child is essentially immoral. He acts solely to obtain rewards and avoid punishment. In the conventional stage, the conscience begins to emerge and consequently, the person does things out of duty and respect for others. The final and highest stage of moral development, the post conventional, is probably reached by a very few people. In this, the person demonstrates an orientation towards self chosen ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality and consistency.

Kohlberg contends that the judgement of a large majority of juvenile delinquents is at early proconventional and late preconventional stages. Supporting Kohlberg’s hypothesis, Aleixo and Norris (1999) also found that adolescent with official records exhibited a lower moral developmental level than adolescents with no records of law violation.
(c) **Interpersonal Maturity Theory**

I-theory has gained attention as a viable psychological theory of delinquent behaviour through the efforts of Warren (1983). I-theory separates personality development into seven stages of interpersonal maturity representing progress from the immaturity of an infant to an ideal of full social maturity. For our purposes we will focus on aspects of the theory most pertinent to juvenile behaviour. I-theory research reveals that most delinquents cluster around three of the seven stages: I-2, I-3 and I-4. The people at maturity level I-2 have little ability to explain, understand or predict the behaviour or reaction of others. People at maturity level I-3 manipulate others for personal gain because they cannot understand needs, feelings and motives of others and why these should be different from their own. At the next level of I-4, people are primarily concerned about status and especially susceptible to the influences of models. Warren believes that very few juvenile offenders, less than 1 percent, are beyond maturity stage I-3.

(d) **Maternal Deprivation Theory**

The originator of the theory and its continuing major influence is John Bowlby. Bowlby’s views are set out in the following assertions. The first states the child’s need for maternal affection, the second relates deprivation of affection to the development of delinquent behaviours.

1. Essential for mental health is that a child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment. Maternal deprivation is defined as a state of affairs in which a child does not have this relationship. (Bowlby and Ainswoth, 1965).

2. Maternal separateness and parental rejection are believed together to account for a majority of the more intractable cases of delinquency including the “constitutional psychopaths and the moral defectives.” Bowlby (1949) found that there was a significantly increased tendency for the delinquent group to come from families which were incomplete (only one parent present) or disrupted (by death or divorce).
(e) **Eysenck’s Theory of Criminal Behaviour**

Eysenck’s theory proposed in 1962 emphasizes avoidance learning—learning not to offend as the key type of learning relevant to delinquent or criminal behaviour. Offenders are seen as those who are predisposed against the rapid acquisition of social rules by avoidance – learning experiences. According to Eysenck, socialized (i.e. rule keeping) behaviour rests on the childhood conditioning of learning, through punishment, not to perform behaviours considered undesirable by parents and teachers. Accepting this, delinquency can be expected to result if a child is inadequately subjected to the conditioning contingencies or if the child is resistant to conditioning.

In his theory of personality, Eysenck initially identified two types: introversion/ extraversion and stability/ neuroticism. Later on, he postulated a third type, impulse control/ psychotics (Eysenck, 1982). In context of “Crime and Personality”, Eysenck states that the delinquents tend to score more highly than non-delinquents on measures of Extraversion (E), Neuroticism (N) and Psychoticism (P). Extraverts having a lower level of cortical arousal than introverts, develop inhibition quickly due to repeated conditioning and dissipate it more slowly. Hence, due to poor conditioning ability, extraverts learn less rapidly and so are more prone to antisocial behaviour. Similarly persons high on Neuroticism are deemed to have a highly labile ANS (Autonomic Nervous System) and to react strongly, with excessive fear reactions to painful stimuli. When N is high, it interferes with the efficient learning of responses, particularly to unpleasant stimuli because of the irrelevant anxiety evoked. Thus social training to be achieved by fear arousing stimuli will be interfered with by a high level of N. Eysenck describes the high P scorer as being characterised by the following features: solitary, troublesome, inhuman and cruel, lacking in feeling, sensation seeking, hostile to others, disregarding danger, liking to make fool of others. In addition, Eysenck (1982) gave biological explanation of psychoticism. He stated that high P scorers show a relative lack of serotonin and the presence of certain antigens in their bodies.

It is tempting to regard P as standing for psychopathy, rather than psychoticism in the usual sense of psychotic behaviour. Eysenck himself has noted “the description derived form the pattern of traits observed seems very close to that of certain types of prisoners”.

9
Gray’s Theory of Antisocial Behaviour

Eysenck’s hypotheses have been extensively tested in many studies on crime and delinquency, often leading to opposite conclusions (Farrington et al., 1982; Parez, 1986). On the other hand, hypotheses derived from Gray’s theory have only recently started to be tested by several authors interested in the study of psychopathy and impulsivity, generally with encouraging results (Newman, 1987). Based on this evidence Gray’s theory provides a better explanation of antisocial behaviour.

Based on his research with rats, Gray (1970) identified two main systems of learning: the behavioural inhibition system (BIS) and the behavioural approach system (BAS). The two systems have different neurophysiological substrates and are responsive to different types of stimuli. The BIS is thought to inhibit behaviour in response to cues of punishment, frustrative nonreward, or novelty, while the BAS is thought to activate behaviour in response to cues of reward or nonpunishment. Extrapolating from animals to human, Gray suggested that the dimension of anxiety reflects individual differences in the activity of the BIS while the dimension of impulsivity reflects the activity of BAS. The first claim is based on the fact that, in rats, the BIS responds to anxiety reducing drugs, while the second is based on the fact that impulsive people and psychopaths are generally motivated by potential rewards in their environment and often appear unable to delay gratification. Furthermore, Gray (1981) postulated that in normal individuals the two systems are balanced, while in people with deficits in passive avoidance (disinhibition syndrome) there would be a less sensitive BIS coupled with a hyper responsive BAS.

These ideas were subsequently developed by other researchers (Newman, 1987; Quay, 1988) and applied to the empirical study of different forms of antisocial behaviour. Newman and collaborators found that delinquents were more sensitive to signals of reward than to the signals of punishment even when the probability of the latter was higher than that of the former. These findings indicate that antisocial children have an overactive BAS and underactive BIS, making them oversensitive to rewards and less sensitive to punishment. Similar results have been reported in studies with juvenile delinquents by Scerbo et al. (1990).
(g) Developmental Theory

Developmental theory propounded by Moffitt (1993 a, 1993 b) is one of the dominant theories in the psychology of delinquency today. Moffitt indicates that a very useful way to understand delinquency is to view it as developing along at least two developmental pathways. On one path, we see a child developing a lifelong trajectory of delinquency and crime at a very early age, probably around 3 or even younger. Across the life course, these individuals exhibit changing manifestations of antisocial behaviour: biting and hitting at age four, shop lifting and truancy at age ten, selling drugs and stealing cars at age sixteen, robbery and rape at age twenty two, and fraud and child abuse at age thirty.

These individuals whom Moffitt calls life course persistent (LCP) offenders, exhibit neurological problems during their childhood such as ADHD or hyperactivity, and learning problems during their school years. The great majority of delinquents are those individuals who begin offending during their adolescent years and stop offending somewhere around their 18th birthday. In essence, those delinquent behaviours arise from peer and social environment factors and the offending tends to be temporary. Moffitt labels these individuals Adolescent Limited (AL) as their antisocial behaviour stops with the realization of the responsibilities of young adulthood. The AL delinquent is most likely to be involved in offenses that symbolize adult privilege and demonstrate autonomy from parental control (Bartol, 2002).

Moffitt has done an appreciable work by giving an insight into developmental factors leading to delinquency but more recent research by Moffitt and others suggest that a simple dual developmental path may not adequately capture all the variations in criminal cases (Donnellan et al., 2002).

1.3 BIOGENIC APPROACHES TO DELINQUENCY

Biogenic answers to etiological questions attribute delinquent behaviour to defective heredity, endocrine imbalances, brain pathology, bodily structure, temperament patterns and so forth. Various biogenic theories of delinquency are:
(a) Theory of Criminal Type

The connection between crime and physique originated with the renowned Italian Biologist Cesare Lomborso (1876). Lomborso pointed the doctrine that criminals and delinquents are "atavistic throwbacks" i.e. they are born criminals endowed with criminal brains. Basically he felt that (1) criminals were a distinctive type at birth, (2) they could be recognised by certain stigmata i.e., such distinguishing characteristics as low forehead, hairy body, red eyes, receding chin, protruding Jaws etc, (3) these stigmata did not cause crime but enabled identification of criminal types, (4) only through severe social intervention could born criminals be restrained from criminal behaviour.

Sheldon (1949b) extended Lomborso’s concepts and incorporated psychological factors. Consequently, Sheldon arrived at three bodily classifications—endomorph, mesomorph and ectomorph which combine certain physical characteristics with temperament characteristics. He discovered high degree of mesomorphism in delinquents and criminals with the corresponding temperament traits of aggressiveness, competitiveness and so on but due to paucity of research on scientific findings of the relationship of body type to deviant behaviour, this approach has been attacked on many grounds.

(b) Theory of Genetic Differences

Another biological approach to criminality focuses on the differences in chromosomal makeup between offenders and non offenders. Since the 1960s, there has been considerable interest in certain abnormal sex chromosome complements that may be associated with a high risk for delinquency and especially violent behaviour. Lancet (1967) found XXY pattern of sex chromosomes in delinquent population. Several other studies of subnormal populations have yielded similar findings (Forssmann and Hambert, 1967). Whereas Wegman and Smith (1963) found only two sex chromatin positive individuals among 1232 boys.

It appears that, the belief that young males with extra Y chromosome are especially prone to violence, is without foundation. In this context, Price and Whatmore (1967a, 1967b) also revealed some considerably interesting findings. They found that criminal records of men with XXY complement were no worse than those
of controls, and included relatively few crimes of violence against the person but the average age at which they were first convicted was 13 years, composed with a mean of about 18 years for patients with normal chromosome patterns. Thus the only difference where most of the studies agree is, that the individuals of XXY and XYY configuration who become delinquents, seem to start their criminal careers earlier than other young male offenders.

(c) Theory of Brain Damage

Remarkable brain damage is sometimes found to be the source of a particular problem behaviour. The electroencephalogram (EEG) measures the electrical activity of the brain. Hill and Pond (1952) found a higher proportion than expected of abnormal EEGs in murderers labelled 'irrational' and 'legally insane' than in those labelled 'incidental,' motivated', and 'sexual'. Subsequent studies have been less successful in associating EEG abnormalities with delinquency or criminality (Loomes, 1965).

A recent interest has been in the extent to which impulsive aggression is linked with specific areas in brain. It has been found that the areas associated with violent behavioural histories are located in prefrontal cortex and the medial temporal region.

(d) Neuropsychological Approach to Delinquency

Performance of offenders on new psychological tests has been cited as evidence of brain dysfunction in a number of studies. Early evidence of deficits came largely from findings with intelligence tests, notable the WAIS or WISC, and particularly the dominance of performance IQ (PIQ) over verbal IQ (VIQ) in delinquents. Siegel and Berman (1973) compared adjudicated delinquents and non-delinquents of similar age and socioeconomic status on the Halstead-Reitan neuropsychological test battery (HRB). The results showed an overall impoverishment of adaptive abilities in the delinquent group, in comparison to the level of performance of normal high school students. Delinquents showed more extreme impairment in verbal, perceptual and nonverbal conceptual spheres.
One of the more significant interpretations of this research was that the adaptive deficits were not different from those routinely diagnosed in children with early school learning problems. The inescapable fact then is that the youngsters who become delinquents are those whose learning disabilities were never diagnosed and who went through the viciously escalating cycle of behaviours that produce a lifestyle predisposing the child to delinquency as the only possible response to the continual frustration and humiliation caused by disability. Even the results of their study were striking. 70% of the youngsters imprisoned in the training school had measurable disabilities significant enough to warrant professional attention and 25% of them had visual perceptual or visual motor disability.

Berman and Siegal’s work on link between LD and delinquency generated further research and currently there are three following hypotheses attempting to explain this link:

(i) The Susceptibility Hypothesis

The susceptibility hypothesis proposes that the neurological and intellectual difficulties of youngsters, who are learning disabled, directly contribute to antisocial behaviour. These difficulties are said to include problems with impulse control and attention, problems with conceptualization, comprehension, and judgment; and problems with social imperception. Thus, a substantial percentage of youngsters who are learning disabled do appear to have concurrent deficits in attention and impulse control, raising the possibility for this subset of youngsters to be at risk for delinquency.

Murray (1976) proposed that LD are frequently accompanied by “a variety of socially troublesome personality characteristics”. Deficits such as low self-esteem, need for immediate gratification, impulsivity, social perception difficulties and low social skillfulness lead to juvenile delinquency.

Another assumption of susceptibility hypothesis is that language deficits in conceptualistion, comprehension and judgment contribute to the probability that a LD youngster may become delinquent. The language deficits have been linked to immature private speech and deficient verbal mediation which in turn is believed to result in deficient self regulation (Camp et al., 1977), social problem solving (Kazden,

Summarising, LD Individuals tend to be more likely to display particular delinquency linked susceptibilities that place them at increased risk for such an outcome, especially in the presence of particular behavioural characteristics.

(ii) The School Failure Hypothesis

The school failure explanation for the association of disability and delinquency posits that school failure often experienced by learning disabled students leads to lowered attachment to school and subsequent delinquency (Hirschi, 1969). Being punished and ridiculed for failures by the teachers, the child thinking of himself as a loser, falls further and further behind. Eventually he is suspended, drops out, or is thrown out of school to roam the streets and the inevitable road to delinquency is well under way.

Several theorists (Quay, 1987; Rutter and Giller, 1904; Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985) have taken the position that both educational failure and conduct disorder are the outcomes of a common etiology characterized by an active, aggressive oppositional temperament. Individuals with such a temperament, according to this perspective, would attend poorly, antagonise others, and violate rules. From this perspective a learning disability per se would not seem likely to predispose an individual toward delinquency. However in combination with a delinquency prone temperament, a learning disability would significantly enhance the chances of such an outcome. According to the school failure hypothesis, rejection at school and self criticism over poor achievement may be two aspects of learning disability that contribute to this interactive effect.

(iii) The Differential Treatment Hypothesis

This position suggests that learning disabled individuals and non-learning disabled individuals engage in the same rate and kind of delinquent behaviours; however police and other officials treat learning disabled youth differently so as to increase the incidence of adjudication (Keilitz and Dunivant, 1987; Lane, 1980).

Two main possibilities have been proposed. First, learning disabled individuals may lack the strategies to avoid detection or effectively dissemble during
encounters with juvenile justice personnel, and fail to adequately comprehend the proceedings (Dunivant, 1982). Secondly, learning disabled youngsters may behave in a more socially inappropriate and abrasive manner in their interactions with justice personnel, thereby eliciting harsher treatment.

While it seems clear that a correlational association between LD and JD has been demonstrated, data supporting a causal relationship has not been generated by research. Through both confirming as well as contradictory findings have been reported, several researchers suggest that LD may not be the direct cause of delinquency but it could be an influence of many interacting factors.

1.4 THE ROLE OF LEARNING DISABILITIES IN DELINQUENCY

Learning disabled children usually experience difficulties in performing certain academic and developmental tasks. They also experience considerable pain and social stigma because they are often harassed and denigrated by peers who are not learning disabled. This negative environment can discourage many learning disabled students from attending school and it may also explain why most learning disabled students drop out and join delinquent gangs to restore their diminished self esteem. Pickar and Tori (1986) focused on Erikson’s fourth stage of development. In this stage, characterized by industry vs Inferiority, an adequate feeling of competence, the ability to do well and to be effective in social interactions with the environment are essential tasks to stage resolution. Thus, a sense of industry or the enthusiasm to engage in productive work is established. The learning disabled adolescents often develop a sense of inferiority, failure and competence in this stage. Therefore, the youth who turn to delinquency tend to lack confidence both in their social and occupational skills.

The notion pertaining to the relation between learning disabilities (LD) and delinquency has been a topic of interest in the previous years. This link has generally been explained differently by different researchers. The significant among these explanations are: Susceptibility hypothesis, School Failure hypothesis and Differential
Figure 1.1
Hypotheses explaining the link between Learning Disabilities (LD) and Juvenile Delinquency (JD)

CHARACTERISTICS
- Attention deficits
- Cognitive disabilities
- Moral development
- Social imperceptions
- Behaviour problems

THE SUSCEPTIBILITY HYPOTHESIS

THE SCHOOL FAILURE HYPOTHESIS

THE DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT HYPOTHESIS
Treatment hypothesis. The susceptibility hypothesis states that learning disabilities are accompanied by the personality attributes such as impulsivity, emotional lability, inability to conceptualize causal relationships and poor reception of social cues that can act as social liabilities and increase the likelihood of delinquent behaviour (Larson, 1988; Brier, 1989).

The School Failure theory argues that social rejection following poor academic achievement breaks down self confidence to the point that if given proper psychological and environmental incentives, a child may engage in delinquent behaviour (Smith, 1998). Suspension and dropout status, which may result from poor performance associated with learning disabilities, increase the opportunity for learning disabled youth to engage in delinquent behaviour (Larson, 1988). The differential treatment hypothesis proposes that youth with learning disabilities and their non-learning disabled peers engage in comparable amounts of delinquent behaviours. The difference is that the police, other officials and social workers treat learning disabled youth differently, which increases their incidence of arrest and adjudication (Broder, Dunivant, Smith and Sutton, 1981). The explanation offered is that learning disabled adolescents may lack the necessary strategies to avoid detection or apprehension when encountering the law, and may also fail to understand legal proceedings (Dunivant, 1982; Pearl and Bryan, 1994). Along with three main theories to account for the learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency link, alternative explanations have been introduced. These include social cognitive ineffectiveness and social maladjustment, as well as social metacognition (Larson, 1988).

Research on the relation between learning disabilities and delinquency has led many to speculate that LD is a predisposing factor for delinquency (Waldie and Spreen, 1993; Winters, 1997; Smith, 1998; Burrell and Warboyes, 2000). Others speculate that no such link exists and that other factors are present which explain the connection. These include the inappropriate labeling of learning disabilities (Lombardo and Lombardo, 1991), family disorganization, alcoholism and economic hardships (Marmo and Charles, 1997; Karanth and Rozario, 2003). Therefore, the inconsistencies in the link between delinquency and learning disabilities need to be examined further to get a clearer picture of the relation between the two variables.
1.5 THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY IN DELINQUENCY

Personality factors have always been found to exert a significant influence on antisocial behaviour (Arbuthnot et al., 1987). Many of these studies have aimed at testing hypotheses derived from Eysenck’s (1964) and, more recently, Gray’s (1972, 1987) theories of personality and learning. These theories emphasize delinquents’ difficulty in inhibiting their behaviour and relate it to dimensions of personality which, in turn, are believed to reflect individual differences in the functioning of specific areas of the brain. Eysenck’s hypothesis have been extensively tested in many studies on crime and delinquency, often leading to opposite conclusions (Farrington et al., 1986). On the other hand, hypotheses derived from Gray’s theory have only recently started to be tested by several authors interested in the study of psychopathy and impulsivity, generally with encouraging results (Newman, 1987).

According to Eysenck’s theory, three personality dimensions are associated with delinquent behaviour: Extraversion (E), Neuroticism (N), and Psychoticism (P). Subjects with high scores on extraversion are more difficult to condition and consequently have more difficulties in inhibiting their antisocial tendencies; subjects with high scores on neuroticism tend to repeat antisocial behaviour since anxiety is believed to act as a drive which multiplies habit; subjects scoring high on psychoticism are more prone to delinquency because of their reduced sensitivity towards people’s feelings and because of their lack of guilt (Eysenck, 1947; Eysenck and Eysenck, 1976).

Whereas Gray (1970), based on his research with rats, identified two main systems of learning: the behavioural inhibition system (BIS) and the behavioural approach system (BAS). The two systems have different neurophysiological substrates and are responsive to different types of stimuli. The BIS is thought to inhibit behaviour in response to cues of punishment, frustrative nonreward or novelty, while the BAS is thought to activate behaviour in response to cues of reward or non-punishment. Extrapolating from animals to humans, Gray suggests that the dimension of anxiety reflects individual differences in the activity of the BIS while the dimension of impulsivity reflects the activity of the BAS. Furthermore, Gray (1981) postulated that in normal individuals, the two systems are balanced while in disinhibited individuals, there would be a less sensitive BIS coupled with a hyper-responsive BAS.
Cleckley (1976) has also described impulsivity as one of the pivotal characteristics of the psychopathic criminal personality. Other theorists believe that impulsive personality styles maintain antisocial behaviour through many interactions the person has with the environment (Moffitt, 1993a). Behavioural impulsivity was especially related to delinquency that was serious and stable over time (White et al., 1994). Besides, the other personality characteristics found to be associated with delinquency are low self esteem (Kaplan, 1980), greater need for stimulation (Farley and Sewell, 1976), hyperactivity (Loeber et al., 1991), aggressiveness (Coie et al., 1991).

Ellis and Walsh (1997) argue that certain genetically based traits such as “pushiness” and “deception” are conducive to crime. Rowe (2002) also suggested that genetic factors and “biological harms” of a non-genetic nature, like head injury and exposure to toxic substances may increase the likelihood that individuals develop traits conducive to crime such as impulsivity and sensation seeking. To conclude, the personality characteristics play an important role in determining if a child will become delinquent or not.

1.6 THE ROLE OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT IN DELINQUENCY

Family environment plays an important role in shaping the children. Parents are a child’s first models for behaviour, bearing the responsibility of teacher and role model. It is logical to assume that parents who set criminal examples may have children who emulate those negative models. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1949) suggests that children who commit crimes lack significant bonds to family. Non-attached children are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour simply because they haven’t learnt the difference between acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour.

Family environment has played a significant role in delinquency theory and research. Several types of families may promote delinquency: (1) families that are broken or disrupted by spousal abuse or divorce, (2) chaotic families, or families with multiple conflicts, (3) parents that neglect both the emotional or physical needs of children, and (4) deviant families that transmit their deviant norms and values to their children. Therefore, family is an important agent exerting a great impact on the child’s behaviour and on whether he becomes normal or delinquent. A dysfunctional
family can be a center wherein delinquency grows; on the other hand, a strong family can nurture and protect where peers and school fail (Fleener and Fran, 1999). Davalos et al. (2005) stressed on family communication and parental school support, preventive of problematic behaviours.

Research has shown that intact high-conflict families predicted same prevalence of offending as disrupted families. On the other hand, it has been found that boys from disrupted families who continued living with their mothers had similar delinquency rates to boys from intact harmonious families (Juby et al., 2001). The research on the link between juvenile delinquency and family has shown inconsistencies so it would be worthwhile to study this relationship in interaction with other variables. Therefore, the issue warrants further attention with greater specificity.

Several other familial variables like size of the family, birth order, parental education, socio-economic status, family structure etc have also been found to be associated with delinquent outcomes. Murlidharan (1969) found that the larger families are less instrumental in exhibiting delinquent behaviour but over decades, results have proved to be opposite. A typical delinquent hails from a rural and poor background, his family is large and his parents are divorced (Fleener and Fran, 1999). Similarly, Sharma and Singh (1982) found that the parents of the delinquent youth were less educated and less affluent. Moreover, the delinquents tended to be middle born. On the contrary, Paranjape (2004) put forward that the delinquents do come from affluent, educated families but such cases are wiped off through the power of money. Thus, the research on even these variables lacks concrete results and so further examination is required.

1.7 THE ROLE OF GENDER DIFFERENCES IN DELINQUENCY

Studies of crime rates have consistently shown proportionally higher rates of offending by males than by females, and especially higher rates of violence by males. This discrepancy in offending has been explored by many different disciplines and from many perspectives, from biological models to socialization and social control theories. Some scholars have attempted to explain it in terms of the distinct and non comparable experiences of males and females while growing up. Others have focused on neurological difference between males and females. Still other have suggested that
common theories of crime apply to both genders, but the males are exposed to more risk factors.

Researchers state that females who are socialized to a non-competitive, non-aggressive and “feminine” role and whose main achievement may involve becoming wives and mothers may experience less frustration at not making a place for themselves in larger society. They are therefore, less likely to turn to delinquent behaviour as a form of compensation or as an alternate means of achieving status. Lorch (1990) supported this view and reported that the impact of economic hardship on substance use and other delinquent behaviours was slightly greater for males than females.

Rutter (1985) pointed out that females are less vulnerable to the development of many delinquent behaviours and psychosocial adversities than males are. While it may appear that being female is the key protective factor, it may be that the different ways in which social cognition develops in males and females are important in understanding gender differences in crime and violence. Most researchers acknowledge that there are gender differences in the development of social cognitive abilities and that these are a function of both biological differences and differential socialization (Chess & Thoman, 1984; Prior et al., 1993; Taylor, 1985).

Social cognitive processing skills are essential for prosocial behaviour in both males and females. Development deficits in the acquisition of these skills could provide a framework for explaining gender differences in crime and violence. Ross and Fabiano (1985) suggested that females, on average, comprised only 6% of offender populations and this could be the result of females acquiring social cognitive skills much earlier in life and consequently having superior skills. Earlier prosocial cognitive skills may result from fewer neurodevelopmental disorders and a greater emphasis in socialization on empathy, role and perspective taking, social reasoning, and social problem-solving skills in girls.

Males appear to be at much greater risk than females of deficits in the frontal lobes of the brain. Moffitt (1993) reported that ADHD and antisocial or aggressive behaviour were the problems most commonly connected with deficits or damage to the frontal lobes. These areas were where executive functions are located. Males are three to five times more likely to develop ADHD than females (Barkley, 1998). Additionally, males are 10 times more likely to be afflicted with severe developmental dyslexia and 4 times more likely to be stutters (Hyde & McKinley, 1997). Barkley (1998) and Taylor (1985) suggested that males suffered more than
females from a variety of neurodevelopmental disorders because males, in general, were more prone genetically to disorders of the nervous system.

Fishbein (1992) stated that males frequently experience a developmental lag of left hemisphere maturation, and this may account for their early learning disabilities associated with prior language skills. Much evidence has indicated that males perform less well than females do on tests of verbal ability, particularly speech production (Hyde and Mckinley, 1997). Language is essential for effective social communication. Chess and Thomas (1984) observed that girls, as a whole, develop language skills faster than boys do and demonstrate that their neurological integration is ahead in both infancy and early childhood. Prior et al. (1993) suggested that the greater level of hyperactive and hostile behaviour documented in boys is probably one consequence of such early cognitive delays. While early language and motor skill deficiencies appear to reduce in later life, antisocial and ineffective methods of social interaction and interpersonal problem solving may become ingrained in some boys.

Moffitt et al. (2001) also tested the hypothesis that males and females are differently exposed to risk factors and that gender differences in exposure account for gender differences in antisocial behaviour. They developed a composite measure of adolescent antisocial behaviour and compared this with the five most important domains of risk factors, parental variables (e.g., young mother, parental crime), family risk factors (e.g. low socioeconomic status, harsh discipline), cognitive and neurological risks predictors (e.g., low intelligence hyperactivity), and peer risk factors (e.g. peer delinquency). The results indicated that males and females were similarly exposed to maternal and family risk factors. However, boys had significantly more delinquent peers and weaker attachments to school and to peers.

Reviewing the literature on gender differences and delinquency, Bennett et al. (2005) put forward that one of the reasons, females have lower rates of offending is because they acquire social cognitive skills earlier in life than males do and because they have better prosocial skills. The superior social cognitive skills of females are influenced by many factors including better interhemispheric communication, fewer frontal lobe deficits, greater verbal ability and differential socialization by parents and peers.

The above discussion makes it clear that all the factors elaborated above i.e., LD, personality and family environment exert a significant influence on delinquency.
In a society that rewards academic participation based on merit can often frustrate a young person when learning disability in him hampers a full participation in the process of learning. This frustration can possibly result in aggression, deviance, acting out or breaking rules and norms as delinquents. Besides LD, the personality of an individual is an important determinant of delinquency. The delinquents have been characterized by specific personality traits like pushiness, deception, impulsivity, insensitivity and hostility etc. The learning disabilities also influence delinquency through certain deviant personality traits possessed by a learning disabled child. Moreover, the above discussion also clarifies that the family environment is also one of the strongest variables in delinquency. It mediates the role of all other variables. Though youth with LD have heightened risk to commit crime but this risk is elevated by an adverse or non supportive family environment.

No theory which attributes the cause of delinquency to a single factor can adequately answer such questions. Why do all the children with LD not become delinquents? why do some persons high in extraversion turn to constructive behaviour, while others also high in the same trait, turn to antisocial behaviour? Why under similar environmental circumstances, do some individuals become delinquents and others do not? The answer to these questions probably lies in the Multifactor Approach to the problem of delinquency. The conduct of some children may be explained by a single precipitating factor but nevertheless, there are many other factors contributing towards precipitating that one factor. Burt (1944) enumerated no less than 170 causes conducive to delinquency. According to him, “Crime is assignable to no single universal source, nor yet to two or three; it springs from a wide variety, and usually from a multiplicity of alternative and converging influencing factors.

The important aspect that needs emphasis is the mutual interaction among all these factors. We agree with the fact that the delinquent behaviour is the result of a combination of intellectual, social, temperamental and physical factors. It is the result of an interplay of many different and diverse variables as viewed from the multifactor approach. In a “Biopsychosocial Theory of Delinquent and Criminal Behaviour”, Cortes and Gatti (1972) postulated that criminal and delinquent behaviour are the result of a negative imbalance within the individual in the interaction between (a) the
expressive forces of his psychological and biological characteristics, and (b) the normative forces of familial, religious, and socio-cultural factors.

Thus the preceding discussion suggests that the problem of delinquency involves the multiple processes. Research has only discovered association between specific variables and delinquent behaviour but it is the interaction of these variables, if studied in relation to delinquency, can give us a clearer picture. Moffitt (1993) in her “Interactional hypothesis” propagated that the combined effect of LD and family adversity increases the probability of offending. Similarly West (1967) studied that minor neurological injuries or congenital abnormalities can accentuate the negative influence of an adverse social environment on psychological development, but even more serious neurological injuries may not produce permanent deterioration of behaviour in the absence of adverse social-environmental factors (Neligan et al., 1976).

Moffitt’s hypothesis also gets support from study conducted by Wolff et al. (1982) who stated that if minor neurological impairment contributed to language impairment in the delinquent group, it probably did so in interaction with disorganised social rearing environment. While Karanth & Rozario (2003) state that in addition to biological factors, several environmental factors are associated with LD. These include poverty, parental illiteracy, lack of exposure to literacy skills in the home environment coupled with lack of access to preschool instruction, overcrowded classrooms and poor instruction. Moffitt et al. (2001) further suggested that a child’s risk of developing antisocial behaviour emerges from “acquired neuropsychological variation, initially manifested as subtle cognitive deficits, difficult temperament, or hyperactivity” but was exacerbated by high-risk socio environmental conditions. This study in a way puts forward that LD and psychological co-morbidity go hand in hand. Even Karanth and Rozario (2003) studied that LD co-occurs with a wide spectrum of significant psychological disorders such as ADHD, anxiety, depression, oppositional defiant and conduct disorders. And these disorders can be attributed to deficits in self regulation, social perception and social interaction faced by learning disabled children.
Waldie and Spreen (1993) concluded that LD is accompanied by impulsivity and poor perception of social cues which could lead to choices to engage in delinquent acts that non-learning disabled youth may not make. Similarly Knox & Conti-Ramsden (2003) studied that children with language impairment may exhibit antisocial behaviour for a number of reasons including frustration at ineffective socio-cognitive skills. Thus we can conclude that LD in an individual are accompanied by specific personality traits such as low self-esteem, impulsivity, poor socio-cognitive skills, hyperactivity, low suppression of aggression etc which could predispose learning disabled youth to delinquency. The above discussion further reveals that the neurological difficulties of youngsters with LD influence their behaviour through executive cognitive functions resulting in possession of troublesome personality traits by learning disabled children and youth. This relation between neurology and behaviour further gets affected by environmental factors as Spergel (1961) found that the interaction of minor neurological impairment and lack of family support during the early school years would render them highly vulnerable to chronic school failure, exclusion from school and perhaps initiation into a 'subculture of delinquency'. Bennett et al. (2005) suggested that with the right environmental conditions, such children may acquire skills for interacting effectively in their environment, and the condition may not visibly interfere with normal behaviour. Conversely, a disadvantaged environment may significantly magnify a slight cognitive processing impairment and ultimately produce several behavioural problems.

Conclusively, it can be said that learning disabilities, personality traits and family environment interact in certain ways resulting in delinquent behaviour. Therefore, it will be interesting to study the role of learning disabilities, personality and family environment, individually as well as in interaction with each other. These individual factors mentioned above have been studied intensively as being the causes of delinquency but hardly any attempt has been made to study them in conjunction. So the present study has been designed to study the individual as well as collective role of LD (a neuropsychological factor), personality and family environment (psychosocial factors) in strengthening of juvenile misconduct.
1.8 OBJECTIVES

Keeping in mind the relevant literature and the aim of the present investigation, the following objectives were envisaged:

1. To study the link of delinquency with learning disabilities.
2. To study the link of delinquency with personality of the adolescents.
3. To study the link of delinquency with family environment of the adolescents.
4. To study the link of delinquency with significant familial variables like family structure, birth order, parental education, criminality and alcoholism in parents.

1.9 HYPOTHESES

On the basis of the previous studies, and theoretical consideration, the following hypotheses were framed. General non-directional hypotheses have been formulated:

1) There will be a significant link between delinquency and following indices of learning disabilities:
   a) Visual-Motor Deficits
   b) Language deficits

2) There will be a significant link between delinquency and following dimensions of Personality:
   a) Psychoticism
   b) Extraversion/Introversion
   c) Neuroticism

3) There will be a significant link between delinquency and following dimensions of family environment:
   a) Relationship Dimensions
   b) Personal Growth Dimensions
   c) System Maintenance Dimensions
4) There will be a significant link between delinquency and other familial variables like birth order, family structure, literacy of parents, criminality in parents, alcoholism in parents and delinquency.

5) There will be a significant interactive effect of LD, Personality and Family Environment on delinquency.