INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE FORMATION OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR AMONG JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

AN ABSTRACT

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INTRODUCTION

Youths are supposed to be the backbone of a nation. The future of a nation depends upon the qualities of its youths. It is now an open secret that thousand of youths are misled and spoil their lives in anti-social activities causing unhealthy atmosphere in the society. Most of the juvenile delinquents become habitual criminals in the later stages of their lives. Some of the children and teen-agers in the society are habitually committing certain anti-social and harmful offences which may take the form of truancy, staying out late, stealing, wandering aimlessly or vagrancy, challenging attitude, bullying, smoking, drug addiction, telling lie, teasing, forgery, suicide, sex-offence and others. Delinquency is the word for these deviations. Presently the word juvenile delinquency has been termed as ‘children in conflict with law’. (The maximum age in India for juvenile delinquents, according to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, is a person who has not completed 18 years of age). Major socio-economic causes for increasing trend of psychological problems among the youth leading to delinquent activities are: the increasing gap between supply and demand for almost anything and everything and the competitiveness this creates, the increasing gap between expectation and reality and rapidly changing face of the value system in Indian family from the more traditional, supportive and collective approach to a more individualistic approach.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The phenomena of crime and delinquency were present in all ages and in all societies. In India it has acquired the dimension of a social problem only in post independent India. Our traditional agricultural society and the intimate social atmosphere provided by the joint family prevented any such delinquent tendency on the part of the child from becoming a major social problem. The rapid pace of industrialization and urbanization are now working against that intimate social atmosphere.

A large percentage of criminal careers have their origin in childhood. Most of the experts in criminology have considered juvenile delinquency as the widest gateway to crime. So for the purpose of checking adult crime juvenile delinquency is the most promising field. A number of sociological, Psychological, anthropological and medical studies have been conducted all over the world. In India also, a number of studies have been conducted on juvenile delinquency. The present study is an effort to focus light on the influence of home,
school, religious institutions and mass media in the formation of delinquent behaviour. The present study will be helpful for knowing the reactions of the delinquents towards the most influencing social institutions and accordingly suggestive measures can be made for these institutions. In this way the present research programme is undertaken to make a thorough study on the global problem of juvenile delinquency and to prevent would-be criminal at the earliest stage of its growth. So the present research problem has been stated as ‘Influence of social institutions in the formation of deviant behaviour among juvenile delinquents’.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The youngsters between certain age groups are easily attracted to the temptations of life and this leads to criminality. Since a nation’s future depends upon young generation, the criminal tendency must therefore be curbed timely so that they do not turn into habitual criminal in their future life. This burning problem of delinquency should not be regarded as a penal problem. It is an educational and welfare problem. So the juvenile delinquents should not be put behind the bars and treated through the normal channel of penal system. What they need is guidance, sympathy and help. Considering all these an urgent need is felt to take such problem of delinquency for research purpose. Most of the countries of the world are now engaged in tackling the problem of juvenile delinquency because ‘the child of today is the citizen if tomorrow.’

OBJECTIVES

Following are the objectives of the study:

1. To study the influence of family in the formation of deviant behaviour among delinquents.
2. To study the influence of school in the formation of deviant behaviour among delinquents.
3. To study the influence of religious institutions on juvenile delinquency.
4. To study the influence of mass media in the formation of deviant behaviour among delinquents.
5. To suggest some preventive measures for minimizing juvenile delinquency.

HYPOTHESES

Following hypotheses are formulated for the study:

1. Juvenile delinquents experience uncongenial home environment.
(2) Inadequate school environment is responsible for the formation of deviant behaviour among juvenile delinquents.

(3) Religious institutions play a role in the formation of deviant behaviour among juvenile delinquents.

(4) Mass media have influence in the formation of deviant behaviour among juvenile delinquents.

METHODS OF STUDY

Descriptive survey method has been used to collect more pertinent and precise information regarding the problem. Descriptive survey method attempts to describe and interpret what exist at present in the form of conditions, practices, processes, trends, effects, attitudes, beliefs and others. There are three main types of descriptive methods: observational methods, case-study methods and survey methods. In the present study all these three methods were used extensively.

UNIVERSE

The universe for the study consist of all the school going children between the ages 7 and 18 who are indulging in anti-social activities within the territory of Assam. Unreported and unobserved delinquent acts are common in society. The universe, therefore, consists of both reported and unreported juvenile delinquents.

SAMPLING

As the universe is uncertain, convenient sampling is followed in the study. Official juvenile delinquents are the children arrested by the police and kept in three observation homes of Assam. Unofficial delinquents were taken from the district of Kamrup. The sample consists of 300 numbers of juvenile delinquents. Out of 300 numbers, 200 numbers were official delinquents and 100 numbers were unofficial delinquents.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

The tool of the study is an interview schedule with 40 questions on different aspects of four social institutions, namely Family, School, Religious Institution and Mass Media. Ten questions for each social institution were put in the interview schedule. The questions were selected and framed so as to be within the realm of day-to-day happenings, experience and comprehension potential of the target population of the study. During data collection
discussion, observation and hearing of the conversation of the delinquent children were also used as supporting tools. All the 40 questions were arranged in a mixed way to break the monotony and to make it more interesting and revealing.

In addition to the 40 numbers of questions, 14 numbers of queries were posed in the schedule to record the identification data of the delinquent children which were later on constructed as independent variables.

DATA COLLECTION

The investigator personally collected the data by interview method with the interview schedule developed for the purpose from July, 2008 to July, 2012. Official juvenile delinquents have been taken from the three observation homes situated in different places in the state of Assam. Unofficial juvenile delinquents have been taken from the district of Kamrup, Assam.

PLAN OF ANALYSIS

Main emphasis was given in the role of selected social institutions in the formation of deviant behaviour among the delinquent children interviewed in the study, which were supposed to reflect in their responses. Focal attention was given in the statistical analysis of the responses and no attempt has been made to qualitatively probing other related aspects of the influence of social institutions in question among juvenile delinquents. Such studies may develop insight about the influence of social institutions among juvenile delinquents and also interrelationship among different factors but at the same time could fail to develop deeper understanding. However, the merit and relevance of statistical study cannot be undermined.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The distribution of the sampled population was highest in the age group 15 to 18 years (58.67%), in the secondary level (38.33%), in male (85.67%), in semi-urban locale (42.33%), in the middle child (42.33%), in Hinduism (79.33%), in nuclear type (83%), and in intact family (56.33%). Most of the fathers (32%) and mothers (55.33%) were highest in illiterate group Fathers were more in casual work (31.33%) and mother were more in house wife category (68.33%). Most of the families (67%) were having no criminal history and 37.33 per cent of the respondents were from families of poor economic condition.
From the analysis of responses of delinquent children in these 10 different questions on the family the percentage of negative responses were 69.99, 91.34, 91.67, 96.66, 96.34, 89.00, 83.00, 78.34, 75.66 and 60.00 per cent respectively. In school the percentage of negative responses were 79.00, 79.34, 70.00, 84.34, 92.33, 92.00, 79.00, 84.33, 84.33 and 77.32 per cent respectively. In religious institutions the percentages of negative responses were 88.00, 73.33, 62.00, 86.00, 95.67, 93.67, 81.34, 90.33, 88.33 and 86.67 per cent respectively. In mass media the percentage of negative responses were 56.00, 77.67, 72.33, 36.66, 68.33, 74.33, 53.33, 68.33, 71.67 and 80.00 per cent respectively. This means that the family, the school, the religious institutions and mass media played an influence in the formation of deviant behaviour among the juvenile delinquents.

**FINDINGS AND IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY**

Major findings of the study were that the family, the school, the religious institutions and mass media have great influence in the formation of deviant behaviour among juvenile delinquents.

The implication of the study were on the parents’ community, teachers’ community, persons connected with religious institutions, persons related to different types of media, police administration and the policy planners for children, officials and other individuals related to juvenile justice and all the adult members of the society regarding conscious upbringing of the children. It may be said that every man is the product of his environment. Man does not learn anything by birth. Most of their qualities, both social and anti-social, are formed and developed during the course of their individual and collective life rather than inherited by birth. A child is really innocent. He acquires deviant and anti-social behaviour in the midst of society. So it is the duty of the mature individuals of the society to involve themselves in such activities which can create a healthy environment based on unity, equality and humanism for balanced development of personality of the child. This is the message the researcher wishes to move all over the world.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

In the present study, the investigator had made an attempt to study the influence of the family, the school, the religious institution and the mass media in the formation of deviant behaviour among juvenile delinquents. The investigator has tried to bring focus on the
meaning, nature, approaches, historical, theoretical and other perspectives of juvenile
delinquency and reviewed related literature. The investigator has followed descriptive survey
method and analysed the data following percentage analysis methods. It is concluded that the
juvenile delinquents experience uncongenial home environment. Inadequate school
environment is responsible for the formation of deviant behaviour among juvenile
delinquents. Religious institutions play a role in the formation of deviant behaviour among
juvenile delinquents. Mass media have influence in the formation of deviant behaviour
among juvenile delinquents. The investigator also suggested certain preventive measures and
scope for further study.