PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many of the circumstances leading children to conflict with law are of a social nature. Children who offend often live in families facing difficulties such as poverty, substance abuse or separation. The vast majority of India’s children at risk have to contend with the ever revolving doors between the care and justice systems. The failure of the legal and administrative machinery to respond to their needs of care and protection often sends them back and forth between the two systems. The main purpose of juvenile justice systems should be to enable them not to reoffend. As stated in Article 40 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child in conflict with the law has the right to be treated in a manner that takes into account “the desirability of promoting [his/her] reintegration and [his/her] assuming a constructive role in society.” Tailored support for each child and his/her family should be provided throughout the process, including after release in the case of a custodial sentence, if the intervention of justice is to be meaningful. Obviously, justice systems are neither equipped nor mandated to fulfill this role alone and need to work hand in hand with the social sector towards this end. In the absence of such intersectoral cooperation, juvenile justice interventions would miss the opportunity of supporting a sustainable change in the child’s behavior circumstances and environment. Social services and the justice system are in many ways too distinct spheres and invariably the responsibility of separate ministries, but the occasions and ways in which they could and should interface and cooperate are numerous and important for the implementation of children’s rights.

It is in this light that the present work is undertaken to identify the causes and conditions for juvenile delinquency and to identify the role of social work intervention in the prevention of juvenile delinquency. The study differs from other studies as it is empirical in nature. Although, it is important to understand and control delinquency of all types by all age groups throughout our society, the problem of juvenile delinquency is all the more important because of the continuity between juvenile and adult violence. Violent behavior that begins before the eighteenth birthday tends to continue after it.
The present study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter discusses the evolution of the need to have a separate legislation for juveniles. The second chapter presents the review of literatures discussing the factors of delinquency in general, factors of female delinquency and strategies for the prevention of delinquency. The third chapter presents the historical background of the juvenile justice system in India. The fourth chapter elaborates on the design of research of the present work. The fifth chapter consists of the interpretation and analysis of the responses received by the researcher from the inmates of the Observation/Special Homes and also contains the suggestions extended by the informants. Finally, the study ends up with some major findings and suggestions regarding social work intervention for the prevention of juvenile delinquency.

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