CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

(Pages from 1 to 10)
of juvenile delinquency to-day is by no means restricted to
display of bad manners or disrespect to the elders and pre­
ference to idle loitering; juvenile delinquent behaviours
now-a-day involves all forms of heinous criminal activities
ranging from culpable homicide to tacit autotheft emmeshing
varied shades of seriousness. The facts and phenomena of
juvenile delinquency in West Bengal further shows that it has
assumed a newer direction not only in quantity but also in
quality, and such change was apparent since the post war
period (Mukerji¹, 1968). But whatever may be the nature,
extent, direction, perennial character of juvenile delinquency
that were noted in the past and in the present, it is of para­
mount importance, throughout the ages, that the impending rates
of delinquency should be curbed. In the task of finding ways
and means to minimize delinquency there is a little consolation
to note that the phenomena of delinquency is not at all recent
or nothing new with the man-in-society. Like other forms of
social behaviour, juvenile delinquent behaviour is nevertheless
a social fact, and cannot be conceived without a social frame­
work. In the earlier days juvenile crime was not considered as

¹ Mukerji (1968), in his attempt to analyze the trends in
juvenile delinquency observed: "..... is not the number of
juvenile delinquents, but the quantity of crimes. Even more
was the quality, the pattern of delinquency. The delinquents
exhibited a more matured skill volume and skill went side
by side..... It started with petty thefts and pocket-picking
and rolled on to cheating of novel types and night-burglary,
gathering technique and nerve, tact and organization".
a separate category and was equated at par with the adult-committed offence until 1897 in England. The societal response to crime, committed either by the adult or by the juvenile was ostensibly same in pattern (Brown, 1947), and punishment of the wrong-doer was the bulwark of the society against crime (Sen, 1932). But this 'hard line' philosophy—a traditional attitude—followed by the law-givers almost in all countries throughout the world yielded insignificant result in minimizing crime-rates. Rather paradoxical has been the outcome "In that criminal punishment has never been very effective in eliminating or reducing crime....." (Chang, 1976).

1.1. IMPORTANT KEY CONCEPTS

Confusion about usage of terms, according to Tyrrell², are common in social and behavioural science disciplines. Since the terms 'juvenile delinquency' and its 'psychosocial correlates' have important conceptual bearing upon the topic of the present investigation, it is incumbent on the part of the researcher to find some stable meaning that can be attached to these terms.

1.1.1. Juvenile Delinquency

"Few terms in the educator's professional vocabulary", observes Kvaraceus (1966), have been used more loosely or

² Tyrrell (1947) pin-pointed the need of clarifying the terms and wrote emphatically: "The first need in this subject is to be definite in the matter of terms. The terminology in psychical research is unfortunately somewhat chaotic, and it will be best to give definitions......"
freely than the term "juvenile delinquent". Practically, it has been a handy label to pin on any young person found displaying some kind of non-compliant behaviour. But in its strictest sense, juvenile delinquency and any criminal behaviour, are technically sociolegal concepts. That is the society through its norms, prohibiting certain kinds of behaviour, takes the onus of declaring an individual as delinquent, of course in view of the conduct shown by the individual. Which forms of behaviour are considered as delinquent, as such entirely depend on the nature and content of the law of the land. From the legal point of view, there is little difference in crime committed by an adult and an offence done by a juvenile so far as the deed-aspects are concerned. Though "there is no precise definition of juvenile delinquency", according to National Institute of Social Defence (1979), most statutes pointed out that delinquent behaviour is a violation of the law or any such ordinance by a young person or group of young persons under certain age. This factor of age of the offender, therefore, demarcates juvenile delinquency from adult criminality. But unfortunately this age is not consistently set throughout the world. Variations in limiting the age of juvenile offenders are also prominent within the country from one state to another. In many states the upper age limit is 18 years, somewhere it is 20, and in certain countries it is 16 years. The consideration about age of the offender is of great importance in any

---

3 A person cannot be called a delinquent until he has been adjudged so in court.
discussion on the problem of juvenile delinquency and apart from the age-aspect the problems of juvenile delinquency and adult-criminality may be vouched as the two sides of the same coin. In view of the controversy in ascertaining the age limit of the juvenile offender, and also variability in offence-criterion, the definition of juvenile delinquent behaviour has been found in very broad general terms. The Working Committee of the International Review of Criminal Policy in 1963 defined juvenile delinquency as "the commission by a child of an act which, if committed by an adult, would be considered as crime" (U.N.O.,1963). Nonetheless, the usual understandings about juvenile delinquency should necessarily emphasize the age of the offender paripassu the offence he commits.

As already stated the concepts of juvenile delinquency in specific and criminality in general are sociolegal in their essence, the importance of individual specific psychodynamic study in the field needs some delineation. It is needless to indicate that one of the essential preconditions in delinquency or criminality is that there must be an overt behaviour displayed on the part of the individual (or individuals) and that expressed behaviour must be counter to the legal imperative on the set norms. Such behaviour (being voluntary and generally motivated) is quite distinct from non-voluntary or reflex

The definition of the term 'crime' is also too general and broad. Williams (1955), for example, defines "crime" as "an act that is capable of being followed by criminal proceedings, having one of the types of outcome (Punishment, etc.) known to follow these proceedings".
actions. So it is quite ostensible that if anybody only thinks about his committing a criminal act, he cannot be called a criminal. Inspite of the undenying major role of the doer’s thinking and planning to activate the criminal deed, no person can be charged by his criminality until there occur any incident of translations of the concerned thoughts and motoric behaviour. It is a common experience that while several people could think about committing a wrongful, offensive act in a weak moment in their lives, only a fraction of the total population actually behaved along the crimogenic directions. Psychoanalytic studies (Aichhorn, 1951; Freud, 1953; Klein, 1948; for example), probing deep into the mind, have amply documented the presence of crimogenic thoughts and phantasies in normal individuals, but in rare instances those ideas came into their practices, and remained operative only in their phantasies. Thus, from scientific as well as statutory point of view the responsibility for behaving criminally rests with the person who behaves in that direction. Psychologically, voluntary and motivated forms of behaviour are the functional outcome of the interaction between personality and environment (Crow and Crow, 1953; Paul, 1973) and as such the role of psychogenic and social and societal facets and field-forces are undenied in the development of behaviour like delinquent behaviour.

Again, in view of the fact that delinquency is essentially a social phenomenon, and also in view of the variability of
delinquent acts along space and time, the study of the environ-
mental as well as psychological correlates of criminal behaviour
by the youngsters seem important to locate the plausible causes
of such behaviour.  

Such an understanding obviously refers to the fact that
juvenile delinquency per se is not only the law-violating deeds
but the spring-board of delinquent behaviour constitutes the
developmental fieldforces (the environmental aspects) that cause
the emergence of a specific psychological make up, or in other-
words, the personality structure.

1.1.2. Psychological Aspects of Personality

In order to study the psychological aspects (in addition
to the social or environmental aspects) of the delinquents, the
investigator is obviously committed to examine the personality
characteristics of the subjects under study. Because 'personality'
is a term which essentially involves psychological individuality
(Allport, 1937), the need for studying the personality character-
istics of the delinquent individuals can not be over-emphasized.

Deb's (1968) observation in this context appear to lend further
support. He writes: "... it must, however, be remembered
that crime is really a result of interaction between predis-
position and opportunity. Society may provide the necessary
environment or opportunity for a certain type of antisocial
behaviour, but without certain amount of predisposition or
subjective anti-sociality an antisocial or criminal act may
not all precipitated.... Unless this internal predisposition
comes in contact with some precipitating external factors no
crime may in fact result".
For all practical purposes study of personality should be synonymous with study of behaviour (Eysenck, 1960) through which individuality of a person is manifested. But difficulty arises with the problem as to which aspects of individuality should be taken into account to cover personality. The literature on personality studies is undoubtedly a vast one. But there is no single definition which may have universal acceptance. "Personality" as Allport (1937) focussed, "is one of the most abstract words in our language and like any abstract word suffering from excessive use, its connotative significance is very broad, its denotative significance is negligible". Even the psychologists lack a consensus among themselves so far as the definition of personality is concerned. For instance, even the scholars who scout the theory that personality is synonymous with behaviour, have very little agreement among themselves as to what aspects of behaviour should be considered as vitally connotative of personality. The understanding of personality are so varied and bewildering that Hall and Lindzey (1957) remarked that "while the diversity in ordinary use of the word personality may seem considerable, it is overshadowed by the variety of meaning with which psychologists have endowed the term". But in spite of the diverse notions the social and behavioural scientists held, two major classes in conceptualizing 'personality' can well be subsumed. One of such concepts considers personality as the 'social stimulus value'.
of the individual (Patterson and Bachtel, 1977) i.e., biosocial concept of personality. The another approach considers that personality is something biophysical. It recognizes the visible but intrinsic aspects of the individual — the aspects which are related to traits, dispositions or qualities that can be described or assessed objectively (Cattell and Dreger, 1977; Hall and Lindsay, 1957). Beside these two definitions of personality there is another definition of personality e.g., psycho-social concept of personality. This definition recognizes psychological individuality in the context of social or outer environment.

Since it is difficult to comprehend a single definition of personality from the divergent views and since personality essentially involves the psychological individuality, which is, nonetheless, highly dynamic in character, in the present work personality has been considered as a dynamic entity a process instead of viewing it as a sum of traits etc., or simply as something bio-social. Personality, as such, is conceived as a dynamic whole, process, i.e., a continuously evolving entity that underlies a large number of psychosocial variables. Such variables include the needs, traits, thinking, perceiving and emotional-motivational characteristics, those operate in the individual with reference to the situational and environning forces and result into a unique process of adjustment in the individual.
Hence in the present research a dynamic and functional exploration of personality has been emphasized. Thus, the attributes of personality — the psychological characteristics of the individual to be examined in this investigation may be regarded only as a cross-section of the total personality process. Such way of viewing personality have endorsed by Abt (1957); Abt and Bellak (1959); Mukhopadhyay (1968); Mukerji and Basu (1980) and many others. Perhaps, the difficulty that crops up with the acceptance of the configurational view of personality is that no test can possibly measure personality in its entity. This understanding has definitely narrowed down the possibilities of personality assessment procedures. However, in the present research the psychological characteristics in personality refer specifically to the affective — motivational disposition, sentiments, attitudes, complexes, and other intra-psychic characteristics those are marked responsible to pattern an individual's distinctive behaviour and thought (Eysenck et al., 1972).

1.2. SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM

It was not until late 19th century, scientific approach to study the 'why' of antisocial behaviour took a start under the guidance of Ceser Lombrosse (1911) and since then innumerable theories have been advanced to explain the causes of antisocial behaviour. It is interesting enough to note that
even among the scientific thinkers a workable consensus as to the causes of antisociality is seriously wanting so far as the findings of the studies as well as the methods that are thought suitable to study the offenders. The disagreement seems to be very much pronounced when studies by the behavioural scientists (Aichhorn, 1951; Anna Freud, 1949; Eysenck, 1964; Glueck and Glueck, 1950; Glueck, 1962; Glueck, 1967; Klein, 1948;Robins, 1966; Schachtel, 1951; Shanmugam, 1975; 1980; Shelley and Toch, 1962; as for example) are placed side by side with the works of the social scientists (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1957; Matza, 1969; Miller, 1958; Reckless, 1955; Shaw and McKay, 1942; Sutherland, 1949; Sutherland and Cressey, 1966; Vaz, 1967 and etc.). While the former group of researchers conceptualize delinquency as a form of deviant behaviour for which intra-psychic functioning of the behaving individual is basically important, the latter group of workers place importance upon external field-forces, viz., the group, the social system, organizations, rather the environmental characteristics as basic in generation of crime. This apparent controversy between the behavioural and social experts tends to obscure one's understanding instead of clarifying it. A normal and spontaneous question, in view of such controversy, is: How can this controversy exist in the field of science? Man has made so much progress in other fields of science and technology but it is queer that he is yet to explain his own behaviour in a fool-proof fashion.
Perhaps the difference existing between the sociologists and psychologists and also other behavioural scientists as to the causative factors of delinquency has been due to the fact that the real fulcrum of antisocial behaviour is yet to be traced out. As such, neither group of researchers could come out with any such finding that might explain all forms of antisocial behaviour universally but only a modicum of the dynamics of antisocial behaviour has been unravelled. Nonetheless, much a condition is not peculiar only to the understanding of criminal or delinquent behaviour. Rather, it is common in the rooms of behavioural and social sciences, vis-a-vis, the physical sciences, for which man himself cannot deny his responsibility. Is such a perspective, inter-alia, Mead and Mead (1965) wrote: "Man studied distant stars before he studied himself, and impersonal and physical sciences have all out-paced the behavioural sciences".

There cannot be any doubt that human behaviour - criminal or non-criminal - is not solely an intrinsic property of the individual nor it is hundred percent dependent on the environment. It is often a fact that one's characteristic reaction in the surrounding acts as a "stimulus dispensor for others" to learn, behave and form reactions as enduring or otherwise personality qualities (Patterson and Bachtel, 1977). It is thus axiomatic that human behaviour, specially motivated forms of behaviours (e.g., antisocial behaviour), hinge upon a score of factors and
field-forces incidenting on the individual unit during his process of becoming, i.e., during his socialization process (Andry, 1963; Hinde, 1980; Mukerji and Roychowdhury, 1981; Nagla, 1981; Straus, 1954 etc.). As such in examining criminal behavior with an object to locate its causative aspects ".... personality will be only part of the story; situational variables will play a significant role" (Feldman, 1977).

1.3. THE PRESENT STUDY

Thus with an understanding that delinquent or criminal behaviour, like other forms of voluntary and motivated behaviours, is the resultant of certain interactions between the personal or personality elements and the situational or environmental field-forces, the present investigation aims to study the juvenile delinquents apropos of their personal-psychological characteristics and the situational (environmental) variables in which they were developed. The present study, therefore, may be said to be an humble attempt to examine the relative importance of extrinsic or impersonal variables and the intrinsic or personal aspects in the making of a delinquent. Thus, it is an attempt to examine and close the research gap apparent between the sociological and psychological studies by way of making a synthesized approach.\(^6\)

\(^6\) Chang (1976) while making an overview on the subject, categorically focussed the need of such approach in criminological research. In his own words, 'Crime has always been an integral part of civilization. Over the centuries thousands of concerned and capable people have sought the causes and cures of crime. Innumerable theories have been suggested, yet there is no single synthesized approach".
Mention has already been made in this chapter that the principal aim of the investigation undertaken is to identify the personality and social-environmental correlates of delinquent behaviour. Put in other words, the present investigation is a specific approach to the study of certain particular socially negative aspects of human behaviour known as delinquent.

It should be pointed out at this juncture that in the present endeavour an attempt has been made for a thorough delineation of delinquents' personality by making an inter-group comparison between the experimental subjects (delinquents) and a control group of non-delinquents. In specific, the present research seeks to identify that group of selective factors from study of birth order, socio-economic status, family influences — atmosphere and orientation as perceived by the subjects, association, habits and practices and other social-environmental factors in addition to each of the individual's dynamic personality functioning.

Although many studies have so far been conducted by several investigators in the field of delinquency and criminality, but the attempt to unravel the global personality characteristics of the delinquents at the same time to study the social and environmental field-forces acted on them is obviously a rare attempt, at least in our country. Because most of the previous researches
conducted by various Indian investigators are mainly concerned with either personality facets or sociological field-forces of the juvenile delinquents, the present study is a worthy attempt to highlight the personal or psychological facets and social or environmental field-forces of the delinquents in which they were developed.

As this type of composite and comprehensive attempt has not been geared in India, specially in the field of criminology, the present work will, no doubt, be a new one in our country and it will definitely be a contribution to the advancement of science of psychology in India.

Having the above working conception in view, the next chapter has to be devoted to survey the diverse theories and formulations in the subject of our study for gaining further perspective of the study undertaken.