

Empirical Analysis of Juvenile Crime in Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

Juvenile Delinquency and crime is a worldwide phenomenon. Until recently, Pakistan authorities have realized the magnitude of juvenile crime and evinced keen interest in scientific and empirical studies on juvenile's crime, its causes, prevention/control and rehabilitation. Thus, the juvenile delinquency would be a serious threat to social and moral fabric of the society in the near future. The study was conducted at Faisalabad and Bhawalpur Districts in Punjab Province, where two Borstal Institutions and Juvenile Jails are located for juvenile's rehabilitation. In all, 221 juvenile convicts in both jails were taken for data collection through a well-structured and pre-tested questionnaire. The results revealed that parent's conflict, community environment, father's nagging attitude and media positively influence the juvenile crime. However, the family income as binary variable provided inconclusive evidence. The study suggests that conflict between parents must be minimized through awareness campaign, counseling, and peer pressure through media and community participation.

Keywords: Empirical analysis, Juvenile crime, Punjab-Pakistan

Introduction

Juvenile Delinquency has become a global epidemic and is spreading in developing and developed societies in both organized and semi-organized manners. In any civilized society, the criminal justice system has the highest premium as it guarantees the rule of law and fair play to its citizens. In fact, economic growth is unthinkable in a country where there is civil strife and fear for one's life and property (Khan, 1997). The delinquent person is guilty of anti-social conduct, perhaps less serious than criminal of misconduct.

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The other cited factors responsible for juvenile delinquency are: broken homes, delinquent community environment, bad company of peer/school group, slums with criminal neighborhood, poverty, and unemployment (Auolakh, 1999).

In Pakistan, money, land, sexual assault, illiteracy, honor killing, old enmity, and drug are the main factors causing juvenile delinquency. The recent emergence of militancy "*deeni madras*" (religious education institutions) has further exacerbated the situation. These institutions impart instruction in militancy and sectarian hatred to young persons below eighteen years of age. The Cyber Net has developed tendency of gang wars among the youth of both developed and developing nations and Pakistan is no exception in such delinquencies (Nadeem, 2002). The dearth of scientific literature on crime, especially juvenile delinquency in Pakistan is attributed to the lack of relevant data (Usmani, 1978). In the light of above discussion, it seems imperative to make a serious beginning to address serious social problems Juvenile delinquency is becoming a serious social taboo. The social dimension of the problem has serious repercussions on the moral and social fabric of the society. The family unit is tearing apart and parents are generally worried about the future of their offspring's. Furthermore, the surge of sectarian violence especially among teenagers has further exacerbated the growing evil of youth delinquency. Thus, if the increasing trend of youth delinquency is unabated and un-noticed, this will further create socio-economic problems of stunning proportions. Therefore, there is a dire need to undertake a study in order to identify the casual factors of Juvenile Delinquency and suggest remedial measures to arrest its fast growing trends. The study will be useful for the policy makers, law enforcing agencies and civil society.

Material and Methods

The present study was conducted in two districts of Punjab, namely, Faisalabad and Bahawalpur. In Punjab Province, two Borstal Institutions and Juvenile Jails are working for rehabilitation of juvenile convicts. The total population of juvenile convicts having 221 respondents was taken for the study. A well-designed

and structured questionnaire was developed and pre-tested.

The correlation is used to describe the strength of relationship between variables. It reflects the independence between two variables. The correlation coefficient may be near to zero, in that case there is no apparent linear correlation between two variables. (Bryman and Cramer, 1996).

Results and Discussion

The divisional distribution of juvenile convicts is reported in Table 1. The data depict that Bahwalpur Division has the highest (22 percent) of juvenile delinquents in the Punjab Province followed by Multan (18 percent), Lahore (15 percent), Dera Ghazi Khan (14 percent) and Faisalabad (13 percent). The spread of delinquency in other divisions is nominal.

Table 1: Division-wise distribution of juvenile convicts in the Punjab province

Divisions	Frequency	Percentage
Lahore	32	14.5
Faisalabad	28	12.7
Sargodha	13	5.9
Rawalpindi	11	5.00
Gujranwala	20	9.00
Multan	39	17.6
Bahwalpur	48	21.7
Dear Ghazi Khan	30	13.6
Total	221	100.00

The study also investigated about the nature of crimes committed by convicts (Table. 2). Majority of the respondents i.e. 70.6 percent were involved in murder cases whereas, 4.5 percent were involved in theft, dacoity or pick pocket cases. Another 4.5 percent respondents were involved in kidnaping, while 14.5 percent and 3.2 percent were involved in Zina and narcotics activities, respectively.

Table 2: Crime committed by juvenile convicts in the Punjab Provinces

Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Murder	156	70.6
Theft + dacoity + Pickpocket	10	4.5
Kidnapping	10	4.5
Zina + prohibition + abduction & rape	32	14.5
Narcotics	07	3.2
*Any other	06	2.7
Total	221	100.00

* Smuggling, car snatch, criminal assault etc

Majority of the respondents committed crimes in retaliations to some social or individual injustice. Poverty or lack of resources forced 10 percent of the respondents to commit crime, whereas 3.2, 10.9, 2.3, 19.0, 4.1, 12.2, 3.2, 1.4, and 10 percent of the respondents committed crimes due to personal aspiration, pressure of associates, fulfill the dream of becoming rich over right, land disputes, provocation, accidental, self defense, drug addiction and sexual lust, respectively, for detail see Table. 3.

Table 3: Reasons for committing crime by juvenile convicts in the Punjab Province

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	22	10.00
Fulfill own need	07	3.2
Pressure of pears / associates	24	10.9
Become rich over night	05	2.3
Land dispute	42	19.0
Provocation	09	4.1
Retaliation	53	24.0
Accidental	27	12.2
Self defense	07	3.2
Drug addiction	03	1.4
Sexual lust	22	10.0
Total	221	100.00

Table 4: The correlation between juvenile delinquency and predictors variables by rural and urban areas in the Punjab Province.

Predictor Variables	Rural	Urban
Parents Conflicts	0.173** (2.006)	0.235** (2.245)
Community Environment	0.173** (2.006)	0.210* (1.993)
Attitude of father	0.175** (2.038)	0.203* (1.921)
Influence of Media	0.154 (1.786)	0.227** (2.160)
Residential location	0.167* (1.944)	0.215** (2.039)
Monthly Family Income	0.191 (2.230)	(-) 0.085 (-0.790)

Parenthesis show t-Statistics values

* Indicates that coefficient of Pearson’s R are significantly different from zero at 10 percent significance level.

** Indicate that coefficient of Pearson’s R are significantly different from zero at 5 percent significance level

The data were subjected to Pearson’s Correlation with appropriate statistics to test six hypotheses. The Pearson’s R-values are 0.173 and 0.235 of parent’s

conflict in rural and urban areas, respectively, and significant at 5 percent significance level. The coefficient shows expected sign, which establishes the relationship between parent's conflict and juvenile behavior.

The 2nd hypothesis tested here is the relationship between the community environment and juvenile delinquency. The Pearson's R-values are 0.173 and 0.210 of community environment in rural and urban areas, respectively, which are significant at 5 percent significance level. The coefficient shows expected sign. Thus the hypothesis is accepted.

The third hypothesis of father's attitude was tested through Pearson's R. The coefficient has desired sign having value 0.175 and 0.203 in rural and urban areas correspondingly and significant at 5 percent significance level, thus supports the hypothesis. The results are also consistent with the findings of Bhatti (1976). The 4th hypothesis of media influence on juvenile delinquency is again tested through Pearson's R having 0.154 and 0.227 coefficient values in rural and urban areas, respectively. The corresponding coefficients are 10 and 5 percent significance level in rural and urban areas. The results support the conceived hypothesis. The relationship of monthly income with juvenile delinquency is inconclusive. The coefficient 0.162 significant at 5 significance level fail to reject the hypothesis in rural areas, while the same hypothesis was not accepted in urban areas the coefficient having significant. The results confound the earlier evidence by Narsian (1997).

In all, six hypotheses were tested through the estimation of Pearson R. statistics. The parent conflicts, community environment, father's attitude and media positively influence the juvenile crime. The family income binary variable provides inconclusive evidence i.e. in rural areas it influence the juvenile crime and in urban areas results are otherwise.

Recommendations

- The community environment should be hospitable having educational and recreational facilities.

- Public awareness regarding juvenile behavior, parent's attitude, and juvenile friendly atmosphere must be provided through electronic and print media.
- Thrust on poverty reduction should be a top priority to remove such social evils from the society.
- The information mass media must be regulated in order to avoid displaying objectionable materials.

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