

Psychological and Behavioral Correlates of Juvenile Delinquency in Balochistan, Pakistan: A Cross-Sectional Study from Three Prisons

Dr. Muhammad Yousuf

Lecturer, Department of Social Work, University of Balochistan, Quetta

Email: usuf.barech@gmail.com

Dr. Abdul Rahim Changezi

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Balochistan, Quetta

Email: rahimji@yahoo.com

Manzoor Ahmed

M.Phil Social Work, Balochistan Study Center, University of Balochistan, Quetta

ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency is a growing concern in Balochistan, Pakistan's least developed province, yet empirical research on its psychological underpinnings remains scarce. This study investigates the behavioral and psychological factors associated with delinquent behavior among incarcerated juveniles. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 120 male juveniles (ages 12–18) housed in three prisons: Central Jail Lorelei, Central Jail Quetta, and Mach Jail. Data were collected through structured interviews assessing educational background, family environment, and self-reported offending. Results revealed that 75% of respondents admitted committing the offense for which they were charged. Furthermore, 28.7% were completely illiterate, and 70% reported parental discouragement regarding academic or social achievements as a significant factor in their delinquency. These findings highlight the role of low educational attainment and negative family influences over purely individual moral failings. We recommend that policymakers establish juvenile rehabilitation centers with integrated psychological counseling and non-formal education programs across Balochistan to address the rising rate of youth offending in the province.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquency; psychological factors; parental discouragement; illiteracy; Balochistan (Pakistan)

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Introduction

Juvenile delinquency in 21st century, like all other social problem, is expanding to dangerous levels posing threats to the entire social structure. It also poses serious issues for youth, which is considered to be backbone of the nation building. The term juvenile delinquency is comprehensive and needs to be described in a scholarly manner. The UNCRC 1989 defined child as any person below 18 (Singh M., 2006). Pakistan being a signatory to this convention adopted the same pre-requisites of the definition of child.

The etymology of the word delinquency is found in Latin “delinquer” means to omit. In the Roman history, they used this term to describe to a person’s failure to assigned task or duty. However, William Coxson in 1484 used delinquency straight away for a person whose deeds are in contrary to the customary laws (Singh M., 2006). On the basis of this assertion, juvenile delinquency is defined as a person below constitutional age (18) and his/her involvement in acts which violate the written laws of state or society. The ambit of delinquency is very large, however, several authors included acts like begging, drinking in public, gambling, truancy, kidnapping, stealing, hijacking, vagrancy etc. (Paranjape N. V., 1998). Amadioha (2010) defines juvenile delinquency as any mentally, physically, socially, or morally harmful work that interferes with a child's education—by depriving them of school attendance, forcing permanent dropout, or requiring them to combine schooling with excessive, prolonged, and heavy workloads. United Nations Forum under Beijing Rules 1985 defined juvenile delinquency as the involvement of a child or young person under legally defined age of adulthood, in behavior that violates penal law.

Literature Review

Concepts related to juvenile delinquency

Delinquency

It is an act, which violates the written laws of the country or illegal as per broader consensus in society. Moreover, the acts that violates laws must have prescribed punishment. However, the same act when acted by a juvenile or any person who do

not reach 18 years according to United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (UNCRC, 1989) will not be considered crime.

Heinous Offenses

It is an illegal, immoral and brutal way of expressing fear, acts on broader societal level which clearly violate the Criminal Procedure Code 1860 of Pakistan. Such acts or expression of fear is punishable as per the constitution of Pakistan under Article 6 of the 1971 Constitution. The punishment for heinous crime under Article 6 is capital punishment, detention for life, or more than 7 years detention (with/without fine) (National Assembly Bill, 2011).

Procedural Justice

It is the process to resolve conflicts reasonably. Data revealed that there is a positive correlation between the fairness of trial on the principle of equity and mentality of the guilty person while resolving issues. Procedural justice has four components including voice, consciousness, reliability and impartiality. The major purpose of the this approach is the effective inclusion and approaching them with deference.

Positive Youth Development

It is a complete course of action to transform youth life stages, encourage several determinants responsible for their individuality, and help them achieve all their accomplishments (Butts, Mayer, and Ruth, 2005) Positive youth development can be possible when there are rehabilitation centers established and developing moral and psychological training to the mal-adjusted youth of society.

Juvenile delinquency in the world

The available data for European countries, a dramatic surge of 50% has been reported in the arrest rate of minors between 1980s and late 1990s. Moreover, an increase of 7 to 15 % in violent crimes by deviant juveniles is reported (Pfeiffer, 1997). As per the report of World Youth Report (2003) for the countries of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States observed 30% increase since 1995 in juvenile delinquency. Moreover, children between age group of 15 to 25 are responsible for more than half of the total offences in the region (Bendit R. et al, 2000). As per the findings of research by Chaudhary I. A. as cited by Turkish scholar Nephan Saran's that the most prevalent crimes committed by

minor criminals (age group 16-18) between 1856 to 1968 includes burglary, violence, sexual offences, pick pocketing across Istanbul (Chaudhary I. A., Aug. 2016). An article by Bendit et al. (2000), focusing on the Netherlands and Germany, reported that social workers in municipal youth offices documented 2,513 cases involving juveniles in 1995, followed by 2,496 cases in 1996.

Asian region has no exception regarding the surge in juvenile delinquency. In this context, the number of minor criminals have increased from eighty million to one hundred fifty million since 1992 to 2000. Beside stunted growth issue of children, juvenile delinquency in India reached its proportion with other countries (Dasgupta & Jayshree, 1981). It is reported that theft and burglary constitute 39.6 % of the total crimes committed under Indian Penal Code (IPC) in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, India. Similarly, Tamil Nadu faced a surge in total crimes committed by juveniles since 1995 (Paranjape, 1998). Tesfay (2016) in Masters Dissertation raised high concerns for the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency with a comparative study of crimes committed by adult. He further stated that the age group of 16 and 18 are more under risks of deviancy (Tsfay S.Z., 2016). Bangladesh among other Asian nations has recorded deteriorating situation with regard to juvenile delinquency. The report of Daily Naya Digonta on October 27, 2004 on minor criminal in Bangladesh stated delinquents are involved in illegal activities including murder, arms and terrorist acts, and drug supply. The report, moreover, stated that juvenile delinquency is a multi-causal issue it has affected the overall life spectrum of the society negatively (Naya Digonto, 2004).

Pakistan's state of juvenile delinquency

The landscape of delinquency began as a consequence of social discrimination, class-based societal structure, developmental disparity, lack of employment opportunities, illiteracy and absence of communication channel between parents and teachers regarding child supervision (Talpur & Shah, 2011). The SPARC (an NGO) in the Daily Times newspaper (Rafiq A. Sep. 2017) stated that the number of detained juvenile offenders in various jails in Pakistan are between 1500 to 2000. However, under trial states are not included. The report further pin-pointed the infrastructure for juvenile detention and claimed the country have only two borstal

institutes in Punjab which are insufficient for the growing number of delinquents across the province. Another report of the National Human Development Program launched by the UNDP in May 2018, Pakistan is considered a country, with 30% of its population aged between 15 and 29. Separately, Gul S. (August 2017), analyzing a report by *The Daily Times* that cited the World Justice Project, noted that Pakistan ranks 5th out of 6 states in its region and 106th out of 113 globally in terms of youngest population. Having this glimpse in mind, the research article (Talpur et al 2012) presented an alarming statistics of juvenile offenders detained in provinces such as Punjab 815, Sindh 303, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa 233 in various detention centers. Balochistan in this regard has no good reputation with the absence of borstal institute and minors are detained with adult criminals. Shujaat (2015) reported that in Balochistan province, out of a total population of 107, 49 minor criminals were detained in Mach Jail under apathetic conditions involving serious violations of human rights, the JJSO 2000, and the JJSA 2018. In contrast, Ramzan J. (The Nation, 20 Nov. 2016) noted that Central Jail Quetta housed 70 underage detainees who had a separate barrack from adult prisoners, a condition absent in Mach Jail.

Factors contributing to juvenile delinquency

Youth deviancy and juvenile delinquency are multi-causal including economic, social, psychological and cultural (World Youth Report 2003: Loeber and Farrington, 1998). Ardoin and Bartling presented a comparative study on juvenile delinquents and stated that among several siblings those who face emotional trauma in early childhood are more likely to be delinquent rather than who do not (Ardoin and Carl, 2010). Ardoin and Bartling stated that some juveniles became victim of delinquency due to their cult in personality. In addition to, they further asserted that child works on pleasure principle and such behavioral fault pave the way for delinquency among juveniles (Yochelson & Samenow, 1976). Hawkins et al (2000) pointed out another factor with a positive correlation between psychic apparatus of juvenile and delinquency. He pin-pointed the components of psychic apparatus including hyperactivity, impulsivity, and risk taking responsible for delinquency among juveniles (Hawkins et al, 2000). One more study described low IQ rate, aggressive

behavior, and delaying language as a push factors responsible for delinquency among minors (Moffitt, Lynam, & Silva, 1994; Shah et al, 2000). A Pakistan based study conducted by Mahmood and Cheema asserted that 24% of delinquent act by the juveniles are conducted on the principle of revenge while 19% of delinquent acts are the result of land issue committed by juveniles. The authors of the study linked both types of crimes with aggression among juveniles which the later authors described as a personality defect (Mahmood & Cheema, 2004).

Why juvenile delinquency is increasing in Pakistan

As juvenile delinquency is the most problematic issue in the State of Pakistan. Various laws have been passed from Senate, National assemble and provincial assemblies of all provinces. On state level until 2000, no efforts have been made to curb the issue of juvenile delinquency. During the regime of Perwaiz Musharaf an ordinance was passed from the national assembly of the Pakistan with the title of “Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000” to protect the youngster of the nation. This ordinance is also known as care and protection of children. Another act was passed from the National Assembly of Pakistan was passed with the title Juvenile Justice System Act 2018 and the provincial assembly passed an act for the care and protection of minor offenders as titled “Balochistan Borstal Institute Act 2014.

The Borstal Institute Act 2014 of Balochistan directed it to the planning division to streamline one Borstal Institute in Quetta in a period of six months while within one year in the remote areas. However, there is no single institute for the juvenile offenders across the province after the enactment of the Law. In these kind of circumstances, the issue of children is expanding from day to day and the rate of crimes are increasing. In this state of ignorance, the juveniles are kept with the adult black caller criminals. This kind of treatment toward the builders of the nation is quite in just, and the juveniles unrest and their psychological problems is the result of ill treatment of government officials towards our backbone juveniles.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research design. It was conducted in three major prisons in Balochistan, Pakistan: District (Central) Jail Quetta, Mach Jail, and Central Jail Lorelei (Loralai). The total sample consisted of male juvenile offenders

incarcerated in these facilities. Respondents were selected using systematic random sampling. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, with participants responding to a series of items. All data gathered pertained to the behavioral and psychological factors contributing to delinquent behavior among juveniles in Balochistan. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Result and Discussion

Personal Profile of the Respondents

Balochistan is a least developed province of the state of Pakistan and every sector under-developed with comparison to other provinces of the country. The entire province is under the taunting clouds of social problems, which risked the entire spectrum of executive and government. Juvenile delinquency amidst these social problems stands out as a pressing social problem undermining the future of Balochistan. The problem evolved due to poor law enforcement promulgated by the provincial assembly of the province.

The existing study is conducted in the 3 major correctional institutions of the province including Central Jail Quetta, Mach Jail and Lorelei Jail. Except for Central Jail Quetta, in other mentioned jails, there were no separate barrack for minor criminal to be detained. Moreover, the juvenile offenders were imprisoned with adult criminals in apathetic situation. The minor criminals were left without psychological and moral training which is the core goal of Borstal Institution as inscribed in the official gazette of Balochistan Borstal Institute Act 2014, Juvenile Justice System Act 2018.

Acceptance of Criminal Responsibility

The table represents the perception of respondents regarding the question, “Do you accept the committed crime, yes/no?” There is a wide range of difference in the opinion of a normal person and a criminal in society. The prior aim of such expression was to test the behavior of the respondents whether they have inspirations for criminality or the consequence of social structure. The states were shocking, as 75% consciously accepted crime. However, a small portion of respondent 25 % declined the question. This proved that minors were unaware of the

consequence of the act they committed.

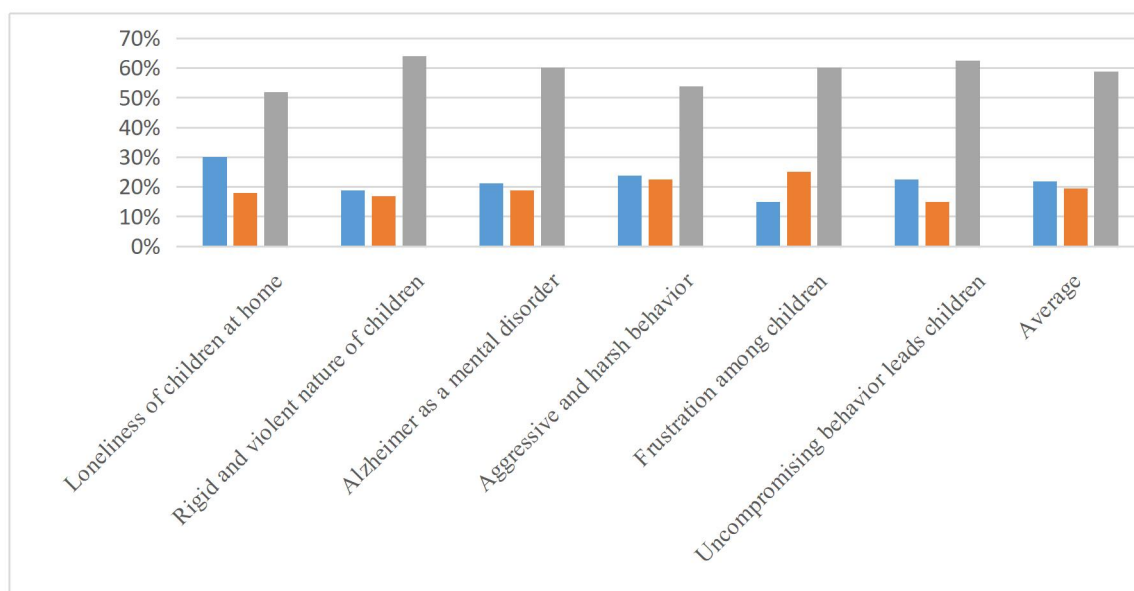
The age of respondents when they committed crime:

To know the tendency towards criminal intentions with respect to age, the field survey moreover, disclosed about the age of respondents on the commission of an offence. The results regarding this question described that delinquent intentions developed in the age of 16. So the percentage share for this age was 21.3%, whereas 17.5 (each) respondents committed deviancy in the age group of 15 and 17.

Education level of respondents:

To check the relationship between education level and juvenile delinquency, the education level of respondents of respondents were inquired. Three levels of graduates were grouped into primary, middle and matriculation, technical diploma and Madrassah education, along with the option of illiterate. The education level from KG to fifth class considered primary graduate, sixth class to eight class regarded middle in this survey, and nine to ten considered matriculation. As per the statistics of the survey, 31.3 % comprised of middle level education, which makes the major chunk of the entire population under study. However, 28.7 % remained uneducated and 30% were primary educated. In addition to, a minute share 1.3% having technical diploma and Madrassah education. Only 8.8 % consist of matriculation. Thus, the statistics of the survey proved that there is a direct relationship between delinquency and education level. The more the juvenile is education, the more he/she is likely to commit crime.

Table 1: Behavioral factors contributing to juvenile delinquency



(Field Survey)

Behavioral Factors of Delinquency among Juveniles

Both the secondary and primary data witness that juvenile delinquency is not only the result of poor economic conditions of the family and social structure, but it is also caused by behavioral factors too. The primary data revealed that when children remained alone at home would result in mal-adjusted and become a delinquent child. The major chunk of respondents agreed feeling of loneliness would result in juvenile delinquency. In behavioral factors, the rigid and violent nature of the person in early age is one of the sign of deviancy. In this regard, 64% of the respondents agreed with the question that rigid and violent nature of the children paved the way towards delinquent behavior among minors. In the same way, 53 % agreed that harsh and aggressive behavior caused deviancy among juveniles, but only 24 % of participants disagreed with the question that aggressive and harsh behavior would not result in deviancy of juveniles.

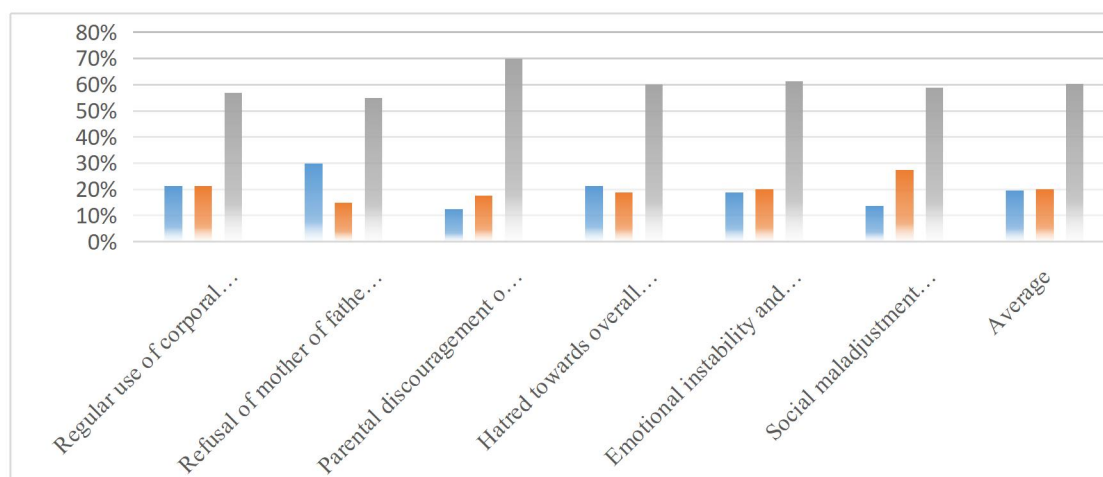
In the same chain of behavioral factors of juvenile delinquency, frustration is also one of the most leading factor. The (60%) respondents of the study agreed that frustration among children would result in juvenile delinquency if they remain frustrated at home or society. Apart from this figure, 62.5 % expressed agreement

that uncompromising behavior of children leads to juvenile delinquency, while 23 % of the respondents disagreed and 15.5 % remain neutral. During literature review, it was observed that mental disease result in juvenile delinquency too. In this respect, Alzheimer is one of the mental disorder to which 60% of the respondents agreed that this mental disorder leads to deviancy among children while 19 % of the respondents remain neutral while answering to this question.

Psychological Factors of Delinquency among Juveniles

The data focuses psychological determinants of juvenile delinquency in Balochistan. The field survey results revealed that various psychological factors strongly contribute to juvenile delinquency. Basically, children are what we make of them. In this respect, parental discouragement is one of the negative factor that push juveniles into deviancy. Regarding the item "parental discouragement of children in academic and other social achievement leads them to be delinquent," a substantial portion of respondents (70%) agreed, compared to only 12.5% who disagreed. Therefore, this factor can be the most harmful factor in the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency because discouragement of children will result in the suppression of the ego of child. Some children became violent in the early years of life due to corporal punishment of their parents and teachers. 57% of the respondents agreed with the statement that when teachers and parents use corporal punishment to their children this would result in the deviancy of juveniles. It is witnessed in several pieces of literature review that the negative attitude of parents such as refusal behavior badly affect the future of a newborn. In this context, more than half 55% agreed with the item that refusal on permission to go with their friends strongly contribute to delinquent behavior, whereas, 30 % disagreed with this item.

Table No 2: *Psychological factors contributing to juvenile delinquency*



(Field Survey)

Furthermore, delinquency among juvenile is also the result of the emotional instability and impulsive behavior. The target group of this study 61.3 % agreed with the item that emotional instability and impulsive behavior of the children leads to juvenile delinquency. On other hand, a small portion 18.8 % of the participants expressed disagreement to emotional instability and impulsive behavior of the children did not contribute to deviancy, while 20 % stayed neutral to answer this question. In psychological factors, social mal-adjustment among children is another contributory factor to this problem. A great number of participants (59%) agreed to the item that social mal-adjustment among children leads to juvenile delinquency. Moreover, 13.8% of the respondents disagreed to above-mentioned statement that social mal-adjustment among juveniles would not lead them to deviancy. Some children by nature have hatred to overall society or sometimes to the segment of society. This behavior is also too much dangerous for the maladjustment/delinquency of children. Regarding this item, 60% of respondents agreed that hatred toward a particular segment of society or toward society in general is a major cause of juvenile delinquency. In contrast, 21% disagreed, and 19% expressed a neutral stance.

Conclusion

The widely adopted definition of the juvenile delinquency involves a person below the age of 18 committed an act that violates codified laws while minimum age for

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criminal responsibility is 7 under the 1973 constitution. Unrest-ness of juveniles is a serious threat to the overall globe. The waves of juvenile delinquency are deep-rooted in developing countries especially while it is existed in USA and other developed countries of the world. The problem of juvenile deviancy is the result of poverty, low economic conditions of family and absence of quality of education in our educational system. Apart from these factors, psychological and behavioral factors strongly contribute to this problem. The causal factors behind this social issue include aloneness of children, parental disagreement with their children, aggression, personality defaults, mood instability, revengeful attitude, social mal-adjustment etc. Various laws have been made in various decades to address the problem such as JJSO (Juvenile Justice System Ordinance) 2000, Juvenile Justice Act 2018 and Balochistan Borstal Institute Act 2014 but unfortunately, the recommendations of JJSO 2000, JJSA 2018 and BBIA 2014 are severely violated. They have no implementation in ground level. The BBIA 2014 recommended that there must be Borstal institutions in each district but after 6 years of the constitution, there is no Borstal institute in each district, even the high authorities had not established Borstal institute in the provincial head quarter of the province. This article suggests that there must be Borstal institutes in the province for the maturation, psychological and moral development of minor criminals.

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