

Explore the Contributing Factors of Juvenile Delinquency among Children in Selected Juvenile Homes, Kerala

*P.Chitra, **AiswariyaChandy, **Belbimol E, **Rakhie George, **Jayakrishnan R, &**Praveena Paul.

Abstract

Descriptive study was executed with two main objectives, which includes , firstly to find the contributing factors of juvenile delinquency and secondly to explore the supportive factors among the vagrant children. The sample size was 60 and purposive sampling technique was chosen. The tool used was written narrative statements and 3 open ended questions. The results revealed that, family factor is found to be the leading cause of juvenile delinquency, 48% children were subjected to physical assault and 27% were punished cruelly by fathers. Twenty six of the parents were separated, 70% of fathers were alcoholic. One open ended question 48(80%) of them reported they will study well and serve the society according to their capacity. Thus, the findings of this study was beyond the belief that, nearly all the children , in juvenile homes, belonged to the category of „Child in need of care and protection“ rather than Child in conflict withLaw“.

Key words:

Written Narrative statements, Vagrant, Child in Need of Care and Protection and Child In Conflict With Law

Introduction

Juvenile delinquency, known as juvenile offending or youth crime, is a state at which the minors are inclined towards illegal activities (individuals younger than the statutory age of majority). A juvenile delinquent is a person who is typically under the age of 18 and the maximum punishment provided in the Juvenile Justice Act (Care And Protection Of Children) is three years sentence in correctional homes.¹In 2010 there were 826 recognizable crimes of juvenile delinquency in Kerala, the following facilities had been established for the treatment of adjudicated children and adolescents; six juvenile homes, fourteen observation homes, one certified juvenile home and two special homes out of which 256 were committed by nearly adolescents in the 12 to 16 age category and 544 were

committed by adolescents aged 16 to 18

years (Crime India 2010).The study was executed with two main objectives, which includes, firstly, to find the contributing factors of juvenile delinquency and secondly, to explore the supportive factors among the vagrant children.²

Methods

The research design used was descriptive as well as explorative in nature. The sampling technique implemented was purposive sampling and the sample size was restricted to 60 children, selected from Juvenile Homes at Trivandrum (60), Kozhikode (115) and Kottayam (52). Of the total children residing in these juvenile homes only one child was Child In Conflict With Law and rest of them were Children In Need of Care and Protection. The study was instrumented with written narrative

statements which is translated in Malayalam from English which determines the past experiences occurred even before entering the juvenile home. The written narrative statements include the responses of the children in order to discern the contributing factors of juvenile delinquency. The findings of the written narrative statements were prioritized in frequency and percentage and the open-ended questions were scrutinized and their experiences were interpreted in words.

Results

The prevalent factors identified under ten headings ; Family background, personality, disciplinary regimen, impact of environment, school life, peer bonding, economic status, recreation, influence of media and use of substance. In the family factor, the subjects were distributed, based on parental interactions and rearing practices; as 26(43.3%) got separated from parents; 42(70%) parents had the habit of consuming alcohol and smoking; 27(45%)mothers were authoritative; 19(31.67%)were authoritative fathers; there was love and care among 36(60%) siblings; 29(48.33%) had physical assault by alcoholic fathers; 16(26.67%) were punished cruelly and 4(6.67%) were sexually molested.

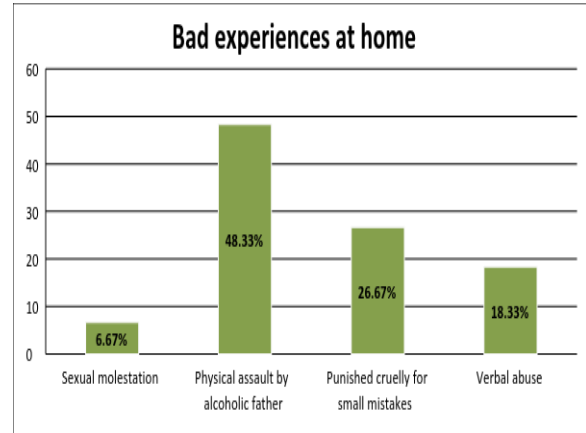


Fig 1: Distribution of Juvenile delinquents according to bad experiences at home

In the school life factor 29(48.33%) of children bunk classes, 16(26.67%) fight with friends, 12(20%) were engaged in stealing, 3(5%) indulged in activities of immoral behaviour toward females. Distinct demographic variables in which 37(61.67%) children belonged the rural area, the entire group of 60 children were males, nearly one third of them 22(36.67%) were in the age group of 16 to 17 years and 17(28.33%) were in between 12 to 14 years.

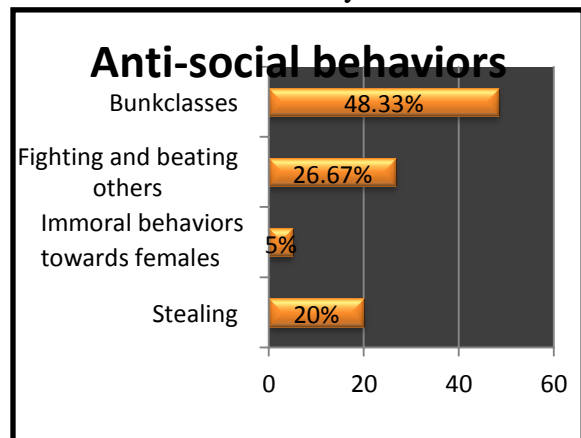


Fig 2: Distribution of juvenile delinquents according to antisocial behaviorsconducted

Other positive explorations include 24(40%) children having good conduct towards others, 33(55%) of them never having any bad habits and 43(71.67%) were found interested in recreational activities and have won several prizes. Unexpected findings identified were 28(46.67%) children were studying well and scoring excellent marks and 42(70%) reported to have maintained good teacher-student relationship.

Discussion

As seen in the other studies, family factor is found to be the leading cause of juvenile delinquency in the present study also. A survey carried out across 13 states in 2009 among 12,447 children focused the fact that

88.6% were found physically abused by parents and in the case of 83% the parents were found to be the abusers. In the present study, it was pointed out that 29(48.33%) children were subjected to physical assault by alcoholic father and punished cruelly. In another similar study, carried out by Jaya N and Narasimhan, in 1999, „Violence on children aged between 10 and 18 years, in varied family contexts were observed and the reasons for the violence on children being the poor inter-personal relationship with family and relatives with 50% of

A study was conducted by C H Ghattargi and S. N. Deshmukh among 300 juveniles admitted to remand homes of which 64(21.33%) were non-delinquents. Thus, the findings of this study was beyond the belief that, nearly, all the children, in juvenile homes, belonged to the category of „Child in Need of Care and Protection“ rather than Child in Conflict With Law.

children, and the presence of unhealthy habits like smoking with 31%, alcoholism with 17% and gambling with 13% were the most common stressful situations that lead to violence on children in families.⁵In the present study, 26% of the parents were found separated, 70% of the fathers were found alcoholic. Three open-ended questions were asked to describe the concept about life includes the following: a) what will you do to become a good citizen? b) Describe the sweet memories before coming to the juvenile home. c) Has the environment of this home influenced you in

any way? Among the children, in the juvenile home, 48(80%) of them reported they will study well and serve the society according to their capability. They also aspire to become doctors, police and engineers in order to take care of their

family. Rest of 12 (20%) did not report anything to uplift their lives and the country. Majority of them 51(85%) did not have any good memorable event to recollect whereas 9(15%) of them expressed that they cherish the sweet memories of family tour and fun with friends. A number of the joint Unicef and Ministry of Labour studies which interviewed street children who had been in the homes found that the majority of children reported that the provision of basic necessities in the home was bad. Almost 57(95%) of them wrote the juvenile home

transformed and moulded them into better children and only 3(5%) of them wrote that they became worse after entering the juvenilehome.

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