

Reassessment of Underlying Factors of Juvenile Delinquency in the Purview of COVID-19: A Case Study

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Abstract: *This paper is a reassessment of underlying factors of juvenile delinquency in the purview of Covid-19. The study tries to judge the relationship between juvenile delinquency and impact of media, heredity, environment, time, age, school performance, economic status, association etc. The significance of the relationships has been tested. Moreover, attempt has been made to study the influence of the juveniles' sexual status and residential status on juvenile delinquency. It is observed that juvenile delinquency inside the home has been increased during the lockdown period. The study reveals that media has a significant impact on juvenile delinquency. There exists no significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and age, economic status of the juveniles. The study proves that there exists a significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and heredity, environment, time, school performance, association etc. The study also proves that juvenile delinquency and juveniles' sexual status and residential status are not independent.*

Keywords: *Covid-19, Juvenile Delinquency, Media, Heredity, Environment, Time, Age.*

Introduction

“Covid-19” or Coronavirus is a notorious virus which causes pandemic worldwide. At present it is not unfamiliar to human being due to its devastation. At first, Covid-19 originates and spreads in a state, Wuhan of China in the months of December 2019. Subsequently it grabs the countries of Europe, America, Africa and Asia miserably. Almost 213 Countries and Territories around the world have reported a total of 7,854,879 confirmed cases of the coronavirus Covid-19 that originated from Wuhan, China, and a death toll of 431,724 deaths till death. Top six largely affected countries in the world are USA, Brazil, Russia, Spain, UK and India. No specific drug or vaccine has yet been invented to control the Covid-19. Some restrictions such as lockdown, social distancing, compulsory using of mask, sanitizer, hand washing and maintenance of new life style are the tools to combat against the pandemic. There is no light of hope to arrest the muted virus so far. This unprecedented phenomenon simultaneously creating some social, economic and psychological problems, those have serious impacts on human beings also. Adolescent school students are confined in their home a long time due to lockdown. They are in a trauma which causes some behavioral changes among them. They become violent in some cases. Now the time to reassess the underlying causes of delinquency among the juveniles in the purview of Covid-19.

Growing nature of delinquency among adolescents is a global phenomenon. Countries across the world are suffering more or less from this problem. India can never be the exception to this. It is a matter of great concern. If we give our attention to daily newspapers, we will see the offences are happening frequently among the juveniles. The society is changing rapidly in the breeze of globalization. Consequently, society is becoming complex and many social problems are originated. Juvenile delinquency is certainly a social problem. In developing countries like India the acuteness of the problem is very significant. Worldwide spreading of Covid-19 and subsequent imposition of lockdown aggravated the problem among the adolescents seriously. They are becoming more delinquent inside the home. Now the time is to reassess the causes of the problem and find out the remedies.

Review of Literature:

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Juvenile delinquency is a subject of social science in broad sense. Many research works have been conducted on the issue in India and also abroad before occurrence of this pandemic Covid-19. Few of them are being highlighted below:

- World Youth Report (2003) indicates that the juvenile who receive less familial supervision, or who live in dysfunctional family settings or in disadvantaged families have more chances of getting involved in delinquent behavior.
- He Len Chung and Laurence Steinberg (2006) indicates that when the neighborhood ties are weak and the social organization factors are not effective, the social control over the members of the society becomes weak, thus leading to delinquent tendencies. Along with the weak neighborhood, ineffective parenting and association of the youth with deviant peers leads to higher rates of offending.
- According to Psacharopoulos (2007) early school leaving and criminal behavior of young people are two important concerns in every community as they can result in individual and public losses. School dropout is associated with lower economic growth, youth unemployment, decreases in gross income and with higher crime rates as well.
- Piquero et al. (2007) and Bosick (2009) proves that the age-crime curve shows that the peak age of criminal behavior is in adolescence, between age of 15 and 19.
- K. S. Williams (2012) explains delinquency from psychological view point, which support the Freudian concepts of id, ego and super-ego. When the id becomes too strong, and the super-ego becomes weak the ego develops into anti- social person.
- Ombato, John Onyango et al (2013) concludes that social factors such as poverty and low education are also responsible for juvenile delinquency. Habits of substance abuse also make the youth vulnerable to offending. Broken families are directly related to higher rates of delinquency.
- The study of female inmates in Bangladesh by Maruf et al (2015) reveals that there can a strong link between psychological condition of the youth and delinquent tendencies. Very high incidence of psychiatric disorder among the offenders of Female Juvenile Center, showed high incidence of substance abuse.
- S. Choudhary (2017) categorizes the causes of Juvenile delinquency into three groups: 1. Biological 2. Socio-Environmental and 3. Psychological, Physiological and personal. Juvenile delinquency is an ongoing problem in today's society, there needs to be more programs created in order to correct this issue.
- D. Agarwal (2018) tries to find out the underlying causes of juvenile delinquency and indicates increasing involvement of the juveniles in heinous crimes. To contain the problem of juvenile delinquency in India, the Act pertaining to Juvenile Delinquency has been amended and now trial of juveniles involved in heinous crimes is held as adults.

In the present article, an attempt has been made to reassess the causes of juvenile delinquency during the lockdown imposed subsequently after the outbreak of Covid-19. So far knowledge goes such type of research work is scarce in the studied area till date. If the causes are detected specifically and are dealt with properly, it may be possible to solve the problem in near future.

Objective of the study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To study the relationship between juvenile delinquency and
 - a. the impact of media
 - b. the heredity of the family
 - c. the environment of living
 - d. the impact of time
 - e. the impact of age
 - f. the school performances
 - g. the economic condition
 - h. Association of the juveniles.

2. The significance of the relationships has also to be studied
3. To study the influence of the juveniles' sexual status and residential status on juvenile delinquency.
4. To assess and consider the heredity, environment, economic condition of the juveniles' families, their association, schools' performances and age of the juveniles.
5. To judge, whether the variances of opinion of guardians and also teachers regarding the impact of media on juvenile delinquency are consistent or not.

Hypothesis

In order to realize that objective of the study, the following null hypotheses have been formulated.

(1) H₀: There exists no significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and

(a) media, (b) environment, (c) heredity (d) time, (e) age, (f) performances, (g) economic condition, (h) association

An alternative hypothesis formulated is

H_a: There exists significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and

(a) media, (b) environment, (c) heredity (d) time, (e) age, (f) performances, (g) economic condition, (h) association

(2) H₀: The variances of opinion of guardians and also regarding impact of media is significantly consistent.

An alternative hypothesis formulated is

H_a: The variances of opinion of guardians and also teachers regarding impact of media is significantly inconsistent.

(3) H₀: Sexual status of the juveniles and juvenile delinquency are independent to each other.

An alternative hypothesis formulated is

H_a: Sexual status of the juveniles and juvenile delinquency are dependent to each other.

(4) H₀: Residential status of the juveniles and juvenile delinquency are independent to each other.

An alternative hypothesis formulated is

H_a: Residential status of the juveniles and juvenile delinquency are dependent to each other.

Delimitation

The study is confined to the jurisdiction of Burdwan Municipality under the district of Purbabardhaman, West Bengal, India. The present study is based on only 21 samples of juvenile delinquent of the studied area. The major portion of the study stands on the opinion of 21 teachers of these sample juveniles.

Description of Attributes

1. Juvenile Delinquency: In the present study it has been selected as the only dependent attribute. Juvenile delinquency means here the crimes or offences committed by the juvenile at the period of adolescence. Destructive activities, physical and mental torture to their associates, bloodshed, stealing, eve teasing, use of slang, audacity, disobedience, etc. are the examples of juvenile delinquency. Such types of offences are increasing in recent time all over the world.

A relationship between juvenile delinquency and impact of media, heredity, environment, time, age, performance, economic status, association may, therefore, be expected.

2. Media: In the present study it has been selected as independent attribute. Media means here both the audio visual and print media. Television, Cinema, Video etc. are under the audio visual media and newspapers, magazines, journals are termed as print media. It is a fact that the impact of audio visual media as well as print media on society is very significant.

A relationship between juvenile delinquency and impact of media may, therefore, be expected.

3. Heredity: In the present study it has been selected as an independent attribute. Heredity is the process by which the characteristics of parents are transferred to their next generation. It is a continuous

biological process. It means if the parents genetically inherit the characteristic of juvenile delinquency, it must be transferred to their sons and daughters.

A relationship between juvenile delinquency and impact of heredity may, therefore, be expected.

4. Environment: In the present study it has been selected as an independent attribute. Here nonphysical environment is explained. It includes sociological, cultural, economic, political, educational, religious atmosphere of the area where the juveniles are living in. Environment both inside the home and outside the home, is considered here.

A relationship between juvenile delinquency and impact of environment may, therefore, be expected.

5. Time: In the present study it has been selected as an independent attribute. Time means a period required for changing a society. It is consensus that the nature and habit of human being changes with the changing of society. So time plays a vital role in changing the activities of human beings.

A relationship between juvenile delinquency and impact of time may, therefore, be expected.

6. Age: In the present study it has been selected as an independent attribute. Here age means the impact of chronological age of juveniles on their body and mind. It is a fact that a radical change takes place in the body and mind of juveniles at the period of adolescence.

A relationship between juvenile delinquency and impact of age may, therefore, be expected.

7. Performance: In the present study it has been selected as an independent attribute. Performance means academic performances of the juveniles. It includes results of school examinations, co-curricular activities etc. Continuous poor performances in school evaluation system create frustration in the mind of juveniles and may, sometimes, be the cause of juvenile delinquency.

A relationship between juvenile delinquency and impact of poor performances may, therefore, be expected.

8. Association: In the present study, it has been selected as an independent attribute. Association means here the close companion of juveniles. In broader sense, association means the friends, parents, school teachers, private tutors, close relatives, near neighbors of the juveniles.

A relationship between juvenile delinquency and impact of association may, therefore, be expected.

Methodology

The study has been conducted on the juvenile delinquency within the jurisdiction of Burdwan (23.2324° N, 87.8615° E) Municipality in the district of Purbabardhaman, West Bengal, India. 21 delinquent juveniles including 7 female have been selected at random assuming true representatives of the total population. All sample juveniles are school students, belonging to the age group of 13 years to 16 years. 21 teachers of these sample juveniles are choosed who are closely associated with them. 21 guardians of these juveniles are picked up with due sincerity.

Selection and Description of Tools

Primary data have been collected by the investigator, in person, using whatsapp from the 21 teachers and 21 guardians on the basis of two types of questionnaire. Data have also been collected from the sample juveniles by direct interview conducted through telephone. These are discussed below:

- (A) **Questionnaire for Teachers:** Questionnaire for teachers is prepared to get the opinion of teachers of the sample juveniles about the degree of delinquency, impact of media on their mind, environment where they live in, their heredity, impact of time and age on their mind,

their academic performances, economic condition of their family and their association. It is a big sized, structured, close ended questionnaire. There are three scales of opinions (high, medium, low/good, moderate, bad) having different scores for each of them. The medium of questionnaire is Bengali for easy comprehension and communication.

- (B) **Questionnaire for Guardians:** Questionnaire for guardians are prepared to get the opinion of guardians of the sample juveniles about the impact of audio visual and print media on the mind of juveniles. They also asked about whether the juveniles are under the coverage of media or not. It is a short sized, structured, close-ended questionnaire. There are three scales of opinions (high, medium, low) having different scores for each of them. The medium of questionnaire is Bengali for easy comprehension and communication.
- (C) **Direct Interview:** Direct interview has been conducted by the investigator through telephone to the sample juveniles and their teachers to collect more information about the said problem. Juveniles are asked about the cause of delinquency and reluctance in study, their families, environment where they live, whether they are under the coverage of media or not, association of them, school performances etc. Teachers are asked about the aspects viz. juveniles' sexual status, juveniles' residential status, their opinion regarding the cause and acuteness of the problem. They are also asked about the influence of sexual status and residential status of the juveniles on juvenile delinquency.

Collection of Data: The data have been collected directly from 21 juveniles, 21 teachers and 21 guardians through telephone & whatsapp by the investigator himself. Sample juveniles, their teachers and guardians are requested to give their natural, free and frank responses to the queries. They are taken into confidence and are told that the information is required only for research purpose and will be strictly kept secret.

Tabulation and Scoring of Data: The data which have been collected through two type of questionnaire are compiled on suitable tabulation sheets which are also prepared for the purpose.

The data obtained from teachers and guardians are scored, keeping in mind the 'Likert Scoring System' as follows:

- (A) **Teachers Questionnaire:** In the teachers questionnaire there are as many as eight questions relating to their opinion about the juveniles' family, impact of media, age, association and performance on juveniles mind. These questions are subjected to answer one of the three options – high, medium, low/good, moderate, bad. Score 10 is allotted to each 'high'/'good' opinion. Score 6 is allotted to each 'medium'/'moderate' opinion and score 4 is allotted to each 'low'/'bad' opinion.
- (B) **Guardians Questionnaire:** In the guardian's questionnaire there is only one major question relating to the impact of audio visual media and also print media on the mind of juveniles. The question is subjected to answer one of the three options high, medium, low. Score 10 is allotted to each 'high' option. Score 6 is allotted to each 'medium' option and score 4 is allotted to 'low' option.

Statistical Technique Used:

The data are tabulated and analyzed keeping in view the objective spelt out and hypothesis formulated. Rank Correlation Co-efficients (ρ) are calculated to study the relationship between juvenile delinquency and (1) impact of media, (2) heredity, (3) environment, (4) time, (5) age, (6) performance, (7) economic condition and (8) association. In order to judge the significance of these relationships 't-value' of rank correlation co-efficient (ρ) have been computed. Test has been made at 1% significance level in general. Chi-Square (χ^2) test has been used for independence of the attribute – juvenile delinquency and (i) sexual status of the juveniles, (ii) residential status of the juveniles. The test has been made at 1% significance level. 'F-test' has also been used to study whether the variances of opinion of teachers and also guardians

regarding impact of media in the mind of juveniles are significantly consistent or not. The test has been made at 5% significance level.

Findings

Table 1 shows the result of all statistical methods have been used to analyze the collected data which outcomes the following findings:

- (1) There exists a high degree of positive relationship between juvenile delinquency and media. The relationship is significant.
- (2) There exists a notable relationship between juvenile delinquency and heredity of juveniles. The relationship is significant also.
- (3) There exists a significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and impact environment in the mind of juveniles.
- (4) Juvenile delinquency and impact of time in the mind of juveniles are very closely related. The relationship is not only close but also significant.
- (5) There exists little relationship between juvenile delinquency and age of juveniles. The relationship is insignificant.
- (6) Poor school performances of juveniles are a cause of juvenile delinquency. Because the relationship between two attributes is significant.
- (7) Economic condition of the family and juvenile delinquency is not significantly related to each other. That means juvenile delinquency does not necessarily depend upon families' economic condition.
- (8) There exists an important relationship between juvenile delinquency and impact of associations on the mind of juveniles. The relationship is very significant.
- (9) The opinion of teachers and also guardians regarding the impact of media on juveniles is significantly consistent. It means the opinion of both is more or less the same. It confirms the impact of media on juveniles is not significant at all.
- (10) Juveniles' sexual status (Male/Female) is not independent of juvenile delinquency. That means male/female ratio of delinquent juveniles differs in the studied area.
- (11) Juveniles' residential status (developed/underdeveloped) is not independent to juvenile delinquency. It indicates percentage of delinquent juveniles which varies between developed and underdeveloped region of the studied area.

Conclusions

Juvenile delinquency has been increased during the lockdown period. The study reveals that impact of media in the mind of juveniles is significant during the lockdown period, caused due to outbreak of Covid-19. There exist a high degree of positive relationship between media and juvenile delinquency. It also reveals that most of the sample juveniles under the coverage of media both print and electronic. The opinion of the teachers and the guardians of sample juveniles regarding impact of media on juvenile delinquency support the above hypothesis. Similarly, age and economic status of the juveniles has no significant impact on juvenile delinquency. Though sometimes it is presumed that the impact of age and economic status of the juveniles are two important causes of juvenile delinquency, but the study proves that the presumption is not true fully. Because all tender aged having poor economic condition does not become delinquent. The investigator identified 6 major causes viz. media, heredity, environment, time, school performances, association which are significantly responsible for this problem. It is also observed that the problem varies in respect of juveniles' sexual status and residential status.

Implications of the Study

The study reveals a number of drawbacks of the guardians, teachers and administrations of the studied area. The state of affairs led the investigator to several implications for the concern authorities. Suitable steps should, therefore, be taken by the respective authorities to remove the existing drawbacks. The following **recommendations** are made in this regard.

- (i) Guardians should be conscious of their children's education and also their children's future. Restricted use of media by the juveniles is permissible. They have to sacrifice many things

- for the development of their children. In some cases the advice of psychologist or psychiatrist may be taken.
- (ii) Central Government, State Governments and local administration have a great responsibility to remove this problem. Administration should try to make the guardians of the juveniles conscious of their children's proper education. Administration should also take a macro level plan to get rid of the trap from the problem.
 - (iii) School teachers and private tutors should take necessary care for the backward and maladjusted students whose school performances are very poor. Special teaching method is recommended for these students to create interest among the juveniles.
 - (iv) Bad associations of the juveniles must be eliminated. The role of guardians and teachers is very important in this regard.

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