

SYNOPSISIntroduction :

The problem of delinquency has recently been the focus of much attention of psychologists, educationists and social workers at home and abroad. Much work has been done on this subject in America and England. In comparison to the work in the foreign countries, perhaps India is practically far behind to solve her problem. Whatever literature and research publications are available on the subject pertaining to delinquency can mostly be obtained from countries other than India. The movement of Remand Homes for the young offenders has been a very recent attempt in this direction in India and this has mainly been the source of inspiration to some enthusiastic research workers in our country by way of at least being the source of information and data necessary in any scientific work. The present investigation is one such effort - studying systematically some of the basic factors of juvenile delinquency in some of the districts of Gujarat.

The problems of delinquency is not mere abstraction, but something concrete which is a part of the social life of the people. It is a living problem and so it should not be neglected. If neglected, it undermines not only social but also national life.

Recently it has attracted the attention of the nation and society. But nothing is done and much remains to be done in the field. Here the investigator has made an humble effort to tackle scientifically and systematically this problem as it exists in one part of our country viz. Gujarat.

Problem :

Delinquency signifies merely misconduct. To an individual it is his own adjustment to his environment approved by him though not necessarily by others. It is to him just as much a response to inner drives and outer stimuli as any other kind of conduct. It indicates a failure on the part of the individual to make a socially acceptable adaptation to the requirements of the society. It means a conduct in contravention of socially accepted norms of a

particular time. It varied from such minor offences like truancy and lying to such major offences like murder and assault.

Importance :

Generally people have considered the problem of delinquency as a case of minor importance, but with the advance of psychology, it has occupied a place of major interest to social workers and reformers. It has not only social importance but also national importance. This problem much neglected earlier has now-a-days become the issue of vital concern. It needs attention of all. Recent years have witnessed definitely an increase in the percentage of delinquency. We read everyday in the news papers something about an adult criminality, the roots of which can be traced to juvenile delinquency. Dealing with juvenile delinquents at the starting level is the economical way to be pursued for decreasing the crimes in the society. It is easier to deal with juvenile delinquents than the adult criminals. Children are in their formative period of life; the knowledge of child psychology helps the worker; the co-operation of children can be easily enlisted. Their case histories are short

and fresh; data can be easily accumulated. All these suggest the importance and urgency and at the same time practicability of dealing with juvenile crimes.

Purpose of Study :

In view of the importance of the problem, the investigation was undertaken with regard to study factors of juvenile delinquency among children of some districts of Gujarat. It is hoped that this attempt will be most welcome at the time of the new creation of the Gujarat State. The State has to face many new problems and the results of this investigation will be of some use to the social workers of the new State in matter of vital importance, viz. welfare of the young.

Plan and Procedure :

Primary approach to the analysis of crime is the exploration of the forces and circumstances that lead to crimes. These may be traced to the working of the mental endowments of the criminal against his family background and his physical and social environments. Conduct may be said to consist of the result of interplay between innate constitution and environmental forces.

Every delinquent or criminal act has its origin in multiplicity of causes, often interwoven and confused. But still there is some cause which is dominating or accelerating the result in a particular case. In order to arrive at the clearest causation of crime, comparison is a fundamental method. A number of delinquents have been compared with non-delinquents and their similarities and differences have been studied here. Most of other studies have vaguely or in general terms enlisted a number of incidental or accidental factors as causes of delinquent behaviour. The author feels that these may not be necessarily causes but concomittant variables. Secondly, some of the oft-quoted major factors often interact with others and conceal the main effects other way. Only an adequate experimental design manipulating the needed variables and controlling other ones can bring the true effects of the factors to be studied. In view of this the author has tried to keep some of the commonest variable constant in both the groups and manipulated the rest. Delinquency has been mostly observed to be incidental to the level of age, intelligence and economic status and these mostly obscure the effect of other factors associated with delinquency. To study later, the

author has carefully introduced an experimental control by keeping the former three, viz., age, intelligence and economic status constant in both the groups of delinquents and non-delinquents.

Sample :

In this present investigation two groups have been selected, viz., delinquents and non-delinquents which are termed as experimental and control groups respectively. Each group consisted of one hundred and fifty children. The subjects came from representative areas of Gujarat where certified schools were available, viz., Surat, Broach and Baroda districts. Members of the experimental group were selected from the certified schools which admitted and educated the juvenile offenders. Members of the control group were selected from the normal school-going population. In selecting the members of the control or normal group rating method was used. The child was rated as non-delinquent on the basis of a rating sheet by teachers. Only boys served as subjects in both the groups as certified schools in this area used to admit only delinquent boys.

Data :

Data of experimental group were obtained from the records in the certified schools, and also interviewing the child, the probation officers, superintendents of the said schools and also if possible parents or guardians of the child. The data of normal children were gathered from their school records as well as from interviewing the child and teachers. In checking the data gathered almost all the available possible sources were used. For determining the level of intelligence "Progressive Matrices Test" was used.

First the records of 150 delinquent children were prepared with respect to a number of items of information on a record sheet. Then about 380 children rated as normal by the teachers were studied with respect to the same number of items of information. Attempt was then made to match as many as possible from the 380 with already available delinquents on the basis of age, intelligence and economic status. At least 150 non-delinquents were available against 150 delinquents, members of both the groups being almost individually equal in age, intelligence

and economic status. This design enabled the investigator to search out the other factors contributing to delinquency.

The investigator has also used the family relationship questionnaire and character evaluation forms devised by Dr. A. S. Patel and Adjustment Inventory standardised by Shri H. S. Asthana. These enabled the author to study the differences in family adjustment, general adjustment as well as character scores of both the groups.

For collecting all the data, information sheets were used. They included many items which were thought to influence juvenile delinquency. Items were chosen on the basis of opinions taken from the specialists in the field, such as superintendents of the certified schools, probation officers, social workers and authors in the field and also modified with experience during the interview by the present investigator. Some of the items were included to know the points of difference between the two groups.

Data on the following items were collected with respect to the members of both the groups :

(a) Information regarding the Child :

1. Legal status of the child.
2. Height and weight.
3. General health.
4. Disease.
5. Physical defect.
6. Physical deformity.
7. Education.
8. Addiction.
9. Cinema preferences.
10. Reading preferences.
11. Ambition.
12. Any three present wishes in order of preference.
13. Dreams.
14. Rank in the family.
15. Attitude towards father and mother.
16. Use of leisure time.
17. Employment.
18. Economic ~~profession~~ **POSSESSION.**

(b) Information regarding the Sibling :

1. Number of siblings.
2. Sibling relationship.
3. Disease prevalent among the siblings.
4. Criminality record.

(c) Information regarding the father :

1. Disease.
2. Education.
3. Addiction.
4. Occupation.
5. Attitude towards the child and other children in the family.
6. Criminality and immorality record.

(d) Information regarding the mother :

1. Disease.
2. Education.
3. Addiction.
4. Occupation.
5. Attitude towards the child and other children in the family.
6. Criminality and immorality record.

(e) Information regarding the home :

1. Types of the family.
2. Size of the family.
3. Marital status of the parents.
4. Relationship of the parents.
5. Earning members in the family.
6. Discipline in the family.
7. Family group recreation.

8. Provision for recreation in the family.
9. Cohesiveness in the family.
10. Entertaining the child's friends at home.
11. House.
12. Number of rooms.
13. Families dwelling in the same building.
14. Change of residence.
15. Neighbourhood.

(f) Information regarding the delinquency :

1. Type of delinquency committed.
2. Age at first delinquency.
3. Act committed in the company of.
4. Conduct in the certified school.

Statistical Analysis :

After collecting the data of both the groups separately, frequency of incidence of a given factor among the experimental group was compared with that of the control group and differences were found out. A Chi-square Test was used to find out whether the given factor was statistically significant or not. Further, the differences in family adjustment, general adjustment and character traits were also studied.

Whether the differences in both the groups was significant or not was determined with the help of a 't' test.

Summary of the Results :

Following factors were found statistically significant. They are discussed in the main thesis at length with facts and figures.

(A) The Child :

1. Legal Status : Illegitimacy was found to be associated with delinquency, while not a single non-delinquent child was found illegitimate.

2. General health at the time of selection : Higher number of delinquent children were found having weak and average healthful living while few showed symptoms of good health in comparison to non-delinquent children.

Information was also obtained regarding the height and weight, disease, physical defect and deformity prevalent in both the groups.

3. Education : Non-delinquent children were selected from the school-going population so in this respect question of comparison does not arise. But higher number of delinquent children were having primary education, very few were having secondary education, while many children were illiterate.
4. Addiction : Delinquent children were more addicted to smoking, gambling, drinking and other addictions such as snuffing, tobacco in comparison to non-delinquent children.
5. Cinema : Generally almost all the children like to visit cinema, but delinquent children were observed to like cinema visits to a greater extent than non-delinquent children. Regarding the type of cinema preferred, delinquent always preferred detective, fighting pictures while non-delinquents preferred social and religious.
6. Reading : Though certain number of children were illiterate, the rest always liked to

read detective stories and the illiterate also showed the same tendency to listen to detective stories during interview, while non-delinquent children always preferred autobiographies and short stories.

7. Rank in the family : Great number of delinquent children were found to be the only child, the youngest or the eldest child in the family, while non-delinquent children were observed to be intermediate in rank in the family.

Information regarding the numerical rank in the family and the total number of siblings in the family of both the groups were also obtained.

8. Child's attitude towards father and mother : Generally delinquent children showed an attitude of indifference and rejection and very few had a warm attitude towards the father or mother, while non-delinquent children had warm and indifferent attitude and very few had an attitude of rejection towards the father or mother.

9. Use of leisure time : Higher number of delinquent children were found passing their leisure time loitering outside the home, near railway station, bazaar, garden or park and near the cinema theatres. Non-delinquent children were found passing their leisure time in a constructive way.

10. Employment : More number of delinquent children were found to be labouring in one way or the other, e.g. serving as a hotel boy, shoe-shiners, coolies, vendors, domestic servants, etc. Some delinquents were doing black-marketing in cinema tickets, some were earning by occupying seats in the railway compartments for the passengers. Delinquents were not found regularly. Information regarding their economic possessions such as sources of pocket-money, the amount per week, disposition of money, etc. was also gathered.

(B) Siblings :

1. Both the groups significantly differed in their relationship towards siblings. More

delinquents were found having indifferent and hostile relationship with their siblings, while more non-delinquents were found having warm and indifferent relationship with their siblings.

Information was also obtained regarding the disease prevalent among the siblings.

2. Criminality Record : Higher number of delinquents had more than one sibling involved in criminal acts.

(C) Father :

1. Addiction : Fathers in both the groups also showed differences in their habits and addictions. A greater number of delinquent children had fathers who were addicted to drinking and gambling in comparison to the fathers of the non-delinquent children.

Information regarding the disease prevalent among the fathers of both the groups is also summarized.

2. Education : A great number of fathers of the delinquent children were mostly illiterate. Fathers of the non-delinquent children had education at least upto primary, also upto secondary and some even upto college level.

3. Occupation : Fathers of the delinquent children were found working in the mill or factory, serving as labourers, or as seasonal labourers or vendors, while fathers of the normal children were found serving in Government Departments or in private firms, some were also found carrying on business.

Generally, fathers of the delinquent children were irregular in their occupation.

4. Attitude towards children in the family :
Fathers of the delinquent children were found partial and discriminating between children in the family.

5. Criminality and immorality : Higher rate of criminality and immorality was found among the fathers of the experimental group in comparison to the control group.

(D) Mother :

1. Addiction : Mothers in both the groups showed difference in their habits and addictions. Higher number of the mothers of the delinquent group were addicted to smoking, drinking and gambling than the mothers of the normal group.

Information regarding the disease prevalent among the mothers of both the groups was obtained.

2. Education : Equal number of mothers of both the groups were illiterate but more mothers of the members of the normal group had education upto primary level than that of the delinquent group. Very few mothers of the normal group had education upto secondary level, while none had college education.

3. Occupation : More mothers of the delinquent children were found working, generally they were working as labourers or as seasonal labourers or as domestic servants. Some were also found vendors. Very few mothers of the non-delinquent children were working as labourers outside. Most of the mothers were housewives, and those that working and not maintaining, were working at their own house and not outside.

Mothers of the experimental group were irregular in their work.

4. Attitude towards children in the family : Mothers of the delinquent children were found partial and discriminating between children in the family.
5. Criminality and Immorality : Mothers of the delinquent children were found having criminality and immorality record in comparison to non-delinquent group.

(E) Family :

1. Broken Homes : A significantly greater number of delinquent children were coming from broken families.

Information regarding the marital status of the parents, types of the family, the care taken etc. is also summarized.

2. Parent's Mutual Relationship : The fathers and the mothers of the delinquent children showed far poorer, not smoother with their other partner than that of non-delinquent children.

3. Cohesiveness in the family : Higher number of delinquent children were coming from families having poor cohesiveness than the non-delinquent children.

4. Family group recreation : Greater number of non-delinquent children had often and occasional family group recreation programmes in comparison to delinquent children.

Information regarding the earning members in the family, attitude towards entertaining

the child's friends at homes was also collected.

- 5. Discipline in the family : Practically higher number of non-delinquent children were treated by their parents with normal rules of conduct. Delinquent children were brought up under strict discipline or lack of discipline in the family.

Information regarding the method adopted by parents in the family for controlling the child in both the groups was also summarized.

- 6. Neighbourhood : Delinquent children were found coming from poor neighbourhood and environment. Only a few delinquent children were coming from fair and good neighbourhood.

- (1) Size of the family.
- (2) Provision for recreation in the home.
- (3) Overcrowding in the home.

Information regarding number of rooms, rent per month, number of the families dwelling in the same building etc. is also summarized in case of both the groups.

Finally, results of the family relationship questionnaire, character evaluation form and adjustment inventory have been discussed. Greater number of delinquent children were maladjusted with themselves as well as in their relations with family members. Members of the delinquent group were also rated significantly lower in the various character traits. Differences between the two groups in the family adjustment, character traits and general adjustment were found statistically significant.