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Professor Name

Juvenile Offenders

Date

**Discuss how a family can contribute to juvenile delinquency**

When it comes to Juvenile Delinquency, the researchers conclude that the families of the criminals contribute majorly to the members behaving this way. Families are the main source of development of a child. Therefore, when children start behaving in a criminal way or are seen involved in carrying out crimes then families are considered to be the biggest contributor to this particular behavior. In this research, we are going to analyze the relationship between crimes and factors originated within the family scenario. These factors will be studied to understand if they act as the agents that cause juvenile delinquency or the reason behind juvenile delinquency are some of the external factors and their interaction with the family (Rathinabalan, and Naaraayan).

**Family –It Basic Concept**

If we look from the perspective of scholars then we can find various definitions of the family as the term varies as per the interpretation of different people. Family is constructed of various parts and it varies in sizes. However, one thing which is common about every family is that the members of each family work hard to accomplish many different things for other members of the family (Rathinabalan, and Naaraayan). The Bureau of Population Reference defines family as,

“A family as a group of people held together by common birth, marriage, residence, close emotional attachment or adoption.”

There are three most basic aspects or goals that every family aims to achieve no matter if they are totally different from one another. These are;

* Improvement of circumstances of the whole family,
* The perpetuation of common existence and;
* Economic self-sufficiency.

A family in its very traditional concept is the one which focuses on its responsibilities and many different functions i.e. childbearing, working on the security of each member, affection and intimacy as well as child-rearing. However, one of the most important things in a family is to bring up the children of that family in the most proper way. Child development is the hardest and the most necessary task for a family. Any issue which gets in the way of development of a child’s character eventually results in affecting the behavior of the child (Parks).

**What is Child Development?**

The growth of a child, be it physical growth, health growth, mental growth or emotional growth; all of these are termed as ‘child development’. For a family, the development of the child is the main focus as through this development they can become emotionally, intellectually and perceptually strong. In addition to this, the development of a child is also important as it is the base of building up the behavior of a child. If we look at it scientifically then child development is all about the changes in the behavioral patterns, stability of the mind and growth of the child (Parks).

As per the father of American Behaviorist Theory’s father, John Watson;

“Children are passive beings who can be molded by controlling stimulus-response associations”.

Researchers argue that children are a clean slate when they are born, they can be easily taught whatever the adults want them to know. Similarly, children can be easily taught with the help of education about the basic concept of right and wrong. In addition to this, education also helps in building the factor of responsibility within children. When the child grows up as responsible human beings, they know exactly which decision can become problematic for them and what is the right decision to make. The development of a child also teaches him or her as to how responsible they are for all of their actions. Moreover, children when brought up in families that are happy and satisfied and have positive attitudes in general then they have the best behavior and are pretty much responsible as well. However, children who are brought up in families that have a negative attitude or that are unhappy, divorced or faces continuous failures then the children of those families are generally seen troubled. These children have the possibility of becoming delinquents (Nevisi).

**What is Juvenile Delinquency?**

There are various standpoints that can easily describe ‘Juvenile Delinquency’. There are many sociologists who believe that juvenile delinquency is all about the social norms and legal laws violation. These offenses can vary from minor to a serious level. From the viewpoint of criminologists, the concept of juvenile delinquency entails all the wrongs which are committed publicly by the people who belong to the 12 to 20 age group. There are many sociologists who believe that the behavior that is termed ‘anti-social’ can be the starting point which highlights a lifelong criminal behavior. However, in some children, it is just part of their growing up. As per the United Nations, there is a higher tendency of juvenile delinquency in young people like children and teenagers. These people can commit the offence of even petty levels throughout their childhood, yet there is no possibility of them becoming criminals professionally. As per the report was given by World Youth in 2003, juvenile delinquency is a phenomenon that is very common throughout the period of a child growing up until he reached adulthood (Mwangangi).

In addition to this, it is also mentioned by the United Nations that Juvenile delinquency is carried by people or teenagers of the same age in the form of groups. These are termed as ‘gangs’. The people who are involved in a gang usually support each other while committing a crime. Moreover, they push each other to continue making offenses in order to stay like a pact (Mwangangi).

**Family’s contribution to Juvenile Delinquency**

There are various factors within families that contribute majorly towards Juvenile Delinquency. The biggest factor being the unhappiness and negative attitude of parents. When divorced parents try to raise a child, there are various issues that impact the attitude of the children like the constant battle between who to choose i.e. live with the mother or the father. Distorted families eventually result in the child looking for attention or affection somewhere else apart from family. Moreover, parents are more involved with their own issues that result in a child being neglected. The impact of this on the child is that they start to walk on the wrong path as they are not supervised by a responsible individual. In addition to this, broken families result in failed economic and financial self-sufficiency as well. Only one parent is responsible to look after the home and the family which results in less fulfilling necessities. This issue tends to make children quite irritated and conscious. In order to fulfill their needs, they try other ways which mostly offend legal and social norms (Mwangangi).

Furthermore, parents who have a previous history of being involved in some crimes contribute more toward juvenile delinquency. It means that when the children of the family get to know about how their parents have been involved in some petty offenses yet they get out eventually, these children believe that they can also do it and get out of it pretty easily. For these children, juvenile delinquency does not mean much and is not a big issue (Mwangangi).

Moving further, the attitudes of parents are also a big factor that contributes to juvenile delinquency. When it comes to children, all they want from their family is compassion, affection, companionship and reassurance. It is the nature of the relationship that parents and children have with each other that impacts a child becoming a delinquent. Constructive and conformist social behavior is the child result that is generated by affectionate, understanding and supportive homes. The positive environment of the home leads to healthy personalities and healthy development of mind. Contrary to this, when this affection is lacking and children feel that they are being neglected or their emotions are not understood they eventually turn towards delinquent and anti-social behavior. The negative attitudes of the parents result in the children moving towards poor personality development and committing delinquent crimes. A negative attitude means scolding or not giving enough love to the child. Moreover, being strict parents and being authoritative is also considered to be triggering negative personality in the child. When children are given strict orders, commands or harsh words are used then they generally feel suffocated. Moreover, the suppression of free will and the suppression of freedom of speech triggers hateful and aggressive behavior in the child (Mullens).

Furthermore, the violence level which is shown by parents towards the children is also one of the factors that contribute towards juvenile delinquency. As per Sarantakos, 78 percent of the children involved in crimes come from families in which they face physical or mental violence. However, only 22 percent of these children come from families that are non-violent. Lastly, the offenders of law come from families that have the issue of uninvolved parenting. The issue of uninvolved parenting revolves deeply within child development and the growth of the personality of the child (Mullens).

**Conclusion**

Juvenile delinquency is common within teenagers and children because of various factors that are triggered because of families and their relationship with each other. If there is affection within a family then the growth of a child is generally positive and away from any illegal offends.

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