Involvement of Youth Attitudes in Crime: A Study Conducted in Four Jails of Upper Assam, India

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Abstract: Youth and crime is not a new phenomenon. In the past as well as in the present day in societies, there have been always a good number of crime cases found like murder, theft, sexual involvement, kidnapping, robbery, attempt to murder, cheating etc where the youth are involved. Nevertheless, in the present day if we observe the crime data, the rate of youth involving in crime is increasing very fast. The attitude of youth towards crime is also different from each other. In the transitional period childhood to adolescence and adolescence to maturity, youth is generally faced the different socio-economic crises. Recent work on the relationship between youth violence and crime and its outcomes can be viewed as an adaptive strategy that seeks to order risky and impulsive environments in the society. Many violent upheavals of youth personalities are thus to be expected in the transitional period. So the youth can also be considered as one aspect of crime. In this present study, an attempt has been made to study the different risk factors responsible for criminal behaviors of youth. The work also tried to analyze the developed criminal attitudes of youths and major risk factors of crime.

Keywords: Youth Attitudes, Youth and Crime, Criminality, Socio Economic Crisis

I. Introduction:
Youth is an important developmental phase in human life and the most energetic forces of the society. Different characters, structures, goals, and temperaments have been reflected in their life due to the impact of socio-cultural, psychological and environmental influences. Well known Indian sociologist Ram Ahuja, (1996) mentioned about the relation between youth and crime, “Youth crime is the caused frustrations and deprivations arising from a failure to achieve goals desires and aspirations. These frustrations break or weaken the youths ‘social bonds with groups which control their social behavior. However, the breaking/weakening of social bonds depends upon youth’s personality structure. One, who is committed to social norms, continues to remain attached to the family, and since he has the ability to adjust to a situation, he is not like to break his bonds with his groups. Thus, the breaking or weakening of the social bonds becomes the cause of a youth’s criminal behavior.”

As recent work has been focused on the crime which is a relative concept, it varies from society to society, country to country, and also time to time in the same society. So, it is difficult to give a universal definition of crime. According to K.C.Dubey, (2009) Crime is a deviant behavior that violates prevailing norms cultural standards prescribing how humans ought to behave normally. This approach considers the complex realities surrounding the concept of crime and seeks to understand how changing social, political, psychological and economic conditions may affect the current definition of crime and the form of the legal, law, enforcement, and penal responses made by society.

In the field of criminology, youth attitudes toward crime and to find out its genesis are the very important. Therefore recent work focused on youth attitudes in respect to their criminal behavior.

II. Objective of the Study
The main objectives of the study are given below:
A. To examine the youth criminality in terms of the theoretical background of criminology to find out the different risk factors of their involvement of crime.
B. To examine the nature of criminal activities of the youths with their ecological background i.e. rural and urban background and

Recent work has been researched based on three theoretical perspectives. Theoretical approach is used to understand crime in human society which is most important. In the context of present research the questionnaire has been prepared to reflect the application of particular theoretical approach.
Differential Association Theory: Developed by Edwin Sutherland proposing that criminal behavior is learnt in a process of communication with the members of small intimate group, which favors’ violation of legal norms. In his formulation learning involves two things, the technique of committing the crime and motives, drives, rationalization and attitudes favorable violation of law.

Bonger’s Economic Theory: William Bonger mentioned that lack of proper parental care, ungenial family and Neighborhood, atmospheres, beliefs etc are also held to be responsible for all sorts of criminal behavior. According to this approach which refers to individual factor, certain economic condition such as poverty, deprivation and unemployment expert pressures on individuals to commit crimes particularly for economic gain.

Containment Theory: Walter Reckless proposed the theory of containment theory of delinquency and crime. His containment theory was built on the same concept of internal and external control, which reckless termed ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ containment. Reckless went beyond this, however to include factors this motivate youth to commit delinquent act’s i.e. ‘pushes’ and ‘pull’ toward delinquency.

III. Methodology
The present study is concerned to examining the nature of criminality in both rural and urban background youthful criminals lodged in four jails of upper Assam-India namely Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, and Dibrugarh and Jorhat jail. Total four hundred (400) respondents have taken in between the age group of 18-35 years. The interview method has been used to collect data from the respondents. All collected data and gathered information are presented and generalized in tabular format. Besides, respondents’ age groups are classified into four categories and we have also categorized the respondents on the basis of their educational standards

IV. Result and Discussion
Recent work has been focused to finding out the involvement of youth attitudes in crime. In this paper a brief description is being made to define the different factors of crime and involvement of the youths. Different case backgrounds have been mentioned also to understanding the responsible situations behind their involvements in crime. An overall statistic of the respondents is given below for understanding the situation clearly:

Table I: Nature of Crime and Area of the Respondents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Crime</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempt to murder</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above diagram out of the total four hundred respondents (400) the highest percentage 16.5% from the rural background of respondents has been found the murderer. The second highest 11% of the respondent found from the urban background are involved in attempt to murder and 9.5% third highest respondents are found as rapist from the urban areas.

Table II: Educational Status of Respondents and Classification of Age groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Status</th>
<th>18Y-22Y</th>
<th>23Y-27Y</th>
<th>28Y-32Y</th>
<th>33Y+</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9.75</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literate Up to Primary Level</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>28.25</td>
<td>19.25</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School To Matriculation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>28.25</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Matriculation</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>28.25</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Graduate</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>28.25</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Graduate</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9.75</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Present study observed the educational background of the criminals based on their age groups as mentioned on Table II. Out of the total (400) hundred respondents, the highest 28.25% respondents have been identified under literate category “high school to matriculation level”. The second highest, 24.50% of the respondents also have been found literate up to primary level. This statistical observation indicates that educational background scenarios of the criminals are very low level of status.

A. The Responsible Factors of Crime:
During the period of study, we have found many factors which influenced the youths towards criminal activities. Here an attempt is made to know the view of the respondents about crime & other influential factors of their involvement in criminal behaviour.

B. Family and Crime:
Family is one of the most important institutions of the development of youth’s behaviour & attitude. It is the main platform, where a child undergoes different guidance and discipline that are maintained and organized by parents and other family members. It is recognised as the stage from where a child's foundations are built. In research work, it has been found that different factors within the family are responsible that impact on youths toward crime. These are like poor parental supervision and defective socialization process, family conflict, violence and breakup; parents are involved in crime and lack of communication in family members, respect and responsibility among family members are the main factors of involving towards crime.

Babu, A fisher man who is 27 years old confessed “I murder my wife when i have found that my wife, Ruma , mother of three children, involved in extra marital affairs with our neighbor Jatin”

From the research work, it has been found that, family confliction, poor parental supervision and defective socialization process reflects on children are major factors of violence of the youths. Cruel, highly inconsistent, passive or neglecting behaviors of parents are treated as factors that increased risk of criminality among young people.

“Ekka an unmarried 21 years girl with nine family members of a remote village murdered her father. She mentioned that father extreme torture on her mother created the environment to commit crime”.

Research study has been found that those families are disrupted by constant conflict between the parents or actual separation, become preoccupied, irritable and prone to aggressive outbursts, leading youth to react in criminal activities.

C. Addiction to Alcohol and Crime:
Addiction to alcohol is reported as another major reason for committing the crime by youth. In this present research work it has been identified that due to the huge amount of alcohol availability in streets and villages that influences youths to engage in regular used of alcohol. Research work identified 25 respondents that committed the crime due to the over alcohol addiction.

“I murder my wife due to habit of regular alcohol drinks that generate the unbalance and uncontrolled behavior within me”: A tea garden labor, Madhab”

Concerning the rural areas of research work, it has been found that traditional alcoholism system among the families and societies is also reported major reason to commit crime. The parental habitual on addiction of alcohol is also impact and motivated them to addict it without any restriction from family members.

Kalidas 21 years old a college student committed sexual crime. He confessed, “I used to drink alcohol with my parent. It increases my desire to get sexual satisfaction. So I did it with a married woman of my neighbour’s family.”

The stress, anxiety and fear generated by alcohol addiction interfere with the normal developmental process of young people like their ability to trust and have a sense of personal safety; their ability to develop skills to control their emotions; their freedom to explore the local environment; and their ability to form “normal” social relationships.

Ranjit 18 years old a college student admitted the crime of attempt to murder. He revealed, “My nature of anxiety and mental disturbance lead to involve me in conflicting situation to argue with my friends”

D. Economic situation and Crime:
In research, it has been found that the major economic factors that contribute to the crime initiations are poverty and unemployment.

i. Poverty and Inequality:
Poverty has been found an attribute to a greater likelihood of involvement in crime and violence (Sampson and Lauritsen, 1994). Self reported felony assault and robbery have been found to be twice as common among youth living in poverty as among middle class youth (Elliott, Huizinga, and Menard, 1989). Low family income predicted self reported teen violence and convictions for violent offenses in several studies (Farrington, 1989; Wikström, 1985; Hogh and Wolf, 1983; Henry et al., 1996).

During research, it has been found that maximum respondents are below poverty level. They married in early age and have 2-3 children’s with them. Entire family economic status has been found very poor that admit them to involve criminal activities to avail easy money to support in family economic condition.

_"Jadu 23 years old man belonging to tea community confessed” I murder my friend only for fifty (50) rupees.”_

Many respondents have been found with no land property. But those that have been sufficient land for cultivation also expressed that regular flooded conditions damage their economic condition very badly. Inequalities of property also lead respondents to commit crime up to murder level. Due to the unequal land distribution of the family is also a main cause of crime.

_"Raghu 26 years old, lived in remote village stated “I adopt thievery option along with my daily labour work only to support my seven members’ family including parents”._

**E. Unemployment:**

Based on present study area, it has been found that lack of employment opportunities lead the criminal activities among unemployed respondents. They informed that they also need money to continue their daily requirements. When they don’t find any legal opportunity to earn it they got involved in criminal activities to finance their living expenses. When research work questioned them about the different central government schemes like NREGA, SEEU, it has been found that many of them did not aware of such schemes. It reflects about poor professional educational environment system in research areas.

_"Pranjit 30 years old, unmarried science graduate boy convicted as terrorist. He expressed “I failed to engage in any job after 2 years of my graduation. So I decided to join local terrorist organization”._

**F. Peer Group Pressure and Crime:**

Research has shown that adolescents whose peers disapproved of delinquent behavior were less likely to report having committed delinquent acts (Elliott, 1994), including sexual assaults (Ageon, 1983). In this present work it has been found that violent behavior of youth is often occurred in the course of gaining independence from parents and developing an identity within the peer group. Study indicates that young people are just like to commit violent behavior because of verbal coercion from friends due to their own private desire to gain acceptance within the peer group.

_"Imran 19 years old unmarried boy convicted as rapist. He revealed “I and my friends attempted to rape a lonely village girl when we overdosed with alcohol and pornography movies”_

For violent behavior that occurs at home or within the peer group, behavior can be attributed to common raised emotional and impulsivity reactions in youth that definitely contribute to violent behavior. Research work conveyed that poor parental supervision of respondents deprived them from family love and care that supported them to involve in peer groups. However in the study, the problem that rises with peer pressure in relation to attitudes and behaviour is that young people influence each other in a negative way and let them lose their values and even believe in things they would not accept before. Young person gives more importance to their peers’ approval than parents views because they can see the moral support from people of the same age which is more realistic than from aged people. Many of our respondents executed crime only because of emotional attachment with the peer group members. Some of them also acted just for enjoyments without any realistic response of crime.

_"Rana,27 year old unmarried youth convicted as murder. He explained “I deprived from my parental love and care and so joined peer group that lead me to commit crime” _

**G. Neighbourhood and Crime:**

Community factors including low neighbourhood attachment and community disorganization, the availability of alcohol and firearms, exposure to violence and racial prejudice, laws and norms favourable to violence may contribute to crime and violence (Brewer et al., 1995). Maguin and colleagues (1995) examined community
disorganization and low neighbourhood attachment as predictors of violence. Neighborhood is played an important role for a child to development of his attitude. It impacts on the development of the behavioral pattern on early stage of life and it’s gradually increased into the young stage. From the present study, it has been found that many respondents are victimized due to the disharmonious situation of neighborhood. Most respondents have been given their views as being poor, defective neighborhood situations and inter family confliction are the main causes of their involvement in crime. In present study, Most of the respondents who are exposed to violence with their neighbourhood feel vulnerable and unable to control their lives. These feelings can be lead to helplessness and hopelessness.

Lala is 31 year old newly married youth convicted in murder crime. He admitted, “I am victimized when I am tried to stop the domestic violence of my neighbor’s family.”

H. Media Influence toward Youth Crime:
A lot of crime movies are being watched today. It influences huge impact towards youths to committing crime. The present study has been found that the media plays another major role for the construction of attitudes, behaviours and physical changes of youths. Research work admitted that some television programs and motion pictures have now come to be blamed for many youth crimes. A violent video picture or a crime movie/television shows give a picture of high risk behaviours. Quite a few movies give a picture of scenes of adventure, kidnapping, rape, assault, murder which offer new example of behavior to youth to imitate them to their real life. Moreover these movies/programs tend to glorify deviant activities, impart knowledge of criminal’s techniques, and spread of criminality in society. These programs terribly reduced taste of emotional interest and increased the disturbance of the young minds very badly. The study also admitted that easy availability in internet and accesses to pornography via mobile phones have been found the major reason to involve in crime. Respondents also admitted that sex and violence have become the two major television program themes that influenced and inspired them to involve in anti social behavior along with preoccupied different magazines.

Kamal, 23 years old unmarried boy convicted as kidnapper and also confessed “I am highly influenced by the internet pornography and mobile phone.

Apart from all these important factors, some another factors have been also found from the entire study like believed in practices of the black magic, suddenly face unexpected situation, revenge, parents for love affairs, dowry etc are equally related to formation of criminal tendency and also become factors to committed crime.

V. Major Findings
The study focused on the different risk factors those have been found responsible for committing crime like family confliction, alcohol addiction, poor economic conditions, unemployment, peer group pressure, neighborhood and media impact. From this study it can be summarized that all the factors are linked to each other.

VI. Conclusion & Suggestion
Youth crime is expected to increase the rate and intensity of existing risk. An increased probability of extreme crime actions and drive the emergence of new vulnerabilities in Assam has already become one of the most vulnerable and multi-hazard risk prone states in the India. The different criminal activities of youth are set to be become one of the most important economic and political questions for Assam in the coming decades, especially as it starts biting into economic growth and displaced the lives and livelihoods of people.
The poor governance, limited family supervision on youth and the commons and declining consciousness of youths towards social improvement implies that it need to emphasis on proper parental supervisions, correlation with the neighbor, constructive discussion with peer group, increase employment opportunities among youths to develop their confident level to challenge the different outcomes of society. Parents are likely to teach positive social skills to their youth or to deal with their problems effectively. A rural-urban framework is necessary that works at neighborhood, city, state, national level and brings together the civil society, private, district and state sectors. Research work also admitted that these institutional interests to conceive and execute constructive actions are weak or non-existent. So the study come to conclusion that the scientific and systematic study about youth crime is very much important that to examine the different problems associated with youths for attitudes improvement.

Reference:


Acknowledgment

The idea of the present study was developed through constant discussions on the problems of criminological theories and studies with my respected supervisor Professor Joyanta Borbora, Department of Sociology, Dibrugarh University.I also do acknowledge and extend hearty thanks to the Prison authorities of Assam for permitting me to visit and conduct interviews with the criminal and also for rendering help of all kinds in the connection. I owe my gratitude to my beloved friend Er. Bidyot Bikash Das. It is doubtful, if the present study would have been completed without his constant encouragement and support.