

## **Role of socio economic determinants and social capital in juvenile delinquency in Urban Lahore: A case study of Lahore district Jail**

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### **Abstract:**

*The aim of this research is to explore the determinants of juvenile's delinquency in urban Lahore. Furthermore, the study will explore the role of informal networks; family, peer and neighborhood (social capital) in encouraging and discouraging juvenile delinquency. The study is qualitative in nature and conducted as on the basis of case study of Lahore District jail. Male respondents were selected from age 12 to 18. Purposive sampling method is used to collect data by conducting semi structured interviews. This research shows that low socio economic status, lack of parental supervision and negative social capital are the significant reasons of increasing juvenile delinquency in Lahore. Twelve respondents were interviewed considering the saturation point of the research. There were 6 theft and robbery cases and all mentioned that we wanted to get money to fulfill their basic needs as their monthly family income ranged from 5000 to 20000 along with rented house. There were 5 rape cases and they all responded that parents never asked about their activities and they used to spend most of their time with friends and participated in each other activities. There was one murder case who responded in the same way that he used to spend his time with friends and parents never asked him. So it shows that low socio economic status, negative social capital and lack of parental involvement are the main reasons of increasing juvenile delinquency in Lahore.*

**Key words:** Juvenile delinquency, social capital, socio economic determinants, peer network, poverty

## **INTRODUCTION**

Juvenile delinquency is globally recognized term and it is increasing day by day which is harmful for the every segment of society. These children are upcoming future of every country to make progress and work for the country. But how can that society progress and make development when its youth are involved in criminal activities at early stage of life? Instead of getting education and planning for future, they are getting involved in delinquent activities. Teenage is such a stage of child development in which he is readily adapted to those things and behaviors which he is seeing and learning. This is the first learning stage of child development which will become part of his nature in future afterwards (Ahmed and Murtaza, 2016).

Juvenile delinquency can be defined as criminal acts committed by teenagers who have not reached to adulthood. Juvenile delinquency is a broad concept given to adolescents who get involve in delinquent act. This concept is made by joining two broader terms. Juvenile means a person who has not reached adulthood while delinquency refers to criminal activity which is recognized as crime by state. So juvenile delinquency can be viewed as a crime committed by an individual who has not reached to his age of maturity (Talpur, Pathan and Shah, 2012).

There are many socio economic conditions which stimulate children towards crime and these involves parents low education, low income, teenage mother are all associated with high delinquent act (Skarohamar, 2009). Furthermore, inadequate family structure which means large family size but les resources to run this family and family conflicts can also be

involved as a cause of juvenile delinquency. The family with criminal tendency also stimulates youth towards delinquent act (Malik and Shirazi, 2010).

There are many other factors involved in increasing juvenile delinquency like Social capital and informal social networks. Social capital can be defined as the core of social networks. Social capital has now been globally recognized term used widely in the field of social sciences. There have been many studies conducted between the association of social capital and delinquent behavior. Social capital is a significant factor of juvenile crime and criminality as it is proved from the research that those juveniles which have low social capital are more likely to involve in criminal activities. The key indicators of social capital includes informal networks which are low parental association, low association of student with students, low interactions in social circle are linked with juvenile delinquency (Salmi and Kivivuori, 2006).

There are different types of social capital. Bonding social capital refers associations of with similar or informal networks which includes parent relationships, peer group and neighborhood interactions .Bridging social capital refers to formal networks along with heterogeneous communities which includes education system, work place etc. informal social networks play significant role towards stimulating juvenile delinquency such as parent child relationship, peer network and neighborhood interactions (Baum and Ziersch, 2003).

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

Lahore is metropolitan city, many people migrate here in search of better education, job opportunities etc due to availability of many facilities e.g. industrialization, luxuries and other comfort. Such developments are beneficial to only those who can afford it. In this way, it is creating more gaps between rich and poor and poor are getting involved in criminal

activities to get access to means. This shows that there is need to shed light on this issue of concern. My research is concerned with this issue that what are social and economical determinants which motivate juveniles to involve in criminal activities. These social and economic determinants may include family income, family size, family structure and education. Other than socio economic indicators, social capital also plays significant role in stimulating delinquent act which includes informal networks like peer network, neighborhood interaction and parents supervision.

My study would explore that how all these indicators act simultaneously to inculcate deviant act. It is not assured that a person commits crime due to only one reason. There can be combined multiple reasons behind any action to instill. This study may also helpful for upcoming youth to confront these socio economic indicators and social capital factors if they come across these difficult situations in life and understand their responsibility towards the development of country. Moreover, it can also help to recommend some policies to our juvenile justice system and government according to current situation of this city.

## **LITERATURE**

Juvenile delinquency has now become universal problem and it is increasing rapidly in every part of the world. Poverty and illiteracy is the main reason of all anti social acts and it is the main problem of increasing juvenile delinquency. Every society has socially approved legal goals such as good education, own a house, own a car and live luxurious life. But not everyone is able to achieve these goals through legal means so they use to illegal means to achieve socially approved legal goals. Moreover, there is negligence by our juvenile justice system that young juveniles are brought together with adult criminals

in which there is tendency to learn more skilled delinquent act from adult criminals (Malik and Shirazi, 2010).

There is a research conducted on Peshawar central jail and found that most of juveniles were belonged to poor educational background and poor economic conditions which stimulated them towards crime. Due to this poverty, those people are unable to get their desired goals which are socially acceptable like education, occupation, high status in the society. So, to achieve these goals they engage in criminal activities with the help of illegal means. Such as if a person's peer is involved in drugs so he will compel his friend to take drugs and he will also start taking drugs. Similarly, if someone in the family especially parents are involved in delinquent act; children are more likely to adopt the same behavior. So in this way we can say that delinquent behavior is learned like any other behavior (Nisar, Shakir, Ali and Sadiq,2015)

There is another research which also stated that rate of unemployment in country increases stimulate individuals towards crime to achieve their goals. Moreover, 14500 criminals were sent to prisons during January 2010 to February 2011 and 59.2% were belonging to age group 15 to 29. Those criminals were most likely to involve in delinquent act like theft, robbery, murder, abortion, offences related to intoxicants and weapons (Gillani, Rehman and Gill ,2009).

It is found that family functioning and structure influence to the great extent because family is the first place where child learns everything attached to him. Family factors include parents relationship with each other, child parent relations, parents supervision on children, parents social activities, economic conditions, family size, family education, use of drugs by parents (Mehmood and Asghar, 2004).

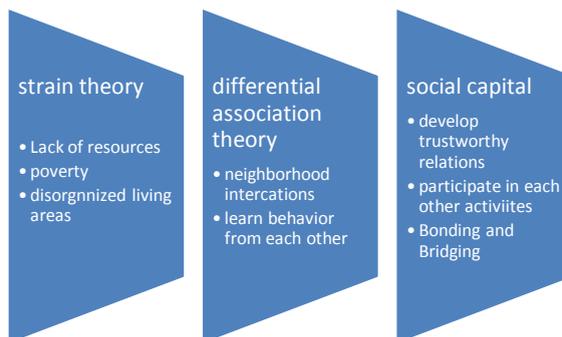
In United States, there is permanent rise in the participation of teenagers in illegal activities. Teenagers are five times more likely to involve in property crimes than adults. In 1997 the population of adolescents aged 15 to 19 was

comprised of at only 7 % of overall population but there was 20% involvement of them in delinquent act. The reason of involvement in delinquent act includes poverty, unemployment, unstable family functioning and state negligence. It is evidenced from the research that crime rates dropped in those states sharply where criminals were punished more stiffly (Levitt and Lochner, 2001).

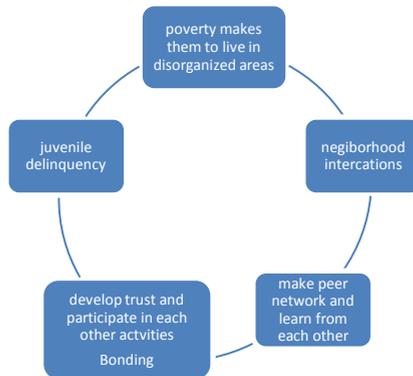
## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Strain theory can be applied to my research in terms of poverty and unemployment which stated that no one is born delinquent; it is the society which makes a person delinquent. Not everyone has enough resources to achieve socially approved goals so they use illegal means to achieve those goals.

Apart from socio economic conditions, a delinquent behavior can be learned from peer or through interactions. This can be proved by Edwin Sutherland, s differential association theory who stated that criminal behavior can be learned like any other behavior. It can be learned through social and neighborhood interactions because when an individual develops social networks it is usual that he would receive or learn something in exchanges. This can be examined through social capital theory which states that on the basis of social networks we gain trust and cooperation for each other (Andriani, 2011).



## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



## METHOD

The study aims to explore the influence of social capital and socio economic determinants in stimulating juvenile delinquency. The nature of the study suggests using qualitative methodology because the purpose of this study is to explore the influence of socio economic determinants and social capital on juvenile delinquency by conducting interviews. Qualitative research gives chance to researcher to explore the social issues of world (Mason, 2002).

## RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is exploratory in nature because the research is based on to explore the role of different factors which act simultaneously and stimulate juveniles towards criminal acts. There is no case study of Lahore District jail, there are researches of overall Punjab prisons but none of the research belonged to solely case study of Lahore jails. Lahore is one of the metropolitan cities of Pakistan but lack research regarding juvenile delinquency. So the main purpose of this research is to identify the key issues of juvenile delinquency in metropolitan

city Lahore. The purpose of exploratory research is to discover ideas and in depth information about certain situation and issue.

### **Population**

My population is juveniles of Lahore District jail aged 13 to 18. They would be all male juveniles because there is no presence of female juveniles in prison. Pakistan juvenile justice system prohibited to keep female juveniles in lock up or prison in any case. According to juvenile justice ordinance 2000, female juveniles should be admitted in separate rehabilitation center from male juveniles. If there is no rehabilitation center in prison then they would be kept in any other care center (Pakistan Juvenile justice system rules, 2002). It means there are strict restrictions on keeping female juveniles in prison.

### **Sampling technique**

The most commonly used sampling technique used in qualitative research is purposive sampling technique. Population is selected which can give effective and concerned information regarding our research. Population is selected on the basis of their characteristics and how well information they can give. Researchers mostly use this sampling in case study analysis (Palys, 2008).

According to the nature of this research is a case study of Lahore district jail so this sampling frame is best suited according to my research. Furthermore, this research is about to explore the role of different factors upon juveniles so direct interviews with juveniles would give relevant and authentic information.

### **ANALYSIS**

By considering socio economic indicators and indicators of social capital, following themes happened to be reasons of juvenile delinquency in Lahore.

- (1) Poverty
- (2) Peer network
- (3) Lack of parents supervision
- (4) Less education of parents lead to low status job

**Poverty:**

In my research all of the respondents mentioned that they belong to poor family background.

The respondent was arrested due to stealing gold chain of women in his neighborhood. He used to work in a show factory as peon. He is 18 years of age and belongs to poor family where monthly income is 5000 to 10000 and lives in a rented house. He added he has not been ever gone to school because poor economic conditions did not allow him for education and he had to earn for family. He added:

“I am very fond of education but my family economic conditions don’t allow me to get education”

Another Respondent was arrested due to stealing bike with the help of friend of his neighborhood uncle 2 days ago. He is 14 years old and he used to work in a snooker club and gets 6000 in a month. He belongs to poor family and monthly family income is 10000 to 15000. His father has died 3 years ago and his mother used to work in people house as servant. He lives in lower class community lived as “Bastani road”. He mentioned that family earning is mostly dependent on him. Out of 4 family members, 3 members earn as his younger brother is in class 2. He said he wants to study but resources are not enough to get education.

It shows that poverty is the significant reason of juvenile delinquency. All of the respondents mentioned that there family monthly income is 50000 to 20000 along with rented house. All of them mentioned that they wanted to get education but due to poverty they had to earn to fulfill their basic needs.

### **Peer network motivation**

The negative social capital can be used as a source to provide illegal resources within the associations. The trust and cooperation which is gained through social capital can be harmful if relationship is based upon gangs and deviant peer network. They can provide each other illegal resources on the basis of this trust and association which facilitates deviant act. Such as a members of gang can collect information about drugs access through other gangs, in this social capital plays negative role towards increasing juvenile delinquency. Any person who joins gang can attain emotional support, protection and access to skills and information about other illegal activities (Liu, 2004).

All of the respondents in this research mentioned that they used to have big social gatherings and used to share and participate with each other activities.

Two of the respondents were arrested due to stealing of one of respondents neighborhood uncle. They both made a plan that they will sail the bike and divide money equally.

There was another respondent who was arrested due to rape of a 15 years old girl in his neighborhood 5 days ago. He said his brother motivated him for this act because she insulted his brother because of eve teasing so he wanted to take revenge for his brother.

This research shows that peer association definitely influences juvenile delinquency and stimulates delinquent acts. All of the respondents in rape cases stated that they used to share their feelings for that girl with their friends and friends used to motivate them. Some of the respondents made planning of stealing together. So peer network has significant influence on juvenile delinquency.

### **Lack of parental supervision**

Parental involvement in children activities can stop adolescents from anti social behavior. Those juveniles tend to stimulate

towards delinquent act that are more likely to have less association with parents and spend improper time with friends (Henry and Huizinga, 2007).

One of the respondents was arrested due to stealing his friend cycle about 2 days ago and his case is under trials. He used to work as labor in the same factory where his father works as peon. His relationship with his parents was not pleasant and parents were not aware about his activities other than labor. He added he used to go for outing with his friends till late night.

Another respondent was arrested due to raping of 13 years old girl of his cousin about a month. He is 16 years old and used to work as office boy. Parents never asked about his activities and friends. He used to have big friends gathering and used to share his feelings for his cousin with one of his friend.

These findings show that lack of parental supervision can also become significant reason in increasing juvenile delinquency. All of the respondents mentioned that they used to spend most of their time with friends rather than parents and parents never asked about their activities. All of the respondents in rape cases said that parents never were aware about their activities and never asked about our activities.

### **Less education of parents leads to low status job**

A study conducted in Peshawar central jail revealed that parents of all the juveniles were unemployed that uneducated. Because of poverty in their family they conducted crime to get their resources and basic needs fulfilled (Nisar, Shakir, Ali and Alam, 2015).

All of the parents of this research were uneducated were maximum got primary education.

The Respondent was arrested due to rape of a 16 years old girl in his neighborhood about 6 months ago. He is 18 years old and he used to work as driver in a factory. He mentioned

that he belongs to poor family as his monthly family income is 10000 to 15000. His parents are uneducated and never forced him for study. He mentioned that

“I wish my parents would be educated and get job \to fulfill all our basic needs. He further added that I would like to study more but I don’t have enough resources to study”.

This research shows that parent’s low education is the main reason of children anti social behavior. It is the parent’s low education which made them to get a low status job and live in socially disorganized areas. It is due to their parent’s low education that parents want their children to earn rather than study. Majority of the respondents mentioned that family poor economic conditions compelled us to earn because father is not educated enough to get better job and educate all of us on his earnings.

## **FINDINGS**

The findings of analyzing interviews show that poverty is the mother of all social evils. Poverty is the significant reason of increasing juvenile delinquency in Lahore. There were 6 respondents who were arrested in theft cases and all they mentioned that they wanted to get money by selling that specific object which they stole. They wanted to get money to fulfill their basic needs and get resources. Five of the respondents said that they want to get education but they don’t have resources to study. So, they do work to earn for the family. Their monthly family ranges from 5000 to 20000 and used live in rented house. It can be seen from the result that how a family can survive and fulfill their basic needs with this range of monthly income. So they use illegal means to get resources. As strain theory discusses this matter of concern that no one is born delinquent, it is the society which makes a person

delinquent. Everyone doesn't have resources to get socially approved goals so they use illegal means to get those goals.

Due to poverty they are forced to live in low status communities which are used to known as socially disorganized areas where all people belong to lower socio economic status and labor. Teenage is such a stage of child development when he likes to make friends and bonding. Juveniles in socially disorganized areas used to make peer network and participate in each other activities. Out of 12 respondents, 10 of the juveniles said that they used to participate in friends activities and get motivated by friends to commit anti social behavior. There were 5 rape cases and all of them mentioned that they used to share their feelings for that specific girl with friends. One of the respondent mentioned that he does not want to go school because all of his friends do labor instead of study so he also wants to do labor.

Majority of the juveniles mentioned that their parents were not aware about their activities. They never asked them about their activities. One of the respondent said that "my parents think that I do labor all of the day", so they never asked me about my activities and friends gatherings. Five of the respondents who were involved in rape cases said that they used to spend most of their time with friends and parents never asked them. It means lack of parental supervision can also lead to juvenile delinquency.

All of the parents of juveniles said that their parents are uneducated. Only 2 juveniles said that their parents are educated till primary and 1 juvenile's father got education till secondary. All of the respondents mentioned that it was due to our father low education, we are suffering in this situation. They further added that if they would be educated they could get good job which would fulfill their all basic needs. It is due to their parent's lack of education, they were compelled to do labor instead of education.

Apparently, the prison management was good but the only barrier which was found that they did not allow conducting interview with juveniles alone. So, the questions which were related to policy framework and juvenile justice system were not getting appropriate. Juveniles were seen scared about to talk about prison management due to presence of two officers in the room. So, all of the juveniles said <sup>that</sup> they are satisfied with the prison management. The permission of these interviews for the research was got with the convenient process and the researchers were allowed to conduct their research with full verification. Instead of this verification and permission by DIG prison Lahore, they did not allow us to conduct interviews with juvenile's lonely. It means the prison management was having sort of guilt that juveniles would reveal and expose their real feelings about the prison management.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings presented totally matches up with the literature explored on this topic. The explored literature on this topic also stated that multiple indicators act simultaneously to stimulate juvenile towards anti social behavior.

This case study of Lahore district jail also shows that multiple indicators act simultaneously to stimulate juveniles towards delinquent act. These multiple factors include poverty, informal network which are peer associations and neighborhood interactions and lack of parental supervision. Due to poverty, those people are unable to get their desired goals which are socially acceptable like education, occupation, high status in the society. So, to achieve these goals they engage in criminal activities with the help of illegal means. Tahir et al. (2010) conducted a study on Gujarat district jail and found that those youngsters aged 15 to 29 which are engaged in labor professions are most likely to involve in criminal activities and

unemployment is the significant reason to stimulate them towards delinquent act.

This study explored the fact that peer involvement plays vital role in delinquent acts. It is explored from previous studies that strong association with delinquent peer group leads juveniles towards delinquent behavior because peer network force their friends to involve in the same act. Juvenile stimulate towards illegal activities in this way which in turn increase more strong association with delinquent peer network (Terrance, Alan, Marvin, Margaret and Sung, 1994).

In United States, there is permanent rise in the participation of teenagers in illegal activities. Teenagers are five times more likely to involve in property crimes than adults. In 1997 the population of adolescents aged 15 to 19 was comprised of at only 7 % of overall population but there was 20% involvement of them in delinquent act. The reason of involvement in delinquent act includes poverty, unemployment, unstable family functioning and state negligence (Levitt and Lochner, 2001).

## **CONCLUSION**

This research concludes that there are multiple factors which lead juveniles towards delinquent act. Negligence by one factor can lead juveniles towards anti social behavior because teenage is that stage of children development which demands much care, protection and appropriate learning. The behavior and things which they learn in this stage will become part of their lives afterwards. Those multiple indicators include low socio economic status, lack of parental supervision and peer associations. All of these factors are found to be participating altogether in juvenile delinquency in Pakistan. There was none of the respondent in the research which mentioned negative relationship of these factors which the juvenile delinquency.

It is also concluded that Pakistan juvenile justice system is not much appropriate that they could allow researchers to conduct interviews with juveniles lonely. The factor which is found in this research regarding policy framework totally negates with literature explored about juvenile justice system in this research. The literature about Pakistan juvenile justice system says that juveniles are not treated well in the prisons and they also have interactions with adult criminals in which there are chances to learn more delinquent act by adult criminals. But in this research, the presence of officers in the room could not allow juveniles to speak about their opinion about prison management. In fact the officer interrupted the conversation and said "adult criminals are kept separate and don't have any interaction with juveniles". So it can say with no doubt that the literature explored regarding Pakistan juvenile justice system in this research is true to some extent.

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