

Young Adults and Crime: Patterns, Trends, And Preventive Strategies

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Abstract:

Youth involvement in criminal activities has become a significant concern in contemporary society, particularly among individuals transitioning from youth to adulthood. The analysis of youth and crime focuses on identifying patterns of criminal behaviour, emerging trends, and effective preventive measures to address the issue. Social, economic, psychological, and environmental factors, such as unemployment, peer influence, familial background, substance abuse, and urbanisation, significantly impact criminal behaviour among youth. Understanding these factors aids in developing specific preventive techniques, rehabilitation programs, and legislative measures aimed at reducing crime rates and improving societal stability. This research examines the patterns and trends of juvenile criminal behaviour and highlights preventive strategies that could improve crime control and youth development.

Keywords: Young Adults and Crime, Criminal Behaviour, Crime Patterns, Crime Trends, Prevention Strategies, Youth Development, Crime Control, etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency has garnered significant public attention in recent years. Statistics reveal that numerous young individuals involved in illegal activities face considerable social and economic marginalisation. Justice Action contends that substantial improvements are essential within the current child justice system to rectify these ongoing concerns. Modern young demonstrate increased autonomy and oppose external intrusion in their activities, a trend identified by Shama Khan, associate professor at Government College, as the principal cause of this phenomena. Chanda Keswani, associate professor of civics and political science, stated, "The current observation I have made is the lack of discipline among the youth, which leads to stress and sadness. The youth face constant pressure to succeed. Intense rivalry and increasing stress in the environment compel the youth to opt for a simpler road," stated Chitra Arora, head of Government Girls College and professor of Philosophy. Students endure prolonged hours and encounter considerable stress, especially resident physicians. They require rest and should partake in work at a leisurely pace to mitigate the risk of depression. A crisis of confidence and unhappiness prevails among substantial sectors of the youth in the nation. The problem of juvenile delinquency is an escalating worry, especially in light of the continual rise in crime rates in urban India. The deregulation and expansion of a consumer economy have created new chances in the criminal sector, offering direct job and income-generating prospects for educated and semi-educated youth.

1.1.1 Criminal Behaviour: -

The examination of criminal behaviour seeks to improve comprehension of offenders and tackle enquiries such as: the identity of criminals, the motivations behind their offences (to develop prevention strategies), their cognitive processes, and their actions (to predict future behaviours and assist in the capture of offenders). Understanding criminal behaviour and its causes necessitates an examination of the psychology of crime. Four universally acknowledged elements delineate behaviour as criminal; they are:

- The behaviour is unlawful and liable to state sanctions.
- It is considered a violation of a moral or religious standard and is perceived as subject to punishment by a higher spiritual authority.
- The activity violates societal norms or customs and is liable to community punishment.
- It causes considerable psychological anguish or mental damage to the victim.

1.1.1 Theories of Criminal Behaviour

Historically, three principal conceptions of criminal behaviour are present:

Psychological Approach: - A multitude of psychological theories regarding criminal behaviour exists, ranging from early Freudian conceptions to contemporary cognitive and social psychology frameworks. The fundamental premises of psychological theories of crime are:

- The individual functions as the primary unit of analysis in psychological theories.
- Personality is the principal motivational force that shapes individual behaviour.
- Normality is frequently established through communal consensus.
- Crimes would consequently emerge from abnormal, flawed, or erroneous mental processes within the individual's psyche.
- Criminal activity may serve a distinct purpose for the individual, as it satisfies certain imagined needs.
- Defective or abnormal mental processes may stem from various factors, including a compromised psyche, insufficient education or inadequate conditioning, the emulation of inappropriate role models, and the resolution of internal conflicts.

Sociological Approach: - The socioeconomic and psychological foundations of crime are interrelated and not fundamentally distinct. Similar to psychiatric ideas, numerous social frameworks exist regarding the origins and regulation of criminal activity. The sociological ideas of crime can be defined as:

1. Attempting to connect an individual's illegal conduct with the broader social structures and cultural standards of society, family, or peer groups.
2. The influence of inconsistencies among these interacting groups in promoting criminal activity.
3. The historical evolution of these institutions, cultures, and paradoxes.
4. The continuous transformation processes that these groups are undergoing.
5. Criminality is analysed via the perspective of its social construction and fundamental social determinants.

Biological Approach: - Biological theories of crime claim that criminal behaviour stems from a deficit in an individual's biological makeup. This physical flaw may arise from...

1. Genetic inheritance
2. Neurotransmitter impairment

3. Neurological abnormalities arising from one of the above stated reasons, insufficient development, or injury

1.1.2 Stress and crime

Criminal offenders and victims experience many forms of stress resulting from criminal behaviour arising from that stress. The analysis of victimisation inside the prison system and society will be undertaken as a source of crime-inducing stress. Future research will present subjects for investigating the correlation between stress and criminality. Victimisation is a troubling event that results in significant psychological and/or emotional discomfort. Stress and crime are interrelated in a linear fashion (e.g., stress precipitates crime) and in a reciprocal cycle (e.g., victimisation engenders stress). Strain theories propose a causal relationship between stress and criminal behaviour, while psychiatric conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder and acute stress disorder clarify the stress induced by criminal acts. A recent study employed universal strain theory to clarify the causal relationship between stress-inducing circumstances and criminal behaviour. Gender differences will be explored in relation to criminal behaviour. Emotional distress is acknowledged as a primary and widespread response among victims of crime. It is a fundamental factor among crime victims, evidenced by four indicators: sadness, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anger, and anxiety. Exposure to such stress frequently presents a risk of melancholy, anxiety, anger, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Employment-related stress is the primary source of stress for adults; nevertheless, stress levels have also increased among children, adolescents, college students, and the elderly due to several other circumstances. The deviant behaviour of a youth, as previously said, stems from maladjustment and the decline of social interactions with family and other groups. When a young person considers themselves ready to join the workforce, achieve stability, undertake responsibilities, and enjoy the material advantages of society. When his circumstances are suddenly altered by unemployment, false allegations, unexpected life events, or the numerous difficulties of acclimating to his new environment, he undergoes a significant shock. It is a phase in youth's life when responsibilities appear most burdensome, when the feeling of achieving something remarkable has waned, and when the past is remembered for its hopes of future successes, for its brilliance rather than its shadows. Thus, starting from the lowest point of immaturity and inexperience, he rises to the highest point of success, only to later fall back to the lowest point of legal violation. This resulted in the youth experiencing stress.

1.1.3 Causes of youth crime

Crime typically arises from a convergence of adverse societal, economic, cultural, and familial influences. To lessen crime, it is crucial to understand its origins; the causes of crime differ from location to location due to unique cultural, economic, and social characteristics. The principal factors contributing to crime are linked to:

1) Economic Situation:- The principal economic factors influencing crime are unemployment, poverty, and the political environment.

2) Social Environment:- The primary socioeconomic root causes of crime are inequality, lack of power-sharing, insufficient familial and community support, actual or perceived inaccessibility to services, poor community leadership, and a lowered valuation of children.

3) Family Structures:- Young individuals from homes exhibiting one or more of the characteristics outlined below are more inclined towards criminal participation. Parental engagement in criminal behaviour, insufficient oversight, neglect, erratic discipline or severe treatment, low socioeconomic status or social seclusion, familial discord, ineffective communication between parents and children, lack of

respect and accountability among family members, child maltreatment and neglect, domestic violence, and family disintegration.

1.1.4 Crime prevention strategies:-

Crime prevention strategies must be holistically incorporated across social, economic, educational, employment, health, housing, urban planning, and judicial domains. Crime is pervasive in all these fields; therefore, it is imperative to integrate preventative strategies comprehensively. Strategies should be based on cooperative connections among governmental entities, ministries, community organisations, nonprofit groups, the corporate sector, and civil society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Liang, Yizhe (2025) Juvenile delinquency is a complex challenge within the criminal justice system, as contemporary trends exceed traditional legal and social regulatory approaches, necessitating innovative solutions. Modern juvenile delinquency exhibits characteristics such as a declining age of offenders, heightened aggression, sophisticated methods, and gang involvement. These issues significantly impact societal welfare by jeopardising public safety, increasing law enforcement costs, and hindering talent development. Tackling juvenile delinquency is therefore of utmost importance. Analysing current traits and circumstances aids in alleviating practical difficulties in understanding the psychological dynamics of offenders. Preventative measures are advised, including the improvement of relevant legislation, the optimisation of legal educational resources, the increase of minors' legal knowledge, and the collaboration of families, educational institutions, and society. These strategies aim to create a collaborative governance synergy, improving preventative measures and fostering youngsters' understanding of the rule of law.

Qobilovich, Odil & Komilovich, Normatov (2025) This research aims to analyse the primary causes of juvenile delinquency, assess the effectiveness of legislative measures in addressing youth crime, and explore preventive options encompassing legal, educational, and social support systems. The study employs a qualitative methodology, encompassing legal analysis, case studies, and a review of relevant literature on juvenile justice systems. A comparative analysis of different legal systems provides insights into the effectiveness of punitive vs rehabilitative approaches. Findings: The statistics suggest that teenage delinquency is predominantly influenced by socio-economic disparities, familial dysfunction, and inadequacies within the educational system. Legal strategies that focus solely on punishment frequently fail to diminish recidivism rates. A comprehensive approach that combines legislative reform, educational policy, and community efforts is more effective in preventing juvenile delinquency. This research enriches the discourse on juvenile justice by emphasising the integration of preventive legal strategies with educational and social support frameworks. This study underscores a multidisciplinary approach as a sustainable technique for alleviating teenage delinquency, in contrast to previous research that mostly focuses on punitive measures.

Shivalov, Ilya (2025). The essay analyses particular traits of teenage delinquency, its current state, and diverse prevention strategies. Significant attention is directed into the characteristics of juvenile criminals and their susceptibility to external factors, together with the context of juvenile criminality in modern Telangana. The analysis of statistical data, supported by the regulatory framework and legal philosophy, highlights the necessity of diminishing adolescent criminal behaviour. The study's findings emphasise the necessity for a comprehensive approach to juvenile delinquency, taking into account its unique attributes. It is recommended to improve children's legal literacy and to take prompt measures to prevent their involvement in criminal actions. The study emphasises the necessity to improve current legislation regarding the criminal accountability of minors.

Karim, Muhammad Hasnayeem (2023). Crime refers to any human conduct that violates the laws of a certain jurisdiction. Telangana, as an emerging state, faces a substantial challenge with escalating crime rates. This study paper analyses crime rates and trends, along with police methodology, to clarify the dynamics of criminal conduct and evaluate the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts. The study commences with a comprehensive examination of crime rates, indicating the frequency of criminal activities within a specific geographical or chronological framework. Additionally, crime patterns, including characteristics, trends, and methods of criminal activities, are analysed to identify recurring patterns and understand the techniques employed by offenders. The research encompasses data collected from the Kotowali Police Station within a certain period and evaluates crime records to furnish an empirical foundation for analysis. Discussions with the Officer in Charge (OC) of the station offer insights into the evolving nature of crime trends, highlighting the challenges faced by law enforcement in combating emerging criminal techniques.

Crowley, Daniel (2013). In this context, there is increasing acknowledgement that specific "tough-on-crime" policies have become substantial factors in the rising social costs of crime. Policymakers are increasingly prioritising intentional investments in teenagers to prevent the development of lifelong offenders, rather than continuing to impose harsher sanctions that lead to costly mass incarceration. In response, innovative strategies for crime prevention and cost control are being executed. Developmental preventive programs are main interventions that target risk factors for delinquent and criminal behaviours at an early stage of life. An expanding corpus of evidence indicates that, when implemented effectively, these developmental preventative programs not only successfully mitigate crime but also constitute cost-effective solutions that conserve public resources.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research employed a descriptive and analytical design to investigate crime patterns, trends, and preventive measures among young adults aged 18 to 25 in Telangana. The study examined the current conditions of juvenile participation in criminal activities and identified characteristics that contribute to criminal behaviour.

Sources of Data

The research predominantly utilised secondary data sourced from government reports, crime records, court statistics, Telangana Law Yearbooks, National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reports, scholarly articles, journals, books, and official publications pertinent to youth crime and criminal justice.

Study Area

The study focused on Telangana State, specifically examining crime patterns among youth aged 18–25 in urban and rural regions.

Population and Unit of Analysis

The target population consisted of young adults aged 18 to 25 years engaged in criminal activity. The core unit of study comprised crime statistics pertaining to this age range.

Data Collection Method

Statistical data concerning the number of offenders, types of crime, educational backgrounds, socio-economic conditions, and new trends such as cybercrime and group offences were obtained from published records and official papers. A survey of literature concerning juvenile delinquency and preventive strategies was conducted.

Data Analysis

The gathered data were examined utilising descriptive statistical methods, encompassing percentages, frequency distributions, tables, and trend analysis. A comparative analysis was performed to discern alterations in crime patterns and the incidence of offences among young people over time.

4. PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND CRIME PREVENTION AMONG YOUTH AGED 18-25 IN TELANGANA

In recent years, incidents such as "teenagers emulating online games to perpetrate homicide," "juvenile theft and robbery offences," and "juvenile campus violence crimes" have surged, making juvenile delinquency a significant topic of investigation within Telangana's criminal law and criminology, as well as a central issue of societal concern, prompting contemplation among various community sectors. Juvenile delinquency is a critical societal concern that necessitates addressing. The Telangana Law Yearbook's judicial data indicates that the number of juvenile delinquents in Telangana initially increased before experiencing a decline from 2007 to 2016. Individuals aged 18-25 constitute the major demographic of juvenile delinquents. Juvenile delinquency in individuals aged 18 to 25 pertains to the perpetration of acts by this group that endanger public safety and necessitate legal penalties under criminal law. The incidence of juvenile delinquents and their proportion of criminal activities suggests that the overall trend of juvenile delinquency in Telangana closely mirrors that of juvenile delinquency in general. Juvenile delinquency exhibits a significant positive correlation with the general trend of juvenile delinquency. This research examines the criminal conduct of individuals between the ages of 18 and 25.

3.1 Present Situations of Crime

3.1.1 Number of Criminals

The Telangana Law Yearbook reveals a reduction in the population of offenders aged 18-25 from 2007 to 2016. The figure fell markedly from 228,792 to 199,161, which considerably influences the overall decline in the total number of juvenile delinquents. From a different perspective, the proportion of offenders aged 18 to 25 remained elevated, having attained 79.8% in 2016. Therefore, education must make substantial advancements in reducing adolescent criminality. Refer to Table 1.

Table 1. Statistics on adolescent delinquency in criminal cases adjudicated by the National People's Court from 2007 to 2016

Particular Years	Juvenile Offenders (persons)	Criminals Aged 18-25 (persons)	Total Number of Juvenile Offenders (persons)	Total Number of Criminal Offenders (persons)	Proportion of Juvenile Delinquents (%)	Criminals aged 18-25 (%)	Proportion of Juvenile Delinquents in Criminal Offenders (%)
2007	87506	228792	316298	931745	27.7	72.3	33.9
2008	88891	233170	322061	1007304	27.6	72.4	32.0
2009	77604	224419	302023	996666	25.7	74.3	30.3
2010	68193	219785	287978	1006420	23.7	76.3	28.6
2011	67280	215149	282429	1050747	23.8	76.2	26.9
2012	63782	219208	282990	1173406	22.5	77.5	24.1
2013	55817	209622	265439	1158609	21.0	79.0	22.9

2014	50415	199161	249576	1184562	20.2	79.8	21.1
2015	43839	192502	236341	1232695	18.6	81.4	19.2
2016	50415	199161	249576	1184562	20.2	79.8	21.1

3.1.2 Forms of Crime

Initially, adolescent delinquency predominantly transitions from petty offences to serious violent crimes. The age of initiation for juvenile delinquency has diminished, and the range of offences has broadened, mostly encompassing violent crimes, property offences, as well as homicide, sexual assault, kidnapping, and other serious crimes. Secondly, the form of crime evolves from individual offences to collective offences. The case of "Fraud in telecommunications involving a freshman admitted to the college entrance examination" exhibits a quintessential adolescent gang crime, which exerts a profoundly detrimental impact on society.

3.1.3 The prevalence of crime is universal, with particular concern about offences committed by rural youth and college students

The investigation indicates that this criminal group generally displays distinct common characteristics, such as low educational achievement (70% have completed middle school or less), insufficient familial economic conditions (27.9% come from impoverished backgrounds), fragmented living situations, an absence of defined life objectives and ideals, and a marked propensity for anti-social norms and maladaptive behaviours. This primarily represents the internal element contributing to juvenile delinquency in rural areas. Since the onset of the new century, criminal conduct among college students has become increasingly evident. The standard age range for full-time college students is 18 to 25 years. Statistics reveal that from 2020 to 2024, the annual apprehension of college students by the public security bureau in the Telangana district has steadily increased. Criminal activity primarily encompasses theft and fraud, with a considerable proportion of offenders involved in pornography. The utilisation of QQ, WeChat, and analogous messaging services to leverage the "nearby people" search function to manipulate others' goodwill and trust, culminating in theft and criminal actions. Furthermore, violent crimes such as premeditated murder, intentional assault, and the incitement of conflicts are on the rise.

5. YOUNG ADULTS AND CRIME — PATTERNS, TRENDS, AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Young adulthood is a crucial developmental stage characterised by identity formation, social integration, and financial independence. In this transitional phase, individuals frequently face social pressures, psychological instability, and economic challenges, which may increase their vulnerability to criminal behaviour. Criminal activity in adolescents is influenced by a complex interaction of social, psychological, and economic factors, including unemployment, family dynamics, peer influence, and exposure to violence.

Adolescents typically demonstrate patterns of criminal behaviour encompassing property offences, violent offences, drug-related activities, and cybercrime. Research suggests that crime rates frequently escalate between late adolescence and early adulthood, due to increased risk-taking behaviour, the pursuit of social identity, and susceptibility to peer influence. Social inequality, inadequate educational opportunities, and unemployment intensify criminal behaviour by cultivating discontent and limiting lawful pathways for social advancement.

Recent trends indicate changes in offences committed by youth, particularly due to the rise of technology and digital platforms. Cybercrime, online fraud, and digital harassment have progressively escalated among young offenders. Moreover, urbanisation and migration have facilitated the development of crime-

prone environments marked by reduced social control and inadequate community support, hence increasing the likelihood of criminal activity.

Preventive measures are crucial in reducing crime among youth. These encompass improving access to educational and vocational opportunities, strengthening familial support networks, promoting community engagement, and implementing rehabilitative initiatives. Effective law enforcement, public awareness initiatives, and skill development programs may reduce youth involvement in illicit enterprises and promote positive social behaviour.

1. Patterns of Crime Among Young Adults

Juvenile criminal behaviours reflect the socio-economic conditions of their surroundings. Common forms of criminal behaviour encompass theft, assault, drug-related offences, and cybercrime. These patterns are frequently associated with peer influence, economic pressures, and psychological factors such as aggression and risk-taking tendencies. Adolescents are inclined to engage in collective illicit acts due to their desire for social validation and identity formation.

2. Trends in Youth Criminal Behaviour

The patterns of juvenile criminal behaviour have evolved over time due to technological advancements, globalisation, and changing social structures. Traditional crimes such as robbery and violence continue to exist, while new offences like cybercrime and digital fraud are increasing. Urbanisation, migration, and socio-economic inequality have transformed crime patterns by creating conditions favourable to criminal behaviour. Understanding these trends assists policymakers in developing effective crime control strategies.

3. Preventive Strategies and Crime Control Measures

Addressing juvenile crime necessitates a comprehensive approach, incorporating social, educational, and institutional interventions. Educational and skill development efforts enhance employment opportunities and mitigate economic dissatisfaction. Familial support and community involvement improve social regulation and reduce deviant behaviour. Rehabilitation programs, counselling services, and awareness campaigns are essential for reforming offenders and preventing recidivism.

6. CONCLUSION

Juvenile delinquency is a complex societal issue shaped by various factors, including economic conditions, social environment, peer influence, and technological progress. Understanding the patterns and trends of criminal activity is essential for developing successful preventive strategies and policy initiatives. An extensive strategy that incorporates education, economic opportunities, familial support, community engagement, and rehabilitation programs may significantly reduce juvenile criminal activity. Therefore, addressing the underlying causes of criminal behaviour in adolescents is essential for improving societal stability, ensuring public safety, and promoting positive youth development.

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