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Define the term juvenile delinquency.
Write a note on the history of juvenile justice system and role of the juvenile court in reducing juvenile delinquency.

Introduction

The effects of juvenile delinquency on both the offending youth and on society as a whole are far-reaching. Juvenile delinquency, the juvenile justice system, and juvenile courts are all interconnected aspects of how society responds to criminal and deviant behaviour among young people. Ideally, the juvenile justice system and juvenile courts aim to deter delinquency by holding juveniles accountable for their actions while also providing them the resources and support they need to avoid future delinquent behaviour. They often emphasize rehabilitation, providing counseling, education, and other services aimed at helping juveniles make better choices in the future.

Defining the term Juvenile Delinquency
The term juvenile means a child,

the one who has not attained the age of adulthood while "Delinquency" has been derived from Latin word "diligere" meaning negligence. So the conduct or action of a juvenile which violates the social code (norms of society) is called juvenile delinquency.

There are two dimensions of juvenile delinquency.

- Behavioral Definition
- Legal Definition

Behavioral Definition:

Juvenile Delinquency can behaviorally be defined as exhibiting frequent disapproved behaviour by the children. The disapproved behaviours means a behaviour which is not liked by the society at large. Examples include Elopement, absenteeism, Lethargy and ill-mannerism. These behaviours though disliked by the society are not criminal offences.

Legal Definition:

Legally the child delinquency signifies a behaviour that violates

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The Criminal code. It is violation of the law committed by a juvenile. Examples include sexual activities, theft and damaging properties of others. These behaviors, in contrast to the ones cited in behavioral dimensions, are criminal offences under the law of the land.

= History of juvenile justice system

Juvenile justice system encompasses laws and institutions which deals with the children / juveniles accused of committing crimes. There is a growing tendency across the globe to recognize that the children committing crimes should not be treated as ordinary criminals rather they should be treated as victims due to lack of maturity.

The history of juvenile system is complicated and constantly changing. In the early 19th century, societies began to perceive the need for a separate justice system for juvenile offenders due to their development differences from adult criminals. Rather than punishment, the juvenile justice system was founded on the principles of rehabilitation.

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and reforms. Here is a brief overview of the key milestones in the history of the juvenile justice system.

• Early Efforts:

The concept of a separate system for dealing with young offenders emerged in the early 1800s in Europe, particularly in England. Reformers like John Howard and Robert Peel advocated for the establishment of institutions that would rehabilitate young offenders of sending them to adult prisons.

• House of Refuge Movement:

The first House of Refuge was established in New York in 1824. These institutions were intended to provide education, vocational training, and moral guidance to young delinquents, aiming to reform their behaviour and integrate them back into society.

• Early Juvenile Courts:

In 1899, the first juvenile court in the world was established in Cook County, Illinois, under the leadership of Judge Julian Mack. The court's mission

was to provide a separate legal process for juveniles based on the principles of *parens patriae*, which means that the state acted as a parent in the best interests of the child.

• Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (1974):

In the United States, this act was a significant development in the juvenile justice system. It established funding for the prevention of delinquency and improved treatment of young offenders.

⇒ History of juvenile justice system in Pakistan

In Pakistan, for many years, there was not a distinct system for juveniles and adults in the criminal justice system, and this led to several problems, such as juveniles being treated as adults in terms of punishment.

The Government of Pakistan passed the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance (JJSO) in 2000. The JJSO made provisions for separate courts, separate jails, and different types of punishment for juveniles. However, in practice, the enforcement of this

ordinance was often lacking and inconsistent. In 2018, the parliament passed Juvenile Justice Act (JJSA), which replaced the 2000 Ordinance.

→ Role of Juvenile Court in reducing Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile courts play a pivotal role in reducing juvenile delinquency. They have unique function and responsibility compared to adult criminal courts, with an emphasis on rehabilitation and prevention rather than punishment. Here some ways through which juvenile courts can help reduce juvenile - delinquency.

Role of Juvenile Court

- (i) Rehabilitation Focus
- (ii) Family Involvement
- (iii) Restorative Justice
- (iv) Education and Vocational Training
- (v) Mental Health and Substance Use Services.

(i) Rehabilitation Focus:

Unlike adults courts, juvenile courts typically focus more on rehabilitation the juveniles offender rather than just punishing them.

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They use tools such as probation, counseling, and education to help juveniles make better choices in future.

(ii) Family Involvement:

Juvenile courts often involve the family in the process of rehabilitation. This could involve family counseling, parenting classes, or other interventions that aim to improve family dynamics and provide supportive environment for the child.

(iii) Restorative Justice:

Some juvenile courts use restorative justice principles to address juvenile delinquency. Restorative justice can help juveniles understand the impact of their actions and take responsibility for them, which can reduce likelihood of future offences.

(iv) Educational and Vocational Training:

Juvenile courts also order to offender to engaged in educational programs or vocational training.

These opportunities can give juveniles the skills and qualifications they need to pursue lawful and productive paths.

(v) Mental Health and substance Use Services:

Many juveniles involved with mental health issues and substance use. Juvenile courts can refer these youth to appropriate treatment services, addressing these underlying issues that often contribute the delinquent behavior.

⇒ Role of Juvenile Courts in Pakistan

Under section 4 of the Juvenile Justice System Act 2018, the juvenile courts is required to complete the trial within six months. In case of inability of the court to complete the trial within given period of time, extension will be sought from the respective High Court. The concerned probation officer is also required to assistance to the court and prepare a report, if desired by the court under section 14 of the Act, on background and character of juvenile. The court is required to take care of best interest of a juvenile offender.