

Criminology

Q What is juvenile delinquency? Explain the nature, extent and causes of juvenile delinquency in Pakistan. Suggest remedial measures for reducing juvenile delinquency in Pakistan. (CSS 2018)

1) Juvenile delinquency:

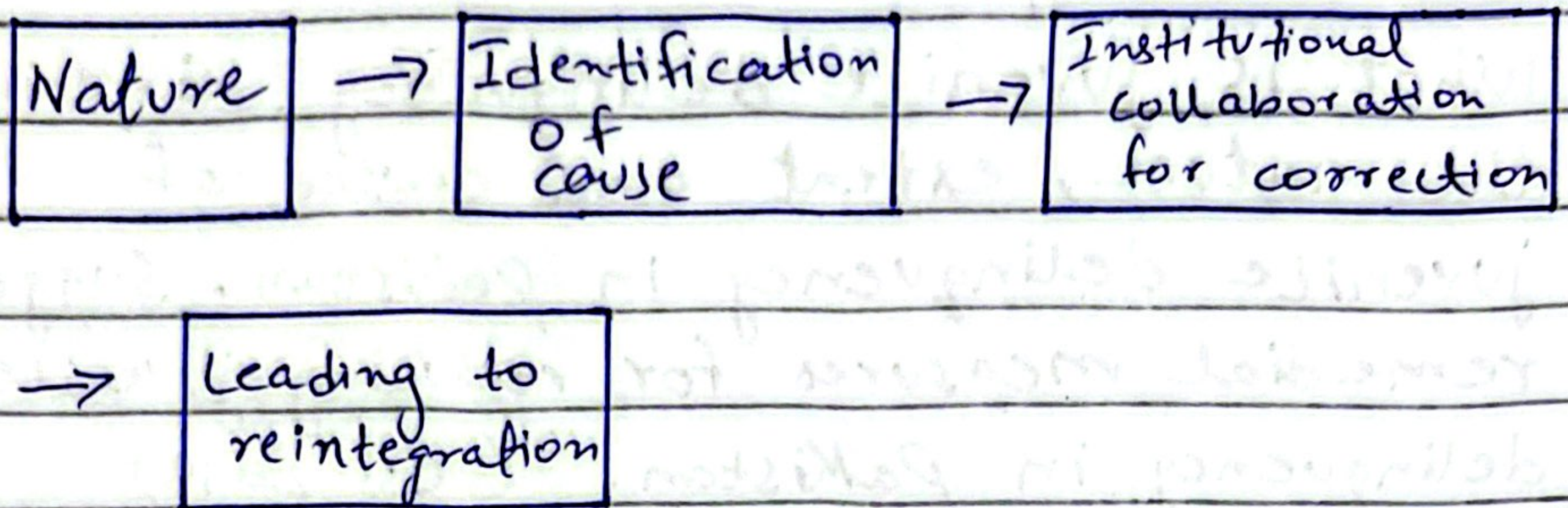
The term is derived from a Latin word 'Juvenilis' which means 'youthful', and 'Delinquency' which means 'failure in duty'. In simple terms it can be defined as an act or offense committed by a child in violation of criminal law or due to his status as a child.

"It is the act of participating in unlawful behaviour as a minor or individual younger than the statutory age of minority"

- Seigel

2) Nature of Juvenile delinquency:

The nature of juvenile delinquency is multifaceted, shaped by psychological development, socio-economic causes, cultural context and also institutional framework. Understanding its nature is really important, not only for developing effective prevention and intervention programs, but also for ensuring the safety of children that are convicted. The end goal is rehabilitation



3) Extent of juvenile delinquency:

The extent of juvenile delinquency is broad incorporating multiple kind of offences

a) Violent crimes:

This category consist of petty crime, which usually no jail time such as street fights. It also consist of heinous crimes such as murder, which has life sentences.

b) Property crimes:

These crimes consist of property damage in which compensation has to be paid to the occupier, and even jail time. It may include causing harm such as breaking of windows and stealing as well.

c) Status offender:

These are the types of crime, which if done by an adult, would not be a crime. They are crime only due to the age of the offender. It may include, violation of curfew time or even underage driving.

4) Causes of juvenile delinquency in Pakistan:

a) Social causes:

Society plays a significant role, due to which people commit crime. As mentioned by "Henry Thomas" that "Society prepares crime, and criminals commit it". So, if at a young age children affiliate with people having traits of criminality, they would learn it too. This claim is also supported by the Theory of Differential Association. Bullying can also be a ~~major~~ major cause of crime in a child. Kids use to label other kind on the basis of their features. So, if a child is labelled as a criminal or a thief, he would eventually go down that path. Which is also what the Labelling Theory argues. Similarly, if a child is brought up in an abusive household, he would learn that aggressive behaviour. If the parents are not focused on their children during the initial years, the tendency of development of anti-social behaviour increases significantly. Lastly, applying the concept of Social Disorganization Theory, if the child is raised in a community where crime rate is high, then the possibility of delinquency boosts. This not only has individual effects, but overall disrupts the social fabric.

b) Psychological causes:

Psychological causes greatly impact a child's tendency to offend. The pre frontal cortex of the brain is responsible for decision making, if there is low activity in that area, it could lead to criminal tendencies in a child. Similarly, IQ of a child could also be a contributing factor, if a child has low iq, he would not be rational with his decisions. Head injuries are also a major reason, and the problem in Pakistan is that, people don't usually seek medical attention.

According to Psychoanalytic Theory, the sub conscious mind is divided into ID, Ego and Super ego. The Id consist of instinctual drives, the super ego consist of moral ~~stern~~ standards and the super ego balances ID's demands and super egos prohibitions. A weak super ego would fail to suppress Id which would lead to deviant act. Similarly, an ineffective ego would lead to poor impulsive control leading to crime.

c) Biological causes:

Age is a major factor of juvenile delinquency. The brain fully develops at the age of 25, till then impulsivity is at it peak. This could lead to irrational decision, without the proper cost-benefit analysis. Gender is also a major factor. Most of the juvenile offenders are male this

is due to the cultural norms that exists, as males are granted more freedom compared to females

Male juvenile suspects outnumber females by over 6:1

- United Nations

Genetics also play its part in crime.

If a juvenile would have an extra Y chromosome, such as XYY, it could increase his tendency towards criminality

d) Economic causes:

Economic deprivation generates stress and fosters criminal tendencies among youth to seek resources. This claim is supported by Strain Theory, that if someone has goals but lack the legal means to obtain it, then he would commit crime.

Adolescents in poor households commit 1.6 times more property offenses

- Pide, 2023

5) Remedial measures for reduction of juvenile delinquency:

a) Spread awareness among parents

Basic learning begins from a child's home.

It is important to spread awareness among parents on how to properly raise their children. They should be gentle with their

children, and incorporate positive values in them.

"Every child's mind is a blank sheet of paper whatever he learns is printed on his mind."

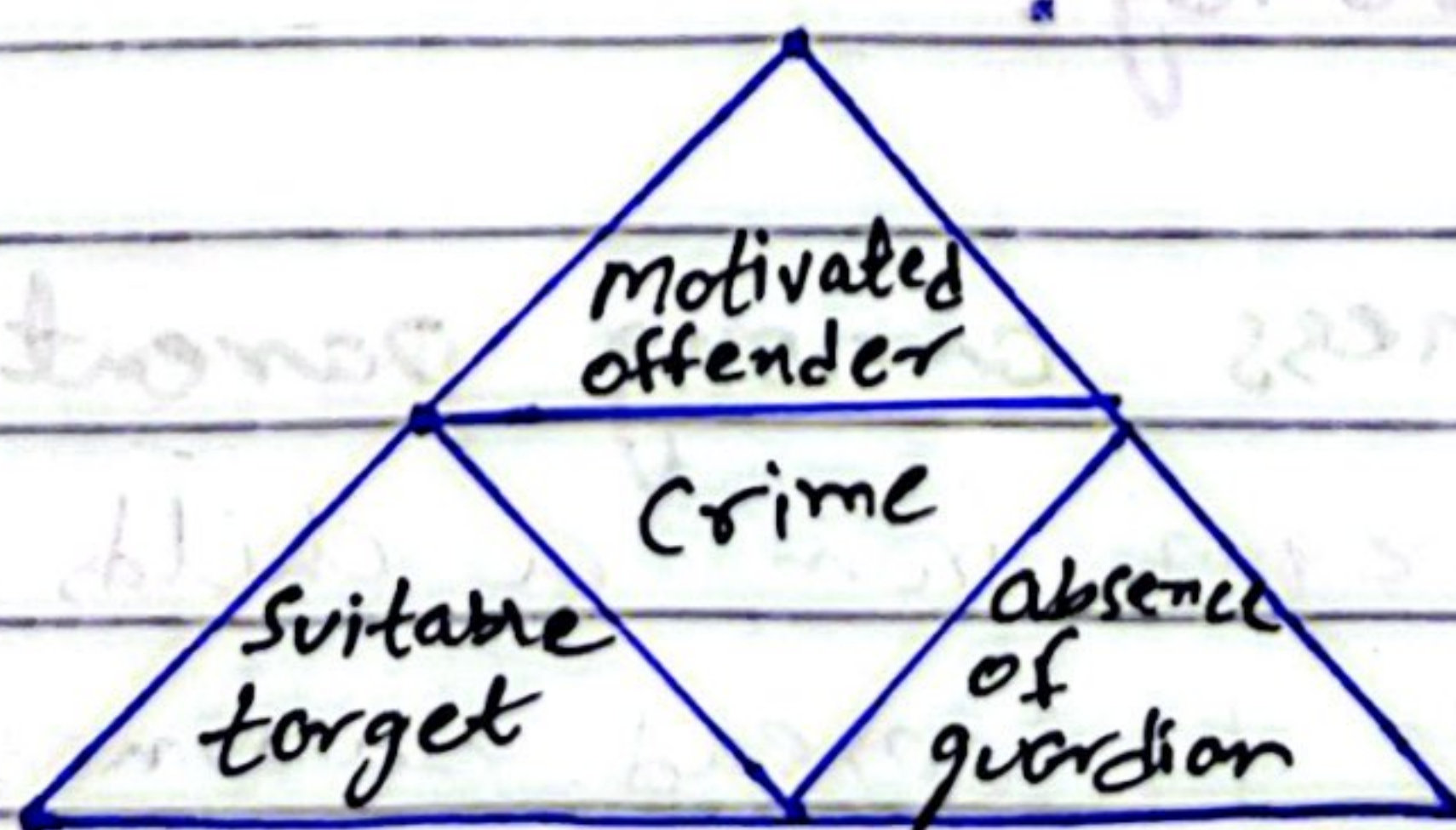
- Law of imitation
by Gabriel Tarde

b) Improving juvenile courts

Juvenile courts have to be expanded in Pakistan, every district should have its own juvenile court, with trained judges and police officials. Such personnel who do not torture the children, and do not necessarily extend deadlines. The quick resolution of the case should be the first priority. Similarly, there should be mandatory diversion for non-violent offenses, targeting a significant reduction in juvenile institutionalization.

c) Community policing

According to Routine Activity Theory, crime happens due to convergence of a motivated offender, a suitable target, and absence of capable guardians.



so, with the incorporation of community policing, there won't be a suitable target within the vicinity.

d) Rehabilitative intervention

The end goal is reintegration, which is only possible by rehabilitation to reduce recidivism. The government should provide therapy services free of cost for the child delinquents. Sindh Juvenile Justice study reported 30% lower recidivism among CBT participants.

e) Educational continuation

The offenders that are in detention centers should be provided education facility for literacy gain and improved social integration. Along with basic study social-emotional learning should be incorporated in the curriculum all over Pakistan, this would build emotional regulation in children and also help to reduce ~~the~~ truancy.

f) Maximise youth engagement

Areas where child delinquency is high have to be identified such as Layari and there should be development of sports facilities and other clubs. This would help children to spend time playing and have a healthy competition among other children. This would overall reduce crime in the area.

6) Critical Analysis :

The nature and extent of child delinquency is broad and multifaceted, which are tailored around a particular individual.

The causes are varied too ranging from peer affiliation, poor economic conditions or even psychological issue. There is no one contributing factor rather it is convergence of multiple criterias that shape an individual to commit crime. For proper remedies a deep study of causes is required, to then making policies for its reduction. The major contributor would be the parents as they are the primary source of learning for the children, and ultimately could have the greatest impact on the reduction of juvenile delinquency.

7) Conclusion :

To conclude, juvenile delinquency is a major issue in Pakistan. Which has many causes such as biological, social, and psychological. Along with poor management just adds fuel to the fire. It can be controlled by improving institutions, rehabilitation, community policing and youth engagement. By improving these areas there would be visible change, that would be long lasting or even ever-lasting.

8) Introduction

Juvenile delinquency is a major issue in Pakistan, that has a broad nature with varied causes such as biological, social, psychological. It can be controlled by improved policy, government incentives and rehabilitation.