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Original Research Article

A study of psycho-social background of children placed in remand home

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ABSTRACT

Background: Children are one of the most vulnerable groups of societies and are at risk of many social evils. They should be identified and provided protective environment and loving care for their adequate growth and development. The aim of the study was to know psycho-social background of children in remand home.
Methods: The study was carried out in Remand home Solapur which is run by Government. Based on the pilot study, 200 children were included in the study. They were interviewed regarding their personal and family background. If necessary data from remand home registers, parents, social workers and teachers were taken. Chi square test and T-test for difference between two proportions was used for the statistical analysis.
Results: Out of 200 children, 78 were delinquents and 122 were non-delinquents. 144 were boys and 56 were girls. Most common reason of admission was financial constraints among non-delinquents and theft among delinquents. 12-18 yrs. old children were more involved in delinquency. Restrained relations with parents and family size played an important role in delinquency.
Conclusions: Out of total 200 children, delinquency was found in 39% more in boys and 12-18 yrs. age group. Delinquency was more in children with restrained familial relations. School dropout rate was more in non-delinquents and addiction was more in delinquents.

Keywords: Juveniles, Remand home, Delinquency

INTRODUCTION

Children are greatest national asset and resource. Children should be allowed and provided opportunity to grow up to become healthy, skillful and robust citizens for the society.[1]

But in today's world children are exposed to mental pressures due to parental illiteracy, ignorance, competitions in various fields, extreme poverty or affluence, losing morals in adult populations and to variety of sources of easily accessible information and which is at times beyond their scope of understanding and reason. In such situation if we do not provide them satisfactory answers, they develop fantasy explanations that may be more dangerous than the actual reality. So it's our responsibility to mould and shape their present conditions in the best possible way because children have a right to grow up in a nutritious environment, only then can they realize their full potential. According to the Indian constitution there should be separate jails for the juvenile prisoners or under-trials. They are Observation Homes formerly known as remand homes. This study is directed to know the psycho-social background of such socially handicapped children and to find the suggestions to improve their quality of life.

Aim

To know psycho-social background of children in remand home.

Objectives

1. To know reasons of admission in remand home.
2. To study psycho-social background of children admitted in remand home.

METHODS

Subjects and methods

It was a descriptive institution based study carried out in a Government run remand home for children in the age groups of 6-18 years. There are two types of children admitted under remand home viz. Children in need of care and protection (CNCP) and children in conflict with law (CICL) taken care by Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) respectively. CNCP include orphans, street children, those whose parents have financial problems, those with single parents or those who ran away from home etc. CICL include those who have engaged in deviant or criminal behavior.

Sample size

The pilot study was done to find out prevalence of children with psycho-social and health problems on 30 children. Based on it, the prevalence of delinquents was 13%. The sample size was calculated using the formula n=3.84 pq/l2.2 Using precision level of 5%, at 95% confidence interval and prevalence of 13%,

n=(3.84×13×87)/5×5=173.72

So the minimum sample size to be collected was 174. So 200 children admitted during the study period (January 2014 to December 2014) were taken for the study with prior consent of CWC and JJB.

Exclusion criteria

1. Children who were not willing to participate in the study.
2. Children whose history could not be taken because of some inevitable problems like no permission could be taken.
3. Readmissions in remand home.

The data collection was done at the time of admission of child to remand home by personal interview using pre-designed and pretested questionnaire. If necessary help of the parent, guardian, social worker, police or remand home authorities was taken to know the past history of child if the child is not able to tell. Prior written consent for the study is taken from Child Welfare Committee and Juvenile Justice Board.

Child parent relationship- relationship scale

Each child was asked five questions as per the strengths and difficulties questionnaire. The answer given by the child for each question was rated in a scale of score 1-5. The total score was recorded. If the score was 1-7, the relationship was taken as 'good', if the score was 8-16, the score was recorded as 'average' and 17-25 score was regarded as 'poor' child parent relationship.[3,4]

RESULTS

The present study was done in remand home on total 200 children which included both delinquents and non-delinquents.

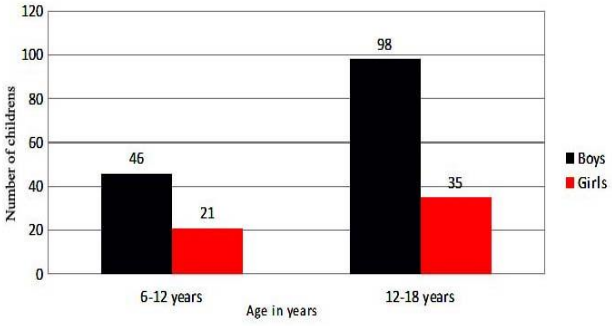

Figure 1: Distribution of children according to age and gender.

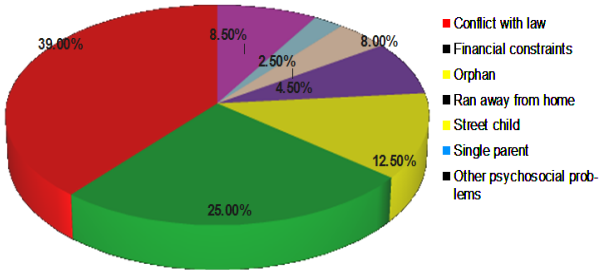

Figure 2: Distribution of children according to psychosocial problem.

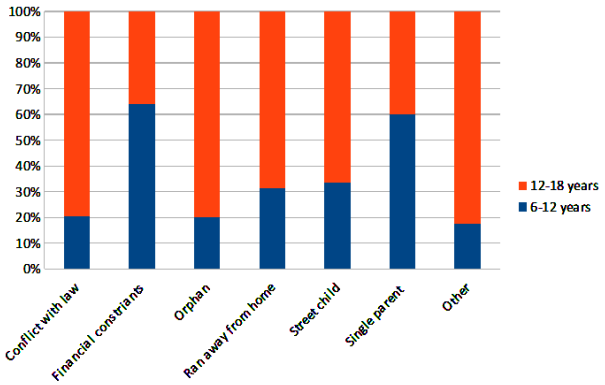

Figure 3: Age-wise distribution of children according to causes of admission.

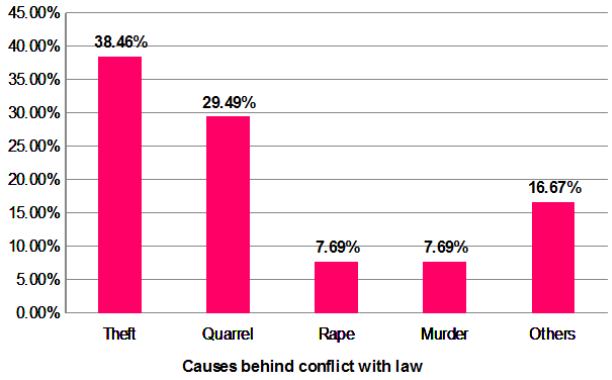

Figure 4: Distribution of children according to causes behind conflict with law.

Psycho-social background of children

42.31% of children doing child labour were delinquents, as compared to 39.26% and 27.27% of delinquent children respectively among those who were not working or doing light work. The difference was statistically not significant (p>0.05).

History of addiction was present in 14% of children. 50% of children with history of addiction were delinquents, while among those with no history of addiction, 62.79% were non-delinquents. After applying chi-square test, it was found that history of addiction and delinquency was not associated (p>0.05).

When the familial status of the children was assessed, it was found that of all the children, delinquents were more from children belonging to three generation (100%) and joint family (75.00%) while 58.17% children from Nuclear family were non-delinquents. The difference was statistically highly significant (p<0.001). 47% of children in remand home were from medium sized family. Family size of 30 (15.00%) non-delinquents could not be traced. Delinquency was common in children from large families (54.55%). While more number of children from small (58.46%) and medium sized (52.13%) families were non-delinquents. The difference was statistically highly significant (p<0.001). **[**total number of members in the family- small family (<3), medium family (4-7), large (>7).] 66.50% of parents of children in remand home were married and living together, 6% were widow/ divorcee/ separated or deserted, 1% were never married. Marital status of 26.50% parents was not known to children due to their tender age and it could not be traced. All (two) children of parents who were never married were delinquents. More children of parents married and living together (54.14%) were non- delinquents. The difference was statistically significant (p<0.05) which showed that marital status of parents and delinquency were associated.

Out of 200 children, child-parent relationship of 170 children can be traced. It was found that that only 1 (00.59%) child was with good child-parent relationship, maximum (65.88%) of children had average child-parent relationship. 61.40% of children with poor child-parent relationship were non-delinquents. In one case, child with good child-parent relationship was delinquent. The difference was statistically not significant (p>0.05). Among children in remand home 32.50% had history of child abuse. Delinquency was more in children who had history of child abuse (55.38%) than in children with no history of child abuse (31.11%). The association of child abuse and delinquency was statistically significant (p<0.05).

DISCUSSION

Like present study, Odgers, Moretti said that the majority of adolescent criminal offenses are committed by males.[5] Predominance of boys in delinquency might be the effect of more exposure to external stimuli and aggressive nature of boys in giving reaction to unpleasant stimulus as compared to girls.

In this study, 39% were delinquents and 61% non-delinquents. Among the non-delinquents maximum number of children 50 (25%) were admitted because of financial problems in family. Maximum number of children i.e. 30 (38.46%) were convicted for theft followed by quarrel 23 (29.49%). However, as per the study done by Ghattargi, Deshmukh.[6] In the study of the total 300 juveniles admitted to remand home 78.67% and 21.33% were delinquents and non- delinquents respectively.

83.5% children were Hindu and 16.5% were Muslim by religion. Similar findings were found in the study done by Pasi, Shinde et al shows that 63.5% of the children were Hindu and 34.1% were Muslim.[7]

In this study, out of 170 children who were enrolled in school, 17.06% were dropped out with more dropout rate in non-delinquents. In my study, it was found that 13% were involved in child labour and 5.5% were doing light work other than child labour. But Sahmey found that most of the Juveniles were having a history of employment as a daily wage labor i.e. 62.5%.[8] In this study, out of 200 children, 14% gave history of some kind of addiction. In a study done by Pagare, Meena et al, among the children interviewed, 57.4% (n=66) had indulged in substance use any time in their life.[9]

Most of the children (47%) were from medium family size. In a study done by Ghattargi, Deshmukh 91% juveniles came from nuclear families.[6] Similar to present study, in a study done by Pasi, Shinde et al, it was observed that 54.0% of institutionalized children belonged to medium-sized (4-7) families, whereas 33.3% to small families and 12.7% to large families.[7] Abidoye found that 61 (56.5%) reported that they felt they did not have their mother's love while forty-seven (43.5%) indicated lack of love from the fathers.[10]

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