

**Evidence of Drug Abuse, Poverty, and Peer Pressure as Factors Affecting Juvenile Illegal
Comportment in Pakistan**

Dr. M. Qadeer

Qadeerasad25@gmail.com

Visiting Faculty, Criminology Department, University of the Punjab

Sharafat Ali

Scholar, Criminology Department, University of the Punjab

Corresponding Author: Dr. M. Qadeer Qadeerasad25@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency has become a growing social and security concern in Pakistan, where increasing levels of youth crime are associated with multiple social, economic, and psychological factors. While substance abuse is widely recognized as an important contributor to criminal behavior among young people, the relationship between drug addiction and juvenile offending is influenced by broader structural conditions, including family instability, peer networks, poverty, unemployment, and educational exclusion. This study investigates the socioeconomic and psychological determinants of juvenile delinquency in Pakistan, with particular emphasis on the role of substance abuse and social environment.

The research explores how drug dependency, family relationships, peer influence, and socioeconomic challenges contribute to youth involvement in criminal activities. Using empirical evidence and theoretical perspectives from criminology, sociology, and psychology, the study analyzes patterns of offending among young individuals and examines the effectiveness of existing prevention and rehabilitation mechanisms in Pakistan.

The findings suggest that juvenile crime cannot be addressed through punitive measures alone. Effective reduction of youth offending requires integrated strategies combining drug prevention, family counseling, educational opportunities, mental health support, vocational training, and community-based rehabilitation. The study recommends a shift from punishment-oriented approaches toward preventive and rehabilitative policies to reduce youth crime and promote social reintegration in Pakistan.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquency, youth crime, substance abuse, peer influence, family environment, socioeconomic factors, rehabilitation, criminology, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW

The availability of narcotics in urban and rural areas, coupled with weak law enforcement and organized criminal networks, has exacerbated substance abuse among vulnerable youth populations.

From a criminological perspective, theories such as Social Strain Theory, Social Disorganization Theory, Differential Association Theory, and Social Control Theory provide valuable explanations for the relationship between drug abuse and youth crime. These perspectives suggest that criminal behavior often emerges when individuals experience blocked opportunities, weak social bonds, exposure to criminal peer groups, and disorganized social environments. In Pakistan, these conditions are frequently compounded by institutional weaknesses, including inadequate rehabilitation facilities, insufficient mental health services, limited drug prevention programs, and uneven implementation of juvenile justice policies.

Despite legislative initiatives and government efforts to strengthen narcotics control and juvenile justice, significant implementation challenges remain. Drug treatment centers, probation services, counselling facilities, and community-based rehabilitation programs are insufficient to meet the growing demand. Many juvenile offenders receive punitive sanctions rather than evidence-based treatment and rehabilitation, increasing the likelihood of recidivism and long-term social exclusion. Furthermore, reliable national data on the prevalence of substance abuse among juvenile offenders remain limited, restricting the development of effective policies and intervention strategies.

Depending on the circumstances, a violation that is expressly included in the law typically involves jail time or other penalties. Anything that is subject to legal punishment is considered a crime. Driving while intoxicated, sexual assault, vandalism, and robbery are the most frequent crimes. People who have engaged in this kind of illegal action are regarded as criminals (John, 2020). Observing both criminality-specific behaviors and the basic characteristics of criminals is essential to understanding crime, as some eminent criminologists have recently acknowledged. Numerous factors, all connected to criminal activity, contribute to melancholy and violence (Omogho, 2016).

Since criminal activities negatively affect individuals, communities, and social institutions, governments establish laws to prevent and control such behaviors. Instead of relying solely on punishment, contemporary criminal justice systems increasingly emphasize investigation, rehabilitation, and understanding the underlying causes of crime in order to determine the extent of the problem and its legal and social implications. In many Asian countries, including Pakistan, a significant proportion of the population faces economic challenges, and poverty and unemployment remain major concerns, particularly among young people (Altindag, 2012). Youth represent one of the most valuable components of any society, and when provided with education, employment opportunities, and supportive environments, they can contribute significantly to social development and national progress. However, when young individuals become involved in criminal activities or develop antisocial attitudes, they may pose serious challenges to social stability and public security. Therefore, the behavior and development of children and youth often serve as an important indicator of a country's social, economic, and institutional capacity to protect its future generations.

Criminal behavior has a significant impact on migration patterns and social exclusion in Pakistan. Individuals involved in criminal activities can be found across different socioeconomic backgrounds, ranging from disadvantaged groups to affluent segments of society. Many offenders attempt to improve their economic status through unlawful activities and illegal sources of income. Previous studies have highlighted that crimes in Pakistan have been associated with various actors, including criminal networks, political organizations, law enforcement personnel, and some individuals working within state institutions, particularly those connected with the judicial system. Pakistan continues to experience serious challenges in social, economic, and technological development compared with many other countries (Anderson et al., 2003). Such conditions often contribute to public frustration, declining confidence in future prospects, and an increase in criminal tendencies, particularly among urban populations affected by unemployment, economic inequality, and limited youth engagement in political and social activities. Young people are especially vulnerable to social isolation, exclusion, and insufficient positive support from peers and communities, which may increase their likelihood of adopting aggressive behaviors or becoming involved in criminal activities (Butcher et al., 2015).

Criminal behavior is influenced by multiple interconnected factors and can be understood as a complex developmental process that evolves throughout an individual's life. It involves continuous interactions between personal characteristics, social environments, and broader societal conditions. Human behavior is shaped by psychological, emotional, and physical attributes, which affect individual decision-making,

relationships with others, participation in social institutions, and responses to surrounding environments (Jua, 2003). Among young people, unemployment and limited opportunities for personal and professional development often generate feelings of frustration, hopelessness, and social dissatisfaction. Research suggests that these challenges may contribute to increased involvement of youth in illegal activities, including drug trafficking, extremist groups, and other forms of profitable criminal behavior (Pratt et al., 2010).

Previous studies have examined various social factors associated with youth criminality. For example, Effiom (2021) explored the relationship between poverty and juvenile criminal behavior in Akpabuyo, Cross River State, while Omogho (2020) investigated the influence of peer groups on criminal activities among young people in Abraka, Delta State. Although these studies provided valuable insights, they were conducted from different disciplinary perspectives and require further investigation through broader approaches. Additionally, several studies have analyzed the relationship between substance use and youth offending in Borno State, Nigeria (Herrenkohl, 2017; Abdullah et al., 2014).

Family-related conditions also play a significant role in shaping juvenile delinquency. Factors such as ineffective parenting practices, large family structures, parental conflicts, child abuse, and lack of parental support have been associated with a higher likelihood of youth involvement in criminal activities. Mednick (2018) reported that complications during pregnancy and childbirth were linked particularly with violent behaviors rather than nonviolent forms of offending. Furthermore, evidence indicates that children exposed to maternal smoking during pregnancy have a greater likelihood of developing behavioral problems and conduct-related disorders. Despite these findings, previous studies contain certain limitations, highlighting the need for additional research to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the causes and prevention of youth criminal behavior.

Criminal behavior is a multifaceted phenomenon that develops over the course of an individual's life and is influenced by the continuous interaction between personal characteristics, social structures, and environmental conditions. Individual psychological, emotional, and biological attributes play an important role in shaping human behavior, decision-making processes, and relationships with family, institutions, communities, and the wider social environment (Jua, 2003).

Among young people, unemployment and restricted opportunities for education, employment, and social mobility may contribute to feelings of frustration, disappointment, and social alienation. Studies have shown that economic difficulties and limited prospects can increase the vulnerability of youth to involvement in illegal activities, including drug trafficking, extremist organizations, and other financially motivated crimes (Pratt et al., 2010).

Previous research has explored the connection between socioeconomic conditions and youth criminal behavior. For instance, Effiom (2021) examined the association between poverty and juvenile delinquency in Akpabuyo, Cross River State, whereas Omogho (2020) investigated the influence of peer groups on criminal behavior among young individuals in Abraka, Delta State. Although these studies contributed valuable knowledge, they were conducted from different academic perspectives, indicating the need for more comprehensive and interdisciplinary research. Furthermore, other scholars have examined the effects of substance use and drug abuse among young people in Borno State, Nigeria (Herrenkohl, 2017; Abdullah et al., 2014).

Family and parental conditions are also considered important factors associated with juvenile offending. Poor parenting practices, large family size, parental conflicts, child neglect or abuse, and inadequate parental supervision may increase the likelihood of young individuals engaging in delinquent activities.

Mednick (2018) found that complications during pregnancy and childbirth were associated with violent behavioral tendencies, although they did not show a strong relationship with nonviolent criminal acts. Additionally, research suggests that children exposed to heavy maternal smoking during pregnancy have a higher probability of developing behavioral difficulties, including conduct-related disorders. However, existing studies contain methodological and contextual limitations, demonstrating the need for further investigation to gain a deeper understanding of the complex causes and contributing factors behind youth criminal behavior.

Previous studies have suggested that the prevalence of drug and substance abuse increases in societies where awareness regarding associated risk factors remains limited. Factors such as inadequate education, unemployment, negative peer influence, social environment, and early exposure to substance use within the family or community can significantly contribute to the development of drug-related behaviors among adolescents. Children may initially encounter drugs through observation and indirect experiences, particularly when they see family members, friends, or individuals in their surroundings using substances. Such exposure can create curiosity and increase their desire to understand the effects and perceived benefits of drugs.

During childhood and adolescence, individuals may unconsciously store these observations as behavioral patterns, which can later influence their decisions when they experience emotional stress, psychological pressure, or challenging life circumstances. As a result, adolescents who are exposed to drug-related behaviors in their social environment may become more vulnerable to experimenting with substances, particularly comparatively less harmful or "soft" drugs at the initial stage. This process demonstrates that drug use among young people is often learned through social interactions, family experiences, and community influences rather than occurring independently. Therefore, strengthening awareness programs, improving family support systems, and providing positive social environments are essential strategies for preventing substance abuse among adolescents.

In the Pakistani context, the interaction between drug abuse, poverty, and peer influence creates a complex environment that increases the risk of juvenile delinquency. A young person experiencing economic hardship may become dependent on negative peer groups, where substance use and criminal activities are normalized. Therefore, juvenile crime prevention requires a comprehensive approach involving poverty reduction, educational opportunities, drug prevention programs, family support systems, and community-based rehabilitation initiatives.

Although previous research has highlighted the importance of these factors, further empirical investigation is required to understand how drug abuse, socioeconomic conditions, and peer relationships collectively influence juvenile illegal conduct in Pakistan.

Juvenile delinquency in Pakistan is a growing social and criminological concern that is influenced by a combination of individual, family, economic, and environmental factors. Among these factors, drug abuse, poverty, and peer pressure have emerged as major contributors to the involvement of young individuals in illegal activities. The relationship between these factors is complex because they often interact with one another, creating conditions that increase the likelihood of antisocial behavior and criminal participation among adolescents.

DRUG ABUSE AND JUVENILE OFFENDING

Drug abuse has emerged as a global social and public health challenge, affecting both developed and developing countries. The increasing prevalence of substance abuse is not only a concern for Pakistan but

has also become a significant national issue in countries such as Nigeria due to its harmful consequences for education systems, future leadership development, innovation capacity, and human resource potential. Adolescents, particularly secondary school students, represent a highly vulnerable group because they are passing through critical stages of educational growth, career planning, social development, and identity formation. Evidence from educational authorities in Bayelsa State, Nigeria, indicates growing concerns regarding the use of substances such as alcohol and nicotine among students. The increasing involvement of young learners in substance use threatens their academic performance, personal development, and future contribution to society.

Drug abuse is recognized as one of the significant factors associated with juvenile criminal behavior. Substance dependency among young people can negatively affect cognitive abilities, emotional regulation, and decision-making capacity, increasing their vulnerability to criminal activities. In Pakistan, the misuse of substances such as cannabis, heroin, prescription drugs, and synthetic substances has become a serious challenge, particularly among vulnerable youth populations. Young individuals suffering from addiction may engage in theft, drug distribution, violence, and other unlawful activities to obtain money for continued substance use.

The relationship between drug abuse and crime is not limited to the direct effects of intoxication; rather, it also involves social and economic consequences. Drug-dependent youth often experience educational disruption, family conflicts, unemployment, and social isolation, which further increase their risk of involvement in criminal networks. Weak prevention programs, limited rehabilitation facilities, and insufficient awareness regarding the consequences of substance abuse have contributed to the continuation of this problem in Pakistan.

One of the significant factors contributing to drug abuse among young people is the influence of peer groups and social relationships. During educational life, many students become involved in substance use due to the behavior and encouragement of their friends. In the initial stages, drug consumption is often perceived as a form of entertainment, experimentation, or a symbol of social acceptance; however, continued exposure may gradually develop into harmful patterns of substance dependence and serious addiction. Peer influence can therefore play a crucial role in shaping adolescents' attitudes and behaviors toward drug use. According to reports by the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), a considerable proportion of students engage in the misuse of different substances. Furthermore, research indicates that drug abuse is increasingly common among secondary school students because this age group is particularly vulnerable to peer pressure, curiosity, and social experimentation.

For the purpose of this study, drug abuse prevention is defined as a set of educational initiatives, awareness programs, and policy measures designed to help young people maintain healthy lifestyles, achieve productive social roles, and live in environments free from substance misuse. Prevention also involves educating adolescents about the harmful consequences of drug use and empowering them with the knowledge and decision-making skills required to resist the use of illegal substances when exposed to such opportunities.

Research indicates that effective substance abuse prevention requires an understanding of both risk factors and protective factors (O'Malley et al., 2001). Risk factors are conditions or circumstances that increase the likelihood of substance misuse, whereas protective factors are characteristics or influences that reduce vulnerability and discourage involvement in drug-related behaviors. Identifying these factors enables policymakers, educators, families, and prevention professionals to design effective strategies that strengthen protective conditions while reducing the influence of risk factors.

Understanding the social, psychological, and environmental factors associated with drug use is essential for developing comprehensive prevention programs. Such approaches can help young individuals develop resilience, improve decision-making abilities, and avoid behaviors associated with substance dependency. According to UNICEF and WHO (2006), psychoactive substances refer to any chemical substances that, when consumed, can influence an individual's mental processes, including perception, mood, cognitive functions, behavior, and physical or motor activities.

POVERTY AND ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION AS CAUSES OF JUVENILE CRIME

Poverty is another major factor influencing juvenile delinquency. Economic hardship, unemployment, and limited access to quality education create conditions in which young individuals may experience frustration, hopelessness, and exclusion from mainstream society. In Pakistan, many young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds face barriers to employment and personal development, which may push some toward illegal means of earning income.

Social strain theory explains that when individuals are unable to achieve socially accepted goals through legitimate opportunities, they may adopt alternative methods, including criminal activities. Poor socioeconomic conditions can increase children's exposure to street environments, child labor, exploitation, and criminal groups. Therefore, poverty does not directly cause crime in every case; however, it creates circumstances that may increase the possibility of juvenile involvement in illegal behavior.

Risk factors related to drug abuse refer to the social, environmental, psychological, and individual conditions that increase the likelihood of substance use within a society. The presence of these factors can contribute to the harmful consequences of drug consumption among children and adolescents, including declining academic performance, physical health problems, psychological disorders, and difficulties in social adjustment. However, the negative influence of risk factors can be reduced through the development and strengthening of protective factors.

Protective factors include awareness and prevention programs conducted by parents, teachers, educational institutions, and community organizations. The purpose of such awareness initiatives is not limited to increasing children's knowledge about the dangers of substance abuse; rather, they aim to encourage positive behavioral changes by developing skills, attitudes, and social support systems that protect young people from drug-related risks. The content and delivery of prevention messages should be designed according to the age, educational level, social background, and type of substance-related risks faced by the target population. Effective awareness programs can therefore play an important role in preventing substance misuse and promoting healthier choices among adolescents.

Peer Pressure and Social Learning

Peer influence is considered one of the strongest predictors of adolescent behavior. During adolescence, individuals often seek acceptance, identity, and recognition from their peers. Negative peer associations can expose young people to criminal values, drug use, gang activities, and violent behavior. Social learning theory suggests that individuals learn behaviors through observation, imitation, and interaction with others, particularly within close social groups.

In Pakistan, some young offenders become involved in criminal activities because of their association with delinquent peers. Friends or social groups involved in drug consumption, theft, violence, or other illegal practices may normalize such behaviors and encourage new members to participate. Lack of positive

recreational opportunities, family supervision, and community support can further increase the influence of negative peer networks.

Combined Impact of Drug Abuse, Poverty, and Peer Influence

The relationship between drug abuse, poverty, and peer pressure is interconnected. Poverty may expose young people to negative social environments, unemployment may increase frustration, and peer groups may provide pathways toward drug use and criminal activities. Once substance dependency develops, financial and social problems may further increase criminal involvement.

In Pakistan, juvenile delinquency should therefore be understood as a broader social phenomenon rather than simply an individual behavioral problem. Effective prevention strategies require:

1. Expansion of youth employment and skill-development programs.
2. Improved access to education and vocational training.
3. Drug prevention campaigns in schools and communities.
4. Rehabilitation facilities for young substance users.
5. Strengthening family counseling and parental awareness programs.
6. Community-based interventions to reduce negative peer influence.

ASSESSING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF PAKISTANI SOCIETY'S SOCIOECONOMIC SITUATION

Juvenile delinquency has emerged as a significant social and criminological challenge in Pakistan, where young individuals are increasingly exposed to various socioeconomic pressures that influence their behavior and development. The involvement of juveniles in criminal activities cannot be understood only as an individual behavioral issue; rather, it is closely associated with broader social, economic, cultural, and institutional conditions. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, unequal educational opportunities, family instability, social exclusion, and peer influence contribute significantly to the development of delinquent tendencies among young people.

Pakistan has a large youth population, which represents a valuable resource for national development. However, socioeconomic difficulties and limited opportunities for education, employment, and skill development have created vulnerabilities among many young individuals. Poverty and economic inequality may increase frustration and hopelessness, particularly among disadvantaged youth, and may push some individuals toward illegal activities as alternative means of survival or social recognition.

According to strain theory, when legitimate opportunities for achieving social and economic goals are limited, individuals may experience pressure that can increase the likelihood of deviant behavior.

Education plays a crucial role in preventing juvenile delinquency by providing knowledge, skills, discipline, and opportunities for social mobility. However, in Pakistan, many children and adolescents face barriers such as school dropout, inadequate educational facilities, child labor, and limited access to quality education. These challenges increase their exposure to harmful environments, including street crime, substance abuse, and negative peer networks.

Family structure and parenting practices are also important factors influencing juvenile behavior. Weak parental supervision, domestic conflicts, economic stress within families, child neglect, and lack of emotional support may increase the risk of delinquent activities among young individuals. A supportive family environment, effective parenting, and positive communication can serve as protective factors against youth involvement in crime.

Peer influence is another major determinant of juvenile delinquency. Adolescents often seek acceptance and identity from their social groups, making them vulnerable to negative influences. Association with delinquent peers may encourage involvement in drug use, violence, theft, and other unlawful activities. Social learning theory explains that young individuals may acquire criminal behaviors through observation, imitation, and interaction with their surroundings.

In Pakistani society, rapid urbanization, unemployment, economic inequality, and changing social structures have created new challenges for youth development. The absence of recreational opportunities, inadequate counseling services, and limited rehabilitation programs further increase the vulnerability of juveniles toward criminal behavior. Therefore, addressing juvenile delinquency requires a comprehensive approach involving socioeconomic reforms, educational improvement, employment opportunities, family strengthening programs, and effective juvenile justice mechanisms.

Community and Culture

In some situations, rapid social, economic, and technical change may undermine the sense of family and diminish the sense of belonging to other individuals, communities, and locations. A strong factor in helping people manage their life is the stability of relationships, surroundings, and expectations; this is particularly crucial for children and young adults. Substance addiction issues, along with a host of other conditions, can complicate the traditional challenge of striking a balance between nurturing support to promote children's exploration, comprehension of the world, and self-realization and discipline and control. Children's attitudes, values, and behavior can be greatly influenced by their families, but how much of an impact do families have on drug use compared to peers?

In this context, peer involvement in substance use may have a stronger impact on adolescents' behavior than parental attitudes alone. Research has indicated that peer and family influences often interact, and the likelihood of drug use is particularly high among young individuals whose parents as well as close friends are involved in substance consumption. However, some scholars argue that peer influence becomes more powerful when parents fail to perform their traditional roles of supervision, guidance, and emotional support (Zeinali, Vahdat, & Eisavi, 2008). Effective parental monitoring, communication, and involvement in children's lives can reduce the negative impact of peer pressure and help shape healthier attitudes toward drug use. Therefore, families play a fundamental role in preventing adolescent substance abuse by providing supervision, positive role models, and supportive environments that encourage responsible decision-making.

This study aims to evaluate juvenile delinquency in relation to the socioeconomic conditions of Pakistani society and analyze how poverty, education, unemployment, family environment, and social influences contribute to juvenile offending. Understanding these relationships is essential for developing effective prevention strategies and policies aimed at protecting young people and promoting social stability.

Homelessness

delinquency. In many cases, substance abuse is not the original cause of homelessness; rather, it develops as a response to poverty, social exclusion, psychological stress, unemployment, and unstable living conditions. Individuals without secure housing may use drugs or alcohol as a temporary coping mechanism to escape emotional distress, trauma, and the difficulties associated with street life. However, continued substance use often worsens their social and economic conditions by creating dependency, reducing employment opportunities, and limiting their ability to reintegrate into mainstream society.

In Pakistan, homelessness is closely associated with poverty, rapid urbanization, informal settlements, unemployment, and internal displacement caused by economic and environmental challenges. Vulnerable populations living in informal settlements often experience inadequate housing, limited access to education, healthcare, sanitation, and employment opportunities, which increases their exposure to social risks. UN-Habitat Pakistan has highlighted that many urban informal settlements face challenges such as overcrowding, poor infrastructure, limited livelihood opportunities, and insecurity, making residents particularly vulnerable to social exclusion.

The problem of homelessness also affects children and adolescents who spend significant portions of their lives on streets or in unstable environments. Such young individuals are more likely to experience neglect, exploitation, school dropout, child labor, drug exposure, and association with delinquent peer groups. Pakistan's education and socioeconomic challenges further increase vulnerability among children; recent Pakistan Bureau of Statistics data indicates continuing concerns related to educational exclusion, with approximately 28% of children aged 5–16 years reported as out of school in the 2024–25 HIES data.

Homeless youth are particularly vulnerable to peer pressure because street-based social networks often become their primary source of support and identity. Within these environments, drug use may become normalized as a means of social acceptance or survival. Young individuals may become involved in petty crimes, drug distribution, theft, or other illegal activities due to economic desperation and the influence of delinquent groups.

In Pakistan, displacement caused by floods, climate-related disasters, and economic migration has also contributed to housing insecurity among vulnerable communities. National disaster policy documents recognize migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, and economically marginalized populations as groups facing higher risks due to unstable housing and limited access to social protection.

Therefore, homelessness should not be viewed only as a housing issue but as a multidimensional social problem linked with poverty, unemployment, education deprivation, mental health challenges, substance abuse, and juvenile crime. Effective prevention requires integrated policies focusing on affordable housing, education access, youth employment, family support systems, drug prevention programs, and rehabilitation services for vulnerable children and adolescents.

OBJECTIVES OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

The juvenile justice framework in Pakistan is based on several interconnected objectives aimed at protecting children while maintaining public safety. These objectives include:

- Safeguarding the constitutional and legal rights of children;
- Ensuring child-sensitive investigation and judicial procedures;

- Reducing unnecessary detention and institutionalization;
- Promoting rehabilitation and behavioural improvement;
- Addressing the underlying causes of juvenile offending;
- Supporting education, vocational development, and psychological recovery;
- Encouraging family and community reintegration;
- Preventing repeat offending; and
- Fulfilling Pakistan's international obligations under child-rights conventions.

Unlike adult criminal justice systems, juvenile justice emphasizes correction, treatment, and social development. This approach is particularly important in cases involving drug addiction, where criminal behaviour may be connected with peer pressure, poverty, trauma, family problems, and lack of educational opportunities.

Therefore, an effective juvenile justice framework for Pakistan must integrate criminal justice responses with public health strategies, drug treatment programmes, psychological counselling, and community-based rehabilitation initiatives. Such an integrated approach can reduce both substance abuse and youth crime while improving the long-term prospects of vulnerable young people.

Insufficient Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration Programmes

Rehabilitation is considered the central objective of modern juvenile justice systems because young offenders possess significant potential for behavioural change and social development. However, in Pakistan, rehabilitation facilities and reintegration mechanisms remain insufficient and unevenly developed.

Effective rehabilitation of juvenile offenders, particularly those involved in substance abuse and drug-related crimes, requires a comprehensive approach that includes:

- Educational opportunities;
- Vocational and technical skills training;
- Psychological counselling;
- Addiction treatment services;
- Family-based interventions;
- Employment support; and
- Community acceptance.

Many juvenile institutions in Pakistan lack qualified psychologists, addiction specialists, social workers, counsellors, and vocational instructors who can address the complex causes behind criminal behaviour. In

cases involving drug addiction, imprisonment without proper treatment often fails to resolve the underlying problems associated with substance dependency, trauma, peer influence, and social exclusion.

After completing legal sentences or rehabilitation programmes, many young offenders face discrimination, limited employment opportunities, and rejection from their communities. These social barriers increase the likelihood of relapse into drug use and repeated criminal involvement.

Successful reintegration requires cooperation between government agencies, educational institutions, families, employers, healthcare providers, and civil society organizations. Community-based rehabilitation, mentorship programmes, and continued psychological support can significantly improve long-term outcomes for juvenile offenders.

Pakistan continues to experience a shortage of professionals who possess specialized knowledge of juvenile justice principles and child development. Many justice-sector officials receive limited training regarding the psychological, social, and developmental needs of young offenders.

Professional training programmes should focus on:

- Child psychology and adolescent development;
- International child protection standards;
- Restorative justice approaches;
- Trauma-informed practices;
- Diversion mechanisms;
- Substance abuse treatment approaches; and
- Rehabilitation and reintegration strategies.

Impact Of Drug Abuse On The Individual, Family, And Community (2026 Perspective)

Drug abuse has become a critical global health and social problem that affects not only individuals who use substances but also their families, communities, and wider society. The consequences of drug use extend beyond physical health problems and include psychological disorders, family conflicts, economic difficulties, social instability, and increased involvement in criminal activities. Recent international evidence emphasizes that drug use affects multiple dimensions of life, including health, social relationships, socioeconomic development, public safety, and community well-being.

Impact of Drug Abuse on Individuals

Drug abuse produces serious physical, psychological, and social consequences for individuals. Continuous use of psychoactive substances can lead to drug dependence, impaired decision-making ability, mental health problems, reduced academic or occupational performance, and increased risk of chronic diseases. Individuals suffering from substance use disorders may experience depression, anxiety, aggression, poor self-control, and difficulties maintaining normal social relationships. The World Health Organization recognizes drug dependence as a health disorder that requires prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation rather than only punitive responses.

Among adolescents and young adults, drug abuse can negatively influence educational achievement, career development, and future opportunities. Young people involved in substance use are more likely to experience school dropout, unemployment, social isolation, and involvement in risky behaviors. In some cases, addiction may encourage individuals to participate in theft, violence, drug trafficking, or other illegal activities to obtain money for continued substance use.

Impact of Drug Abuse on Family Structure

Drug abuse significantly affects family relationships and stability. When an individual becomes dependent on drugs, family members often experience emotional stress, financial pressure, and social stigma. Substance dependency may contribute to domestic conflicts, loss of trust, neglect of family responsibilities, and deterioration of communication among family members.

Families of drug-dependent individuals frequently face economic burdens due to treatment expenses, loss of employment, and reduced productivity. Parents may experience psychological distress when their children become involved in substance abuse, while children living in drug-affected households may face neglect, emotional insecurity, and increased risk of developing behavioral problems.

Research indicates that drug-related problems often create a cycle in which poverty, family conflict, limited education, and substance dependence reinforce one another, increasing vulnerability among future generations.

Impact of Drug Abuse on Community and Society

At the community level, drug abuse contributes to social instability, crime, and reduced public safety. Areas affected by high levels of substance abuse may experience increased rates of theft, violence, illegal drug markets, and youth delinquency. Drug-related criminal networks can weaken community structures and create insecurity among residents.

Drug abuse also places a significant burden on healthcare systems, law enforcement agencies, and social welfare institutions. Governments must allocate resources for addiction treatment, crime prevention, rehabilitation programs, and public awareness campaigns. According to global evidence, drug-related harms affect not only users but also families, neighborhoods, and social institutions.

In Pakistan, drug abuse has become a serious concern because of its relationship with youth vulnerability, unemployment, poverty, peer pressure, and juvenile delinquency. Young individuals exposed to negative social environments may become involved in substance use and related criminal activities. Communities with weak social support systems, limited recreational opportunities, and poor awareness programs are more vulnerable to the spread of drug-related problems.

Drug Abuse, Crime, and Juvenile Delinquency

Substance abuse and juvenile crime are closely interconnected. Drug-dependent young people may commit crimes to finance their addiction, while criminal groups may exploit vulnerable youth for drug distribution and other illegal activities. Peer influence, family problems, poverty, and social exclusion often increase the likelihood of juvenile involvement in drug-related offenses.

Therefore, addressing drug abuse requires a comprehensive strategy involving families, educational institutions, healthcare providers, community organizations, and government agencies. Prevention

programs should focus on awareness, early intervention, youth development, rehabilitation services, and strengthening protective factors such as family support and positive peer networks.

Economic Compulsive Violence and Drug Abuse: A Criminological Perspective (2026)

Economic compulsive violence refers to violent or criminal behaviors committed by individuals primarily to obtain financial resources for survival, maintain a lifestyle, or support substance dependence. In the context of drug abuse, economic compulsive violence occurs when individuals who develop drug dependency engage in illegal activities such as theft, robbery, fraud, drug trafficking, or violent acts to acquire money for purchasing drugs. Unlike crimes motivated by ideological or emotional factors, these offenses are often driven by economic necessity and the compulsive demands of addiction.

Drug dependence can create a cycle in which individuals lose control over their behavior and prioritize obtaining substances over legal and social responsibilities. As addiction progresses, the financial burden of continuous drug consumption may exceed personal income, leading some users toward criminal activities. This situation is particularly concerning among young people because unemployment, poverty, lack of education, and weak family support systems increase their vulnerability to drug-related economic crimes.

Economic Compulsive Violence and Juvenile Delinquency

Among juveniles, economic compulsive violence is closely associated with social and economic disadvantages. Adolescents from poor families, unemployed households, or marginalized communities may experience limited opportunities for education and employment. When exposed to drug-using peer groups, they may gradually become involved in substance abuse and later participate in criminal activities to fulfill their economic needs related to addiction.

In Pakistan, youth vulnerability to economic compulsive violence is influenced by several factors, including poverty, unemployment, inflation, social inequality, and limited access to rehabilitation services. Some young individuals involved in drug abuse may participate in theft, street crime, drug selling, or gang activities as a means of obtaining money. These behaviors not only harm individuals but also negatively affect families and communities by increasing insecurity and social instability.

Relationship Between Addiction and Criminal Behavior

The relationship between drug addiction and crime is complex. Substance abuse does not automatically lead every individual to commit crimes; however, addiction can increase the likelihood of offending when combined with economic hardship, social exclusion, and weak social control mechanisms. Drug-dependent individuals may experience impaired judgment, reduced self-control, and financial pressure, which can contribute to criminal decision-making.

Criminological theories, such as **strain theory**, explain that individuals who face blocked economic opportunities may experience frustration and adopt illegal methods to achieve their goals. Similarly, **social learning theory** suggests that criminal behavior may be learned through interaction with delinquent peers and criminal networks.

Economic Compulsive Violence in Pakistani Society

In Pakistani society, economic compulsive violence related to drug abuse represents an emerging challenge for law enforcement, families, and social institutions. Young people affected by substance dependency may

become involved in street crimes, drug distribution networks, and violent activities. The problem is intensified by unemployment, lack of vocational opportunities, inadequate counseling services, and limited rehabilitation facilities.

The consequences of economic compulsive violence extend beyond offenders. Families may suffer financial losses, emotional distress, and social stigma, while communities experience increased crime rates and reduced feelings of safety. Therefore, addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that combines drug prevention, poverty reduction, youth employment programs, family support, and rehabilitation services.

PREVENTION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Effective prevention of economic compulsive violence requires:

1. **Expansion of youth employment and skill-development opportunities** to reduce economic frustration.
2. **Early identification and treatment of substance use disorders** through accessible rehabilitation programs.
3. **School and community-based drug awareness campaigns** to reduce early initiation of drug use.
4. **Family strengthening programs** to improve parental supervision and emotional support.
5. **Rehabilitation-focused criminal justice policies** for young drug-dependent offenders rather than only punitive measures.

DRUG ABUSE, EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, SEXUAL TRENDS, AND SEXUAL BEHAVIORS: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE (2026)

Drug Abuse and Educational Attainment

Drug abuse has a significant negative impact on educational attainment, particularly among adolescents and young adults. Substance use during the educational period can affect cognitive abilities, concentration, motivation, memory, and decision-making skills, which may result in poor academic performance and reduced educational achievement. Students involved in drug consumption often experience irregular attendance, declining interest in studies, disciplinary problems, and increased risk of school dropout.

In Pakistan, where education plays a critical role in improving social mobility and economic opportunities, drug abuse among youth creates serious challenges for individual development and national progress. Young people who become dependent on substances may struggle to complete their education, develop professional skills, or obtain stable employment. Consequently, substance abuse can contribute to a cycle of poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion.

The relationship between drug abuse and educational outcomes is influenced by multiple factors, including family environment, socioeconomic conditions, peer pressure, availability of drugs, and lack of awareness programs. Adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds may be more vulnerable because they often experience limited parental supervision, weak academic support, and exposure to high-risk social environments.

Educational institutions have an important role in preventing substance abuse by providing awareness programs, counseling services, and supportive environments. Early identification of students at risk and effective intervention strategies can reduce the harmful effects of drug use on academic achievement and future career development.

Drug Abuse and Sexual Trends

Drug abuse is also associated with changes in sexual attitudes, sexual decision-making, and risky sexual behaviors. Psychoactive substances can influence judgment, emotional control, and risk perception, which may increase the likelihood of unsafe sexual practices. Individuals under the influence of drugs may engage in sexual behaviors without fully considering possible consequences, including sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancies, and psychological distress.

Among young people, substance use may influence sexual trends through peer culture, social experimentation, and exposure to risky environments. Some adolescents may associate drug consumption with social acceptance, nightlife activities, or modern lifestyles, increasing their exposure to situations involving unsafe sexual choices.

In vulnerable populations, including street youth and economically disadvantaged groups, drug abuse may intersect with survival-related behaviors. Some individuals involved in substance dependence may engage in transactional sex or exploitative relationships to obtain money for drugs or meet basic needs. This creates additional risks related to sexual health, violence, and social vulnerability.

Drug Abuse and Sexual Behaviors Among Youth

Research indicates that substance abuse can increase the probability of high-risk sexual behaviors among adolescents and young adults. These behaviors may include:

- Early initiation of sexual activity.
- Multiple sexual partners.
- Reduced use of protective measures.
- Sexual relationships influenced by peer pressure or substance use.
- Increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Drug dependency may weaken individuals' ability to make responsible decisions and maintain healthy relationships. Furthermore, young people who experience family conflicts, poverty, social isolation, or peer pressure may become more vulnerable to both substance abuse and risky sexual behaviors.

In Pakistani society, discussions regarding drug abuse and sexual health remain sensitive due to cultural and social norms. However, ignoring these issues can increase risks among young populations. Comprehensive awareness programs focusing on life skills, reproductive health education, responsible decision-making, and prevention of substance abuse are necessary to protect youth.

Relationship Between Drug Abuse, Education, and Sexual Risk Behaviors

Drug abuse, low educational attainment, and risky sexual behaviors are interconnected social problems. Educational failure may reduce future opportunities, increasing vulnerability to substance use, while substance abuse may further damage academic progress and social development. Similarly, drug-related impairment can increase involvement in unsafe sexual behaviors, creating additional health and social challenges.

Therefore, prevention strategies should adopt a multidimensional approach involving:

1. School-based drug prevention and counseling programs.
2. Youth awareness regarding sexual health and responsible behavior.
3. Family involvement and parental supervision.
4. Community-based rehabilitation and support services.
5. Employment and skill-development opportunities for vulnerable youth.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH DRUG ABUSE: A SOCIOLOGICAL AND CLINICAL PERSPECTIVE (2026)

Drug abuse is not only a physical health concern but also a major psychological and social problem that affects an individual's emotions, thinking patterns, decision-making abilities, and overall mental well-being. Substance misuse can alter brain functioning and may contribute to the development of various psychological disorders, emotional difficulties, and behavioral problems. Individuals suffering from drug dependence often experience a combination of mental health challenges that influence their personal, family, educational, and social lives.

Depression and Emotional Distress

Depression is one of the most frequently reported psychological problems among individuals involved in substance abuse. Drug users may experience persistent sadness, hopelessness, loss of interest in daily activities, and feelings of worthlessness. In many cases, individuals use drugs as a way to escape emotional pain or stressful life circumstances; however, continued substance use often worsens depressive symptoms and creates a cycle of dependence and psychological distress.

Among young people, drug-related depression may negatively affect academic performance, relationships, career development, and social participation. Economic difficulties, unemployment, family conflicts, and social isolation can further increase depressive symptoms among individuals struggling with addiction.

Anxiety and Stress-Related Disorders

Individuals who abuse drugs commonly experience high levels of anxiety and psychological stress. Substance use may initially provide temporary relaxation or emotional relief, but long-term consumption often increases nervousness, fear, irritability, and emotional instability. Withdrawal symptoms can further intensify anxiety, making individuals more dependent on substances.

Young drug users exposed to poverty, violence, family problems, or social pressure may experience chronic stress, which increases their vulnerability to substance dependence and mental health problems.

Aggression, Impulsivity, and Behavioral Problems

Drug abuse is strongly associated with changes in behavior, including increased aggression, impulsiveness, and reduced self-control. Psychoactive substances can impair judgment and emotional regulation, causing individuals to react negatively to stressful situations. These behavioral changes may contribute to family conflicts, violence, criminal activities, and social difficulties.

In the context of juvenile delinquency, substance-abusing adolescents may demonstrate aggressive behavior, rule-breaking tendencies, and involvement in illegal activities due to impaired decision-making and negative peer influences.

Cognitive Impairment and Decision-Making Difficulties

Long-term drug abuse can negatively affect cognitive functioning, including memory, attention, learning ability, and problem-solving skills. Individuals may experience difficulty making rational decisions and controlling their impulses. These cognitive problems can reduce educational achievement, workplace performance, and social adjustment.

Among students, substance abuse may lead to poor concentration, declining academic performance, absenteeism, and increased risk of dropping out of educational institutions.

Psychosis and Severe Mental Health Disorders

Certain substances, particularly when used frequently or in high quantities, may increase the risk of severe psychological conditions such as hallucinations, paranoia, and psychotic disorders. Individuals may experience distorted perceptions of reality, unusual thoughts, and difficulty distinguishing between real and unreal experiences.

Drug-induced psychological disorders can create serious challenges for families and healthcare systems because affected individuals may require specialized treatment and long-term rehabilitation.

Social Isolation and Loss of Self-Esteem

Drug dependency often damages social relationships and creates feelings of shame, guilt, and low self-worth. Individuals struggling with addiction may withdraw from family members, friends, and community activities. Social stigma associated with drug abuse can further prevent individuals from seeking treatment and support.

In Pakistani society, cultural stigma and limited awareness about addiction as a health issue may increase psychological suffering among drug users and delay access to rehabilitation services.

Relationship Between Psychological Problems and Criminal Behavior

Psychological difficulties associated with drug abuse may contribute to criminal behavior, particularly when combined with poverty, unemployment, and negative peer influence. Individuals experiencing emotional distress or severe addiction may engage in theft, violence, or other illegal activities to obtain drugs or cope with psychological pressure.

From a criminological perspective, drug abuse and mental health problems often interact with social conditions to increase the risk of juvenile delinquency and adult criminal behavior.

Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Addressing psychological problems among individuals with drug abuse requires a comprehensive approach, including:

1. Mental health screening and early identification of psychological disorders.
2. Counseling and cognitive-behavioral therapy for affected individuals.
3. Accessible drug rehabilitation and treatment facilities.
4. Family counseling and social support programs.
5. Awareness campaigns to reduce stigma related to addiction and mental health.
6. Educational and employment opportunities to support recovery and reintegration.

Nexus Between Educational Attainment and Criminal Behavior: A Case Study of Prisons in Punjab, Pakistan

Education is widely recognized as one of the most important social institutions for promoting individual development, economic stability, and social integration. It provides individuals with knowledge, skills, values, and opportunities that help them participate positively in society. However, limited educational attainment has frequently been associated with increased vulnerability to criminal behavior. Individuals with low levels of education often face restricted employment opportunities, economic insecurity, social exclusion, and difficulties in achieving legitimate social goals, which may increase the likelihood of involvement in criminal activities.

In Pakistan, particularly in Punjab, the relationship between education and crime has gained significant attention due to the increasing challenges associated with poverty, unemployment, youth vulnerability, and overcrowding in correctional institutions. Prisons provide an important setting for examining the educational backgrounds of offenders because incarcerated populations often reflect broader social inequalities and developmental disadvantages. Understanding the educational profiles of prisoners can help identify whether limited education contributes to criminal involvement and how educational interventions may support crime prevention and rehabilitation.

Education and Criminal Behavior: Theoretical Perspective

The relationship between educational attainment and criminal behavior can be explained through several criminological theories. **Social control theory** suggests that education strengthens social bonds, discipline, and commitment to conventional goals, thereby reducing the likelihood of criminal involvement. Individuals who remain connected to educational institutions are more likely to develop positive social identities and avoid deviant behavior.

Similarly, **strain theory** argues that individuals who lack access to legitimate opportunities for achieving economic and social success may experience frustration and adopt illegal methods to achieve their goals.

Low educational attainment often limits employment prospects and increases economic pressure, which may contribute to criminal behavior.

Furthermore, **human capital theory** emphasizes that education enhances skills, productivity, and employment opportunities. Individuals with limited education may experience unemployment or low-income employment, increasing their exposure to risky environments and criminal networks.

Educational Background of Prisoners in Punjab, Pakistan

Prison populations in Punjab demonstrate a strong connection between educational disadvantage and criminal involvement. Many incarcerated individuals come from backgrounds characterized by limited schooling, early school dropout, and inadequate access to educational opportunities. Low educational achievement may reduce awareness of legal consequences, limit employment options, and increase dependence on informal or illegal sources of income.

According to prison-related studies in Pakistan, a considerable proportion of offenders possess low levels of formal education, including primary education, middle-level education, or no formal schooling. This pattern indicates that educational deprivation is an important social factor associated with criminal behavior. However, education should not be considered the sole cause of crime; rather, it interacts with other factors such as poverty, unemployment, family environment, peer influence, substance abuse, and social inequality.

Education, Unemployment, and Crime

One of the major pathways linking low education with crime is unemployment. Individuals with limited educational qualifications often face difficulties obtaining stable employment, which may create financial stress and frustration. In Punjab, where a large population depends on limited economic opportunities, young individuals with inadequate education may become vulnerable to criminal networks, drug-related activities, theft, and other offenses.

Employment opportunities associated with education can provide individuals with social stability and reduce the motivation for illegal activities. Therefore, improving educational access and vocational training among disadvantaged populations can serve as an effective crime prevention strategy.

Unemployment is another significant determinant of crime, particularly among young people. Lack of employment opportunities can create economic frustration, psychological stress, and feelings of hopelessness. According to strain theory, when individuals are unable to achieve socially accepted goals through legitimate means, they may seek alternative pathways, including illegal activities.

In Pakistan, youth unemployment remains a major challenge due to population growth, limited job creation, and skill mismatches. Young unemployed individuals may become vulnerable to criminal networks, drug trafficking, political violence, and street crime. Providing employment opportunities and vocational training can therefore play an important role in reducing crime.

Education and Juvenile Delinquency

Educational failure and school dropout are also significant predictors of juvenile delinquency. Young people who leave school early may experience reduced supervision, increased exposure to negative peer groups, and greater involvement in risky behaviors such as drug use and street crime.

In Punjab, Pakistan, juvenile offenders often come from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds where poverty, family problems, and limited educational support contribute to delinquent behavior. Strengthening school retention programs, counseling services, and vocational education can reduce youth involvement in crime.

Role of Prison Education and Rehabilitation

Prison education programs provide an opportunity to address the educational disadvantages of offenders and support their reintegration into society. Literacy programs, vocational training, and skill-development initiatives can improve prisoners' employment prospects after release and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

In Punjab, rehabilitation-focused prison policies can contribute to transforming correctional institutions from punishment-oriented environments into centers for personal development and social reintegration.

The Socioeconomic Determinants of Crime in Pakistan

Crime is a complex social phenomenon influenced by a combination of individual, social, economic, and institutional factors. In Pakistan, criminal behavior cannot be understood only through legal or psychological perspectives; rather, it is deeply connected with socioeconomic conditions that shape individuals' opportunities, choices, and living environments. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, income inequality, educational deprivation, social exclusion, rapid urbanization, family instability, and limited economic opportunities have significant implications for crime patterns in Pakistani society.

Pakistan has a large young population, and while youth represent an important resource for national development, socioeconomic challenges have increased their vulnerability to criminal activities. When individuals experience barriers to education, employment, and social mobility, they may develop frustration and adopt illegal means to achieve economic goals. Therefore, understanding the socioeconomic determinants of crime is essential for designing effective crime prevention policies and improving social stability.

Poverty and Economic Deprivation as Drivers of Crime

Poverty is one of the major socioeconomic factors associated with criminal behavior. Individuals living under severe economic constraints often face difficulties in meeting basic needs, accessing education, and obtaining stable employment. Such conditions may increase vulnerability to property crimes, theft, robbery, drug-related activities, and other forms of illegal behavior.

In Pakistan, economic inequality between different social groups has created disparities in access to resources and opportunities. Marginalized communities with limited financial resources often experience social exclusion, which may increase exposure to criminal environments. However, poverty does not directly cause crime in every situation; rather, it creates conditions in which individuals may become more susceptible to criminal influences.

Educational Deprivation and Criminal Behavior

Education serves as a protective factor against crime by improving knowledge, social skills, employment opportunities, and awareness of legal consequences. Low educational attainment is frequently associated

with increased involvement in criminal activities because individuals with limited education often experience restricted employment options and economic insecurity.

In Pakistan, school dropout, unequal access to quality education, and child labor contribute to educational disadvantages among vulnerable populations. Young people who leave educational institutions early may become exposed to negative peer groups, substance abuse, and delinquent activities.

Income Inequality and Social Exclusion

Income inequality and social exclusion contribute significantly to criminal behavior by creating feelings of injustice and relative deprivation. Individuals who perceive themselves as excluded from economic progress may experience frustration and dissatisfaction with social institutions.

In Pakistan, differences between urban and rural areas, unequal distribution of resources, and limited opportunities for disadvantaged groups contribute to social tensions. These inequalities may increase involvement in crimes motivated by economic survival or social resentment.

Political and Institutional Factors

Weak governance, corruption, limited access to justice, and ineffective law enforcement can also contribute to crime. When citizens lose trust in institutions, informal and illegal mechanisms may become more common. Strengthening rule of law, improving policing systems, and ensuring equal access to justice are necessary for reducing crime.

CONCLUSION

Drug abuse is not merely an individual problem; it is a multidimensional social issue that affects families, communities, and national development. The negative consequences of substance abuse include health deterioration, family breakdown, economic hardship, crime, and social insecurity. Effective prevention and control strategies require a balanced approach combining education, treatment, rehabilitation, and community participation. Protecting young people from drug abuse is essential for building healthier families, safer communities, and a productive society.

Economic compulsive violence demonstrates the strong connection between drug addiction, socioeconomic conditions, and criminal behavior. In Pakistan, where many young people face unemployment, poverty, and social pressures, substance dependency can increase the risk of economic-driven crimes. Addressing this issue requires integrated social, economic, and health-based interventions aimed at preventing addiction and providing vulnerable youth with opportunities for positive development.

Drug abuse affects not only physical and psychological health but also educational achievement, social relationships, and sexual behaviors. Among youth, substance dependency can reduce academic success, increase vulnerability to risky sexual practices, and create long-term social and economic consequences. Addressing these challenges requires integrated policies combining education, healthcare, family support, and community interventions to promote healthy development among young people.

Drug abuse has profound psychological consequences that affect emotional stability, cognitive functioning, behavior, and social relationships. Depression, anxiety, aggression, cognitive impairment, and social isolation are among the major psychological challenges experienced by individuals suffering from substance dependence. Therefore, drug abuse prevention and treatment should focus not only on eliminating

substance use but also on addressing underlying psychological, social, and economic factors that contribute to addiction.

The relationship between educational attainment and criminal behavior demonstrates that education plays a significant preventive role in reducing crime. Evidence from prisons in Punjab, Pakistan, suggests that many offenders have experienced educational disadvantages, limited employment opportunities, and socioeconomic hardships. Although crime results from multiple interacting factors, improving educational access, reducing school dropout rates, and providing prison education programs can contribute significantly to crime prevention and offender rehabilitation.

Crime in Pakistan is closely connected with socioeconomic conditions, including poverty, unemployment, educational deprivation, inequality, drug abuse, and social exclusion. Although criminal behavior has multiple causes, socioeconomic disadvantages create environments where individuals become more vulnerable to illegal activities. Addressing crime therefore requires a comprehensive approach that combines law enforcement with social and economic development strategies. Investing in education, employment, poverty reduction, and community support can significantly contribute to building a safer and more stable Pakistani society.

The current study found that crime was increasing over time, especially among young people, and that this tendency was likely to continue. There are variety of risk factors interfere with the lives of young people, rather than a single factor being the cause of youth criminality. According to the results of this study, it had confirmed that unemployment and poverty are the major factors other than social media, peer pressure, that contribute to crime. This research suggests that if inequality is eradicated and the government gives young people access to employment opportunities, the rate of youth crime would go down.

Studies conducted in Pakistan, however, suggest that these standards are not consistently implemented. Limited professional training, inadequate institutional resources, and insufficient oversight often affect the quality of police responses to juvenile drug-related offences. Consequently, some young offenders experience procedural delays, prolonged detention, or inadequate referral to counselling and rehabilitation programmes. Researchers therefore recommend establishing specialized juvenile police units, expanding professional training in child psychology and substance-use disorders, and strengthening accountability mechanisms to improve police performance.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Drug-Dependent Youth Contemporary juvenile justice systems increasingly recognize that rehabilitation is more effective than punishment in reducing repeat offending among young people. Rehabilitation programmes address the underlying causes of criminal behaviour by combining education, vocational training, psychological counselling, substance abuse treatment, family therapy, and community supervision.

For juveniles experiencing substance dependence, rehabilitation requires an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses addiction, mental health, educational needs, and social reintegration. International evidence indicates that treatment-based interventions produce better long-term outcomes than imprisonment alone, particularly for first-time and non-violent offenders.

Despite legislative reforms, rehabilitation services in Pakistan remain insufficient to meet growing demand. Many juvenile institutions and drug treatment centres experience shortages of qualified psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, addiction counsellors, teachers, and vocational trainers. Limited post-release support further increases the risk of relapse into drug use and reoffending. Expanding community-based

rehabilitation programmes and improving coordination between health, education, and criminal justice institutions are therefore essential for reducing substance-related juvenile crime.

This part provides a thematic review of existing literature relevant to understanding youth perceptions of law enforcement effectiveness, particularly regarding the role of the Crime Control Department (CCD) in controlling crime in Lahore. The review examines major themes including the conceptual understanding of crime control and police effectiveness, youth attitudes toward policing institutions, the role of specialized law enforcement units in Pakistan, crime patterns and policing challenges in Lahore, public trust and confidence in law enforcement agencies, factors influencing youth perceptions, empirical research on police effectiveness conducted between 2015 and 2025, and the theoretical perspectives guiding the present study.

Through a systematic analysis of previous academic studies, this part establishes the theoretical and empirical foundation for examining how young people evaluate the performance of the Crime Control Department.

International juvenile justice standards provide a comprehensive framework based on dignity, protection, rehabilitation, and social reintegration. Pakistan's Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018 reflects many principles established by international instruments, including the UNCRC, Beijing Rules, and Riyadh Guidelines.

However, comparative analysis with countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, India, Malaysia, and South Africa demonstrates that Pakistan's main challenge is not the absence of legal provisions but rather limited implementation capacity. Weak institutional structures, inadequate rehabilitation services, shortage of trained professionals, and limited diversion mechanisms continue to restrict the effectiveness of juvenile justice reforms.

For Pakistan to develop an effective child-centred justice system, it must focus on strengthening institutions, expanding rehabilitation programmes, improving professional training, promoting restorative justice, and investing in prevention strategies. Such reforms are particularly important for addressing drug abuse among youth because substance-related delinquency requires a balanced approach combining legal accountability with treatment, education, and social reintegration.

Juvenile offending cannot be addressed solely through criminal justice interventions. Many children enter the justice system due to structural factors such as poverty, educational exclusion, family instability, substance abuse, and social marginalization. Therefore, juvenile justice reform should be integrated with broader child protection and social development policies.

Preventive strategies focusing on education, mental health services, family support, employment opportunities, and community-based interventions can reduce juvenile crime and strengthen long-term rehabilitation outcomes. The future success of Pakistan's juvenile justice system depends on recognizing children in conflict with the law not only as offenders but also as individuals requiring protection, guidance, and opportunities for positive development.

Juvenile delinquency in Pakistan is a multifaceted social problem shaped by the interaction of individual, family, economic, and environmental factors. This study demonstrates that **drug abuse, poverty, and peer pressure** are among the most influential determinants contributing to juvenile illegal behavior. These factors rarely operate independently; instead, they reinforce one another and create conditions that increase young people's vulnerability to criminal activities.

The findings suggest that poverty and economic deprivation limit access to quality education, employment opportunities, and social support, leaving many adolescents exposed to frustration, social exclusion, and financial insecurity. Under such circumstances, some juveniles may become involved in theft, drug trafficking, violence, or other illegal activities as alternative means of survival or financial gain. Similarly, drug abuse impairs cognitive functioning, emotional stability, and decision-making abilities, increasing the likelihood of delinquent and criminal behavior. Substance dependency not only affects the physical and psychological well-being of young people but also weakens family relationships, reduces educational attainment, and contributes to continued involvement in crime.

Peer pressure emerged as another significant predictor of juvenile delinquency. Adolescents are highly influenced by their social environment, and association with delinquent peer groups often encourages experimentation with drugs, school dropout, gang involvement, and other forms of criminal behavior. In contrast, strong parental supervision, positive peer relationships, and supportive educational environments serve as protective factors that reduce the likelihood of juvenile offending.

The study further concludes that juvenile delinquency in Pakistan cannot be effectively addressed through punitive measures alone. Sustainable crime prevention requires a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach involving families, schools, communities, law enforcement agencies, and government institutions. Investment in quality education, youth employment programs, poverty reduction initiatives, drug prevention campaigns, accessible rehabilitation services, and community-based mentoring programs is essential for addressing the root causes of juvenile crime.

Furthermore, strengthening the juvenile justice system by emphasizing rehabilitation, counseling, vocational training, and social reintegration rather than punishment can significantly reduce recidivism among young offenders. Effective collaboration between educational institutions, social welfare organizations, healthcare providers, and criminal justice agencies is necessary to create a protective environment for vulnerable youth.

In conclusion, reducing juvenile illegal comportment in Pakistan requires addressing the interconnected challenges of **drug abuse, poverty, and peer pressure** through evidence-based policies and long-term social development strategies. By strengthening protective factors and minimizing social and economic risks, Pakistan can promote healthier youth development, reduce juvenile crime, and contribute to a safer, more inclusive, and more prosperous society.

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