

Addressing the Role of the Family in Preventing Youth Gang Crime: The Case of Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this article is to explore the critical role of the family as a protective factor in preventing youth gang crime in Bangladesh. The family is a main building block in society and an integral part of human life. In recent years, youth gang crime has proliferated like an epidemic in society in Bangladesh. This study has been used a qualitative and library-based method and conducted an extensive review of scholarly literature. The study examines the influence of familial support and effective familial strategies of moral guidance, emotional support, and instilling religious teachings to counteract youth engaging in gangs and committing criminal activities. Moreover, the study investigates the influence of socio-economic crises within the family, social media, and violent activities in forming and recruiting youth into gang crimes. In addition, the study explores the role of religious values and extended families resisting and mitigating against youth aggressive behaviour and criminal activities. This article contributes on comprehending relationship between youth criminal behaviour and families in Bangladesh and proposes recommendations for bolstering familial measures.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Family, Youth Gang Crime, Religious Values, Socio-Economic Crisis

INTRODUCTION

Why are thousands of youths across Bangladesh joining youth gangs, despite the combined efforts of government bodies, religious leaders, and civil societies? This disturbing trends reflect global crisis: youth gang crime is no longer an isolated issue-it transcends national, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic boundaries. In Bangladesh, what was once unimaginable has become harsh reality. Youth gang crime has been escalated into widespread social epidemic, affecting not only major cities like Dhaka but also reaching small towns and rural communities. According to recent law enforcement data, over 10,000 youths are involved in 237 organized gangs with 127 groups, and 1382 active members in Dhaka alone. Over the past fifteen years, youth gangs have been responsible for the murder of 86 people in Dhaka, including 25 victims in the year 2023 alone. Most importantly, despite frequent arrest, imprisonment, and rehabilitation attempts, many return criminal activity, often more violent than before. The concern is this growing wave of crime undermines education, safety, and social cohesion, which is raising alarm among parents, educators, business owners, and community leaders.

Despite widespread concern and intervention efforts, a critical gap remains in our understanding that why have the current prevention strategies failed, and what role does the family truly play in safeguarding from gang

involvement? While socio-economic hardship, moral decline, political instability, and broken education systems are often cited, the influence of the family is the primary moral and emotional foundation that remains under explored in empirical and policy discussions. Scholars and practitioners agree alike that the family is the first and most formative institution in a child's life so far little research directly investigates how familial dynamics, parenting styles, and values transmissions influence youth vulnerability to gang culture in the context of Bangladesh.

Therefore, this study explores the role of family in preventing youth gang crime in Bangladesh, particularly in light of the socio-economic and political forces that shape family life and community dynamics. By investigating both the protective and risk-enhancing roles families may play, the research aims to fill a critical gap in existing literature on crime prevention.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it enhances understanding of how family structures intersect with broader societal challenges to influence youth behavior. Practically, it offers evidence-based insights for policymakers, religious leaders, educators, and civil society organizations to design more effective and family centered intervention programs. Strengthening the family could be the missing key to turn the tide against youth gang violence which not only in Bangladesh, but also as a model for other affected regions.

Definition of Key Terms

Indeed, there is no single definition or universally agreed to define terms of Juvenile, teenage or youth. It depends on the nation, region, culture and context. However, In 1985, the United Nations enacted the Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, which state that "a **juvenile** is a child or young person who, under the respective legal systems, may be dealt with for an offense in a manner which is different from an adult." According to the United Nations Secretariat, "**youth**" are defined as "people between the ages of 15 and 24." For statistical reasons, the United Nations General Assembly adopted this definition in 1981. While people between the ages of 10 and 19 are considered to be in "**adolescence**," according to the United Nations. In Bangladesh, the National Youth Policy 2017 defines youth as those between the "ages of 18 and 35" (DYD, 2017); however, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics takes into account those between the "ages of 15 and 29" for its Labor Force Surveys (BBS, 2017).

In the context of Bangladesh, it is observed while studying juvenile gang crime in Bangladesh that many researchers and studies have been addressed differently while using the terms and ages of juvenile gang crime. Most of the studies used various terms in their studies, such as children, teens, juveniles, youth, etc., where they also differ in the age of juvenile gang. Some studies denoted that crimes committed by juveniles are between 14 and 19, while other studies referred to youth gang criminals aged between 19 and 25. In a word, there are no unified terms and age groups committing crimes among the youth of Bangladesh.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The youth gang crime is a name of panic, tension, death, and violence in Bangladesh, which concerns scholars, policymakers, law enforcement, family, and the media. This phenomenon is closely associated with drugs, politics, women, economic matters, and so on. There is a contest over the definition of youth gang among the scholars.

Understanding Youth Gang Crime

According to research by the Australian Institution of Criminology, there are four characteristics that can be identified as youth gangs: 1) Youth gangs main focus will be involved with any illegal activities. 2) They will fight and use violence for gaining social status and street reputation. 3) They will be heavily involved with drug use, and 4) They adopt and form a gang-related culture.

In their article, *Gang and Non-Gang Youth: Differences in Explanatory Factors*, Finn-Aage Esbensen, David Huizinga, and Anne W. Weiher investigate to find out the distinctions between gang and non-gang youth. The study figured out that the main differences between the two groups are family dynamics, environmental, and psychological. The main reasons behind the formation of gang members are family conflict, lack of parental supervision, and socio-economic factors. They demonstrate higher levels of recklessness and violence, as well as decreased attachments with schooling and authority. By addressing issues at the family and community levels, these outcomes highlight the necessity of multiple strategies to reduce gang involvement.

According to Miller, there are five characteristics that define youth gang crime: first and foremost, they will be violent in their actions and behavior; second, they will be organized and maintain a chain of command; third, their leadership will be identifiable; fourth, they will communicate continuously among themselves; and fifth, they will be identifiable by a specific territory.

METHODOLOGY

This paper explores the role of family in preventing youth gang crime in Bangladesh applying a qualitative, library-based research methodology. What does it solve? The usage problem is increased youth participation in activities where a gang is part of it and how youth engagement with family has not been harnessed to engage gang activity differently. In order to achieve research objectives, academic journal articles, books, and credible reports were systematically reviewed and analyzed. Sources were gathered from periodical databases, such as JSTOR, Scopus, and google scholar. A thematic content analysis was performed to detect common themes and arguments regarding moral and religious upbringing, emotional support, parental control, and economic strain in the family. The research is also informed by Social Control Theory and Islamic educational ideals: *Tarbiyyah*, *‘Adl*, and *Ihsan*. The study was based entirely on secondary sources, and no field data were collected. The approach is consistent with the aim of this research to offer a conceptual and contextual foundation for recognition and improvement of family-based prevention programs in relation to curbing youth gang involvement in Bangladesh.

Youth Gang Culture

Youth gangs first emerged in Europe, but it is not sure exactly when they emerged. Youth gangs first appeared in the United States in 1783. However, the United States has seen a rapid increase of youth gangs since 1980. Youth gang violence has emerged in the UK in the 90s and 70s. However, in the last three decades, youth gang crimes have rapidly proliferated, and they are involved in crimes such as illegal drugs, knife attacks, street violence, etc. In recent years, youth gangs have increased dramatically in Bangladesh, especially in urban areas, with hundreds of youth gangs forming and creating chaos in society through drug trafficking, murder, kidnapping, and extortion, which is frightening the city's residents and threatening their lives.

Causes Behind the Young Gang Culture

According to Thrasher, "gangs developed as a natural evolution of youth friendship groups. These groups grew up together, engaged in "play fighting," and were ultimately united through conflict". Homaira Nowshin Urmi and Ahmad Rajib Chowdhury argued that joining gang groups in Bangladesh is not natural; rather, there are many reasons involved behind this, such as family, peer pressure, political and economic matters, getting expected partner, etc. In addition, Spergel asserts that "there are two main reasons behind the emergent youth gang culture, which are political turmoil and massive social change. They serve as a backup entity when any other organization is unable to give its members a specific level of unity and control." Furthermore, Sabina Sharmin claims that peer pressure is one of the major factors of youth crime in Bangladesh. Peers directly influence the lives of young people, while parental influence wanes.

Family and Youth Behaviour

The family is an integral part of youth life. The parents and family have massive influence over the life of youth because they nurture the child from birth until a certain time, teach them to speak, teach them discipline, social norms, etc. Unfortunately, in contemporary times, parents, family, and youth relationships are not strong across the globe. However, Karol L. Kumpfer and Rose Alvarado argue that preventing youth problems requires strong families and capable parenting. According to Mohammed Abul Khair, Abul Kalam, and Muhammad Rabi Ullah, moral character is promptly eroding among Bangladeshi youth. They advocate for parents and civil society to monitor juvenile immorality and behavior in families, schools, and nation-wide. Today, youth gangs are involved with many heinous crimes. Law and law enforcement forces cannot control them in many cases. The family and lack of parenting can be caused by raising youth gangs in society. Salasiah Hanin Hamjah, Izzah Nur Aida Zur Raffar, Zaizul Ab Rahman, and Rosmawati Mohamad Rasit argue that skillful parenting, spirituality, and Islamic education can reduce the criminal tendencies of the youth gang.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is.

1. To explore the influence of the family on the youth behavior
2. To identify the familial strategies to prevent youth gang violence

Causes of Youth Gang Crime in Bangladesh

Youth gang crime in Bangladesh is no longer a figment of imagination; rather, it has become a outrageous, permeating from urban centers to rural village across the nation. This ubiquitous issue makes a sense of dread and anxiety for just about anyone, hence collapsing the very fabric of society. Thorough theoretical analysis and field studies, including those conducted by the law enforcement agencies reveal the various aspects of the multidimensionality of youth gang crime. It is clear that the emergence of gangs and manifestation of criminal

behaviour cannot be ascribed to a singular origin; rather, a variety of interrelated elements converge, triggering a series of events comparable to a spark igniting a conflagration. However, where most of the studies point out socio-economic problems, poverty, family breakdown, peer influence as the key drivers of the rising trend in youth gang activities, our studies argue on different premises. These can be compared to symptoms of disease. We claim that this is the real underlying cause-trigger for such disturbing trends, the deep **moral decadence** among the youth generation. Additionally, several analysts suggest an unprecedented rise in indecent activities among the youth, implying that the state of moral decay has reached alarming levels in Bangladeshi society. This collapse of morality, we argue, is gateway to criminality, for a person without moral grounding becomes easily susceptible to criminal behaviour.

Furthermore, many claim that poverty is a core driver for the development of youth gangs and rise in crimes relating to such gangs. However, we believe that these crimes cannot be attributed to economic deprivation only. There is an old proverb: “when character is lost, everything is lost”. This observation is immensely relevant in our understanding of the root causes that lead to youth gang participation. Interestingly, many school and college students from financial stable families are also involved in different immoral activities, which question the notion of poverty being the only catalyst. For example, in Dhaka city, the extremely high expenses of education in both government and private institutions make it almost impossible for lower middle-class to bear the expenses of schooling their children. Nevertheless, it is frequently the case that the individuals from privileged or financially stable environments are involved in gang related activities. This striking reality highlights that economic considerations alone are insufficient to account for the increase in youth participation in gangs. Rather, the phenomenon is deeply connected to a significant deterioration in moral values, which acts as an essential catalyst for young individuals to be drawn toward gangs and criminal conduct.

Numerous studies concluded that one of the most vital reasons for this alarming increase in youth gang crime is the **disintegration of the family unit**. This too has been greatly documented through investigations report in newspapers and television broadcasts. Shocking statistics show that marital breakdowns are happening at an alarming high rate – one divorce is taking place every 40 minutes in Dhaka alone. This alarming trend ultimately encourages an environment that precipitates the very formation of youth gangs, their growing membership, and rising crimes within society. Dhaka has become a hotspot or even an epicenter for the activities of these youth gangs. The city contains not only the maximum number of youth gang groups but also the highest concentration of crime committed by these groups. The field-based study revealed that 41% of respondents from various social backgrounds and 37% of experts attribute crime among youth gangs to breakdown the family structures. From this one is brought to the question of: what happens when the ties between parents and children slack or parents fail to properly monitor their children? The terrible example of the case of Oishee Rahman. In 2013, Oishee brutally killed her parents in their home as a means of covering of her drug abuse. Her family was not under privilege or poor; rather, they were an affluent and renowned family in society. This incident shows how moral and behavioral gaps among children may be caused by neglect or disturbed family relations, regardless of the social background. Moreover, it is highly documented that, even when divorce is not officially present, spouses are increasingly separating; thus, children stay in broken homes. Parents are not interested in who they associate with, where children are, or what the children are doing. This particular situation creates an excellent ground for delinquency and encourages the growth of crimes committed by the youth gangs. It follows, therefore, that the family breakdown is a key driver in both the increase and growth of youth gangs, which in terns sweeps younger people into serious criminality and moral decline.

In line with the above facts and from a practical perspective, one might argue that the growth in youth gang crime inextricably related to the consequences of economic migration. In a report by the world bank, it was estimated that approximately 300,000 to 400,000 people move into Dhaka every year from rural areas in search of livelihood opportunities. This mass movement has deep social and familial consequences. The process of migration to Dhaka almost invariably involves a disruption of extended family relationships, particularly separation of grandchildren from grandparents, who played an important role in their upbringing in the villages, besides providing extra care to them in addition to the parents. In urban areas, the case is entirely different. It is because of various barriers, including financial, many migrants’ parents cannot send their children to schools or colleges in time. Also, in most of the instances, both parents are forced to stay away from home for more time to meet the heavy expenditures of urban livelihoods – house rent, cost of food, school fees, etc. Children naturally are alone for a long period without supervision. The absence of parental presence and supervision creates a critical gap during the transition of a child from a rural to urban environment. The time lag between leaving village, getting admitted to a new educational institution, and adjustment to a city life often leaves children vulnerable. Without proper guidance and supervision, such a vacuum can be easily turned into fertile ground where all the negative influences pour into drive young males to gangs and serious crime. Thus, economic migration inadvertently fuels the alarming trend of youths’ gang crime in urban metropolises like Dhaka along with disruption in family cohesion.

Political factors are considered one of the major motivating factors for the emergence of youth gangs and crime in Bangladesh. The political culture and leadership of the country often rely on gang-based tactics. Powerful individuals, such as Members of Parliament, ministers, local chairpersons, and other prominent figures from both ruling and opposition parties, either form or hire youth gangs to serve their interests. These gangs are often involved in election campaigning, tenders, capturing land illegally, extortion, attacking political rivals, drug peddling, and other forms of vigilantism. Very often, one finds it in newspapers or on television that the police arrest youth gang members, but after a few days, the political leaders get them out of jail. Most importantly, investigations by law enforcement have brought to light the fact that political leaders are patronizing youth gangs and, after arrest, youth gang members are bailed out by political leaders. The police have voiced their frustration that, due to political patronage, proper action cannot be taken against the youth gangs and, therefore, youth gang crime cannot be stopped.

Action movies, pornographies, and especially social media may be noted as another major contribution to increased youth gang criminality. These days people, mostly the young generation are addicted and waste considerable time on social media, including Facebook, twitter, Instagram etc. Most importantly these Medias often show violence and crime in their channels that influence teens to practice these actions in their life. Youth exposed to this kind of violence regularly are likely to suffer negative consequences, says Britany Bostic. According to meta-analyses of the negative effects of media violence, youth who consistently watch violent media are likely to be antisocial, accept vicious behavior, feel more hostile, be desensitized to violent behavior, and mimic violent behavior with toys. The country of Bangladesh, for example, has a huge proportion of youth addicted to social media and spending quite enough time on it day by day. The thing that distresses most is that they get influenced by the violence they are exposed to on social media and replicate it in their lives by using it to terrorize and harass others, forming youth gangs, and eventually committing crime in society. A survey was conducted to query the general public about the influence of social media on youth gangs and criminal activity. The results of the survey showed that 20.70 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that social media is one of the reasons for the increase in youth crime, while 52.70 percent of the respondents believed that social media is mainly responsible for the increase in youth gang crime. Hence, it can be concluded that Action movies, pornographies, and especially social media have profound influence in fueling youth gang crime in Bangladesh.

Another major cause for the increase by youth gangs is peer pressure. Indeed, as the proverb aptly states, "paradise with the righteous, destruction with wicked." Apart from the parents, peers are the primary cause of a young individual making choices and acting accordingly. Adolescents throughout their lives spend more time with friends-from childhood until university age, even share intimate details of their lives that they might well hide from parents and siblings. This strong level of influence can easily steer them into delinquent behavior if their friends are wrong crowd. It is seen that emotions at the tender ages often run over reason and moral judgement, and adolescents are very vulnerable to adverse influences. It is in this direction that, under the compulsion of peer pressure, adolescents engage themselves in criminal activities such as joining youth gangs, in which, starting from petty offenses, their activities escalate into more serious ones. To illustrate further, in the realm of romantic love, a refused love proposal or a love affair that has gone sour often brings on severe psychological trauma. Similarly, a poor academic result or pressure to perform well from the family might drive a vulnerable youngster towards the glitter of gang culture to escape. In such fragile states, the peers' influence becomes a two-edged sword: support in some cases, but more alarmingly, a passage to criminal networks. The vulnerable individual, therefore, if he succumbs to the enticement of peers, may soon find himself drown into the fold of youth gang groups and begins to engage in activities that irreparably harm both themselves and society at large.

In a broader sense, poverty undoubtedly serves as one of the motivation factors for youth gang crime in Bangladesh, though very subtly than what is usually projected. Whereas many people consider that poverty forces individuals to commit crimes, this belief is not an absolute fact as was proved in many studies. In fact, while there is a strong link between poverty and crime, most poor people do not commit crimes. For example, a BBC report shows that most of the poor are law-abiding, while society is full of cases where rich people have committed heinous crimes. However, the case of Bangladesh proves that, at least among adolescents from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, poverty does contribute to youth gang involvement. Even more astonishingly, adolescents from middle-income families also show a tendency toward criminal activities, which means that the link between youth gangs and crime is not quite simple as it may seem. This complex relationship suggests that economic deprivation does not, by itself, lead to criminality but is a stress factor that may be additive in the processes leading some youths to commit delinquent acts. Additionally, when financial crises hit families hard, many of their young members may feel more stressed and frustrated, making them vulnerable to criminal activities promising immediate financial returns. This has often been seen in crimes such as robbery, drug trafficking, and hijacking, when the expectation of money proves to be stronger than any moral inhibition. While it may not be solely because of poverty, it has indeed contributed much to being one of the major factors in bringing youths into gang crimes, combined with socio-emotional pressures.

Role of the Family in Preventing Youth Gang Crime

The family is a nucleus, main building block, and fundamental unit of any society, which consists of husband, wife, and children in general. It is also called a small civilization and has been entwined with humans since the first humans in the history of the world. The importance of this institution is unmatched in the world. Generally, it has nuclear material to prevent youth gang crime.

Parents as Living Example

Parents serve as the most significant role model for every aspect of their children's lives. Parents are the only models for children after birth. When a child is born, he or she sees his/her parents first. What a child will be like depends mostly on how parents present themselves to the child because children are exposed to their parents from the moment they are born, i.e. how they present themselves to the child, their relationship with the parents, their lifestyle, attitude, character, behavior, etc. Most importantly, during children's formative years, they are easily influenced by others, particularly by parents; they tend to acquire features and behaviours manifested constantly in the home environment. If parents demonstrate values, including kindness, cooperation, empathy, discipline, and respect for others, definitely parents provide a dynamic role model that is going to be followed by their children. For example, if parents demonstrate problem-solving strategies through peaceful discussion rather than using aggression, this will be a great example for children of how to solve problems nonviolently, which they can apply in their personal lives. Gang culture develops among children when the child does not receive strong moral direction. The regular integrity of the parents acts as a strong safeguard for the child against immoral influences from outside. In addition, it is well-established that teenagers who believe that their parents are fair, trustworthy, and honest are less likely to look to their peers who are involved in criminal activity for approval. Strong and emotionally parents can educate children how to deal with life challenges without compelling violent activities. However, in addition to serving as moral and emotional role models for youngsters, parents should also actively participate in their education. Above all, in order for their children to receive good advice, parents should be extremely attentive of their schooling, socialisation, and peer interactions. They should also hold their children accountable if they observe anything improper. Parents should attend parent-teacher meetings, keeping an eye on extracurricular activities, and demonstrating interest in friendships are a few examples behaviours that demonstrate concern and care. Children are less likely to seek recognition or belonging in harmful environments like gangs as a result of these initiatives.

Conversely, the opposite may occur if there are bad role models present, or parents are not involved. When parents engage in substance misuse, irregular behaviour, or illegal activity, they may unintentionally normalise these behaviours for their children. Parental failures increase the child's vulnerability to violent effects, resulting in a vicious cycle of delinquency. In the context of Bangladesh, parental role-playing is very important because socio-economic challenges prevent families from parenting properly. Many families live in poverty, which reduces their capacity to play the role of models as parents due to stress and lack of time. However, even in the face of socio-economic problems, parents can take some effective and practical steps, such as eating meals together, having regular conversations, and showing love, which can significantly protect their children from the risk of joining youth gangs.

Religiosity

Religion is central in shaping every sphere of life, including morality. When it comes to the moral development of youth, religious guidance is inevitable. There is no alternative to religion in the ways families and parents adopt for the moral development of youth. The moral development of an adolescent is not only to prepare to be a better religious person but also to help raise a good citizen of the nation, and it builds up a strong immune system inside to fight against immoral activities, including youth gang crime. There is an entwined relationship between religion, moral development, and prevention of crime, particularly youth gang crime in society. In fact, the family is the best place, especially parents, who are the best tutors to instill religious and moral values in their children, which even educational institutions cannot do. Because a child is raised by the family from the moment he is born. The religious and moral upbringing of the child depends on the family or parents. One of the studies demonstrate that moral principles imparted in children by their parents can contribute to the moral development of their offspring. While studying youth gang crime, it was observed that urban families are not interested in imparting religious and moral education to their children because they fear that the children may become extremists. Moreover, they do not want to interfere with the freedom of the children in the name of modernity, and the parents themselves maintain a certain distance from religion. In a word, they give more importance to secularism. On the other hand, parents want their children to be moral, but without the influence of religion. In fact, the two things are contradictory, and without religious education, morality cannot be instilled in the children, and it has been seen that, as a result, the children are deprived of religious and moral education, and ultimately many youths get involved in crimes. Many

studies indicate that parents' religiosity and morality are extremely important to instill morality and religiosity into their children. Because parents are the first tutors and models for the children. Moreover, parents are the long-term companions of the child from birth to adulthood, and regular conversations, spending time together, etc. are the most common between parents and children, through which parents can easily integrate religious and moral education into the child.

In order for children to learn from their parents and carry them into their own lives, parents who are Muslims should adhere to all facets of Islam, particularly prayer, Halal and haram observance, discussing and resolving complex issues, and practicing morality. In fact, observing religious rules has important guidance and benefits for everyone. Islam is the state religion of Bangladesh, a nation with a majority of Muslims, demonstrating the importance of religion in both society and personal life. Unfortunately, the majority of Muslims, particularly those living in urban areas, do not carry out Islam in all facets of their lives. Parents should, however, raise their children in accordance with Islamic law. It is thought that this will prevent the formation of young gangs and violence in society. Moreover, it is great responsibility of Muslim parents to raise their children by teaching Islamic *Adab* (etiquette, morals, good manners, etc.), treat children with Prophetic manner, kindness, love, respect, providing Halal food, and making Dua for well-being of their children. Then, it can be hope to grow an exemplary child.

Positive Parenting

Positive parenting is the key in preventing youth gang crime by creating an environment where children feel valued, safe, supported, guided, and loved. Additionally, positive parenting helps to develop healthy relationships between parents and children when parents address issues through positive behavior and constructive ways rather than punishment. When youngsters feel safe with their parents and feel confident to discuss issues openly, parents correct children's mistakes with love instead of aggressive verbal or physical assault; they do not feel alone and do not seek peer support. On the other hand, studies show that children who are physically and verbally abused by their parents instead of gently explaining or correcting them for their mistakes are more likely to disobey their parents, feel less respected or safe at home, and seek peer support. If the peer is good, they can spend time with people of good character, while if the peer is a member of a gang, they are more likely to get involved in crime. The study finds out that the above trends are more common in poor and developing countries. Furthermore, when parents actively listen and offer careful advice, for example, they impart youngsters problem-solving skills that lessen the appeal of gang-related activities that promise instant cures. Adolescents who have warm and involved parents are less likely to be gang affiliated, according to study.

On the other hand, lack of positive parenting has detrimental effects on various aspects of children, including emotional, social, academic, ethical, etc. Usually, lack of positive parenting characterizes lack of nurturing children, insufficient emotional support, and inadequate application of disciplines., which results in inappropriate behavior, poor emotional issues, and problems with interpersonal interaction. Children who do not receive positive parenting, there is a possibility of being involved in the youth gang. Additionally, parents who lack the ability to provide appropriate emotional support or give harsh punishment lead their children to get into peer groups that commit crimes in society. Ultimately, unstructured guidance can develop normalization of bad character and involve in youth gang crime. A study indicated that 30% of children experienced emotional, behavioral, or cognitive issues due to inappropriate parenting. In the context of Bangladesh, positive parenting is complex due to the socioeconomic crisis. Most importantly, parents are less educated in general, with very limited knowledge, practice, and training on parenting. Additionally, families face problems, such as poverty, limited education, and migration, which make it difficult to have positive parenting. Instead of many challenges for parents, there is still possibility for parents to instill characteristics such as love, kindness, and celebration of academic and social achievements, spending quality time together, having meals together, etc. Which may realize children a sense of security, warm relationships between children and parents, prevent to join and commit youth gang crime.

Monitoring

In order to prevent teenage gang crime, parental supervision of children is crucial, particularly in the contemporary digital era. In the modern environment, young people are often swayed by two sources: their peers at school or college and various social media platforms. Practically speaking, parents cannot prevent their children from using social media, even if they so choose. Therefore, parents should closely monitor their children's whereabouts, how much time they spend on social media, the types of content they view, the conversations they have with friends, and other activities. The study found that parenting monitoring is a key element of the bond between parent and youngsters and has the ability to lower risky behaviours, lessen participation in potentially extremely dangerous or adverse behavioral context, and foster environmental contexts that encourage good behaviour and sound judgement. Another study figured out that parental monitoring has a critical influence on reducing youth risky behavior, and it has two central dimensions to reflect effective parenting. One is warmth, and the other is control. The author defines that under the aspect of control, parenting behaviors focus on children's

various issues, including monitoring their movement, friendship with peers, and socializing on social media. In addition, parent monitoring has resulted in lowering youth gang violence and victimization activities in society.

In the case of Bangladesh, monitoring the activities of youth is very important for parents because youth gang crime has broken all past records and has spread rapidly to every corner of society, making people from all walks of life fearful and insecure. It should be noted that around 40% of adults are uneducated in Bangladesh, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics survey 2023. The concern is that a significant percentage of parents in Bangladesh are not aware or knowledgeable about technological and social media, while parents in the upper class of society are both too busy at work and are unable to monitor their children properly. This gap makes it impossible to monitor and guide children's activities. As a result, the tendency of adolescents aggressive and violence behaviour, to join youth gangs and get involved in crime is increasing. Nevertheless, it is not an unresolved condition, though. Community based education initiatives that teach parents the fundamentals of online literacy and dangers of social media could be one way to address this issue. By providing workshops and supporting groups that educate parents, despite their level of education, schools and neighborhood organizations may play a critical role in closing this gap. The result could be monitoring the activities of youngsters and lowering the youth gang crime in society.

Teaching Moral and Religious Education

Moral and religious instruction including Islamic education. This education is crucial to the attitude of young people and to gang crime in Bangladesh. Based on Islamic moral education (*tarbiyyah*), this education then emphasizes innervation of values such as truthfulness (*sidiq*), justice (*adl*), and compassion (*ihsan*) which is also consistent with social control theory whereby social and moral bonds will prevent people from criminal deviance. The contrary is observed: Madrasah going students were less delinquent compared to students of secular institution, (as per) authors it was possibly because of the formal religious education and the continuous learning of morality while in a another study. Moreover, participatory Islamic education at local level of Mosques and study circles also highlights the importance and role of responsible and accountable community for at risk youth, especially in urban slums. However, the efficacy of this model of education is not uniform with different curricula in Madrasah-some focus on rote learning and do not motivate critical engagement or context based moral reasoning. Religious education is politicized as well, and partia-religio-youth groups engage in political activism that contravenes moral aims.

Furthermore, school curricula are often very limited and confine only to develop the moral education in reference to broad psychological and social knowledge; thereby, moral education is unable to address the complexity of youth problems, such as peer pressure, drug abuse, and membership of the gang. According to some studies, to remedy these problems, it will be necessary to integrate Islamic ethical values into civic education, guidance and psychological counseling classes that are currently provided at school, but currently only receive low amounts of education, as well as teacher training and parental cooperation. Hence, it can be concluded that full-fledged and culturally relevant teaching of morals and faith may be employed in Bangladesh as an effective instrument against youth gang crime.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal that how the role of families is crucial to influence the young people behavior and keep them away involving in gangster group in Bangladesh. In this case, the stability of the family is the first and strongest component. It has been seen from thorough criminological research that parental neglect, broken homes, and parental absence increase the probability of criminality. In fact, this problem is made worse in Bangladesh due to widespread economic migration and stresses of urban poor, which contribute frequently for massive erode in parental influence and interpersonal connection that incorporates parents with their children.

Moral upbringing and guidance from parents play paramount and an equal role. The research has shown that regular, loving discipline combined with active and proper supervision reduces the potential danger of young people getting involved in gangs. Most importantly, this notion has been supported by the Qur'an, which encourages believers to protect the moral and spiritual well-being of their families. As Allah says in the Qur'an,

“And enjoin prayer upon your family (and people) and be steadfast therein” (Al-Qur'an 20:132). This verse emphasizes the role that parents play in fostering spiritual perseverance in addition to controlling behavior.

Additionally, ethical and religious education are found to be strong safeguards. It is seen that young individuals who receive an Islamic family life from early age that incorporates moral training, mentorship in mosques, and Qur'anic education are more empowered to exercise more self-control, respect the rule of law, and feel accountable to almighty Allah SWT. It is also supported by empirical research on religiosity because young people who are

deeply religious exhibit lesser levels of criminal activity, which clearly indicating that a moral foundation rooted in faith enhances sociological theories of preventable crime.

It has been seen while studying about the preventive measures of the youth gang culture that despite their influence, sociopolitical factors do not determine gang culture exclusively. Rather, delinquency is encouraged by economic hardship, unemployment, and political favoritism, but these stresses can be lessened when family stay together and dedicated to the teaching of morality and ethical conduct. In this regard a Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) most relevant as He (PBUH) said, "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock" (Sunan Abi Dawud 2928). Indeed, this hadith not only emphasizes how moral teaching by parents can play critical role as a defensive measure against unfavorable outside influences but also it is their essential duty towards children.

Lastly, a holistic approach is essential to prevent youth involvement in gang activities, safeguard them from committing heinous crimes, and foster a sustainable and peaceful society. Such an effort must begin with the family, including parents and other relatives, who provide religious teachings, social moral guidance, discipline, and emotional support etc. However, by providing guidance, instruction, and supportive social networks, community-based Islamic establishments like mosques, Madrasahs, and other religious group provide a supplement. Indeed, a strong preventive framework that decreases youth susceptibility to gang culture and delinquent behavior is created when families and various institutions collaborate.

DISCUSSION

Undoubtedly, the family remains major institution of our society, particularly in shaping youth behavior in the context like Bangladesh where gang crime has been affair like an epidemic instead of going through mountain crisis in the 21st century. Though many criminological studies frequently stress the causes such as poverty, unemployment, and political patronage, in reality, these factors are only determinant for committing crime by youth. Indeed, effective, appropriate, and quality parental monitoring, emotional attachment, and raising with ethical education greatly influenced to resist external pressure. This is consistent with the Social Control Theory of Hirschi (1969). However, Al-Qur'an says that "O ye who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones" (Al-Qur'an, 66: 6). This verse indicates that family members have a great responsibility towards each other, including parents towards children, most importantly, this responsibility is not only in terms of fulfilling worldly needs nevertheless it is an obligatory divine duty and will be questioned about this responsibility. Hence, there is no way in neglecting parenting responsibility and considering it as an only social need.

According to Islamic pedagogy, it is considered that parents are the primary educators for children to provide moral and disciplinary education from the concept of *tarbiyyah*. However, this is supported by contemporary psychology, which concludes that regular parenting supervision and loving discipline lead to lower adolescent criminal activity. The Prophet (PBUH) emphasizes this responsibility as saying that "Each of you is shepherd and each of you responsible for his flock" (Sunan Abi Dawud: 2928). This hadith indicates that parental guidance is not only a preventive criminology but also a religious duty, and parents will be accountable. Therefore, it can be said that a stable and supportive family is deterrent to juvenile crime from both Islamic and criminology perspective.

The role of religion, (i.e religiosity) has further implications. It has been seen that secular criminological studies view religion is a stronghold component to enhance social behavior, compassion, and self-control etc. In line with this, while Islamic teachings are more pragmatic where it encourages that a best heritage a parent can give their children is good character (*husn al-khuluq*). As the Prophet (PBUH) said, "There is no gift that a father gives his son more virtuous than good manners." (Jami` at-Tirmidhi 1952). Hence, it is clear from the hadith that wealth, highest educational degree or social status are not important but good character. However, in the context of Bangladesh, implication of teaching of this hadith is paramount, where economic and political factors are considered as a leading factor for the youth crime. In fact, this indicates that family based particularly parental teaching is the root and most effective raising children with good character and preventing youth violence in society.

It is undeniable that structural causes such as poverty, joblessness, or weak governers are the responsible for the youth gang crime. Nevertheless, the families rooted in Islamic principles can reduce these risks with instilling and nurturing Islamic moral responsibility and accountability. However, this does not indicate or ignore the systemic issues. It also suggests that government should not depend only considering law enforcement and harsh punishment that can reduce youth crime. Most importantly, this sort of measure often fails to address the root causes from the study of modern criminology. It can be said that instead of government's harsh policies, a holistic strategy must integrate, including parental education and training, instilling Islamic moral and social teachings,

family empowerment, accountability and punishment for crime in this world and hereafter, particularly focus on *tarbiyyah* based programs through mosque and Islamic social and welfare organizations.

It can be concluded that identifying and addressing root causes are the first and paramount. For a sustainable, peaceful society, and reducing youth gang crime, a holistic approach is essential in the context Bangladesh, particularly, strengthening families through Islamic education, ideal parenting, and community support.

CONCLUSION

Youth gang crime remains a critical and growing threat in Bangladesh, particularly urban centers like Dhaka, where fear and insecurity have become everyday life. This study highlights that, despite ongoing efforts by law enforcement and development agencies, the persistence of youth gang violence signals a deeper, multifaceted crisis rooted in socio-economic pressures, political influences, and most importantly familial breakdown. The key findings of this research reveal that the family institution, often overlooked in policy solutions, holds a central and transformative role in preventing youth gang involvement. As the first and most influential unit of socialization, the family shapes values, behavior, emotional resilience, and moral grounding in children and adolescents.

By emphasizing the critical role of the family, this study contributes broader discourse on crime prevention by proposing a shift from punitive approaches to proactive, family-centered strategies. The implications of this far-reaching, not only for crime control but for building healthier communities and nurturing future generations. Future research should further explore family-based intervention models, particularly those that engage parents, religious leaders, educators, and social workers in collaborative efforts.

To effectively combat youth gang crime, a national framework must be developed that empowers families with the resources, education, and support they need to raise responsible and resilient youth. It is time for policy makers community leaders, and civil society to recognize that strengthening families is not merely a moral responsibility but a strategic necessity in restoring peace and stability across Bangladesh.

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