

## Effect of Bad Parenting on Juvenile Delinquency: A Reflection

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### ABSTRACT

Children are the unpolished diamonds of the human society, who need experienced hands to mold them into a precious diamonds. It is the parents who rope the seeds of goodness into a child as a gardener rope the plants into the soil. A child's heart is like an empty slate, for once the imprints are drawn, will stay there forever and play the most effective role in the foundation of a child's character. Parents should up bring their children with love, care, affection and proper guidance. Ignoring or punishing a child during early childhood, will surely lead him on the path of delinquency. Therefore, parenting is such a phenomena that not only affect the mental and psychological well being of a child but also affects his/her course of action. This paper will provide a proper definition of bad parenting, signs of bad parenting, impact of bad parenting with the help of previous researches and will guide the parents how children should be treated so that they should remain away from delinquency. Suggestions for effective parenting will be discuss in the later part of this paper.

**Keywords:** *Bad Parenting, Juvenile Delinquency*

Parenting is often considered as the root cause of juvenile delinquency by educationalists, theorists, social workers, mental health professionals and criminologists. Many studies have been conducted to understand the role of bad parenting in juvenile delinquency (see, Gottfredson and Tonry, 1997<sup>[6]</sup>; Farrington, 1979<sup>[4]</sup>). Researcher like, Farrington (1979)<sup>[4]</sup> on the bases of his longitudinal study provided a productive ground for exploring and assessing the factors related to improper or bad parenting that are responsible for delinquent behavior among children. On the other hand, researchers like, Gottfredson and Tonry (1997)<sup>[6]</sup> with the help of identified offenders (that is; delinquents who have been released from jails) tried to analyze the most influential parenting factors that have turned such identified offenders into professional criminals. A number of studies has been conducted (see, Loeber-Stouthammer, 1986<sup>[10]</sup>; Farrington, 1979<sup>[4]</sup> and Derzon, 2005<sup>[3]</sup>) to find out the correlation between bad parenting and child delinquency and concluded that bad parenting (such as harsh discipline, unaware or overprotective parents, less attachment between child and parents and parental rejection) is frequently considered as the root cause of future child offending and children who have experienced bad parenting during their childhood days are more prompt to violent crimes (see, Farrington, 1979<sup>[4]</sup>).

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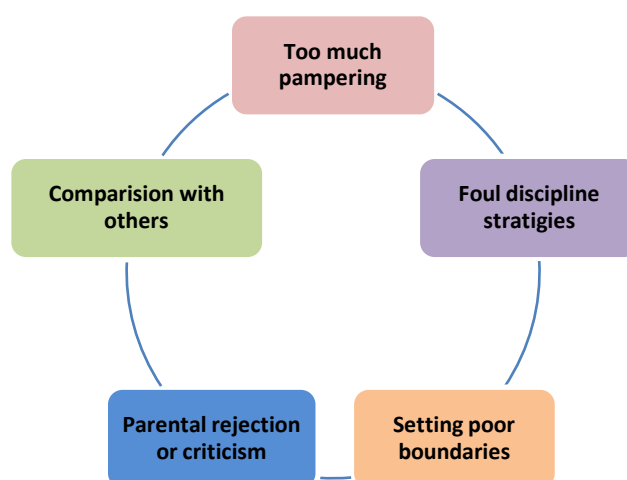
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### ***Meaning of Bad Parenting:***

Bad parenting does not refer to a particular behavior or action but it is a chain of destructive acts that may damage the overall well-being of a child into the most harmful way. Ineffective parenting such as scolding or insulting a child in front of others, lack of proper guidance and communication between parents and children or lack of proper care, love and affection will surely put a child on a wrong track. Bad parenting is not only injurious during early childhood period but will have everlasting effect on a child's thoughts and actions. It may be said that parenting (good or bad) is like a hammer that shapes a child's personality (negatively or positively). Researchers, educationalist and sociologist has often claimed bad parenting as one of the root causes of a child's deviant behavior (see, Farrington, 1979<sup>[4]</sup> and Derzon, 2005<sup>[3]</sup>). Factors like, harsh discipline strategies, over parental control, less communication, strict parents, poor parent-child involvement and parental rejection, not only come under bad parenting but lack of proper guidance, over protective or lenient parents, poor parental control and unaware parents are also equally responsible for spoiling a child and divert him towards antisocial activities hence, such foil parental practices also come under bad parenting. Bad parenting not only diverts a child on the wrong track but it may also convert a delinquent child into a professional criminal (see, Gottfredson and Tonry 1997<sup>[6]</sup>). Some signs of bad parenting are shown in Figure 1:



***Figure 1: Signs of Bad Parenting***

### ***Effects of bad parenting on children: literature review***

Foul parental practices have many negative effects on a child's mental and psychological well-being. Literature has often claimed bad parenting as one of the root causes of child delinquency. Many previous studies have claimed that there is a strong correlation between juvenile delinquency and bad parenting (see, Glueck and Glueck, 1962<sup>[5]</sup>; Hirschi, 1969<sup>[9]</sup>). This finding also supported by Cashwell & Vacc, (1996)<sup>[2]</sup> who strongly claimed that parents who treat their children badly or in a insulting way and set strict boundaries to control their children may lead their children on the path of delinquency as such children often seek membership of antisocial peers. Whereas, Glueck and Glueck, (1962)<sup>[5]</sup> on the bases of their findings told that children's of highly impatience and destructive parents are at high risk of delinquency. Studies (see, Patchin, 2006<sup>[12]</sup>) also argued that children whose parents remained unaware about their children's where about are more prompt to seek gang membership and future delinquency. In addition, the lack of proper parental guidance and support may also put a child on wrong track (see, Glueck and Glueck, 1962<sup>[5]</sup>). On the other hand, Patchin, (2006)<sup>[12]</sup> also claimed that children whose parents use harsh corrective approaches may often turned them into violent criminals. Many researchers named as, Hill,

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Howell, Hawkins, & Battin-Pearson, 1999<sup>[7]</sup> and Bank & Burraston, 2001<sup>[11]</sup> also claimed foul means of discipline (which are frequently used by most of the parents as an effective tool of controlling their children) as the root cause of child delinquency as such harsh discipline methods often create frustration and aggression among children, they further stated that such children are also at high risk of substance abuse. Hunner & Walke, (1981)<sup>[8]</sup> in their study explained the different factors of bad parenting such as beating or scolding a child in front of others, using insulting words for children, no words of appreciation, criticism, always comparing them with others or poor communication. Miller & Knutson, (1997)<sup>[11]</sup> also conducted a study and find out that harsh parental control is very strongly correlated with violent crimes or further child criminality.

### *Some suggestions of good or effective parenting:*

- Parents should maintain a proper balance between their affection and control by setting clear boundaries and giving logical reasons for those rules and regulations so that, they have a clear picture of socially acceptable behaviors or actions and always act accordingly.
- Some parents always hide the mistakes of their children. They never blame them for anything as they have blind faith on their children. Some parents never scold their children as they have fear of losing them. Both type of parenting are poisonous for the social or psychological well being of a child. Children of such parents often create a sense as 'they are always right' or they are 'all in all'. Such children never accept their fault and are more prone to delinquency.
- Children always want parental support in all their endeavors. Children who do not encouraged by their parents often seek deviant groups or peers for moral support and may turn into habitual offenders.
- Children are totally clueless about what is wrong or what is right. They only follow their parents during childhood. Parents who set poor rules or no rules for their children often put their children on wrong track.
- Parents who scolds or beats their child in front of others may often responsible for the deviant behavior of their children. Children are sensitive creatures they should be treated with love and affection. Parents should not try to teach them in front of others as this may hurt the emotions of your child and may lead them on wrong path.
- Children who are always being compared with other children may often show deviant behavior. As such parental behavior may often caused frustration or aggression into children. Parents should appreciate and promote the best qualities of their child.
- Some parents often have unrealistic or too much expectation from their children. Children who have over expecting parents often show the signs of depression or aggression. Parents should treat their children as normal human beings as, they are not the material of fulfilling your dreams or ambitions. Too much, expectations of parents may also cause depression, frustration, aggression and violence into a child or may lead him towards delinquency.
- Parents should set clear rules for their children. It will give your child a clear understanding of desirable behavior. Children who do not have fix boundaries at their homes, are often remain clueless about socially expected rules. Also, such children often feel difficulty to follow the rules that are created by law or society such as, breaking signals, damaging government property, drink and drive or drive without license. Frequently breaking of rules often made them habitual criminals.

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- Many parents have the tendency of criticizing their child for each and every single mistake. Children who never get appreciation or get admired by their parents often tend to seek peer group for support and appreciation.
- Some parents never show their love and affection to their children. They never express their love into words. Children are always hungry of parental love. They love to listen how valuable they are for their parents. Children whose parents never show their love to them by hugging them or by saying 'I love you' often feel as they are unloved or unwanted. Such emotionally blank children are more prone to delinquency.
- Parents who spent less time with their children often create a distance between them. Children love to spend quality time with their parents. Children whose parents have no time for them often seek antisocial groups or peers. Ignoring a child during his or her childhood often causes future delinquency.

### CONCLUSION

Raising a child is not about always being politically correct. Though, no particular manual on 'good parenting' is provided by society for parents yet, it is the basic duty of parents to up bring a child with proper nurturance, care, support, guidance and training. Parents are considered as the first founder of a child's character. Therefore, it is the moral duty of parents to mould a child into a responsible citizen of country by cultivating the seeds of truth, goodness, moral values and humanity. Parents should raise their child with proper penalty that is suitable to the particular behavior of child (whether positive or negative) as it will surely put an everlasting impact on their personality. Parents should also let their children free to make their own choice as it will give them confidence to take their own decision in future. Parents should realize that they are investing in future so always set good example for kids and trained them calmly and politely. Always remember your child is like a blank slate whatever you write on it will stay forever.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

There is no conflict of interest.

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