

Research Article

Investigating Early Warning Signs of Delinquency and the Role of Educators in Identifying At-risk Students

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Abstract

Adolescents and young people have a natural inclination toward exploration and self-assertion through various activities, which can marked in both positive ways—such as art and creativity—and destructive behaviors, including criminal activity, drug abuse, and sexual deviation. Understanding this contrast is crucial in addressing juvenile delinquency and fostering positive youth development. The growth in juvenile delinquency poses significant challenges to society, particularly within educational settings, which are intended to be safe and nurturing but can also facilitate negative behaviours. This study seeks to identify the key factors within educational environments that contribute to juvenile delinquency and explore how social, psychological, and educational influences interact to shape youth behaviour. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research gathers empirical evidence through surveys and interviews with educators, students, and juvenile counsellors, revealing a complex relationship between educational environments and delinquency characterized by a lack of supportive relationships with educators, poor school climate and safety perceptions, socioeconomic challenges faced by students, and limited access to creative and constructive extracurricular activities. In the long run, the paper concludes that addressing juvenile delinquency requires a holistic approach that integrates educational, social, and psychological perspectives; by fostering supportive educational environments and implementing effective prevention strategies, we can promote positive youth development and mitigate criminal activities among the youth.

Keywords

Juvenile, Delinquency, Education, Psychology, Social

1. Introduction

India has the largest population with a big society in the World. The background of the growing deterioration of the socio-cultural structure leads to disruption in social and legal order. Increasing problems of Juveniles as being at the centre of discourse have started invoking numerous sanctions to prevent abuses against juveniles. Delinquency is a societal issue. Juvenile in India, as a result of their sheer numbers, should be the aim of the predominant point of focus for de-

velopment, study, and wellbeing in India, which has not been so. The problem of juvenile delinquency is a condition that causes education, socio-cultural and parental dynamics and disparities of means. The nexus between education and juvenile delinquency has garnered considerable attention from researchers, policymakers, and practitioners alike. Education, while fundamentally a tool for personal and intellectual development, also serves as a critical factor in influencing

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youth behaviour and potentially mitigating delinquency. Juvenile delinquency is an unusually growing problem that is a cause of concern in the world. Delinquency usually refer to cases of conflict with a juvenile. There could be no denial of the inclusive fact that the early years are the most critical journey in a juvenile's life. On the grounds, that as of now establishments are laid for touch, subjective, visible, jargon, socio-economic, emotional and identity development. At this vital stage, all open doors ought to be accommodated for legitimate development and advancement of each juvenile.

Juvenile delinquency, characterized by criminal or antisocial behavior by minors, represents a reflective challenge that affects individuals and communities. The impact of delinquent behavior is multidimensional, often resulting in long-term negative outcomes for the individuals involved, including academic failure, strained relationships, and increased likelihood of continued criminal activity. Concurrently, communities face increased costs related to law enforcement, social services, and lost productivity. Given the significant

repercussions of juvenile delinquency, understanding and addressing its underlying causes is imperative.

"A Juvenile or Child means a person who is under eighteen years of age. According to International Convention, a Child means every human being below the age of 18 years. Today this is a universally accepted definition of a child which comes from UNCRC [1] ("UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989")."

"Under Section 2 (k) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2021 defines "juvenile or child as a person who has not completed eighteenth year of age" ("Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act," 2021) [2]. The Juvenile Justice System (JJS), as brought about by enactment, goes for giving consideration assurance treatment advancement, and restoration of delinquents and juveniles". However, the care and administrations gave to them have been censured as being inadequate and sub-standard.

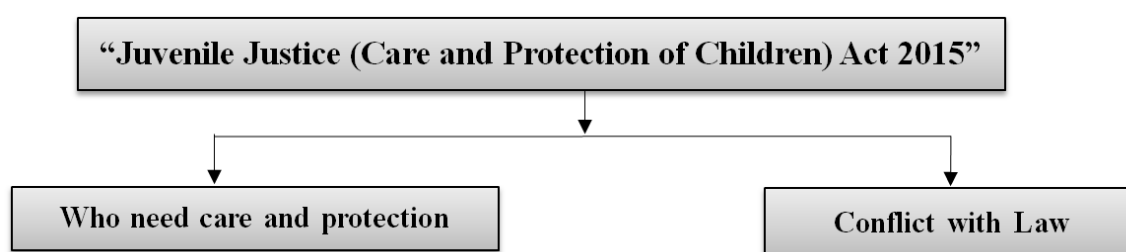


Figure 1. Juvenile Category under Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act.

"Classifications of Juvenile Delinquents under Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2021"

Theoretical Perspective on Intersection of education & Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency is a pathway to adolescent abuse, with a significant proportion of criminal professions finding their roots in childhood, causing severe issues worldwide. Today, it has become a matter of grave concern and needs addressing in an unbearable way. "The uncertainty is growing when we look at developing nations' statistical information relative to those in growth."¹ "In the last few decades, the crime rate by the children under the age of 16 years has increased".² The reason of increasing crime rate may be due to the upbringing environment of the child, economic conditions, lack of education and the parental care.

The causes for juvenile crime are usually found at each level of the social structure, including society, social institutions, social groups and organizations, and interpersonal relations. Juveniles' choice of delinquency is fostered by a wide range of factors, the most important of which are described

below. The reason of increasing crime rate may be due to the upbringing environment of the child, economic conditions, lack of education and the parental care.

Rational Choice Theory

Cornish and Clarke argued that suitable target and motivated offenders are two main components of any criminal gang. During the age of juveniles, delinquents are most vulnerable and suitable target for criminal gangs [3]. This theory introduces the possibility that people settle on a balanced decision to immoral act or not to carry out a criminal act.

Social Learning Theory

We must understand that not every theory will fit every juvenile's situation and/or reasoning to commit a delinquent act or status offense, because, there is no one to set a blueprint. We need to examine more theories and causations of juvenile delinquency such as social learning theory. Social learning theory presents the idea that all behaviour is learned—both good and bad [4]. Hence, our social surroundings (school) often dictate how we perceive the world. Elements of social bonding include attachment to families, commitment to social norms and institutions (school), involvement in activities, and the belief that these things are important [5].

1 www.legalservicesindia.com/article/626/Juvenile-delinquency.html

2 Puri Vyas, An Analytical Study of Juvenile Justice System in India. <https://blog.ipleaders.in/juvenile-justice-system-india/>

The study emphasized the importance of healthy parenting and a healthy social atmosphere, focusing on education as an approach to alleviating delinquent conduct and substance abuse among adolescents [6]. The results have such a major effect on the creation of preventive services that focus so much on social and family-oriented programmes.

Researcher has reviewed many researchers regarding drug abuse related to rural areas, higher education, industrial workers as which kind of drug were being taken by related people in which circumstances, they began to take drugs [7].

Study examines the behavioral issues of juvenile delinquents in India's observation homes and evaluate the effectiveness and usefulness of the therapy offered through the Life Skills Education (LSE) module [8].

2. Nexus Between Education and Delinquency

Education plays a crucial role in shaping youth behaviour and has been increasingly recognized as a pivotal factor in both the prevention and intervention of delinquency. The relationship between education and juvenile delinquency is complex, with educational experiences and outcomes directly influencing a young person's likelihood of engaging in delinquent acts. Schools not only provide academic instruction but also serve as environments where social and behavioural norms are learned and reinforced. Thus, educational settings can act as both a buffer against and a contributor to delinquent behaviour.

Education (Educational obstacles/Absenteeism, failure, loss of interest in study)

Illicit drug use may lead numerous kinds of scholarly deterrents (like-absenteeism, failure, and loss of interest in study). There can be numerous interruptions and deterrents to scholarly achievement. Drug abuse are significant issues that influence youth at prior age than before. Juvenile, much of the time starts to explore different avenues regarding alcohol, tobacco, and different drugs during grade school. When understudies are in secondary school, paces of substance use are astoundingly high. Many examiners perceive that drug and alcohol among understudies are critical obstructions to the accomplishment of instructive destinations.

"The need to take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children and young people against the use or abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as defined in the relevant treaties, and to prevent the use of children and young people in the illicit production of and trafficking in such substances, and urging Governments to implement" (Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 53/10 of 12 March 2010) [9].

Each society must therefore contribute its full attention to ensuring that children are well cared for and grew up in a proper environment, were they would obtain sufficient in-

struction, education and encouragement in addition to being able to have their privileges place in society as they're growing up.

Recent research highlights that educational institutions have the potential to significantly impact juvenile delinquency through various mechanisms. High-quality education, positive school environments, and supportive relationships with teachers and peers can help mitigate risk factors associated with delinquency. Conversely, factors such as poor academic performance, school disengagement, and inadequate support services can exacerbate the likelihood of delinquent behaviour. As such, exploring how educational strategies and interventions can be effectively implemented to address these issues is crucial.

3. Method and Data Analysis

This paper aims to explore the intersection of education and juvenile delinquency by examining how educational environments and practices influence delinquent behaviour. It will focus on the development and implementation of strategies for both prevention and intervention, drawing on current research and best practices in the field. By analysing the role of educational institutions in shaping behavioural outcomes and assessing various programs and policies designed to address juvenile delinquency, this paper seeks to offer insights into how education can be leveraged as a powerful tool in reducing and preventing delinquent behavior among youth. The goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which educational strategies can be optimized to foster positive developmental outcomes and contribute to a reduction in juvenile delinquency.

Both quantitative and qualitative strategies for research were utilized for the present study. These methods were used as they are related and can be commonly upgrading each other. Thus, the following information base and examination report are both statistical and subjective. Since the focal point of the examination is to analyse the inter-sectionality of education among juvenile delinquent and study the role of counselling into observation homes and children homes.

The researcher has selected the resources such as –the Constitution of India, UNCRC deceleration of child Rights, Juvenile Justice Act 2021. This study is an explorative and cross-sectional study. It depends on methods and techniques.

Interview Protocol:

This study aims to explore the intersection of education and juvenile delinquency by examining how educational environments and practices influence delinquent behavior. Specifically, the research focuses on the development and implementation of strategies for both prevention and intervention, particularly in the context of counseling in observation homes and children's homes. The following section outlines the interview protocol used to collect qualitative data for this study. The interview process was designed to gather in-depth insights into how educational institutions shape the

behavior of youth at risk of delinquency and how counseling practices influence their development.

1. Interview Content and Questions:

The semi-structured interviews focused on understanding the experiences of both educators and counselors working within juvenile justice settings, as well as the perspectives of youth involved in these programs. The questions were designed to explore the role of education and counseling in shaping behavioral outcomes, specifically targeting juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention.

The specific questions posed to participants included:

- 1) How do you perceive the role of education in preventing juvenile delinquency within your facility or program?
- 2) Can you describe a particular instance where educational practices or counseling interventions helped reduce delinquent behavior in a youth?
- 3) What challenges do you face in trying to provide effective educational strategies in observation homes or children's homes?
- 4) How do you integrate counseling practices with educational programs to support youth at risk of delinquency?
- 5) In your experience, how have the educational and counseling programs impacted the long-term behavioral outcomes of the youth you work with?

These questions were selected to explore the ways in which educational and counseling strategies are applied within institutional settings, and to assess their effectiveness in addressing delinquent behavior. The open-ended nature of the questions allowed for the exploration of individual experiences and offered opportunities to uncover both successes and challenges in implementing such programs.

2. Rationale behind the Selection of Questions:

The questions were crafted based on existing literature on juvenile delinquency, educational interventions, and counseling practices. Given the focus of the study on the intersectionality of education and juvenile delinquency, these questions aim to uncover participants' perspectives on how educational environments and counselling interventions contribute to reducing delinquent behaviour. By incorporating questions that focus on both the challenges and successes of current practices, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for improving educational and counselling strategies within juvenile justice settings.

3. Procedures for Consistency across Interviews:

To ensure consistency and reliability across all interviews, the following procedures were adhered to:

- 1) Interview Guide: A standardized interview guide was used for all participants. This guide outlined the key

questions to be asked, maintaining a focus on the intersection of education, delinquency, and counselling. The interviewer followed the same set of questions for each participant, allowing flexibility for probing responses when needed.

- 2) Training for Interviewers: All interviewers participated in a training session to standardize their approach. This included reviewing the questions, practicing interviews, and discussing strategies for minimizing bias during the interviews. Interviewers were instructed to maintain neutrality, encourage open responses, and avoid leading questions.
- 3) Pilot Testing: Prior to conducting the main study, a pilot interview was carried out with a small group of participants to test the clarity and relevance of the questions. Feedback from the pilot interviews was used to refine and adjust the questions, ensuring that they addressed the core issues of the study effectively.
- 4) Follow-up Questions: While the interview guide structured the conversation, interviewers were encouraged to ask follow-up questions based on the participant's responses. These questions were aligned with the research objectives and allowed for deeper exploration of key themes such as the impact of educational and counselling interventions on delinquency.
- 5) Audio Recording: All interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants to ensure accurate transcription and analysis. This also helped maintain the integrity of the interview content and allowed for detailed examination of the responses.
- 6) Interview Duration and Environment: Each interview was scheduled for approximately 15-20 min conducted in a quiet, private setting to facilitate candid conversation. The environment was designed to make participants feel comfortable and open, enhancing the quality of the data collected.

Objective

- 1) To study the intersection of education and delinquency.
- 2) To suggest intervention model for juvenile delinquents.

Data analysis

Data interpretation in form of Table- Socio-Demographical profile

States that plot in social science can be perceived as processing a sequence of incidents overall, so that when the purpose of each activity can be conveyed through its connection to that whole, there by conveying the meaning of events [10]. Narratives are historical, temporal, and social, provided that they are created for a particular audience.

Table 1. Juvenile's Profile.

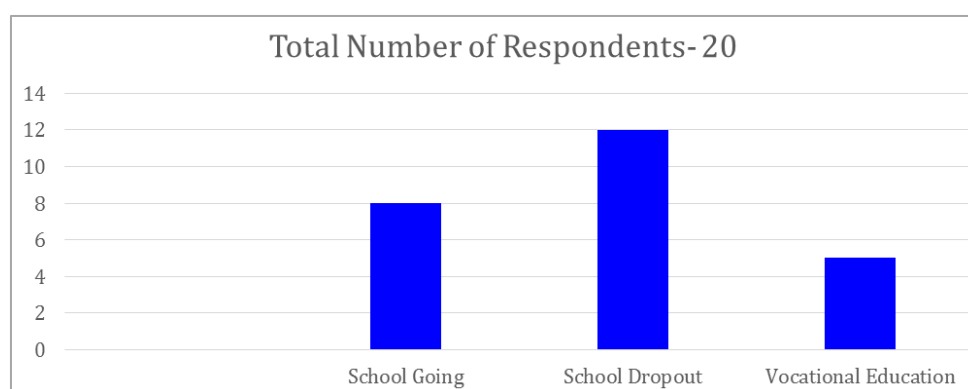
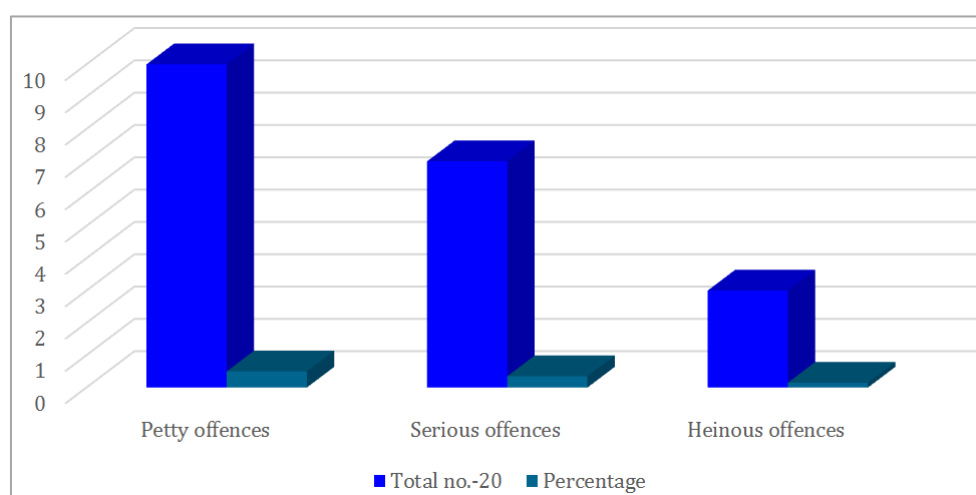
Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Religion	Education	Work Profile	Vocational Education	Social Group	Criminal Background
P-1	15	Male	Hindu	Drop Out	Mobile Repairing	No	Unknown	Theft
P-2	17	Male	Hindu	Drop out	Electrician	Yes	Peer group	Red light jump
P-3	14	Male	Muslim	7 th	-	No	Family	Theft
P-4	15	Male	Hindu	9 th	Mobile Repairing	No	Unknown	Over-speed
P-5	16	Male	Sikh	Drop Out	Shop attendant	No	Peer group	Affray
P-6	13	Male	Hindu	Drop Out	-	Yes	Family	Theft
P-7	17	Male	Hindu	Drop Out	Car Cleaner	No	Relative	Affray
P-8	16	Male	Muslim	9 th	Shop attendant	No	Peer group	Half murder
P-9	17	Male	Hindu	Drop Out	-	No	Peer group	Drug selling
P-10	13	Male	Muslim	6 th	Cleaner	No	Unknown	Bike riding
P-11	16	Male	Hindu	Drop Out	Waiter	No	Unknown	Mobile snatching
P-12	17	Male	Hindu	Drop Out	Computer hardware	Yes	Peer group	Theft
P-13	17	Male	Sikh	11 th	Mobile Repairing	Yes	Peer group	Red light jump
P-14	15	Male	Muslim	Drop Out	Waiter	No	Unknown	Affray
P-15	16	Male	Hindu	9 th	Dance class	Yes	Friends	Kidnapping
P-16	15	Male	Hindu	Drop Out	-	No	Peer group	Theft
P-17	15	Male	Muslim	Drop Out	-	No	Unknown	Affray
P-18	16	Male	Sikh	10 th	Shop attendant	No	Family	Theft
P-19	17	Male	Sikh	11 th	Shop attendant	No	Peer group	Theft
P-20	13	Male	Muslim	Drop Out	-	No	Peer group	Affray

Table 2. Education status of Juvenile.

Education Status	Total Number of Respondents- 20
School Going	08
School Dropout	12
Vocational Education	05

Table 3. Offence category under JJAct.

Offence category under Juvenile Justice Act	Total no.-20	Percentage
Petty offences	10	50%
Serious offences	07	35%
Heinous offences	03	15%

**Figure 2.** Chart of respondents.**Figure 3.** Chart of offence category.

4. Conclusion and Intervention Model

Strategies for the prevention and intervention of juvenile delinquency require a multifaceted approach that includes early education, community involvement, targeted support, and restorative practices. By addressing both the immediate and underlying factors contributing to delinquent behavior,

these strategies aim to support at-risk youth and foster positive development, ultimately reducing the prevalence of juvenile crime.

“The Greatest weapon against crime is not punishment but Education”- Jiddu Krishna murti

This emphasizes the role of education as a powerful tool in preventing youth from engaging in criminal activities.

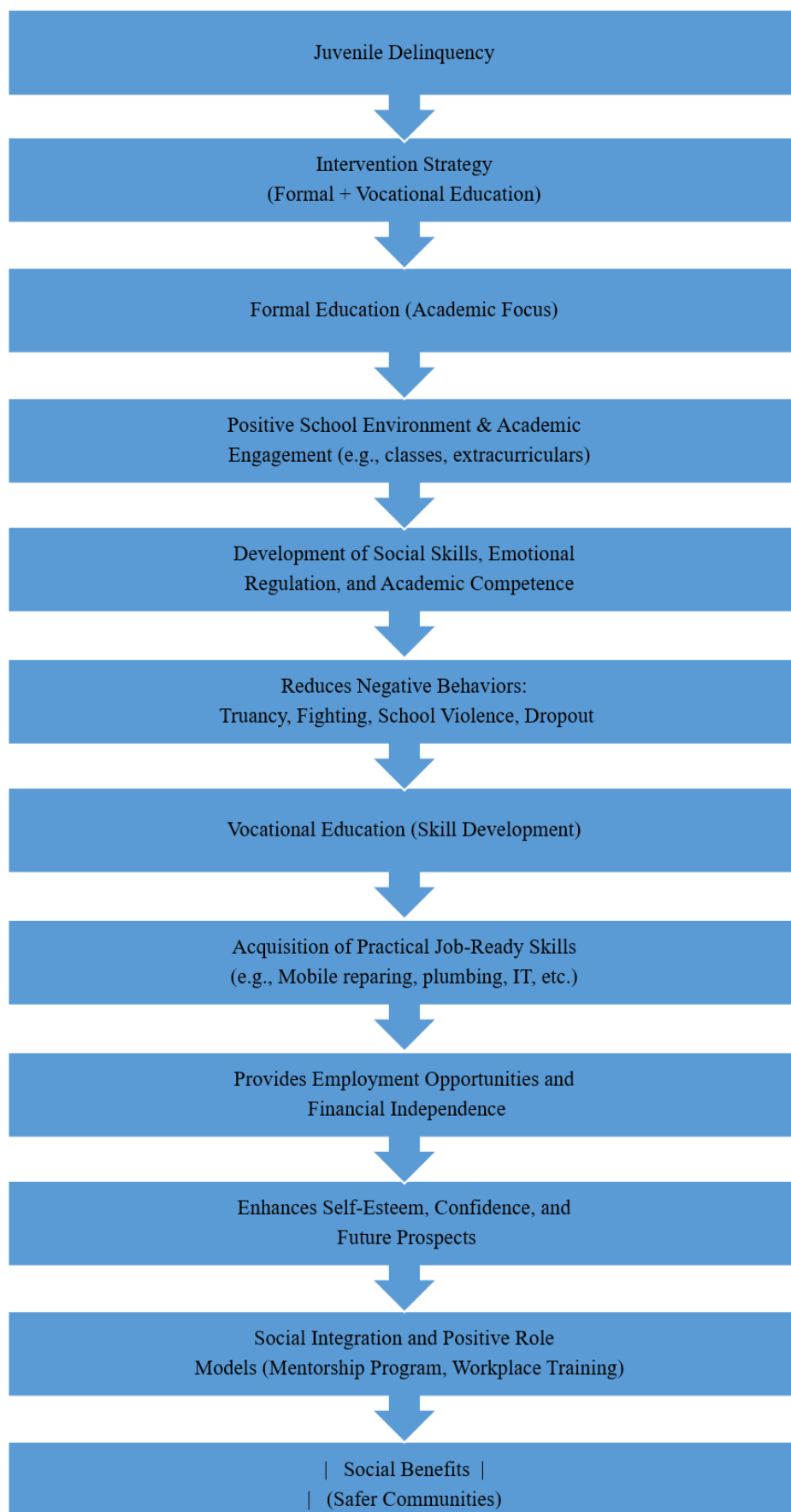


Figure 4. Single dimension chart.

Abbreviations

JJA	Juvenile Justice Act
LSE	Life Skills Education
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Author Contributions

Neha Tanwar is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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