



FACTORS LEADING URBAN YOUTH TO JOIN GANG IN COLOMBO CITY OF SRI LANKA

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Youth ganging and related delinquent behaviors have become a deviant fashion in urban societies. It is a social phenomenon that has turned into a critical social issue in the world. This serious global issue of gang culture has put the main societies in a high risk by challenging the safety, security, well-being, ethics, rights and law and order of those societies and their individuals.

This research was conducted with the participation of 493 gang members of identified 75 gangs in 14 GN Divisions in the Colombo city. The information were gathered using a questioner survey, In-depth interviews, focus group discussions observations, case studies and information collected from Police and other institutions. The data and information have being carefully analyzed in numerous ways to derive important findings, arrive at conclusions and make recommendations for remedial actions.

The research could derive and provide foundation for several important findings such as a database on youth gangs in Colombo city with its membership, activities engaged and linkages with drug dealings, prostitutions and links to political arena etc. It revealed that the real 'core' factors such as freedom, friendship, protection income generation substance usage and sexual needs etc. are causing youths to get attracted to gangs. Nearly all the gang members are found to be addicted to substances and involved in crimes of different scales. Gang members have freedom, protection from legal authorities and opportunities for delinquencies, substances use, enjoyment, prostitutions, and access to sexual activity, income generation and heroic states by being members of youth gangs. Thus all the anti- social behaviors are strongly linked with gang culture; for its origination, attract members, stability and development.

Keywords: *Anti-Social Behavior, Colombo City, Culture, Delinquent, Urban Youth Ganging*