



DAFFODIL INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (DIU)
Research Thesis on the
"Crime in Bangladesh: Juvenile Gangs and Societal Impact"

Submitted by

Name: Md Jewel Islam

ID: 0242320013263003

Supervised of

Dr. Abdul Kabil Khan

Associate Professor

[Has been carried out and submitted as a requirement for the partial fulfillment of the degree
'MSS (Master of Social Science) in Journalism Media and Communication (JMC)]



DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION (JMC)
DAFFODIL INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (DIU)

Dhaka, 14 July 2024

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Letter of Transmittal

14 July 2024

Dr. Abdul Kabil Khan

Associate Professor

Department of Journalism Media and Communication (JMC)

Daffodil International University (DIU) of Bangladesh

Subject: Letter of Transmittal

Dear Sir,

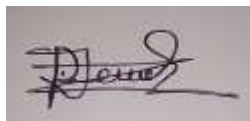
With due respect, I, the undersigned student of JMC batch have Research on “Crime in Bangladesh: Juvenile Gangs and Societal Impact” for the partial fulfillment of the degree ‘MSS (Master of Social Science) in Journalism Media and Communication (JMC)

Though I am on the learning curve, this Research has enabled me to gain insight into the core fact of Crime in Bangladesh: Juvenile Gangs and Societal Impact. So it becomes an extremely challenging and interesting experience.

Thank you for your supportive consideration for formulating an idea. Without your Inspiration, this report would have been an incomplete one.

Lastly, I would be thankful once again if you please give your judicious advice on the effort.

Yours sincerely,



Md Jewel Islam

ID: 0242320013263003

Testimonial

This is to certify that Md Jewel Islam, a student bearing ID: 0242320013263003 of the Department of Journalism Media and Communication (JMC) has carried out the study titled “Crime in Bangladesh: Juvenile Gangs and Societal Impact” under my supervision as a partial fulfillment of the degree MSS (Master of Social Science) in Journalism Media and Communication (JMC).

To the best of my knowledge, he has conducted the study with sincerity and the data and analysis have been based on his research work. The paper has been approved for submission to the board for further formalities.



Dr. Abdul Kabil Khan
Associate Professor
Department of Journalism Media and Communication (JMC)
Daffodil International University (DIU)

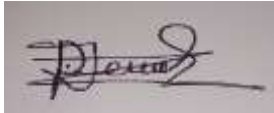
Dedication

This research work has been dedicated to my parents, whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank the following people without whom I would not have been able to complete this research and without whom I would not have made it through my MSS (Master of Social Science).

My first and foremost thanks and gratitude must go to my supervisor Dr. Abdul Kabil Khan Associate Professor, Department of Journalism Media and Communication (JMC) Daffodil International University (DIU) Bangladesh, whose insight and knowledge into the subject matter steered me through this research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Md Jewel Islam', is displayed on a light gray rectangular background.

Md Jewel Islam

ID: 0242320013263003

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Abstract:

Juvenile gang activities have become a growing concern in urban areas worldwide, including in Bangladesh, where they pose a significant threat to community safety and social cohesion. Despite global efforts to address youth crime, the specific socio-economic and cultural contexts of Bangladesh present unique challenges. The prevalence of juvenile gangs in urban areas like Dhaka and Chattogram has been linked to factors such as poverty, unemployment, lack of education, and the breakdown of family structures. However, existing research on effective intervention strategies to combat juvenile gang activities in Bangladesh remains limited. This thesis aims to fill this gap by identifying and evaluating effective intervention strategies tailored to the Bangladeshi context. The specific objectives are to understand the prevalence, causes, and impacts of juvenile gang activities in urban areas and to propose targeted, sustainable interventions that can mitigate these challenges. The thesis employs a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews and content analysis of secondary data from prominent Bangladeshi newspapers, Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, to gather insights from various stakeholders, including gang members, community leaders, and law enforcement officials. The findings reveal that socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education are the primary drivers of gang involvement among youth. Additional contributing factors include the breakdown of family structures and inadequate community support. The thesis identifies several key themes, including motivations for joining gangs, personal and familial consequences, and effective intervention strategies, such as educational opportunities, vocational training, family support services, and community policing. The thesis recommends a multi-faceted approach, combining enhanced educational and vocational opportunities, strengthened family support systems, increased community engagement, improved law enforcement collaboration, and ongoing evaluation and adaptation of programs. By addressing the root causes of juvenile delinquency and fostering a supportive community environment, the study provides a foundation for policymakers, community leaders, and stakeholders to develop targeted interventions. This research encourages future studies to build on these findings and explore additional strategies for mitigating the impact of juvenile gangs, promoting safer communities, and ensuring a more resilient societal framework in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Juvenile gang, Youth, Family, Society, Bangladesh

Chapter One

Background of the study

1.1 Introduction:

In recent years, juvenile delinquency has emerged as a critical concern for policymakers and social scientists worldwide. Across different regions, the activities of juvenile gangs have garnered particular attention due to their increasing prevalence and the profound implications they hold for society. Globally, juvenile gangs are seen as a manifestation of deeper sociocultural and economic issues. In many countries, factors such as rapid urbanization, economic disparities, and the erosion of traditional family structures contribute to the rise of youth criminality, including gang involvement. Studies have shown that gang affiliation during adolescence is associated with adverse outcomes such as increased rates of school dropout, substance abuse, and long-term criminal behavior (World Health Organization, 2020).

In Asia, and particularly in South Asia, juvenile gangs have become a growing concern. Countries like India, Pakistan, and Nepal have witnessed an increase in youth involvement in organized crime and violent activities. These gangs often serve as a refuge for marginalized youth who face severe socio-economic challenges, such as poverty, lack of education, and limited employment opportunities (Sharma, 2021). In South Asia, the influence of rapid urbanization, coupled with weak law enforcement and political patronage, has created an environment where juvenile gangs can thrive (Khan & Singh, 2022).

Against this backdrop, Bangladesh presents a unique context where the issue of juvenile delinquency is particularly acute. The rise in juvenile gang activities in urban areas of Bangladesh can be attributed to factors such as rapid urbanization, poverty, and the breakdown of traditional family structures (Hossain, 2019). These gangs engage in a range of criminal activities, including theft, drug trafficking, and violent crimes, contributing to a sense of insecurity and lawlessness in the affected communities (Rahman, 2021). The involvement of youth in gang-related activities in Bangladesh has far-reaching consequences not only on the individuals involved but also on families, neighborhoods, and the broader community. Studies in Bangladesh have shown that gang affiliation during adolescence is linked to higher rates of school dropout, substance abuse, and continued criminal behavior into adulthood (Ahmed & Khan, 2020). This situation underscores the critical need for comprehensive and context-specific strategies to address the root causes of juvenile gang involvement in Bangladesh.

Addressing juvenile gangs in Bangladesh requires a multifaceted approach, involving law enforcement, social services, and community engagement. Previous research has highlighted the importance of preventive measures, such as educational programs and community policing, in

mitigating the influence of gangs on young people (Islam, 2018). This study, titled "Crime in Bangladesh: Juvenile Gangs and Societal Impact," seeks to build on this body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive analysis of the current state of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh, their socio-economic drivers, and the effectiveness of existing interventions. In conclusion, the problem of juvenile gangs is not unique to Bangladesh but is a significant global challenge with deep sociocultural and economic roots. However, the manifestations of this problem in Bangladesh present specific challenges that require urgent and targeted intervention. By examining the causes, consequences, and potential solutions, this research aims to contribute to the development of effective strategies to combat juvenile delinquency and promote a safer, more cohesive society in Bangladesh.

1.2 Background of the Research: The phenomenon of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh has evolved over the past few decades, becoming a pressing social issue. Historical and sociocultural contexts play a crucial role in understanding the emergence and proliferation of these gangs. Traditionally, Bangladeshi society has been characterized by strong community bonds and familial structures, which provide a support system for juveniles. However, rapid urbanization and socio-economic transformations have disrupted these traditional systems, creating an environment conducive to the formation of juvenile gangs (Hossain, 2019).

Urbanization in Bangladesh has led to the migration of large numbers of people from rural to urban areas, particularly to cities like Dhaka and Chittagong. This migration has often resulted in overcrowded and underserved urban slums, where economic opportunities are limited, and social services are inadequate (Chowdhury, 2017). In these settings, young people, especially those from impoverished backgrounds, are vulnerable to the allure of gang membership, which promises a sense of belonging, protection, and economic gain (Rahman & Islam, 2020).

The socio-economic drivers of juvenile gang formation are multifaceted. Poverty, lack of access to quality education, and unemployment are significant factors. According to a study by Ahmed and Khan (2020), many juveniles join gangs out of economic necessity, seeking financial stability through illicit activities. Additionally, the breakdown of family structures, often due to economic stress and parental absence, leaves young people without guidance and supervision, increasing their susceptibility to gang influence (Khatun, 2018). Furthermore, the media and popular culture play a role in glamorizing gang life. The portrayal of gangs in movies, television, and music often romanticizes violence and criminal behavior, making it appear attractive to impressionable youth (Rahman, 2021). This cultural influence, combined with peer pressure and the need for social acceptance, can lead to increased gang membership among juveniles.

The impact of juvenile gangs extends beyond immediate criminal activities. Gang-related violence and crime contribute to a pervasive sense of insecurity in affected communities, hindering economic development and social cohesion. Families of gang members often face stigmatization and fear, which can further exacerbate social isolation and economic hardship (Islam & Rahman,

2019). Additionally, the long-term consequences for gang-involved youth are severe, including increased likelihood of continued criminal behavior, incarceration, and limited opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration into society (Chowdhury & Hossain, 2020).

Addressing the issue of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh requires a comprehensive approach that includes preventive measures, law enforcement, and community-based interventions. Previous research highlights the effectiveness of community policing, youth engagement programs, and educational initiatives in reducing gang involvement (Islam, 2018). By providing alternative pathways for youth development and fostering strong community ties.

This research aims to delve deeper into the socio-economic and cultural factors contributing to juvenile gang activities in Bangladesh. By analyzing current trends, evaluating the effectiveness of existing interventions, and exploring new strategies, this study seeks to provide actionable insights for policymakers, law enforcement, and community organizations working to address juvenile delinquency and its societal impact.

1.3 Definitions: To provide clarity and context for this study, the following key terms are defined operationally:

1. Juvenile Gangs: Crime in general refers to any wrongful behavior punishable by society. An act that is not recognized by the state or society is called a crime. (Dr. Ahmed Helal, 2020)

In the context of this study, juvenile gangs refer to organized groups primarily composed of individuals under the age of 18 who engage in a range of criminal activities, including but not limited to theft, drug trafficking, violence, and extortion. These gangs are characterized by hierarchical structures, often led by older youth or adults, and operate predominantly in urban areas of Bangladesh, such as Dhaka and Chattogram.

2. Juvenile Delinquency: Juvenile delinquency is a particular type of abnormal and antisocial act committed by teenagers. under Section 83 of the Bangladesh Penal Code 1860. (The "Juvenile Crime" Act, Book) Cesare Beccaria is the father of modern criminology. He was an Italian jurist, philosopher, and political figure. He provided the first theory of criminology in his book "On Crime and Punishment" in 1764. A crime is an anti-social illegal act that is harmful to the society and public. When adults commit all the acts those are considered as crimes but when minors or juveniles commit such acts are called juvenile crimes. (Hostettler John, 2011)

Juvenile crime and juvenile gangs are a little different. When a juvenile breaks the law, it is a juvenile delinquency. Juvenile gangs are when juveniles engage in criminal activity in an organized manner by defying the law. The activities of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh have significant implications for community safety and social stability (Islam, 2018). In Bangladesh, rapid urbanization has contributed to the formation of slums and the rise of juvenile gang activities (Chowdhury, 2017).

Juvenile delinquency in this study is defined as the participation of youths, particularly those under the age of 18, in behaviors that violate legal, social, and cultural norms. This includes both individual and group activities that contribute to social disorder, such as gang involvement, substance abuse, theft, and violence. (Islam, 2018).

3. Socio-economic Drivers: Refers to the economic and social conditions that contribute to the formation and sustenance of juvenile gangs, including poverty, unemployment, lack of education, and limited access to social services. These factors are identified as primary motivators for youths joining gangs in urban areas. (Rahman & Islam, 2020)

4. Cultural Influences: In this study, cultural influences refer to societal norms, values, and behaviors, including those perpetuated by media and peer groups, that glamorize or normalize gang life and criminal activities among juveniles. The study specifically examines how local media coverage and cultural attitudes impact youth behavior and gang recruitment.

5. Family Dynamics: Refers to the structure, relationships, and conditions within a family that may influence a juvenile's propensity for delinquency. This includes parental involvement, family cohesion, supervision, and domestic environments, which can either mitigate or exacerbate the risk of gang involvement. (Anderson, 2003).

6. Community and Law Enforcement Responses: This term encompasses the actions taken by local communities, law enforcement agencies, and policymakers to prevent and reduce juvenile gang involvement. It includes community policing, youth engagement programs, legal interventions, and other efforts aimed at addressing juvenile delinquency.

7. Intervention Strategies: In the context of this study, intervention strategies are defined as policies, programs, and initiatives designed to prevent juvenile gang involvement, rehabilitate at-risk youth, and enhance community safety. These strategies are evaluated based on their effectiveness in the specific socio-economic and cultural context of Bangladesh.

8. Urban Areas: For this study, urban areas refer to densely populated regions within Bangladesh, particularly cities like Dhaka and Chattogram, where juvenile gang activities are most prevalent. These areas are characterized by rapid urbanization, socio-economic disparities, and diverse populations. (Rahman & Islam, 2020)

1.4. Study Objectives: The main objective of the analysis was to find out the causes of juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh through research and possible remedies and to present some recommendations to the nation. The extent to which the research work will be successful depends on the exact reflection of the goals and objectives of the research. Therefore, the researcher had to consider this study with the following objectives in mind.

- a. To explore the current dynamics of Juvenile Gangs in Bangladesh.
- b. To Evaluate the Role of Media Coverage in Shaping Public Perceptions and Policy Responses to Juvenile Delinquency in Bangladesh.
- c. To provide recommendations and suggestions to solve is problem and Govt. responses to with juvenile delinquency.

1.5 Research Questions: The study analyzes how possible solutions to juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh are presented by gathering information and data to find answers to the questions. Some descriptive methods were used to conduct the research keeping in mind the research questions to answer the following four research questions.

1. What are the key characteristics and structural patterns of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh?
2. What factors contribute to the involvement of juveniles in gang activities in Bangladesh and How do impact society?
3. How does media coverage influence public perception and governmental policy responses to juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh?
4. What recommendations can be proposed for address juvenile gang issues in Bangladesh?

1.6 Rationale of the Study: The rationale for this study, "Crime in Bangladesh: Juvenile Gangs and Societal Impact," is grounded in the urgent need to address the escalating issue of juvenile delinquency and its wide-ranging implications for society. The prevalence of juvenile gangs in urban areas of Bangladesh poses a significant threat to social order, community safety, and the future prospects of the youth involved. This study seeks to fill critical gaps in the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic and cultural drivers of juvenile gang activities and evaluating the effectiveness of current intervention strategies.

Juvenile delinquency, particularly in the form of gang involvement, has seen a notable increase in Bangladesh, correlating with the country's rapid urbanization and socio-economic changes. According to Hossain (2019), urban migration and the resulting expansion of slums have created environments where youth are highly susceptible to criminal influences. This migration has disrupted traditional family structures and social networks, leaving many young people without

adequate supervision or support (Chowdhury, 2017). As a result, juvenile gangs have become an attractive alternative for those seeking identity, protection, and economic opportunity (Rahman & Islam, 2020).

Furthermore, the socio-economic conditions that contribute to the formation of juvenile gangs such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education—are pervasive in Bangladesh. Ahmed and Khan (2020) highlight that many juveniles join gangs out of economic necessity, driven by the promise of financial gain through illegal activities. This study aims to explore these socio-economic drivers in-depth, providing a nuanced understanding of how and why juveniles are drawn to gang life.

The societal impact of juvenile gangs extends beyond the immediate criminal activities they engage in. Gang-related violence and crime foster a climate of fear and insecurity, which can stifle community development and social cohesion (Islam & Rahman, 2019). Families of gang members often face stigmatization, further exacerbating social isolation and economic hardship. Additionally, the long-term consequences for gang-involved youth include higher rates of school dropout, substance abuse, and continued criminal behavior (Chowdhury & Hossain, 2020). Addressing these issues is crucial for the well-being of the affected individuals and the broader community.

Existing research has emphasized the importance of preventive measures and community-based interventions in mitigating juvenile gang activities. For instance, community policing and youth engagement programs have shown promise in reducing gang involvement and fostering safer neighborhoods (Islam, 2018). However, there remains a significant gap in understanding the specific socio-economic and cultural contexts that influence the effectiveness of these interventions in Bangladesh.

This study aims to contribute to this body of knowledge by assessing current strategies and exploring new approaches to prevent juvenile delinquency and support at-risk youth. By examining the socio-economic and cultural factors that contribute to gang formation and evaluating the impact of existing interventions, this research provides actionable insights for policymakers, law enforcement, and community organizations. The ultimate goal is to develop effective strategies that can mitigate juvenile delinquency, enhance community safety, and promote the healthy development of youth in Bangladesh (Helal Dr. Ahmed, 2020).

Gap Statement: While there is existing research on juvenile gang involvement and interventions, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that specifically examine the socio-economic and cultural factors driving gang formation in Bangladesh and evaluate the contextual effectiveness of current prevention strategies..

1.7 Scope and Nature of the Study: The scope and nature of this study, titled "Crime in Bangladesh: Juvenile Gangs and Societal Impact," are defined by its comprehensive approach to understanding the multifaceted issue of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh. This research aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the causes, dynamics, and consequences of juvenile gang activities, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of existing interventions and propose new strategies for mitigating this issue.

1.7.1 Scope of the Study:

1. Geographical Focus: The study primarily focuses on urban areas in Bangladesh, particularly in cities like Dhaka and Chattogram, where juvenile gang activities are most prevalent. These regions have seen an increase in gang-related violence and crimes, as evidenced by reports from Prothom Alo and The Daily Star between 1st May to 30 June 2024.

2. Demographic Focus: The study examines juveniles under the age of 18 who are involved in gang activities, as well as older youth who may be part of the broader gang structure. It also considers the impact on the broader community, including families, schools, and local law enforcement, to understand the wider societal impact of juvenile delinquency.

3. Temporal Scope: The study covers recent developments in juvenile gang activities over the past decade, with a particular focus on data collected from 1st May to 30 June 2024. Historical context is also considered to identify trends and changes in gang dynamics over time, allowing for a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh.

4. Thematic Scope: The research addresses several key themes:

a. Socio-economic Drivers: Investigating socio-economic factors that contribute to the formation and sustenance of juvenile gangs, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education.

b. Cultural Influences: Examining the role of media, peer pressure, and cultural norms in glamorizing gang life and influencing juvenile behavior, with specific references to media coverage from Prothom Alo and The Daily Star.

c. Family Dynamics: Analyzing the impact of family structures, parental involvement, and domestic conditions on juvenile delinquency, as highlighted in recent news articles.

d. Community and Law Enforcement Responses: Evaluating the effectiveness of community policing, youth engagement programs, and other interventions in preventing and reducing gang involvement. The study also considers the role of political patronage and law enforcement challenges, as reported by national media outlets.

5. Methodological Scope: The study employs a qualitative research method, utilizing thematic analysis and semi-structured interviews. Data were collected from a range of stakeholders,

including gang members, their families, community leaders, and law enforcement officials, to explore the characteristics, components, and societal impacts of juvenile gangs. Secondary data from Prothom Alo and The Daily Star during 1st May to 30 June 2024 were incorporated to support the analysis and provide real-time insights into the issue.

1.7.2 Nature of the Study:

1. **Descriptive and Analytical:** The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. It describes the current state of juvenile gang activities in Bangladesh, providing detailed accounts of their operations, structures, and impacts. It also analytically examines the underlying causes and evaluates the effectiveness of various interventions.

2. **Exploratory and Explanatory:** The research explores new areas of inquiry, such as the impact of digital media on gang recruitment and the role of economic incentives in gang membership. It seeks to explain the complex relationships between socioeconomic conditions, cultural influences, and juvenile delinquency.

3. **Policy-Oriented:** The study is policy-oriented, aiming to provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and community organizations. It focuses on developing practical strategies to prevent juvenile delinquency, support at-risk youth, and enhance community safety.

4. **Interdisciplinary:** Given the complexity of juvenile gang issues, the study adopts an interdisciplinary approach, drawing from criminology, sociology, psychology, and urban studies. This allows for a holistic understanding of the problem and the formulation of comprehensive solutions.

5. **Community Engagement:** The research emphasizes community engagement, involving local stakeholders in the research process. By incorporating the perspectives and experiences of those directly affected by juvenile gangs, the study aims to develop contextually relevant and sustainable interventions.

In summary, the scope and nature of this study are defined by its comprehensive, analytical, and policy-oriented approach to addressing the issue of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh. By exploring the socio-economic, cultural, and familial factors that contribute to gang involvement and evaluating existing interventions, this research seeks to provide valuable insights and practical solutions for mitigating juvenile delinquency and enhancing community well-being

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The issue of juvenile gangs and their societal impact has been extensively studied across various contexts worldwide. This literature review aims to synthesize existing research relevant to juvenile gang activities in Bangladesh, highlighting key findings, theoretical perspectives, and gaps that this study seeks to address. The review is organized into several thematic sections: the prevalence and characteristics of juvenile gangs, socio-economic drivers, cultural influences, family dynamics, community responses, and the effectiveness of interventions.

2.1 Prevalence and Characteristics of Juvenile Gangs :

Juvenile gang activities have become a significant concern in urban centers of Bangladesh, posing substantial threats to community safety and social cohesion. Rapid urbanization and socio-economic challenges in urban slums are closely tied to this phenomenon. These gangs, predominantly composed of young males under the age of 18, engage in a spectrum of criminal activities, ranging from theft and drug trafficking to violent crimes.

Socio-Economic Factors: The influx of people into urban areas in search of better opportunities has expanded slums, where socio-economic hardships are prevalent (Hossain, 2019). Poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education and social services make youth in these areas vulnerable to gang recruitment and involvement.

Organizational Structure: The structure of juvenile gangs often mirrors adult criminal organizations, exhibiting clear hierarchies and division of roles (Chowdhury, 2017). These include leaders, enforcers, and lower-level members, facilitating criminal activities and maintaining order within the group.

Criminal Activities: Gangs engage in various criminal activities, significantly impacting their communities. Common activities include theft, burglary, and drug trafficking, with gangs often controlling local drug markets. Violence within and between gangs and against community members is frequent, contributing to a pervasive sense of insecurity and fear (Chowdhury, 2017).

Impact on Community: The socio-economic conditions of urban slums exacerbate the problem. High poverty and unemployment levels leave young individuals with limited legitimate opportunities. The allure of gang life, promising financial reward, protection, and social status, becomes an attractive alternative. The breakdown of traditional family structures and community networks means many young people lack the guidance and support necessary to resist gang involvement (Hossain, 2019).

Consequences: The criminal activities of juvenile gangs lead to increased crime rates and heightened fear among residents, eroding trust within communities and disrupting social interactions and cooperation. The presence of gangs can also disrupt local economies, as businesses may close or relocate due to safety concerns, further exacerbating residents' economic difficulties (Ahmed & Khan, 2020).

Interventions: Addressing the issue of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh requires improving living conditions in urban slums, providing educational and employment opportunities for youth, and strengthening family and community support networks. By tackling the root causes of gang involvement, it is possible to reduce the prevalence of juvenile gangs and mitigate their impact on community safety and social cohesion.

2.2 Socio-Economic Drivers: Numerous studies have identified socio-economic factors as critical drivers of juvenile gang involvement, highlighting the complex interplay between economic hardship and delinquent behavior. Ahmed and Khan (2020) emphasize how poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education create environments where gang membership becomes an appealing alternative for youths seeking economic stability. These conditions foster disenfranchisement and desperation, pushing young individuals toward gangs to achieve financial security and social status.

Poverty: Poverty is pervasive in many urban areas of Bangladesh, particularly in rapidly growing slums. Families struggling to meet basic needs often cannot provide adequate supervision and support for their children. This neglect makes youths more susceptible to the allure of gang life, which promises immediate financial rewards and a sense of belonging (Ahmed & Khan, 2020). The economic strain on impoverished families creates fertile ground for gang recruitment, as gangs seem to offer a viable solution to economic hardship.

Unemployment: Unemployment, especially among the youth, significantly contributes to juvenile gang involvement. The lack of job opportunities for young people, particularly those who have dropped out of school or lack vocational training, leaves them with few legitimate avenues for achieving financial independence (Rahman & Islam, 2020). Gangs often fill this void by providing financial incentives and a sense of purpose and identity that unemployed youths might not find elsewhere. The promise of economic gain through illegal activities can be highly attractive to those who see no other viable options.

Lack of Access to Education: Education is a critical pathway to economic and social mobility. However, in many urban slums of Bangladesh, access to quality education is severely limited. Overcrowded classrooms, poorly trained teachers, and a lack of resources contribute to high dropout rates and low educational attainment. Ahmed and Khan (2020) note that the absence of educational opportunities leaves many youths without the skills and qualifications needed to secure stable employment, driving them toward gangs as an alternative means of achieving economic stability.

2.3 Cultural Influences: Socio-cultural factors significantly influence juvenile gang behavior, shaping how young individuals perceive and engage in criminal activities. These influences manifest through media portrayals, peer associations, and societal norms.

Media Portrayals: Media portrayals of gang life profoundly impact youth. Rahman (2021) highlights how films, TV shows, music, and social media often glamorize gang culture, presenting it as exciting and desirable. These portrayals allure young people seeking identity and social recognition. Media often highlights the power, wealth, and camaraderie associated with gang membership, overshadowing the dangers and negative consequences.

Social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura (1977), supports the idea that individuals learn behaviors through observation and imitation. Young people exposed to media depictions of gangs internalize these behaviors, especially if they see them rewarded or normalized. Constant exposure desensitizes youth to violence and criminality, making these behaviors seem acceptable.

Peer Influence: Peer influence critically affects juvenile gang behavior. Edwin Sutherland's differential association theory (1947) posits that criminal behavior is learned through interactions with others. Individuals become delinquent when exposed to more definitions favorable to law violations than unfavorable ones. Youths lacking strong family support may turn to gangs for belonging and identity, where they are socialized into a subculture that values and rewards criminal behavior.

Societal Norms: Broader societal norms and values also contribute to juvenile gang behavior. In some communities, especially those with high poverty and social disorganization, gang involvement may be seen as a legitimate means of achieving economic and social mobility. The breakdown of traditional family structures and community institutions leaves a vacuum that gangs fill, offering protection and purpose.

2.4 Family Dynamics: Family structure and dynamics significantly influence juvenile delinquency and gang involvement. Research shows that the quality of family relationships and home environment stability are crucial in shaping young people's behaviors and choices. Disrupted family environments, characterized by parental absence, domestic violence, and economic stress, markedly increase the risk of juvenile gang involvement.

Islam and Rahman (2019) highlight the impact of family disruptions on juvenile delinquency. Parental absence due to death, divorce, or work migration leaves children without adequate supervision and emotional support. This absence can lead to feelings of neglect and abandonment, making youths more susceptible to peer and gang influences that offer them a sense of belonging and identity. (Islam & Rahman, 2019).

Economic stress within the family also contributes significantly to juvenile delinquency. Families struggling with poverty may be unable to meet their children's basic needs, leading to feelings of

inadequacy and desperation. Economic hardship limits access to education, extracurricular activities, and other positive opportunities, pushing youths towards gangs for economic stability and social recognition. Financial stress can also strain parent-child relationships, reducing parental involvement and supervision (Islam & Rahman, 2019).

Hirschi's social bond theory (1969) explains these dynamics. Strong social bonds to family, school, and other institutions act as protective factors against delinquent behavior. Weak attachment to parents, low commitment to educational goals, lack of involvement in positive activities, and weakened belief in societal norms increase the likelihood of delinquent behavior.

Khatun (2018) emphasizes the importance of strong family support systems in preventing juvenile delinquency. Stable and supportive family environments provide a foundation for healthy development and resilience against negative influences. Effective family support includes consistent parental involvement, open communication, and positive reinforcement. These elements build strong bonds of attachment and commitment, reducing the likelihood of youths seeking acceptance in gangs.

Interventions aimed at strengthening family dynamics and support systems are crucial for preventing juvenile delinquency. Programs providing parenting education, financial assistance, and counseling can help mitigate the effects of disrupted family environments. By supporting families in building stable relationships, it is possible to reduce juvenile gang involvement and promote healthier developmental outcomes for young people.

2.5 Community Responses:

Effective community responses are crucial for addressing juvenile gang activities and preventing delinquency. These responses often involve community policing, youth engagement programs, educational initiatives, and social support systems, fostering trust, providing positive alternatives, and enhancing social cohesion.

Community Policing: Community policing emphasizes collaboration between law enforcement and communities. Islam (2018) highlights its role in mitigating juvenile delinquency by building relationships and trust with residents to identify and address crime's root causes. Regular meetings, youth outreach programs, and collaborative problem-solving efforts foster partnership and shared responsibility for community safety. This involvement provides at-risk youths with positive role models and mentors.

Youth Engagement Programs: Youth engagement programs offer positive alternatives to gang involvement, providing structured activities, mentorship, and personal development opportunities. Islam (2018) emphasizes their role in building resilience and promoting positive social interactions among at-risk youth. Programs include recreational activities, arts, leadership development, and

community service, instilling purpose and belonging while developing life skills like teamwork, communication, and problem-solving.

Education and Vocational Training: Education and vocational training are critical for reducing juvenile gang involvement. Chowdhury and Hossain (2020) note that educational initiatives and job training create pathways to legitimate employment and economic stability. Programs may include after-school tutoring, scholarships, and vocational training, equipping youths with skills and certifications valuable in the job market, and reducing economic incentives for gang involvement.

Social Support Systems: Social support systems prevent juvenile delinquency by providing youths and families with necessary resources. Chowdhury and Hossain (2020) highlight their importance in addressing gang involvement's underlying issues. Counseling services, family support programs, and community centers offer trauma, stress, and emotional support, educational resources, and social services, addressing the multifaceted needs of at-risk youths and their families.

2.6. Effectiveness of Interventions:

The effectiveness of interventions targeting juvenile gang activities hinges on multi-faceted approaches that integrate law enforcement with comprehensive community and family support systems. Such holistic strategies not only address the symptoms but also tackle the root causes of juvenile delinquency.

Multi-Faceted Approaches: Research underscores the effectiveness of multi-faceted approaches that blend law enforcement with community and family support. Rahman and Islam (2020) emphasize the necessity of these integrated strategies for addressing the complex socio-economic factors contributing to gang involvement. While law enforcement addresses immediate issues, holistic approaches delve deeper into underlying causes driving youths toward gangs.

Educational Opportunities: Quality education plays a pivotal role in steering youths away from gangs by equipping them with skills for legitimate employment and social mobility. Programs focusing on school engagement through tutoring, mentorship, and extracurricular activities have successfully lowered dropout rates and prevented delinquency (Rahman & Islam, 2020).

Community and Family Support : Comprehensive community and family support systems, involving local stakeholders and offering counseling, parenting education, and financial assistance, stabilize home environments and strengthen familial bonds. These measures address broader social contexts of delinquency, providing a holistic approach to prevention (Chowdhury & Hossain, 2020).

2.7 Western Perspective: There is an extensive body of research on gang issues in the United States, where the problem has been consistently present. Although gang activity saw a decline in the mid-1990s, the National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS) reported an overall increase of 15% in gang-related problems.

a. The highest increase rate was in the suburban areas (22%) and lowest in larger cities (13%) (Egley, Howell & Moore, 2010). In their study “Indicators of School Crime and Safety” found similar increases in schools as well. Gang activities increased to 23% in 2007 from 17% in 1999.

b. A survey conducted by the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, with a sample of 9000 adolescents, showed that 8% of the youth from the sample had been a gang member between the ages 12 and 17 (Snyder and Sickmund, 2006). In the study “The Violent Gang Problem in Chicago: A Local Community Approach”, Spergel (1986) found that minority male youths responsible for most of the delinquent and violent offending. According to the 2008 survey of the National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS), Hispanic youth make up almost 50% of all gang members, African American 32% and Caucasian 11% (National Gang Center, 2010).

c. In his article “Gang Prevention: An Overview of Research and Programs” James Howell (2010). In this article, Howell summarized the list of risk factors by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. These risk factors fall into five categories:

1. Individual risk factors (anti-social behaviors, drug abuse, mental health problems, victimization, negative life events),
2. Family risk factors (disruption in family structure and family bond, family members’ involvement in gangs),
3. School risk factors (unsafe school environment, lack of connectedness with school, poor academic performances),
4. Peer group risk factors (affiliation with aggressive youth, friends’ involvement in gangs),
5. Community risk factors (lack of neighborhood bonds, availability of firearms, criminogenic neighborhood).

d. In her research "The Gang Member Label and Juvenile Justice Decision-Making," Susan Teresa Quinn (2010) explored how the label of gang membership influences decision-making at various stages of the juvenile justice system. She analyzed three stages: 1. Intake, 2. Disposition, and 3. Incarceration release to determine whether there was a relationship between the gang membership label and decisions made within the juvenile justice system. Her findings indicated that offenders labeled as gang members were more likely to receive a recommendation for judicial proceedings, although this varied by county. For example, in Dade County, gang members were 87% more likely than non-gang members to receive a recommendation for judicial proceedings and were 2.85 times more likely to be incarcerated (Quinn, 2010).

2.8. European Perspective: The authors observed that European gangs are predominantly composed of males from ethnic or national minority groups (Klein, Weerman, & Thornberry, 2006). Gangs involving individuals of Algerian, Moroccan, Turkish, Indian, Pakistani, Jamaican, Chinese, and Albanian descent are frequently reported in countries such as Holland, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Russia, and Italy, although indigenous street gangs also exist. Similarly, in the USA, the majority of gang members come from minority groups (Klein, Weerman, & Thornberry, 2006). By comparing various studies, the authors concluded that youth violence levels and severity in European countries are generally lower than in the USA, with the exception of gangs in the Kazan area of Russia, which are notably violent. Compared to non-gang youths, gang members in Europe were found to be more prone to violence and weapon use (Van Gemert & Fleisher, 2005; Thornberry, 2006). They also discovered that European gangs are less organized and structured than those in the USA and that the use of symbols and colors is less prevalent in the European context.

2.9 Perspectives in Bangladesh: Bangladesh has seen a rise in juvenile crimes, which were relatively minor decades ago but have become more severe post-independence. There has been very little research on juvenile gangs in Bangladesh, a critical issue given the alarming increase in such activities. In 1985, post-liberation war, 6,100 juvenile crimes were recorded, with 5,659 committed by boys and 651 by girls. Since the .(Uddin, M. Minhaz, 2019).

In 2001, the 'Crab Group' in Uttara introduced gang culture to the capital, **In 2003**, juvenile crime is between 12 and <16 years (64.58%), and it was found that 31.25% did not attend school. Notable incidents include the **2013 murder of Oishee Rahman's** parents, **the 2017 murder** of 14-year-old Adnan Kabir by the 'Disco Boys' and 'Big Boss' gangs, and the 2019 public hacking death of Rifat on College Road in Barguna. These cases highlight the persistent and growing issue of juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh. (Islam Rozina, 2024 Prothomalo,).

An intelligence report indicates at least 5,000 to 6,000 youth gang members exist across all departments and districts, causing 120 murders in the capital over 17 years due to gang conflicts. Drug addiction among children has led to approximately 200 parents being killed by their offspring. Moreover, girls also engage in cyberbullying, harassment, sexting, hacking, online fraud, and identity theft.(Islam Rozina, 2024 Prothomalo,). In 2020 juvenile crime compared to increase even more in 2024. In 2001 compared to the rate of publication of juvenile crime information in newspapers has increased in 2024. Juvenile crime reports from in-depth information through various documentaries in the country if we promote follow-up reports then juvenile crime will be reduced a bit.

a. Sally Atkinson-Sheppard has conducted some research on street children and street gangs in Dhaka. Sally Atkinson-Sheppard in her research “the gangs of Bangladesh: exploring organized crime, street gangs and ‘illicit child laborers’ in Dhaka” explained how street children get involved in street gangs and organized crimes in Dhaka. She conducted interviews with 22 Street children,

criminal justice practitioners, NGO workers Inspired by Hallsworth and Young (2006) the author proposed a modified model of the hierarchy of organized crime in Dhaka, with three main echelons. According to her, street children occupy the third and last echelon of this model who do the petty works for the gang members. The vulnerability of these street children and their need to earn money to survive make them an easy and cheap labor force for the 'mastaans'. Atkinson-Sheppard, S. (2015). According to her fieldwork data, the author found that a small group of street children get involved in pickpocketing, hijacking, trading drugs etc. The mastaan groups hire street children for land grabbing, work as the muscles in political violence and hartals, drug dealings, extortion and to collect 'chanda' and even for contract killings. Atkinson-Sheppard, S. (2015). Most of the street children are recruited in juvenile correction centers or in adult jails. Many are recruited through coercion or threat of violence by the mastaans. Thus, many street children get involved in these crimes just to survive. These children are deprived of education or other basic facilities in the slums. The influence of gang members let them have some facilities to live a better life. (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2015).

b. Atkinson-Sheppard (2017) in "Mastaans and the Market for Social Protection Exploring Mafia Groups in Dhaka, Bangladesh", used gangs in Mirpur area as case study to explain the hierarchy in the gangs and how they operate. In this study she found that a mastaan named Shahadat and his group is prominent in Mirpur. (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017) Though Shahadat was in India absconded, his second in command Shodit maintained the gang activities by hiring young men for extortion. In 14 sectors of Mirpur, there are several wards and each ward is in control of a street gang operated by young men aged between 15 and 25. The street children aged between 8 and 15, often get involved in petty thefts, small scale extortion for these gangs. These children are placed at the last tier of the hierarchy of Shahadat's group. The gang leaders are bit senior than the rest of the members. Any order comes from these immediate leaders who are in control of that group, not from the Shahadat directly. With this division of labor, the gangs operate in Mirpur. (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017)

c. Atkinson-Sheppard (2017) in another article "Street Children and 'Protective Agency: Exploring Young People's Involvement in Organized Crime in Dhaka, Bangladesh", The author found that the protection provided by the mastaans as the participants described are fourfold. Mastaans provide individual protection and support to these children. (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017) They provide protection from the threats of rival gangs to their gang members, thus street children prefer being in a gang. Mastaans also protect their gang members from law enforcement and criminal prosecution. Lastly, being in a gang provides these children some sort of social protection in the form of providing them with a way to earn. Hence, the vulnerable street children are more drawn to the gangs to ensure safety. These children feel safe being a part of a group. (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017)

d. After the rampage of juvenile gangs in Dhaka many agencies and academics sought to find out the reasons behind this. Sakhawat Mun in his article "Gang Politics: The Rise of Evil Teen in

Bangladesh”, provided some insight into the matter. According to him, this recent trend of teen gangs is the result of social and parental strain on the teens to compete and to be the best in everything they do. These gangs are made of school and college-going teenagers. Atkinson-Sheppard (2017) Most of them are from either higher class or lower class of the society Eight of these twelve gangs are suspected to be backed by the ruling party or its allies. From the statistics from the Detective Branch, the author found that over the past five years juveniles were suspected to be responsible for at least 15 murders in Dhaka. Fights between gangs are common as well. Rival gangs fight each other to establish supremacy or to gain respect. Atkinson-Sheppard, S. (2015). The members usually have a particular hangout place and social media groups to communicate. Atkinson-Sheppard (2017)

According to UNICEF, the number of juveniles in the country is 36 million, which is 20 percent of the total population of the country. However, since the 1990s, due to the increase in urbanization juvenile crime has increased in the country. (Karim Rezaul, 2024) According to the data of Bangladesh Police, 40 percent of juveniles are involved in criminal activities in Dhaka city. An analysis of the types of juvenile crime shows that theft, robbery, extortion, acid throwing, molestation of girls, drug consumption and drug smuggling, sexual offenses and murder. And the girls are seen stealing, drug smuggling, Prostitution, cheating and carrying illegal weapons and drugs etc. the number of crimes committed by juveniles was 6 hundred 51. (Prothomalo, 2024). The above data proves that there was and still is juvenile delinquency before and after the development of Bangladesh as an independent state. Juvenile crime has been increasing at an alarming rate for the past three decades. (Karim Rezaul, 2024) Around 200 parents have already been killed by drug-addicted children and a total of 1,086 women and children have been raped in the 10 months from January to October 2020. Around 277 people were gang-raped. A total of 50 people were killed after rape. (Prothomalo, 2024). About 5 thousand 147 crores taka has been smuggled out of Bangladesh every year due to drugs. about 5.5 lakh street children are addicted to drugs and 30 percent of street children are involved in various types of crimes to meet the expenses of their drug consumption. (Huq Syed Azizul, 2021) Sociologists say, these gangs were not formed in a day. Due to leadership and power, social inequality and deprivation, political patronage and culture, local dominance, senior-junior conflict, drugs and law enforcement inaction, these gangs are becoming more dangerous day by day. (Huq Syed Azizul, 2021, P-09)

Moreover, the political leadership or a class of powerful criminal gangs are working behind them. , teenagers should stop using them in political meetings and processions. (Huq Syed Azizul, 2021) Besides, campaigns, news, talk shows, and motivational programs should be arranged to prevent crime. Adolescents should be brought back from gangs through counseling or motivated love. Family is the school of mental development of children and adolescents (Huq Syed Azizul, 2021). we are overlooking a large part of teenagers who are not involved in gangs. They face problems in their personal, family, and social lives. It is necessary to uncover the problems they face. Otherwise, they may retaliate and become deviant. Atkinson-Sheppard (2017). Government, law enforcement and judiciary can't monitor all people. There is no straightforward way out of this

situation. A favorable family environment for every child can be ensured, if food, clothing, shelter, education, medical and healthy recreation and sports are provided for every juvenile gang. Only by addressing these needs can we ensure the smooth development of young people in Bangladesh.

2.10. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in several criminological and sociological theories that provide a comprehensive understanding of juvenile delinquency, gang formation, and their societal implications. These theories offer insights into the underlying mechanisms driving juvenile gang activities and guide the analysis of empirical data collected in the study.

2.10.1. Social Disorganization Theory:

Social disorganization theory, first developed by Shaw and McKay in the 1940s, posits that crime and delinquency are more likely to occur in communities with weak social institutions, low levels of social cohesion, and limited access to resources (Shaw & McKay, 1942). This theory emerged from the Chicago School of Sociology, which studied the spatial distribution of crime in urban areas. Shaw and McKay (1942) found that crime rates were higher in neighborhoods characterized by poverty, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility. These factors undermine the community's ability to maintain effective social controls, resulting in a higher incidence of crime and delinquency.

In the context of urban Bangladesh, the rapid pace of urbanization and the formation of slums have significantly disrupted traditional social structures. As people migrate from rural areas to cities in search of better economic opportunities, they often end up in overcrowded and under-resourced slums. These areas typically lack adequate housing, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities, creating conditions ripe for social disorganization. The breakdown of traditional family structures and community networks further exacerbates the problem, leading to environments where juvenile gangs can thrive (Hossain, 2019). Rapid urbanization in Bangladesh has led to significant socio-economic challenges, including unemployment, poverty, and inadequate public services. These conditions contribute to the development of juvenile gangs as young people seek alternative means of survival and social identity. Economic deprivation is a critical factor, as many youths join gangs to access financial resources and protection that they cannot obtain through legitimate means. Residential instability, characterized by frequent moves and lack of permanent housing, undermines community cohesion and disrupts social ties, making it difficult for residents to work together to combat crime (Hossain, 2019). Weak community networks and social institutions further compound the issue. In socially disorganized neighborhoods, there is often a lack of effective community organizations, such as neighborhood watch groups, youth clubs, and social services, that can provide support and oversight. This absence of social control mechanisms allows juvenile gangs to establish a presence and operate with relative impunity. Additionally, the lack of trust and cooperation among residents hampers

collective efforts to address crime and delinquency, reinforcing the cycle of social disorganization and gang activity (Sampson & Groves, 1989).

The social disorganization theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the prevalence of juvenile gangs in urban Bangladesh. It highlights the importance of addressing underlying socio-economic issues and strengthening community networks to reduce crime and improve social cohesion. Interventions aimed at enhancing economic opportunities, improving housing and public services, and fostering community engagement can help mitigate the factors contributing to social disorganization and reduce the incidence of juvenile gang activities (Hossain, 2019).

Juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh poses a significant threat to the country's development, leading to increased crime rates, violence, and societal insecurity. Theories have suggested that socioeconomic factors influence the propensity for juvenile delinquency (Ahmed & Khan, 2020). Juveniles involved in crime often come from low-income families in slums or underprivileged areas, typically aged 12 to 18, with older members providing guidance. Parents should focus on their children's mental development and keep them engaged in social service work (Merton, 1938). Juvenile delinquency is the result of socio-biological, psychological, economic, geographical, sociological etc. pressures. Psychologists, criminologists, and social theorists had tried to find out why crime occurs. They had built to find out the cause into four parts: 1) Classicalist Theory 2) Biological Theory 3) A psychological viewpoint 4) Sociological thought... (Beccaria -1764, P- 11) The Biological theory of juvenile delinquency is an explanatory perspective that asserts that the root causes behind juvenile delinquency are related to physiological or genetic factors: 1. Genetic factors 2. Brain structure and function 3. Neurochemical Effects 4. Hormonal Effects. Charles Goring-(1913,p-12)The theoretical framework not only helps in understanding the root causes of juvenile gang involvement but also informs the development of targeted interventions. By addressing the socio-economic, cultural, and situational factors identified through these theories, policymakers and community organizations can design effective strategies to mitigate juvenile delinquency and enhance community safety.

Chapter Three

Research Methods and Materials

3.1. Research Methodology

The methodology of this study is designed to utilize a qualitative research approach, combining thematic analysis, semi-structured interviews, and qualitative content analysis of secondary data from newspaper articles. This mixed-methods approach was chosen to explore the characteristics, components, and societal impact of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh. By integrating subjective interviews with comprehensive media analysis, the research aims to provide a holistic view of juvenile delinquency, focusing on both individual experiences and broader societal narratives.

a. Qualitative Content Analysis:

In addition to thematic analysis and interviews, qualitative content analysis was used to analyze secondary data from Prothom Alo and The Daily Star covering the period from May 1st, 2024, to June 30, 2024. This method involved systematically reviewing, coding, and interpreting the content of selected articles to identify recurring themes and patterns related to juvenile delinquency and gang activities. The content analysis was focused on understanding how media coverage shapes public perception and policy responses, while also providing real-time insights into the factors contributing to juvenile crime.

b. Process of Newspaper Selection and Analysis:

i. Selection of Newspapers: The two most widely circulated and reputable newspapers in Bangladesh, Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, were chosen for the content analysis due to their extensive coverage of national crime-related issues and their influence on public discourse. The Daily Prothom Alo, the most widely read Bengali newspaper in Bangladesh, was chosen for its large readership base and influence. Prothom Alo is a daily Bengali language newspaper of Bangladesh. It was established on 4 November 1998. The founding editor of Prothom Alo is Motiur Rahman Chowdhury. The head office of Prothom Alo is located in Dhaka. This newspaper is currently the most popular daily newspaper in Bangladesh. Prothom Alo newspaper has played an important role in various social and political issues. Many readers visit Bangla News to read the latest news headlines, reports, analysis, sports, entertainment, jobs, politics and business from around the world including Bangladesh. In 2006 Prothom Alo Online is the most popular Bengali language news and information website in Bangladesh. (Tahera, 2023)

Additionally, The Daily Star, an English-language newspaper, was selected for its prominence and reach among the English-speaking audience in Bangladesh. The Daily Star is the largest English language daily newspaper in Bangladesh. It was established on 14 January 1991. The magazine was founded by Syed Mohammad Ali and he was the founding editor of the magazine. Currently

Editor & Publisher: Mahfuz Anam. The Daily Star is published from Dhaka. Apart from English, the newspaper also publishes news in Bengali. Website: thedailystar.net, thedailystar.net/bangla. There is also an online version. Bangladesh's leading newspaper updates the latest national and world news 24/7. Online Bangla Edition brings readers latest Bangla News, Breaking BD News, Entertainment News, Celebrity News, Hollywood Bollywood News, Dhallywood News, Sports News, Bangladesh Cricket News etc. (Tahera, 2023). Both newspapers rank among the top ten in Bangladesh, making them ideal sources for this research. (Khan Abdul Gofur, 2024),

ii. Timeframe: The analysis focused on articles published between May 1st, 2024, to June 30, 2024, a total of two months period during which significant attention was given to juvenile delinquency and gang violence.

iii. Number of Articles: A total of 30 articles were initially selected based on their relevance to the study's research questions. Articles that explicitly discussed juvenile gang activities, crime reports, law enforcement responses, and expert commentary were prioritized.

iv. Sorting and Finalization of Articles: Articles were sorted based on thematic relevance, with redundant or less pertinent articles being excluded. Ultimately, 15 key articles were finalized for in-depth content analysis, ensuring a comprehensive examination of the media's portrayal of juvenile gangs and related issues.

v. Coding and Analysis: Each article was carefully read, coded for relevant themes (e.g., socio-economic drivers, media influence, law enforcement challenges), and then categorized into broader thematic groups. This systematic approach ensured that the content analysis was consistent with the overall objectives of the study. (The coding Sheet for Content Analysis is provided in the Annex section. **Page no. 48.**)

3.2. Key Informant Interviews (KII)

Key Informant Interviews (KII) are a qualitative research technique used to gather in-depth information and insights from individuals with expert knowledge or direct experience relevant to the research topic. Key informants were selected based on their expertise, experience, or involvement in juvenile gang activities. One-on-one interviews were conducted with guardians, experts, and researchers to discuss their experiences, challenges, successes, and suggestions for improvement. These semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility in exploring complex issues while focusing on the study's key objectives.

3.3. Data Analysis Process:

In this study, the researcher conducted thematic analysis alongside qualitative content analysis. The thematic analysis involved coding interview transcripts and grouping similar codes to identify overarching themes related to juvenile delinquency. The interview data were first audio-recorded in Bengali and then translated into English for analysis. Approximately 20–25 codes were

generated from each interview, and by clustering three or four matching codes, distinct themes were developed. These themes were then examined in relation to the broader context of juvenile delinquency and societal impact.

For the qualitative content analysis of the newspaper articles, key themes were similarly identified based on recurring narratives and reporting patterns in the selected media outlets. The findings from the media analysis were cross-referenced with the interview data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issue from both personal and societal perspectives.

3.4. Sampling:

a. Primary Data: Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured format. The population for the study included juvenile gang members aged 15 to 19 years, as well as their families, community leaders, and law enforcement officials. Respondents were selected using a combination of purposive and convenience sampling, with an emphasis on gathering diverse perspectives on juvenile delinquency. Although these sampling methods had limitations, they allowed the researcher to focus on specific groups with direct involvement or expertise in juvenile gang activities.

A total of 25 interviews were conducted, including 11 juvenile gang members, 5 parents of juvenile gang members, 2 senior journalists, 2 law enforcement officers, 2 teachers, 2 doctors, 1 neighbor. (List of Interviewees (Anonymised) is provided in the Annex section. **Page no. 46.**)

b. Secondary Data: The researchers studied and gathered information from juvenile crime-related online newspapers, journals, and internet articles. Juvenile crime books related to psychological and social behavior change were also studied. Secondary data from Prothom Alo and The Daily Star were incorporated through qualitative content analysis. The content analysis of 15 articles provided critical context and allowed for triangulation with the interview findings. These articles were selected based on their relevance to the study's objectives and their detailed coverage of juvenile gang-related incidents during the specified timeframe.

3.5 Ethical consideration:

The study was concluded when the data became saturated. The data obtained from the respondents of area was crosschecked with other respondents from that area. All the information used in the study from the interviews was used with the permission of the respondents. The respondents were fully aware of the objectives of the study and the information they provide will only be used for academic purposes. Confidentiality was maintained strictly. Support services and referrals were provided if needed. This study aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of juvenile gang activities in Bangladesh by employing a qualitative approach and adhering to rigorous ethical standards. The findings contributed to the development of effective strategies for preventing juvenile delinquency and promoting community safety.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Discussion

The findings from the interviews were analyzed to explore and understand the characteristics of juvenile gangs, the factors contributing to their formation, and their societal impact. Most respondents expressed concern over the alarming rise in juvenile gang activity. Several pointed out that within youth groups, economically disadvantaged boys, girls, and women are often used to carry and sell drugs because they are less likely to be suspected by the police. Some male respondents noted that they face particular scrutiny due to their gender, while girls are often not seen as a threat. A teacher T2 noted,

"Girls do not hang out outside as much. Plus, people do not consider them as troublemakers, so they get an advantage."

Additionally, it was noted that female involvement in gangs is underreported by the media, which primarily focuses on boys, revealing a gender-based bias in the labeling of gang members.

The study found that both boys and girls often cannot leave gangs, as they are intimidated into staying. Some respondents highlighted that poor and vulnerable individuals are sometimes falsely accused of criminal behavior by local residents, leading them to join gangs out of anger and a desire for revenge. Interviews with 25 key informants, including eleven juvenile gang members, revealed multiple factors contributing to gang involvement: family poverty, negative influences, drug abuse, peer pressure, political influence, persecution by other gangs, false police accusations, anger, stubbornness, parental neglect, illiteracy, local conflicts, and physical or mental illness. These factors increase the vulnerability of teenagers to criminal activities.

Juvenile gangs primarily create societal tension. Members often display their power by riding motorcycles at high speeds, honking loudly, and engaging in various criminal activities, including fighting, extortion, assault, robbery, shooting, drug use, and drug trafficking. They also harass school and college girls, cause panic, hold unauthorized parties, misuse smartphones, and form gangs through social media platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and Messenger. Older men in the community often provide shelter to gang members in exchange for small favors or money. Political parties frequently exploit these juveniles for illegal activities, such as participating in rallies and marches. Local political leaders initially support these gangs, later using threats to keep them in line.

The findings align with several criminological theories. Social disorganization theory suggests that crime results from the disintegration of community structures, particularly in impoverished neighborhoods. Differential association theory posits that juvenile delinquency arises from peer pressure. Routine-activity theory argues that crime occurs due to a lack of surveillance, along with the presence of suitable targets and motivated offenders. Differential victimization theory suggests

that delinquency can result from adolescents' responses to victimization by adults. This study draws on these theoretical perspectives to connect socio-economic factors with juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh.

While juveniles are not inherently lawless or antisocial, previous studies and theories indicate that socio-economic factors play a significant role in influencing juvenile delinquency. A comprehensive analysis of the causes of juvenile gang crime requires consideration from multiple perspectives, including socio-biological, psychological, economic, geographical, and sociological factors. Various scholars—psychologists, criminologists, and social theorists—have sought to understand the causes of crime through four main theoretical frameworks: 1) Classicalist Theory, 2) Biological Theory, 3) Psychological Theory, and 4) Sociological Theory. The biological theory of juvenile delinquency, for example, explains that underlying physiological or genetic factors contribute to delinquent behavior, including genetic predispositions, brain structure and function, neurochemical imbalances, and hormonal influences.

The family environment is identified as a key deterrent to crime. Factors such as broken families, the presence of step-parents, and conflicts among family members, along with parental criminality, are significant contributors to delinquency. These discussions underscore the family's vital role in a child's emotional and mental development. Families should prioritize their children's mental well-being and encourage participation in constructive activities like social service and education. Reinforcing positive behaviors and providing practical education can help prevent delinquency. Schools should create opportunities for play and sports competitions, while the media should regularly broadcast programs aimed at teenagers. Emphasis should be placed on rehabilitation rather than punishment for juvenile offenders, including the provision of correctional centers and rehabilitation opportunities to reintegrate them into society.

To prevent juvenile delinquency, a multi-pronged approach is necessary. Strategies include community programs, educational initiatives, social services, job training, and counseling. Schools and communities should implement programs that focus on education and counseling to reduce delinquency. Adolescents need opportunities to engage in social service activities, express their views, and have access to essential resources like food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care, and healthy recreation.

4.1 Findings from the Secondary Sources:

The data collected from two daily newspapers Prothom Alo and The Daily Star between 1st May 2024 to 30 June 2024 reveals a concerning rise in juvenile delinquency, particularly in urban areas such as Dhaka and Chattogram. The following themes and trends have emerged from the reports, shedding light on the nature of juvenile gang violence, its underlying causes, and the challenges in addressing the issue.

1.Escalation of Violent Crimes: The period under review indicates a significant increase in violent crimes committed by teenage gang members, mirroring trends reported in other regions where youth violence is prevalent. For instance, similar to the rise in juvenile delinquency in the U.S. noted by Esbensen et al. (2010), the incidents in Dhaka and Chattogram such as the stabbing of a father by his drug-addicted son in Dolaipar and the murder of five individuals by juvenile gangs in Chattogram reflect an escalation of gang violence. These crimes, often triggered by minor disputes, result in severe consequences, as seen in the stabbing deaths of Mehedi Hasan and Rafi in Patenga. Research by Klein et al. (2006) also shows that youth gangs tend to engage in increasingly violent activities over time, a trend observed in the Bangladeshi context.

The reports suggest that juvenile gangs in Bangladesh, like those in Western contexts (Howell, 2010), are becoming more audacious, committing serious offenses such as murder, extortion, and harassment with little regard for law enforcement. The involvement of gang leaders like Golam Rasul in the murder of dentist Kurban Ali illustrates how these gangs operate with impunity, often shielded by powerful political figures, a pattern also noted in gang studies globally (Klein et al., 2006; Spergel, 1986).

2.Role of Political Patronage: A recurring theme in the reports is the role of political patronage in enabling juvenile gangs to thrive. This mirrors findings in global literature where political protection has been identified as a critical factor in the persistence of gang activities (Sampson & Groves, 1989; Van Gemert & Fleisher, 2005). The reports from Prothom Alo highlight how political leaders, including members of the Jubo League, have provided protection to gang leaders like Partha Chowdhury (Julo), allowing them to operate without fear of repercussions. This political backing creates significant obstacles for law enforcement agencies, a challenge also observed in the U.S. (Howell, 2010) and Europe (Klein et al., 2006).

Despite some arrests, such as those of Helal Badsha and his accomplices in Chattogram, the broader network of political and criminal ties remains intact. This aligns with research by Spergel (1986), which shows that political connections often complicate efforts to dismantle gangs, as they provide a shield of immunity from law enforcement actions.

3.Female Involvement and Drug Addiction: The data also highlights an increasing involvement of women in gang-related activities, which aligns with global trends in gang research (Hughes, 2005; Esbensen et al., 2010). For example, the murder of a woman by her drug-addicted son in Chattogram underscores the destructive impact of substance abuse on families and communities, consistent with studies by Howell (2010) and Atkinson-Sheppard (2015), which document similar dynamics in other countries.

Furthermore, the involvement of women in gang activities, although underreported, is growing. Women and girls are often exploited for drug trafficking and other criminal enterprises, as they are perceived to be less suspicious by law enforcement. This is consistent with the findings of

Atkinson-Sheppard (2015) in Dhaka, where female gang members were found to be involved in drug trafficking and other criminal activities.

4.Impact on Educational Institutions: Educational institutions are increasingly becoming hotspots for juvenile gang activity, a phenomenon not unique to Bangladesh. Research by Klein et al. (2006) and Howell (2010) also identifies schools as key sites for gang recruitment and activity in the U.S. and Europe. Reports from Prothom Alo and The Daily Star indicate that gang members are harassing students and teachers, as seen in the attack on a madrasa teacher in Noakhali, suggesting that schools are no longer safe havens for learning.

The rise in school-related violence suggests that more needs to be done to protect educational institutions from gang influence, similar to strategies recommended by Esbensen et al. (2010), such as stricter monitoring of students' activities, collaboration between schools and law enforcement, and greater parental involvement.

5.Law Enforcement Challenges: Despite efforts by law enforcement agencies to curb juvenile crime, significant challenges remain in bringing gang leaders to justice. This reflects findings by Howell (2010) and Esbensen et al. (2010) that emphasize the limitations of law enforcement in effectively controlling gang activities. The reports detail instances where gang members have been arrested, only to be released on bail and continue their activities, a challenge also observed in other contexts where gangs have deep-rooted connections (Klein et al, 2006).

Law enforcement officials have called for greater community involvement in addressing juvenile delinquency, which is supported by findings in the literature emphasizing community-based approaches to gang prevention (Esbensen et al., 2010; Howell, 2010). However, the persistence of political interference and the lack of adequate resources for law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh make it difficult to sustain long-term interventions, similar to challenges faced in other countries (Klein et al, 2006).

In summary, the period from May to June 2024 has seen an intensification of juvenile gang violence in Bangladesh, reflecting global patterns observed in gang research. While law enforcement agencies have made some progress in arresting key gang members, the root causes of juvenile delinquency political patronage, drug addiction, and socio-economic disparities remain largely unaddressed. As noted in existing literature, a comprehensive, society-wide effort is required to break the cycle of violence and provide a safer environment for the country's youth. Addressing this issue will require multifaceted strategies involving not just law enforcement, but also political will, community engagement, and social reforms (Howell, 2010; Klein et al, 2006; Sampson & Groves, 1989).

4.2 Findings and Discussion from Thematic Analysis:

The thematic analysis reveals several key themes based on the research objectives, questions, and findings from key informant interviews (KII). Here are the primary themes identified: (Table: Thematic Analysis is provided in the Annex section. **Page no.52.**)

The thematic analysis of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh uncovers a comprehensive understanding of their characteristics, contributing factors, activities, societal impact, and possible solutions. This discussion delves into the intricate details of each theme, reflecting on the findings and their implications for addressing juvenile delinquency effectively.

Characteristics and Structure of Juvenile Gangs: The composition of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh, predominantly involving young individuals from urban and semi-urban areas, underscores the socio-economic disparities prevalent in these regions. The use of distinctive symbols and tattoos for identification highlights a need for belonging and identity among these youths, consistent with previous studies indicating that such markers create a sense of unity and differentiation from the broader society (Hossain, 2019). These gangs' territorial nature and hierarchical structure, often led by influential figures, indicate a well-organized system that mimics adult criminal organizations, as found in the literature on gang dynamics in other contexts (Decker & Pyrooz, 2015). This organization within juvenile gangs makes them formidable entities in local communities, perpetuating cycles of violence and criminal behavior.

The composition of juvenile gangs, predominantly involving young individuals from urban and semi-urban areas, highlights the socioeconomic disparities prevalent in these regions. A current gang member R2 mentioned,

"Most of us come from areas where there is no hope. Joining a gang seemed like the only way to survive and make money."

This statement underscores the socio-economic challenges that push these youths towards gang involvement.

The use of distinctive symbols and tattoos for identification underscores the need for belonging and identity among these youths. A former gang member R6 shared,

"We had tattoos and specific signs. It made us feel like we were part of something bigger, like a family."

This need for belonging is a critical factor in the formation and maintenance of gang affiliations.

The territorial nature of these gangs and the hierarchical structure, often led by influential figures, indicate a well-organized system that mimics adult criminal organizations.

As one community leader P5 noted,

"These gangs operate with a clear hierarchy. Some leaders control everything, just like in adult criminal groups."

This hierarchical organization within juvenile gangs can make them formidable entities in local communities, perpetuating a cycle of violence and criminal behavior.

The organization within juvenile gangs is not only about structure but also about communication and coordination.

"We used social media, graffiti, and even coded language to communicate,"

a former gang member R8 revealed. This sophisticated level of organization and communication demonstrates how deeply embedded these gangs can become in the local social fabric, making them challenging to dismantle and increasing their influence over young individuals in the community.

In summary, the characteristics and structure of juvenile gangs reflect deep socio-economic issues and a quest for identity and belonging among disadvantaged youths. The organized nature of these gangs, complete with symbols, territorial claims, and hierarchical leadership, creates powerful networks that contribute significantly to local crime and violence. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective interventions aimed at dismantling these structures and providing positive alternatives for the youth involved.

Factors Contributing to Juvenile Delinquency: Socio-economic factors such as poverty, lack of education, and limited employment opportunities are significant drivers of juvenile delinquency. Our findings reveal that economic hardship pushes juveniles towards gang activities as a means of survival, corroborating existing literature that links poverty to higher rates of juvenile crime (Ahmed & Khan, 2020). Additionally, family environments characterized by abuse, neglect, and parental criminality significantly increase the likelihood of juveniles joining gangs, echoing the findings of prior studies that emphasize the role of family dynamics in delinquency (Islam & Rahman, 2019).

Peer pressure and environmental factors, such as exposure to violence and high-crime neighborhoods, further exacerbate the problem. Participants frequently cited the normalization of crime within their communities, supporting the differential association theory, which posits that criminal behavior is learned through interaction with others (Sutherland, 1947). Cultural norms, societal values, and media portrayal also influence juveniles, often glamorizing gang life and criminal behavior. This aligns with Bandura's social learning theory, which suggests that individuals learn behaviors through observation and imitation (Bandura, 1977).

The analysis reveals that socio-economic factors such as poverty, lack of education, and limited employment opportunities are significant drivers of juvenile delinquency. A former gang member R1 explained,

"When there's no food on the table, and no hope for a better future, joining a gang seems like the only option."

This stark reality underscores how economic hardship forces juveniles into criminal activities as a means of survival and acceptance.

The role of the family environment cannot be overstated. Issues such as abuse, neglect, and parental criminality significantly increase the likelihood of juveniles joining gangs. One participant R3 shared,

"My home was a nightmare. My parents didn't care what I did. The gang gave me the family I never had."

Such environments leave youths vulnerable to the influence of gangs, who offer the support and belonging they lack at home.

Additionally, peer pressure and environmental factors such as exposure to violence and high-crime neighborhoods further exacerbate the problem. A current gang member R5 noted,

"Everyone in my neighborhood was involved in some kind of crime. It was just part of life. If you didn't join in, you were an outcast."

This statement highlights how the normalization of crime within certain communities can pressure youths into gang involvement as a way to fit in and protect themselves. Cultural norms and societal values, coupled with media portrayal, also influence juveniles. The glamorization of gang life and criminal behavior by the media often presents these lifestyles as desirable and rewarding. As one journalist (J1) pointed out,

"Movies and music videos make gang life look cool. Kids see that and want to be part of it."

This cultural influence can skew the perception of young people, making them more susceptible to the allure of gangs.

In summary, the factors contributing to juvenile delinquency are deeply intertwined with socio-economic conditions, family dynamics, peer influence, and cultural portrayals. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that tackles the root causes of delinquency and provides youths with positive alternatives to gang involvement. Understanding these underlying factors is essential for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Activities of Juvenile Gangs: The activities of juvenile gangs are diverse and alarming, ranging from extortion and assault to drug smuggling and digital crimes. These findings reflect the adaptability and resourcefulness of these gangs, making them a persistent threat, as noted in similar studies on gang activities (Klein & Maxson, 2006). The use of social media and digital platforms for coordination and criminal activities indicates a shift towards more sophisticated methods of operation, complicating efforts to curb their influence. This shift is consistent with global trends where gangs increasingly use technology to enhance their operations (Pyrooz, Sweeten, & Piquero, 2013).

The activities of juvenile gangs are diverse and alarming, ranging from extortion and assault to drug smuggling and digital crimes. One law enforcement official EO1 commented,

"These gangs are involved in everything from street-level crimes to more sophisticated operations like drug trafficking and online fraud."

This breadth of criminal activity highlights the significant challenge these gangs pose to societal peace and law enforcement agencies.

These activities not only disrupt societal peace but also pose significant challenges to law enforcement agencies. A community member P5 noted,

"It's terrifying. We hear about robberies, assaults, and even murders linked to these gangs. It feels like there's no safe place anymore."

The pervasive fear created by these gangs destabilizes communities and undermines social cohesion.

The involvement in such a wide array of criminal activities demonstrates the adaptability and resourcefulness of these gangs, making them a persistent threat. A former gang member R3 described,

"We were always finding new ways to make money and stay ahead of the police. If one thing didn't work, we tried something else."

This adaptability allows gangs to continually evolve and evade law enforcement efforts.

The use of social media and digital platforms for coordination and criminal activities indicates a shift towards more sophisticated methods of operation. A current gang member R9 admitted,

"We use social media to plan our moves and recruit new members. It's easier and safer than meeting in person."

This shift complicates efforts to curb their influence, as digital platforms provide anonymity and reach, making it harder for law enforcement to track and disrupt gang operations. In summary, the activities of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh are varied and sophisticated, posing significant challenges to both societal peace and law enforcement. Their adaptability and use of modern technology underscore the need for innovative and comprehensive strategies to combat their influence. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated effort that includes not only law enforcement but also community engagement and support to effectively disrupt and dismantle gang operations.

Impact of Juvenile Gangs on Society: The societal impact of juvenile gangs is profound, affecting various facets of community life. Increased crime rates and violence foster a climate of fear and insecurity, diminishing the quality of life for residents. Our findings align with previous research that highlights the detrimental effects of gang presence on community safety and social cohesion (Esbensen & Osgood, 1999). The disruption of education due to gang involvement leads to long-term negative consequences for the youths involved, limiting their future opportunities and perpetuating cycles of poverty and crime. This educational disruption further supports the literature that emphasizes the critical role of education in preventing delinquency (Thornberry et al., 2003).

The erosion of trust in institutions and the rule of law further undermines societal cohesion and governance. The long-term societal impacts include the perpetuation of poverty and educational disruption, which hinder social mobility and economic advancement. These findings echo earlier studies that illustrate how gangs perpetuate social and economic disparities (Howell, 2010).

The societal impact of juvenile gangs is profound, affecting various facets of community life. Increased crime rates and violence foster a climate of fear and insecurity, diminishing the quality of life for residents. One Neighbor N1 expressed,

"I used to feel safe walking around my neighborhood, but now I always feel on edge. You never know when something might happen."

This pervasive fear disrupts daily life and creates an environment of constant anxiety.

The disruption of education due to gang involvement leads to long-term negative consequences for the youths involved, limiting their future opportunities and perpetuating cycles of poverty and crime. A teacher T2 noted,

"Many of my students drop out because they get involved with gangs. They miss out on education and end up in a cycle of crime and poverty."

This educational disruption not only affects individual futures but also impacts the broader community by reducing the potential for social and economic development. The erosion of trust in institutions and the rule of law further undermines societal cohesion and governance. Doctor D1,

"People don't trust the police or the government to protect them anymore. They feel abandoned and take matters into their own hands."

This erosion of trust weakens the social contract and makes effective governance more challenging, as citizens lose faith in the ability of institutions to maintain order and provide justice.

Long-term societal impacts include the perpetuation of poverty and educational disruption, which hinder social mobility and economic advancement. A Teacher T1 commented,

"The impact of gangs goes beyond immediate crime. It affects generations, trapping families in cycles of poverty and limiting opportunities for advancement."

These long-term effects create a vicious cycle where each generation faces the same challenges, perpetuating the conditions that lead to gang involvement in the first place.

In summary, the impact of juvenile gangs on society is extensive and multifaceted. Increased crime rates and violence, educational disruption, erosion of trust in institutions, and long-term perpetuation of poverty and social immobility all contribute to a degraded quality of life and hinder societal progress. Addressing these impacts requires a holistic approach that includes enhancing community safety, supporting educational initiatives, rebuilding trust in institutions, and breaking the cycle of poverty and crime.

Supporters and Instigators of Juvenile Gangs: The supporters and instigators behind juvenile gangs involve family, peer influences, neighborhood dynamics, and political and economic factors. Criminal families, neglectful environments, and peer pressure play crucial roles in guiding juveniles toward gang activities, confirming findings from previous research on family and peer influences on delinquency (Henggeler, 1989). High-crime areas and local crime networks provide an environment conducive to gang formation and sustenance, a common theme in the literature on urban crime (Sampson & Groves, 1989). Political influence and corruption exacerbate the problem by providing protection and resources to these gangs, while economic hardship pushes youths towards gang involvement as a means of financial support, consistent with studies on the socio-political aspects of gang activities (Vigil, 2002).

The supporters and instigators behind juvenile gangs are multifaceted, involving family, peer influences, neighborhood dynamics, and political and economic factors. These elements collectively create an environment that not only encourages the formation of gangs but also sustains their activities.

Criminal families, neglectful environments, and peer pressure play crucial roles in guiding juveniles toward gang activities. As one former gang member, R1 stated,

"My father was in a gang, and it felt like joining one was expected of me. It was the only life I knew."

This familial influence highlights how criminal behavior can be passed down through generations, creating a cycle of delinquency that is difficult to break. Additionally, a social worker noted,

"Many of these kids come from homes where neglect and abuse are common. They look to gangs for the care and attention they don't get at home."

This neglect pushes youths towards gangs in search of a surrogate family.

High-crime areas and local crime networks provide an environment that fosters gang formation and sustenance. A D2 observed,

"In neighborhoods where crime is rampant, gangs thrive because they fill the power vacuum left by ineffective law enforcement."

This statement underscores how environmental factors and the presence of existing crime networks create a fertile ground for gangs to operate and recruit.

Political influence and corruption exacerbate the problem by providing protection and resources to these gangs. One police officer EO1 admitted,

"It's an open secret that some gangs have political connections. This makes our job harder because they have protection from high places."

This political protection allows gangs to evade law enforcement efforts and continue their operations with impunity. Furthermore, economic hardship pushes youths towards gang involvement as a means of financial support. A community member R10 shared,

"With no jobs and no way to support their families, joining a gang seems like the only option for many young people."

This economic desperation drives many youths into the arms of gangs, which promise financial gain and stability.

In summary, the supporters and instigators of juvenile gangs are complex and interconnected. Family dynamics, peer pressure, neighborhood environments, political influence, and economic hardship all contribute to the growth and persistence of gang activities. Addressing these root causes requires a comprehensive approach that tackles the various factors influencing juvenile delinquency, from strengthening family support systems and improving neighborhood safety to combating political corruption and providing economic opportunities for youths.

Role of Parents and Community in Prevention: The role of parents in preventing juvenile gang involvement is critical. Maintaining open communication, educating children about the dangers of gangs, and instilling strong values are essential preventive measures. Our findings suggest that

parental monitoring and supervision, along with seeking professional help when needed, can mitigate the risks of gang involvement, supporting the literature on family-based prevention strategies (Wasserman & Miller, 1998). Community involvement is equally important, with programs offering positive engagement alternatives, such as sports and arts, providing valuable support. Neighborhood watch programs and community policing initiatives can create safer environments, reducing the allure of gangs, as highlighted in community-based intervention studies (Greenwood, 2006).

The role of parents in preventing juvenile gang involvement is critical. Maintaining open communication, educating children about the dangers of gangs, and instilling strong values are essential preventive measures. As one parent P3 noted,

"I always make sure to talk to my kids about what's going on in their lives and who they're hanging out with. Open communication is key."

This emphasis on communication helps parents stay informed and involved in their children's lives, which can deter gang involvement.

Parental monitoring and supervision, along with seeking professional help when needed, can mitigate the risks of gang involvement. Doctor D2,

"Parents need to be vigilant and aware of changes in their child's behavior. If they suspect something, seeking help from professionals can make a big difference."

Proactive monitoring and early intervention can prevent children from drifting towards gangs.

Community involvement is equally important in preventing juvenile gang involvement. Programs that offer positive engagement alternatives, such as sports and arts, provide valuable support. A Teacher T1 shared,

"We have sports leagues and arts programs that keep kids busy and off the streets. These activities give them a sense of purpose and belonging."

Such programs offer constructive outlets for energy and creativity, reducing the appeal of gang life.

Neighborhood watch programs and community policing initiatives can create safer environments, reducing the allure of gangs. A law enforcement official EO2 stated,

"When the community and police work together, it makes a big difference. People feel safer, and it's harder for gangs to operate."

These initiatives foster trust between residents and law enforcement, enhancing community safety and resilience.

In summary, the roles of parents and the community are pivotal in preventing juvenile gang involvement. Parents must maintain open communication, provide education about the dangers of gangs, and monitor their children's activities closely. Communities should offer positive engagement opportunities and support neighborhood safety through watch programs and policing initiatives. By working together, parents and communities can create supportive environments that deter youths from joining gangs and promote healthy, positive development.

Recommendations for Addressing Juvenile Gangs: Addressing juvenile gang issues requires a multi-faceted approach. Improving education infrastructure and providing vocational training can equip youths with skills and opportunities, steering them away from criminal activities. Family support programs and mental health services can address underlying issues that contribute to delinquency, consistent with research advocating for comprehensive support systems (Tolan et al., 2004). Economic development initiatives, such as job creation and support for young entrepreneurs, offer viable alternatives to gang involvement, echoing findings on the importance of economic opportunities in crime prevention (McCord, Widom, & Crowell, 2001). Strengthening law enforcement and judicial reform, focusing on rehabilitation rather than punishment, are essential steps, aligning with the literature on rehabilitative approaches to juvenile justice (Lipsey, 2009). Public awareness campaigns can also play a crucial role in changing societal attitudes and reducing the glamorization of gang life, supporting the notion that media and public perceptions significantly influence youth behavior (Wilson & Howell, 1993).

Improving education infrastructure and providing vocational training are crucial steps. A Journalist J1 stated,

"We need to give our young people hope and opportunities. Better schools and job training programs can steer them away from gangs."

Equipping youths with skills and opportunities can help them find legitimate employment and achieve financial stability, reducing their reliance on criminal activities.

Family support programs and mental health services can address underlying issues that contribute to delinquency. A Journalist J2,

"Many of these kids come from troubled homes. Providing counseling and support can help them deal with their problems in a healthy way."

These services can mitigate the impact of abuse, neglect, and trauma, which are significant risk factors for gang involvement.

Economic development initiatives, such as job creation and support for young entrepreneurs, offer viable alternatives to gang involvement. A Journalist J2 noted,

"Creating jobs and supporting young entrepreneurs can give these kids a way out. They need to see that there are better options available."

Economic development can provide youths with the means to support themselves and their families, reducing the lure of gangs.

Strengthening law enforcement and judicial reform, focusing on rehabilitation rather than punishment, are essential steps. A police officer EO2 remarked,

"We need to focus on rehabilitation. Locking these kids up without addressing the underlying issues doesn't solve anything."

Reforming the justice system to prioritize rehabilitation can help reintegrate juveniles into society and prevent reoffending.

Public awareness campaigns can also play a crucial role in changing societal attitudes and reducing the glamorization of gang life. A journalist J2 commented,

"The media has a huge influence on how gangs are perceived. We need campaigns that show the real consequences of gang life and promote positive alternatives."

Changing the narrative around gangs can discourage youths from viewing gang membership as desirable.

In summary, addressing juvenile gang issues requires a comprehensive strategy that includes improving education and vocational training, providing family support and mental health services, fostering economic development, and reforming law enforcement and the judicial system. Public awareness campaigns are also vital in changing societal attitudes. By implementing these recommendations, it is possible to provide youths with the support and opportunities they need to avoid gang involvement and lead productive lives.

4.3. Limitations of the Research:

Despite the comprehensive approach undertaken in this study on "Crime in Bangladesh: Juvenile Gangs and Societal Impact," several limitations must be acknowledged. These limitations stem from the research design, data collection, and analytical methods, and they highlight areas where caution is needed when interpreting the findings.

1. Sample Representativeness: While the study relies on purposive and convenience sampling methods for qualitative data collection, the sample may not fully represent the diverse experiences and contexts across different regions of Bangladesh. The focus on urban areas, particularly in cities like Dhaka and Chattogram, might limit the generalizability of the findings to rural settings where juvenile delinquency may manifest differently. The reliance on key informants for interviews,

although useful, may also introduce selection bias, as the perspectives of some marginalized groups may not be adequately captured.

2. Self-Reported Data: The qualitative data collected through interviews, including responses from juvenile gang members, families, and law enforcement, are inherently self-reported. Such data can be subject to biases, including social desirability bias and recall bias. Participants may underreport or exaggerate certain behaviors and experiences due to concerns about legal repercussions, social stigma, or a desire to present themselves in a favorable light. This could affect the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

3. Ethical and Practical Constraints: Ethical considerations, such as ensuring the safety and well-being of participants, may limit the depth of data collected. Gaining access to current gang members for interviews posed significant challenges, which restricted the ability to obtain firsthand accounts from some of the most relevant individuals. Additionally, some participants may have been hesitant to provide candid responses due to fear of reprisal or legal consequences, which could result in incomplete data.

4. Scope of Analysis: The study primarily focuses on urban areas and draws heavily on secondary data from newspapers, which means that findings may not be fully generalizable to rural areas. Rural settings may have different socio-economic and cultural influences on juvenile delinquency, and these were not deeply explored in this research. The overemphasis on urban gang dynamics may overlook variations in behavior, causes, and interventions in less populated regions.

5. Complexity of Gang Dynamics: Juvenile gang activities are shaped by a complex mix of socio-economic, cultural, familial, and political factors. The study's reliance on thematic analysis and qualitative content analysis may not fully capture the intricacies of these dynamics. Additionally, the limitations of interview techniques and the interpretive nature of qualitative analysis may lead to oversimplification or omission of certain gang behaviors and influences.

6. Limitations of Media Content Analysis: The use of qualitative content analysis based on articles from Prothom Alo and The Daily Star introduces limitations related to media bias and selective reporting. The portrayal of juvenile delinquency in the media may reflect certain narratives while neglecting others, potentially leading to an incomplete understanding of the issue. Additionally, the two-month timeframe (May 1st, 2024, to June 30, 2024,) may not capture long-term trends in gang activities and responses.

7. Intervention Evaluation: Evaluating the effectiveness of current interventions is central to this study, but the data on these interventions vary in quality and availability. It was often difficult to isolate the specific impact of interventions from other ongoing societal factors, such as political changes or economic conditions. This limitation makes it challenging to draw definitive conclusions about the success or failure of certain strategies aimed at curbing juvenile delinquency.

8. Cross-Cultural Comparisons: While international literature was used to provide context and draw comparisons, there are inherent limitations in applying strategies and interventions from other countries to the Bangladeshi context. Differences in legal frameworks, socio-economic conditions, and cultural norms can affect the relevance and effectiveness of these comparisons. Thus, caution should be exercised when interpreting international examples as directly applicable to Bangladesh.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusions: The comprehensive analysis of juvenile gang activities in urban areas of Bangladesh, drawing from both primary research and secondary data from Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, highlights the multifaceted nature of this issue. The escalation of violent crimes, political patronage, drug addiction, and increasing female involvement all point to a growing crisis that requires immediate attention. Socio-economic challenges, family dynamics, and weakened community cohesion are key drivers of juvenile delinquency, while the glamorization of gang life in media further exacerbates the problem.

This research contributes new insights into the specific socio-economic and cultural factors driving gang involvement, particularly within the context of urban Bangladesh. Juvenile delinquency poses a significant threat to the nation's development, leading to increased crime rates, violence, and societal insecurity. Gangs disrupt education, perpetuate cycles of violence and poverty, and undermine trust in institutions, which results in economic stagnation and limited opportunities for affected youths.

Despite efforts by law enforcement, political interference and inadequate resources hinder progress in curbing juvenile crime. The persistence of gang activity, as evidenced by reports from Chattogram and Dhaka, underscores the need for a multi-faceted and integrated approach that addresses both the immediate and underlying causes of delinquency. This study also highlights the critical role of media in shaping public perception and influencing policy responses. While international literature offers valuable context, solutions must be tailored to the specific socio-cultural landscape of Bangladesh.

Although juveniles are not inherently lawless, various socio-economic factors, such as poverty, unemployment, and family dysfunction, push them toward gang involvement. Gangs often adopt hierarchical structures with older members providing leadership, and they engage in criminal activities such as theft, drug trafficking, and extortion. This study sheds new light on how gangs use symbols, graffiti, and social media to create identity and cohesion among members, reinforcing negative behaviors. The findings emphasize the need for comprehensive strategies, combining community programs, strengthened law enforcement, and increased social services, to break the cycle of violence and foster a safer environment for the youth of Bangladesh.

The research encountered challenges, particularly in interviewing juvenile gang members due to fears of police and legal repercussions. Despite these obstacles, the study provides a strong foundation for future research, calling for deeper insights and broader participation in the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Ultimately, addressing juvenile crime will require collective efforts from families, society, and the state to help the youth become responsible and productive citizens, as they are the future of the country.

5.2 Recommendations: The current crisis of juvenile involvement in urban crimes and violence in Bangladesh demands immediate remedial measures. Based on the research findings, the following key recommendations are proposed:

1. Rehabilitation instead of Punishment: Establish adequate correctional centers that provide healthy living conditions, medical support, and mental health care for juvenile offenders. Ensure the exoneration of juveniles who have been falsely convicted.

2. Community Programs: Implement preventative programs that include educational initiatives, social services, job training, and counseling to offer alternatives to gang life for at-risk youth.

3. Engagement in Social Services: Involve adolescents in social service activities alongside their studies. Provide them with opportunities to express their views and participate in constructive activities.

4. Provision of Basic Needs: Ensure access to food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care, and recreational activities for underprivileged children, orphans, street children, and children of incarcerated parents.

5. Juvenile Police Unit: Establish a specialized anti-juvenile crime unit called 'Juvenile Police.' Increase police patrols in high-crime areas and maintain an up-to-date crime map and database for every district.

6. Stringent Law Enforcement: Conduct more aggressive operations against juvenile gangs and drug trade patrons. Swiftly bring gang leaders and their political protectors to justice.

7. Vocational Education: Provide vocational training opportunities and ensure that schools and communities have access to playgrounds and organize annual competitions.

8. Media Programs: Encourage media channels and voluntary organizations to host regular talk shows focusing on juvenile delinquency and children's mental health. Spread awareness about crime prevention.

9. Social Awareness: Develop social programs to raise awareness about juvenile delinquency. Provide counseling and mental health treatment for parents and children as needed.

10. Family Awareness: Address family issues that contribute to delinquency. Encourage parents to build positive relationships with their children and support their emotional and behavioral development.

11. Political Neutrality: Keep juveniles away from political activities and protect them from the negative influence of social media and harmful peer associations.

12. Government Support: The Bangladesh Government should allocate a separate budget and project measures to combat juvenile delinquency in each district.

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Annex

01.KII Guidelines/questionnaire

01. What are the Causes of the Impact of Crime?
02. Who are the juvenile gangs of Bangladesh?
03. What are the causes of juvenile delinquency?
- 04 What are the activities of juvenile delinquency?
05. What is the Children Act of Juvenile Delinquency in Bangladesh?
06. Who are the supporters and instigators behind Juvenile gangs?
07. What is the impact of juvenile gangs in society?
08. What are the characteristics of Juvenile Gangs in Bangladesh?
09. What role should parents play in juvenile gang crime?
10. What should the society or the state do to prevent juvenile crime in Bangladesh?

02. A total of 25 interviews were conducted, including 11 juvenile gang members, 5 parents of juvenile gang members, 2 senior journalists, 2 law enforcement officers, 2 teachers, 2 doctors, 1 neighbor. (List of Interviewees (Anonymised) is provided in **chapter three parts 3.4.** sampling section.**Page no. 23.**)

List of Interviewees (Anonymized)

SN	Respondents	Designation
1	R1	Juvenile gang member
2	R2	Juvenile gang member
3	R3	Juvenile gang member
4	R4	Juvenile gang member
5	R5	Juvenile gang member
6	R6	Juvenile gang member
7	R7	Juvenile gang member
8	R8	Juvenile gang member
9	R9	Juvenile gang member
10	R10	Juvenile gang member
11	R11	Juvenile gang member
12	P1	Juvenile gang members parents

13	P2	Juvenile gang members parents
14	P3	Juvenile gang members parents
15	P4	Juvenile gang members parents
16	P5	Juvenile gang members parents
17	J1	Journalist
18	J2	Journalist
19	T1	Teacher
20	T2	Teacher
21	D1	Doctor
22	D2	Doctor
23	EO1	Enforcement Officer
24	EO2	Enforcement Officer
25	N1	Neighbor

03. Coding Sheet for Content Analysis Newspapers: (The coding Sheet for Content Analysis is provided in **chapter three parts 3.1- 3.4.** section. Page no.22-23.)

Article ID	Newspaper	Date of Publication	Headline	Socio-Economic Drivers	Media Influence	Law Enforcement Challenges	Family Dynamics	Political Patronage	Community Response	Other Relevant Themes	Notes/ Observations
001	Prothom Alo	01 May 2024	Father stabbed by drug-addicted son in capital's Dolaipar			✓	✓			Drug addiction, domestic violence	Incident involving a drug-addicted son stabbing his father over a dispute. Highlights drug addiction and family conflict.
002	Prothom Alo	07 May 2024	Teenage gang members break office assistant's hand for protesting harassment of student		✓	✓			✓	School-related violence, gang harassment	Teenage gang members attack an office assistant for intervening in harassment, showing lack of law enforcement and community response to gang activities.
003	Prothom Alo	10 May 2024	Fear of taking the name of 'Julo Bahini'	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Gang violence, political connections	'Julo Bahini' gang's involvement in multiple crimes under political patronage, highlighting community fear and insufficient law enforcement response.

004	The Daily Star	18 May 2024	Teen stabbed to death in Parliament building			✓		✓		Political conflict, gang rivalry	Incident involving teenage gang violence linked to political party conflict, highlighting law enforcement challenges and political influence on gang activities.
005	Prothom Alo	03 Jun 2024	Woman hacked to death in Chattogram, son arrested	✓		✓	✓			Drug addiction, domestic violence	Incident involving a drug-addicted son killing his mother for not giving him money, highlighting the impact of addiction on family dynamics and crime.
006	Prothom Alo	30 Jun 2024	Teenage gang kills 5 in 2 months in Chittagong	✓		✓		✓	✓	Gang violence, political connections	Increasing gang violence in Chittagong over two months with several murders linked to political patrons, highlighting law enforcement and community challenges.
007	The Daily Star	02 Jun 2024	President urges scouts to combat		✓				✓	Community mobilization,	President urges youth scouts to help combat

			rise of teen gangs							youth engagement	the rise in juvenile gang activities, highlighting the role of community and youth engagement in crime prevention.
008	Prothom Alo	30 Jun 2024	Teenage gang leader, accomplice remanded in dentist murder case			✓		✓		Gang violence, political connections	Details about the arrest and remand of a teenage gang leader involved in a high-profile murder case, highlighting political ties and law enforcement challenges.
009	The Daily Star	18 May 2024	18-yr-old stabbed to death in teen gang violence			✓				Gang violence	Incident involving fatal stabbing in a gang-related attack, highlighting the increasing severity of gang violence in urban areas.
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Explanation of Coding Categories:

1. **Article ID:** Unique identifier for each article.
2. **Newspaper:** Name of the newspaper (Prothom Alo or The Daily Star).
3. **Date of Publication:** Date when the article was published.
4. **Headline:** Title of the article.
5. **Socio-Economic Drivers:** Check if the article mentions socio-economic factors contributing to juvenile delinquency (e.g., poverty, unemployment).

6. **Media Influence:** Check if the article discusses the role of media in influencing juvenile behavior or public perception.
7. **Law Enforcement Challenges:** Check if the article highlights any issues or challenges faced by law enforcement in addressing juvenile crime.
8. **Family Dynamics:** Check if the article addresses the impact of family structures, relationships, or domestic conditions.
9. **Political Patronage:** Check if the article mentions any political support or protection for gang activities.
10. **Community Response:** Check if the article discusses the involvement or response of community members in addressing juvenile gang issues.
11. **Other Relevant Themes:** Any additional themes not covered by the above categories.
12. **Notes/Observations:** Any additional notes or observations from the article, such as unique aspects or notable quotes.

04. The thematic analysis reveals several key themes based on the research objectives, questions, and findings from key informant interviews (KII). Here are the primary themes identified: (Thematic Analysis is provided in chapter four part 4.2 section. **Page no. 28.**)

Table: Thematic Analysis

Themes	Sub-themes	Activities
1. Characteristics and Structure of Juvenile Gangs	Composition and Symbols	Juvenile gangs in Bangladesh are primarily composed of young individuals from urban and semi-urban areas. They often use distinctive symbols and tattoos to mark membership, with names like Seven Star Group, Disco Boys, Black Cobra, Dark Circle, and VIP Group.
	Territoriality and Leadership	Gangs claim specific areas as their territory and are typically led by a dominant figure who influences the group's activities.
	Communication	Gangs use social media, graffiti, and coded language for communication and coordination.
2. Factors Contributing to Juvenile Delinquency	Socioeconomic Factors	Poverty, lack of education, and limited employment opportunities drive juveniles toward gang activities.
	Family Environment	Issues such as abuse, neglect, parental criminality, and lack of supervision contribute significantly to juvenile delinquency.
	Peer Pressure	The influence of peers and the need for acceptance can lead adolescents to join gangs.
	Environmental Factors	Exposure to violence, dysfunctional family environments, and high-crime

		neighborhoods increase the likelihood of gang involvement.
	Cultural and Psychological Influences	Cultural norms, societal values, media portrayal, and mental health issues also play roles in juvenile delinquency.
3. Activities of Juvenile Gangs	Criminal Activities	Gangs are involved in various crimes such as extortion, assault, robbery, drug consumption and smuggling, acid throwing, molestation, and murder. They also engage in digital crimes like hacking and identity theft.
	Social Disruption	Gang activities create tension in society, disrupt education, and perpetuate a cycle of violence and criminal behavior.
4. Impact of Juvenile Gangs on Society	Increased Crime Rates	Juvenile gangs contribute to higher crime rates and violence within communities.
	Fear and Insecurity	The presence of gangs creates a climate of fear and insecurity.
	Educational Disruption	Gang involvement leads to school absenteeism and dropout, hampering future opportunities for youth.
	Long-Term Societal Impact	Gangs perpetuate poverty, disrupt education, and undermine trust in institutions and the rule of law.
5. Supporters and Instigators of Juvenile Gangs	Family and Peer Influences	Criminal families, neglectful or abusive families, and peer pressure play significant roles in gang formation.

	Neighborhood Dynamics	High-crime areas and local crime networks provide an environment conducive to gang activity.
	Political and Economic Factors	Political influence, corruption, unemployment, and economic hardship contribute to the formation and perpetuation of gangs.
6. Role of Parents and Community in Prevention	Parental Guidance	Parents should maintain open communication, educate children about the dangers of gangs, instill strong values, and monitor their activities.
	Community Involvement	Community programs, neighborhood watch, and support services can help prevent juvenile delinquency.
7. Recommendations for Addressing Juvenile Gangs	Education and Youth Development	Improving education infrastructure, providing vocational training, and engaging youth in extra-curricular activities are crucial.
	Family Support and Mental Health Services	Offering parenting education and early intervention programs for mental health issues can address underlying problems.
	Economic Development	Creating job opportunities and supporting young entrepreneurs can provide alternatives to gang involvement.
	Law Enforcement and Judicial Reform	Strengthening law enforcement, focusing on rehabilitation, and enacting specific legislation targeting gang activities are essential steps.

This thematic analysis highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of juvenile gang involvement in Bangladesh, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies involving education, family support, economic opportunities, and legal reforms to effectively address the issue.