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Gang Membership among Malaysian Indian Young Adults

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Abstract

Young people involvement in gang crime is not only a problem in Western countries but also in middle and low-income countries. Globally, gangsterism has become a threat to the well-being of young adults. Therefore, the present study aims to explore the issue of gang membership, especially among Indian young adults in Kuala Garing Park, in Rawang. An in-depth interview approach was used to identify the demographic profile of the gang members and explore the risk factors that promote gang membership. The present study's findings show that the majority of the respondents were single, male, drug dealers, aged between 23 and 24 years old, and had completed their education up to lower secondary level. The findings also show that the respondents were involved in gangsterism due to various reasons such as peer influence, poor relationships with parents, financial deprivation, and a desire to gain power and esteem in society. Since gangsterism is a sophisticated and multidimensional phenomenon, it is therefore recommended that collaboration and synergy among families, schools, social support groups, and law enforcement agencies are essential to create a comprehensive approach to tackle gangsterism issues. Through early intervention, community engagement, and targeted enforcement we can work towards reducing the allure of gangs and creating safer and healthier communities for everyone.

Keywords: Young Adults, Crime, Gangsterism, Indians, Malaysia

Introduction

Gangsterism has become a global phenomenon that has existed in Western and Eastern societies for centuries. In general, gangsterism is defined as an association of three or more individuals whose members collectively identify themselves by adopting a group identity that they use to create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation (Petrus et al., 2019). As early as the 1600s, London was terrorised by a number of organised gangs such as the Mims, Hectors, Bugles, and Dead Boys; such gangs were known to smash windows, attack guards, and demolish taverns (Van Deuren et al., 2022). The gangs also fought pitched battles among themselves and dressed in coloured ribbons to indicate gang affiliation (Van Deuren et al., 2022). In the 17th and 18th centuries, English gangs wore belts and metal pins, with motifs of stars, animals, arrows, serpents, and hearts pierced by arrows (Belokurova, 2018).