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ASSESSING THE EFFICACY AND CHALLENGES OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION ACT (JJDP A) IN THE US JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) of 1974 stands as a significant federal law in the United States, aiming to establish federal standards for treating youth within the criminal and juvenile justice systems. This paper assesses the effectiveness of the JJDP A's application in the juvenile justice system while highlighting the challenges encountered during its implementation.

KEYWORDS: JJDP A, juvenile justice system, effectiveness, challenges, implementation

INTRODUCTION

The United States operates diverse and decentralized juvenile justice systems across its states and territories. The JJDP A, amended in 2018 with bipartisan support, prioritizes the protection of minors, youths, and families involved in juvenile and criminal courts through federal guidelines. This paper focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of the JJDP A's implementation while identifying challenges the government faces in executing its provisions.

LITERATURE SURVEY

Pasko (2019) highlights the JJDP A's provisions and benefits for justice-involved youths, emphasizing safeguards such as deinstitutionalization, demarcation of youth from adults, and addressing excessive minority interaction. *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act 1974* (JJDP A) is a national law of the United States that specifies safeguards for justice-involved youngsters. It is supervised by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Deinstitutionalization of status offenders (DSO), "sight and sound" demarcation of youth and adults, prison removal prohibiting the incarceration of youths in adult prisons, and excessive minority incarceration (with "incarceration" eventually revised to "contact") needing states to investigate the high prevalence of youth of color in the justice system are examples of such safeguards. The JJDP A and its amendment have benefited female youth perpetrators by reducing their incarceration for status offenses, investigating the scope and accessibility of gender-specific facilities, and addressing excessive minority interaction.

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) was passed in 1974 to address fundamental security and rehabilitation problems in the juvenile justice system. This policy has been amended six times since its inception to enhance services and safeguards for juvenile youth. Presently, the juvenile justice system lacks adequate psychological health services closely linked to prison patterns. According to research, 65 to 70 percent of young people in the justice system satisfy the criteria for a psychological well-being disorder at a percentage three times higher than the general populace. However, Abram (2016) emphasizes the necessity of mental health services in the juvenile justice system and discusses the 2015 Reauthorization Act aimed at enhancing these services. In reply to this concerning situation, the *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act of 2015 (JJDPRA)* has been presented in the Senate to improve psychological well-being services within the juvenile justice system by raising funding integrating evidence-based programs and broadening the use of society-based alternatives.

Schmitz (2017) advocates for the use of risk assessments in juvenile justice, outlining its potential to reduce expensive services while maintaining public safety. Risk assessments are increasingly being used in juvenile justice, especially in parole, to decide the probability of a youth re-offending or striking a pose of danger to public security. Adopting regular risk assessment processes can lead to a decrease in the use of expensive services, out-of-home locations, and intensive supervision while still safeguarding the public's safety by appropriately segmenting and addressing youth who are most likely to commit crimes. Nevertheless, it necessitates the use of a legitimate or evidence-based risk assessment method and sound enactment efforts, such as mentoring in risk-need-responsivity practices for case management.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The JJDP A faces challenges such as inadequate mental health services, overrepresentation of youth of color, and the need for legitimate risk assessment methods in juvenile justice.

Methodology / Approach / Results

This study integrates existing literature and employs a mixed-method approach using primary (surveys, interviews) and secondary data sources to assess the JJDP A's effectiveness. Primary data is collected through surveys and interviews conducted across various states and regions in the US.

CONCLUSION

The JJDP A holds immense significance in shaping state programs aimed at curbing juvenile crime and addressing the needs of vulnerable youth and their families. However, challenges in its implementation necessitate comprehensive reforms to ensure its effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Utilize the JJDP A to address the overrepresentation of youth of color in the justice system.



Enhance measures within the Act to reduce suicide rates among juvenile offenders, particularly those incarcerated in adult facilities.

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