INDIAN Gangsterism

A Brief Introduction

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INTRODUCTI0N

The recent police operation to go after gangsters , *of whom many were Indians*, has raised an alarm amongst the Indian community of the severity of the problem of Indian gangsterism . Especially worrisome is to read of our Indian youths, most of whom are aged between 20-30, involved in hard core gangsterism.

THE CRACKDOWN ON STATISTICS – INDIAN GANGS

The police went after criminal gangs, crime syndicates and secret societies:

The Statistics (Malaysian Insider , Sept 9 2013)

1. Number of people arrested – **5, 505.**

2. Crime involvement – *armed robbery, theft, vehicle theft, extortion, illegal activities, narcotics and secret society dealings.*

3. Total number of gang organisations – **49**

4. Out of this 49 organisations, **38 are Indian gangs** linked to gangsterism.

5. Representation of the three racial groups in these gangs:
   i.   **70% - Indians**
   ii.   **25% - Chinese**
   iii.   **4.7% - Malays**

6. Of these 49 gangs, **two gangs (04 and 08)** , both of which are Indian are the most dangerous and active.

THE HISTORY OF THE INDIAN GANGS

The Edge (Sept 3, 2013) reports of a Chinese newspaper, stating that most of these gangs stemmed from Chinese gangs, especially the more notorious ones (04, 08, 36 and 18).
It reports that the Indian gangsters were initially employed by the Chinese. But eventually the Indians took over and became more aggressive than the Chinese. It reports further that the Chinese who once ruled these secret societies have now become funders and are actively involved in the property market.

THE AGE GROUPING
It has been discovered that most of the youths who joined these gangs were aged between **20 and 30 – prime youth age.** It is also reported that 1 out of every ten Indians has some underworld background , though this has to be verified.

SOCIAL STATISTICS OF INDIANS

1. **Mortality rate** – Indians the highest number

2. **High school drop-out rate** – only 5% make it to the tertiary level.

3. **Primary school** – 1 out of every 10 Indian children not attending primary school.

4. **Alcoholism** – Indians the highest rate.

5. **Drug addiction** – Indians the highest (in proportion to the population)

6. **Prisoners** – Indians the highest (in proportion to the population)

7. **Gangs –** Indians the highest number

8. **Crimes** – 70% committed by Indians (though this has been disputed by some key Indian social scientists) , while Indians are only 7% of the total population.

9. **Beggars** – 41% are Indians

10. **Nation's corporate wealth**
    Indians – 1.5% (The figure seems to remain stagnant for years. An article appeared in the Star , November 27 , 2001 where Letchuman is reported as saying in his " Nagging Pains of Local Indians" that " …if you took Ananda Krishnan out of the equation, nearly all that equity would be gone, reduced to perhaps a pathetic 0.2%).
    Malays – 19.4%
    Chinese – 38.5%

11. **University applications** – less than 5%. It is reported that there are insufficient Indians to take up the seats in the universities. Chances of getting a place In public universities is relatively low.

12. Life expectancy – lowest life expectancy.

13. Suicides – Indians comprise the largest group of suicide victims.

SOCIOLOGICAL FACTORS BEHIND THIS RAMPANT GANGSTERISM

1. **Deprivation of educational opportunities**.

    1) **Indians** - not coping well in schools

    2) **Indian students who do badly** - ignored by teachers.

    3) **Poor Indian students** - labelled as problematic. As a result, these students are condemned to under-performance, relegated to the worst classes, stereo-typing, alienation and delinquency.

    4) **This labelling in the schools** – the seed for gangsterism.

    5) **Indians were seen as** - low achievers.

    6) **The secondary school** - has become a *supply* for potential gangs. Gangsters are recruited in secondary schools. They are threatened - to join. They have to pay *protection money*. The more members you recruit the better is your *position* in the gang and bigger is the *money.*

2. **Deprivation of economic opportunities. Economic inequality.**
   Indians generally feel that they have been sidelined from the high economic growth of the nation.
   A political scientist comments that Indian descent into the lower class began in the 1970s, when the Bumiputras in their push for the New Economic Policy sidelined the Indian sector, leading to economic marginalisation. Over the last 30 years , the relative performance of the Indian community has deteriorated. There is a serious Under-investment in human capital. Self-employmemt and small-scale businesses are few.

3. **Poverty**
   The poorer Indians generally feel that they are trapped in poverty. Rapid industralisation caused many rural Indians to migrate to the urban centers led to:

1) Social pressure on the Indians.

2) Lose of plantation jobs.

3) Forced involuntary migration to the towns. An article in the "Public Policy Studies" on "The Case of Low Income Malaysian Indians, points out that over 300,000 Indian poor have been displaced after the plantations were acquired for property and township development.

4) Ending up in slum areas.

5) Many of them ended up in low skilled jobs – as – odd job labourers, petty traders.

6) It is reported that there are almost **150,000 Indians** live in the slum of Kuala Lumpur.
Should slum ministry be one of the strategic ministries of the Church?

4. Social Ostracisation

Indians feel that they have been ostracised practically in all sectors

1) **Schools** – the poor students are ignored

2) **Institutions –** public learning institutions have been a big let down, Especially Indians from the low income group are very much dependant on public universities for higher education opportunities.

3) Enforcement agencies

4) **Government** – little job vacancies for Indians.

5) **Corporate** – Chinese companies prefer Mandarin speaking applicants

5. Poor Parental Influence

The Malaysian Nanban on August 28, 2013 came out strongly criticising Indian parents for poor influence.

6. Peer Pressure in Schools

Poverty is pushing Indian youths at every level. Secondary school students cannot resist strong peer pressure to join gangs. The secondary school is the godown for supply.

THE SOCIAL IMAGE OF INDIANS

1. **Under-Class**
   Frequent racial labelling in the media as **under-class.**

2. **Crime Contributors**
   To the highest crime rate in the nation whereby police feel that public and national security are threatened.

3. **A Problematic Community**
   The poorer Indians are generally seen as a **problematic community.**

4. **Negative Image**
   Indians political and social scientists feel that there is a gradual formation of a negative image of the Indians in the media. It is strongly felt that media report has been highly prejudiced and tended to project a negative picture of the Indian community. Indian issues in the media are reported in a way that gives a representation of the Indians as a problem community. Some strongly feel that Reports in the media tended to be one-dimensional , sometimes lacking professionalism of the media.
   Someone is reported to have said that " A Malay problem is a national problem. A Chineses problem is a racial problem. An Indian problem, however , is not a problem.

5. **Poverty**

   The seed-bed for gangsterism. It now seems to be entrenched and interwoven with gangsterism. Inseparable.

THE INDIAN RESPONSE

What is the poverty prone Indian youth's response to this problem?

1. Fight back.

2. Create a **defensive mechanism**. The best defence would be to group together. Fight society.

3. Cluster together. If they don't belong to society then seek another avenue – the gangs. They provide a sense of belonging. The sense of belonging is a powerful social factor in perpetuating the gangsterism menace.

   A disproportionate number of Indian youths, including school pupils, are becoming Increasingly alienated from the mainstream of society in recent years. This problem of alienation is driving the youths to the secret societies involving violence and crime. The alienation problem is a very serious one. If the problematic youths are relegated to the backward classes and neglected , alienation can become the number one cause for Indian gangsterism.

THE POLICE' RESPONSE

Go after the gangs.
A **punitive strategy** has been undertaken to deal with this social menace. A temporary measure. But this cannot be a permanent solution. Indian academic and social scientists feel that the problem is more complex and that it needs a more preventive strategy.

And what is the Church's response?

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE

1. ## Re-Evaluating Missions to Indians

   Has the Church has to seriously re-evaluate is mission to the Indian community. Where have we failed?

2. Slum Ministry

The Church has to prioritise its mission to the slums.
In Kuala Lumpur, it is said that there are 150,000 Indians in the slums.
Have we ignored the our Indians in the slums?

3. Secondary School Ministry

Has the Church to re-evaluate its mission to Indian students in secondary schools?
Is our school ministry too weak? Have we trained our Christian young people
to reach-out to Indian students in secondary schools?

4. Education

The Church must emphasise the issue of education to its youth population.
Have we provided sufficient support for poor students? Tuition programmes?