The Problem Of Gang Violence

A group of multiple individuals' approach and attack one who evades trouble, for doing quite not anything at all to offend or deter others. Why is this? As a citizen of Australia, going for a simple stroll throughout the park or shopping with some friends is without doubt, incontestable. It is not expected that a group, consisting of multiple people will approach and confront one who is steering clear of trouble. This is not right. 'Street gangs' cannot roam around our country setting fear within those who surround them. We are entitled to be free and live about a safe environment where we do not fear harm. We cannot allow our cities and suburbs to fall victim to gangs and violence. The protection of citizens should be the governments' foremost concern, in which there must be tougher legislation put into place against gang activity, as well as harsher punishments for gang-related crimes.

A gang is an aggregation of three or more individuals who perceive themselves as distinct and identify themselves by adopting a group identity, which they use to create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation and are viewed as disparate by the community. Their purpose is to engage in criminal activity and exert violence or power to further its criminal objectives. Today I have chosen to focus more specifically on the Apex gang. The Apex gang is a Melbourne born gang that primarily consists of young male criminals of African origin. On December 1st, more than 20 youths from the Apex gang committed a senseless attack on three innocent men in St Kilda. CCTV footage showed of the three men cowering as they were punched and kicked repetitively and robbed of their possessions. These men were walking along the foreshore when they were approached and hassled by a large group of African individuals, they were then punched and kicked multiple times by the offenders, and had their mobile phones and wallets stolen from them. A victim of the attack, a 24-year-old male, suffered a broken nose and facial bruising. A second victim, a 26-year-old male was knocked out due to multiple kicks to the head, suffering lacerations to his face. A third victim, a 20-year-old man was also struck to the head and face. All three victims of the attack required hospital treatment.

Now, without a doubt these offenders, whether they were caught or not, would not face any serious charges. Most individuals apart of this particular 'gang' are youths and under the age of 18. Tougher laws need to be enforced for youths that commit crimes as such, the fact that they can get away with crimes because of their age is unacceptable. What's a short sentence in a juvenile detention centre going to do? Youths will continue to commit crimes unless they know that they will be punished more greatly. Knowing that youths can get away with a short sentence or no sentence at all, a lot of adult members choose to bribe or use youths to do specific jobs for them, as they will not be charged with what an adult would.

But why do people join gangs in the first place, knowing that they are associated with crimes and violence in general? In seeking to understand the motivation for youths joining gangs, it is essential to look at the way their family functions, if they are being peer pressured or if they have not been educated well etc, in which could influence the delinquency that develops within these individuals. Speaking to A Current Affair, a few members of the notorious Apex gang revealed why they had chosen to turn to the "bad side". One of the men told that "Gang is your best friend. Your whole group, you can do anything. You're happy, you want to do anything. You're not scared of stuff." This proves that being involved in a gang allows for people to feel

as if they are accepted into a family, where they have got each other's backs and feel powerful amongst society. Violence is a way for gang members to gain recognition and respect by asserting their power and authority in the street.

Additionally, gang involvement among youths remains a prevalent problem for parents, schools, and society, although, we can effectively prevent youths from becoming affiliated with gang activity if the government were to provide school and community-based programs to reduce gang violence. Prevention of complex societal problems, like gang violence, require a substantial effort and commitment from the community as a whole. Schools can institute specific gang prevention and intervention activities in which are effective in reducing gang violence. In order to discourage young people from joining gangs, it is important that these programs assist the students in the right way and show the negative impact of violence, drugs, and conflict while also promoting positive things youths can do for their community and themselves. The best solution is to simply educate youth and parents. With regard to the Apex gang, the majority of members are of African origin and have migrated to Australia from their home country. Coming from a country, like that of Africa, where crime is normalised, these individuals do not know any better, which contributes to the reason why they believe this is okay. According to the Victorian Crime Statistics Agency (CSA), Sudanese-born people are 57 times more likely to be charged with aggravated robbery in Victoria and are 33 times more likely to be charged with riot and affray. Figures for the past five years show Sudan has consistently been among the top two or three places for offenders charged with crimes including aggravated burglary, serious assault, motor vehicle theft, aggravated robbery, and riot and affray. Also, statistics show that 20 years ago, Australia had only 20,000 immigrants entering the county, but as of 2018, more than one-third of Australia's population are immigrants. Crime rates in Australia have also increased to around 35-40% in just 10 years. I believe that those who come to Australia to live, from foreign countries, must be properly educated or be held in institutions and provided with a proper educational system to ensure that they are not creating an unsafe environment like the one in which they are fleeing. It is unfair to destroy our country and turn it into exactly what it's like where they once lived, when we are giving them an opportunity to live in a country where they have the right to freedom.

Not everybody believes that gang violence is an issue, some people might not want to believe that this is a problem, although we need to acknowledge that this is a rising issue and it affects many innocent individuals around not only Australia, but many other countries. There is factual evidence that gang violence is a predominant issue at hand, ignoring this issue and not acknowledging that this is reality is only going to harm our country even more. We need to take immediate action to prevent gangs from further escalating this problem.

Gang violence is on the rise, if the government continues to do nothing regarding this issue, it is only going to get worse. We have to tackle this ever-increasing issue and ensure more time and money into this 'problem'; whether it be placing people into institutions they require or giving individuals an opportunity to be part of an educational system. But whatever it is, it needs to be done now, before it is too late. Before more lives are lost and ruined to gang violence.