



## THE CORRELATES OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES IN NIGERIA

**Comfort Oyinlola OYAFUNKE-OMONIYI and Oladele Adelere ADELEKE**

*Department of Sociology/Psychology  
Olabisi Onabanjo University  
Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria*

*[oyafort@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:oyafort@yahoo.co.uk); [adelekeola01@yahoo.com](mailto:adelekeola01@yahoo.com)  
+234-8038473806; +234-8034098167*

### ABSTRACT

*The issue of Juvenile delinquency is becoming polemical and widespread. Delinquency prevention are either unfitted to deal with the present happenings or do not exist. Most of the emerging countries have established some mechanisms to deal with this problem, and international programmes are evidently inadequate. Even where programmes are in place, the mechanism are always inadequate to address the multiple ways in which these children must be assisted. This article assessed factors influencing delinquent behaviours and the effective ways of rehabilitating young offenders. Building on this premise, the article reviewed relevant literatures on juvenile delinquency and its prevention measures. As evident in the literature and discussion in this article, juvenile offenders, as labelled individuals, are hampered by social conditions and support that are required to enhance their recovery, constructive behaviour and full rehabilitation. As juvenile delinquency is not caused by a single factor, its prevention and treatment should not be limited to a single factor. The interaction between the offender and significant others before, during and after the act of deviation, is important to the overall prevention of delinquency. Therefore, it is important that prevention and treatment of juvenile must be appropriate to the offender's age, gender, ethnicity, social circumstances and culture. Punitive measures should be discouraged while individualised treatment oriented measures should be encouraged.*

*Key word: Delinquency, Prevention, Punitive, Rehabilitation*

### INTRODUCTION

During the past 2 decades, the world has experienced a dramatic increase in the rate of juvenile delinquency. The increase has been accompanied by an increase in scientific and public policy interest in examining causes and correlative of juvenile delinquency. Although researchers have identified a multiple of potential risk factors, much of the work in this area is single faceted and therefore reduce the means through these minors (juvenile) can be help is limited. Why do people behave the way they do? What causes one person/child to become violent and antisocial, while another channels his/her energy into work, school and family? How do we explain the risk children in a highly disorganised neighbourhood who successfully resist the temptation of the streets go through? What accounts for the son of a multimillionaire who engages in shoplifting? The former who has nothing, yet is able to resist crimes; the latter has everything and is fascinated into delinquent acts. Is behaviour a function of personal characteristics or of upbringing and experience? Is it a combination of all these influences?

Throughout the world, it is evident that almost every youth commit certain practices of juvenile delinquency at some point in time. It is also established that after a period of occasional offending, most youth discontinue their delinquent behaviour. While scholarly literatures have identified and discussed extensively the correlates of juvenile delinquency. There is however need to re-examine the uniqueness of some factors and how this shapes preventive measures. Issues to be addressed briefly in this article include Juvenile delinquency as a concept, its causes, social implications, preventive measures and way forward.

### JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND ITS CAUSES



Delinquency is a disruptive behaviour in defilement of the law by a minor. The concept "Juvenile Delinquency" can be essentially defined as any act that violates the criminal law, committed by an individual defined by the law as a juvenile, which if it had been committed by an adult will be treated as law-breaking or criminal act (Alemika 1978; Muncie 1999). There are other acts, which adult criminals act free of but certified or defined as delinquency, when manifested by children and juveniles. These are referred to as status offences and they include such deviant behaviours as running away from home, consuming alcohol in public, truancy from school, etc. Juveniles are, therefore, subjected to broader lawful boundaries and differential treatments within the criminal justice system (Okagbue, 1996). In preventing juvenile delinquency, the United Nations adduced that certain attitudes and behaviours that does not supports the cultural values and societal norms are often exhibited during the development stage (United Nations Children's Fund, 2004) but tends to vanish in most individuals as they continue to transit to adulthood. Siegel (2002) revealed that larger number of young people tend to engage in some kind of trivial violations at a particular time of developmental stage (adolescence) and which they eventually outgrow to prevent future occurrences (Acosta & Chavis, 2007).

According to the UN-Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, delinquency is observed to be on the rise in the whole world and its development is related to the rapid socio-political and economic changes that have taken place in Africa (United Nations, 2004). The basic crimes committed by youngsters are stealing, theft, smuggling, prostitution, the abuse of narcotic substances, and drug trafficking (Okorodudu, 2010). In Asian countries, delinquency is essentially an urban occurrence while in Europe it is due to the nature of the families. Studies conducted by Olutayo and Okunola (1999) asserted that juveniles constitute the most criminally active segment of the population and the most noticeable trends in Africa are drug-related offences, which are marked among the male delinquents.

A multitude of biological, psychological and socio-cultural factors describe the major issues responsible for young offenders to engage in delinquent behaviour (Merton, 1957). The socio-cultural sources of juvenile delinquency involve a wide array of theories that have been set forth by criminologists and sociologists. Some theorists view delinquents as a function of the individual while others view delinquency as a macro level function of society. Some theorists look at the way society is structured to explain juvenile delinquency. Moe often than not, the structure of a particular society can promote young offenders to engage in delinquent behaviours. Merton states 'some social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain persons in society to engage in non-conforming rather than conforming behaviour' Merton (1957). Merton continues by stating, "American society was Merton's prime example.

Nigerian society can also mirror American society. The African culture places greater attention to financial success and prosperity. Apparently, lawful opportunities to become prosperous are very limited (Oyafunke-Omoniyi, 2014). From the structural ideology, when these young individuals cannot achieve financial prosperity, the tendency to engage in delinquent act and wrong doings become inevitable. The Conflict perspective emphasises on the relationship between the strain theory and juvenile delinquency. A Conflict theorist would say that juvenile delinquency comes as a result of a conflict in society between two or more groups. This conflict is most often class based and economic. Conflict can also be because of a power struggle in society. Conflict theory unravels relationship the correlation between the legal system (judges, police officers etc.) and minority groups who feel beleaguered by the legal system (Huang & Barreda, 2004). From this perspective, juvenile delinquency can be viewed as a function of acting out against those in a conflicting group in society. The cultural deviance theorists look at the environment and sub-culture of a juvenile's residence, the social conditions that make-up those areas are "physical deterioration; economic segregation (Tolman, 2001); social and ethnic segregation; a high incidence of social ills such as infant mortality, mental illness, and unemployment (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2001).



Invariably, a child who grows up in an environment that condones unacceptable conducts may be exposed to unlawful lifestyle and could engage in delinquent acts and behaviour.

The definition of delinquents and scope of behaviour covered by the term vary with time and across the globe. Thus, the child/juvenile is viewed as a defenceless and depending being who deserves a special care. This awareness of a juvenile increases the formation of a different trend within the criminal justice system in treating cases of children and juvenile who violate the law (Oyafunke–Omoniyi, 2014). Young children from a disadvantaged families and environments are believed to be at-risk for the reason that they are susceptible to detrimental influences, often resulting in criminally deviant behaviour later in life. Studies indicated that there are a quite number of factor influences juvenile delinquency. Among these are family influence, socio-economic status, peer influence, urbanization, the media and educational experiences. Elliott and Merrill's study revealed that distorted family influence tend to be the most potent of 4000 juvenile delinquents. In the same vein, Healy and Bronner found that about 50 percent of them came from divided or broken families.

Literature and empirical research has consistently highlighted the important role of the peer group. Exposure to the delinquent peers in particular, has been shown to be one of the strongest predictors of juvenile delinquency (for example Alemika 1978: Olutayo, and Okunola, 1999; Oyafunke-Omoniyi 2014). There has been some suggestions that involvement with delinquent peers is a necessary step on the path to delinquency, and that adolescents who do not have delinquent friends have little risk of becoming involved in deviant behaviour. For example, Oyafunke-Omoniyi (2014) found that most juvenile offenders on the justice corridor in Lagos State, Nigeria had delinquent friends. Nonetheless, in spite of the well-documented associations between peer influence and juvenile delinquency, few studies and literature have actually examined the role of peer behaviour as it relates to development of juvenile delinquency. This current review revealed that desire for companionship or a sense of belonging most times forced juvenile to bow to pressure from their delinquent friends.

### ***Family background***

The role of family background has been a forceful factor for the development of delinquency among juveniles in that the norms, values and morals from the family unit create an internalized blueprint for juvenile personality, beliefs and attitudes. Psychologists believe that stable and fostering families educate juveniles on how to interact using functional norms, whereas unstable families educate juveniles on how to interact using dysfunctional norms. Gorman-Smith, Tolan, Loweber. and Henry (1998) give families with marital instability as the bedrock and foundation for dysfunctional norms. They observe that when marital breakdown exist within a family, the observable outcomes are seen through juveniles. These inabilities often include; tension, pressure, separation, disaffection, fighting of parents, emotionlessness, and morbid boundaries. That is why Albert Bandura in the Social Learning Theory believes that an environment surrounded by a culture of conflicts, decay and insufficient social organization is a major source of delinquency among juveniles. Oyafunke-Omoniyi (2014) noted that, families that disintegrate into divorce exhibit a high incidence of delinquency more than families that remain united. She believed that when parents divorced, fathers habitually focus on marrying another wife wives and the supervision of the children becomes unrealistic. Such inconsistency in supervision and direction becomes a major cause of delinquency. She however assert that it does not mean that all single-parent homes are likely to produce delinquents; the key factor is whether the family unit is healthy or not. Troublesome families with scarce resources also influence juveniles to delinquency (Tolman, Pittman, & Cervone, 2001). Fathers and decay of parent-juvenile interaction that would have barred delinquency manifest this through failure to pay school fees. A child with single parenting supervision and care is often exposed to stealing, taking drugs and alcohol to relief pressures. It is from such circumstances that Simmons, Burgeson, Carlton-Ford and Blyth (1987) believe that home environment is essential to the development of delinquency.



### ***The Socio-economic factors***

The status of the working-class families is an important factor for the growth of delinquency (Martin, 2005). Using a historical analysis from Child-Saving Movement (CSM), Martin exemplifies how urban working families (middle-class) can reduce the level of juvenile delinquency. In the middle-class families, Martin believes that “parents put a lot of pressure on juveniles due to involvement in peer groups and the nature of lifestyle portrayed by juveniles”. Juveniles do not like such pressures and in order to be free from the parents’ pressure, juveniles resort to delinquency. On the other hand, Martin believes that the poor and under-class people have greater chances of producing delinquents. This group of poor and under-class people are commonly found in urban-centers with enduring pattern of poverty that does not allow juveniles to reach their goal. Because of poverty, juveniles lack opportunities to go to school and parental attention. Scholars have observed that in outskirts/suburb areas where such group of poor and under-class people are living, cultural values and family blood ties continue to deteriorate and this will subsequently increase the delinquent acts among juveniles.

### ***Education***

Education is an influential factor for the development of delinquency among juveniles. It has been observed that in every ideal society, the juvenile should be given the equal chance and opportunities of been educated. This article observes that educational opportunities available for the poor and middle-class juveniles are different from the educational opportunities available to rich juveniles. Such disparity in educational chances discriminate and segregate juveniles from the poor and low-income earners families and for them to be self-reliant and free, they either consciously or unconsciously engage from in order for juveniles to free in some acts of delinquency such as pilfering, theft, stealing, drinking alcohol, taking drugs and robbery which constitutes delinquent acts.

### ***The Media***

The role of media has also contributed immensely to the growth of delinquency among juveniles. All-over the world, Television and movies have simplified supermen who encourage uprightness and justice through physical elimination of their opponents. Several studies like Coldman (2000) and Ingale (2009) indicated that juveniles who watch such movies have higher tendency to behave in an irrational and hot-blooded manner once they are triggered and provoked in order to eliminate their offenders. This is common among juvenile males between 8- to 12-years old. Besides that, the Media promotes individual violence by establishing vehement actions to the viewers, and such violent acts are through the act of omission or commission transferred to juvenile audiences/viewers.



Through globalization, the media has facilitated juvenile violence by demonstrating indispensable resources of life to sustain a lifestyle and high quality products/services which eventually generates a sense of frustration in many young individuals. Huang & Barreda (2004) added that things we see most times influences our thoughts, attitude and behaviours. Therefore the media create a virtual picture of reality in the mind of many young people which makes them to go beyond what they cannot achieve in a short term. More importantly, these young individual are easily influenced based on the paradox between perfect and socially approved goals (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993). When this young people sensed limited real-life opportunities and insufficient means to reach what they are seeing virtually, they eventually become frustrated and always willing to do anything at disposal just to make ends meet, them legally creates a sense of frustration in many young people. This may be largely due to their low level of education, lack of proficient training, inequitable pay, income, health services, housing and poor parental guidance (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2001). Juvenile delinquency is often committed not only when young people sensed limited real-life opportunities and insufficient means but also when they have access to illegitimate and illegal opportunities.

### **delinquency**

### **Urbanization and Juvenile**

The on-going urbanization in developing countries is a contributing factor to juvenile delinquency. Urbanization has fostered new forms of social behaviours among juveniles due to weakening of primary social relations in families. Evidence from documented literature shows that juveniles who receive adequate parental supervision are less likely to engage in delinquent activities compared to those who receive just a dose of parental supervision. In urban areas, dysfunctional families are characterized by conflicts; inadequate parental control, weak internal linkages and integration (Olutayo & Okunola, 1999). Papalia, Wendkos-Olds, Duskin-Feldman (2006) observed that many of the urban poor live in slum and squatter settlements with overcrowded, unhealthy housing and a lack of basic services. It is here that the majority of urban youth and children live and it has been a serious source of the street and orphaned children, but above all delinquents. Communities in the urban centres offer their members with the necessary infrastructures that will make life easier and comfortable for them at the local level.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF THE SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**

The passion and strictness of juvenile violations are largely determined by the socio-cultural factors which exist in a particular society. There is indication that universal upsurge in juvenile misconduct is correlated with economic recession (Kohn, 2005), principally in the slums and ghettos of large cities. In most cases, when children suffers destitution, they later become young offenders for survival. This violation comes not because they are suffering but because the environment they find themselves would have exposed them to witness or become victim of violent acts. In many cases, low level of their educational status contribute largely to the insufficiency, poverty and under or unemployment (Millichamp, Martin & Langley, 2006). The bases and circumstances for juvenile misconduct are habitually initiated at every level of the social structure, comprising the society as a whole, social organizations/institutions and social groups. A widespread collection of factors explained above are most importantly responsible for encouraging juveniles' selection of delinquent careers and the consequent perpetuation of delinquency.

Juvenile delinquency is obsessed by the undesirable consequences of socio-economic development, in particular economic predicaments, political unsteadiness, and the dwindling of the major social institutions. Social and economic uncertainty is frequently related to persistent idleness and low incomes amongst the young and consequently intensify the possibility of their participation in immoral activity (Oyafunke-Omoniyi, 2014). Delinquent behaviour habitually arises in an environment where the societal norms and values for



tolerable conduct have been destroyed. The dilemma of cultural subgroups and migrants, including displaced persons and refugees in certain parts of the world, is especially distressing. Beneath every circumstances, most this societal norms and values for tolerable conduct may possibly fail their significance for certain people in the society. They often react to the damaging and detrimental deviations from the acceptable values in the society by contributing to insubordinate, aberrant or even felonious activities. For example, the modernisation of traditional values, culture and norms which has consequently influenced the social and physical characteristics, lifestyles and living conditions (Coldman, 2000). These transitional deviations and changes affect the use of power and authority, procedures of compliance, sensitivities to reality and approaches to political and administrative involvement (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993).

Analyst in geography and topography advocates that nations with a highly populated urban centres are often prone to engage in criminal activities than their counterpart in the rural communities. The variations may possibly be caused by differences in lifestyles, cultural values, social control and social interrelation. In the rural centres, the family is seen as a smaller unit used in promoting social cohesion and control to fight against any unacceptable behaviours and activities (Okorodudu, 2010). While the urban and industrialized centres are disposed to prescribe authority and jurisdictional procedures, an impersonal method that gives the idea to higher and advanced law-breaking rates (Oyafunke-Omoniyi, 2014). However, it is important to note that reaction to socio-cultural and established alterations to similar offence may be different from one country to another. The continuous process in the development of the urban and industrialized societies has contributed immensely to juvenile participation in unlawful conduct. The basic characteristics for these societal variations are modern development of new methods of social interaction and activities, increased reliance on the media (television, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc) at the detriment of the traditional mode of communication.

Studies indicates that children who enjoys high level of parental care, control and supervision are less expected to involve in criminal activities. It was also indicated that involvement of children in criminal activities are characterised by struggle, poor parental supervision, untimely freedom and independence, peers influence, etc. apparently, it was also observed that children from broken homes and unstable families have insufficient prospects and opportunities for appropriate employment and this consequently lead them to engage in some criminal conducts for survival and livelihood (Trojanowicz, 2002). Children from disadvantaged families are generally over-represented among juvenile offenders. The incessant increase of children from disadvantaged families has become a polemical issue especially in countries where insecurity, poverty and unemployment are prevalent and widespread. These factors has become predominant with an increase in the numbers of children and youths who are often abandoned by their immediate parents and subsequently, suffer from mistreatment, cruelty, abuse, forcefulness and violence in the family. Children mostly become offenders when they are only been taken care of by one single parent (Acosta & Chavis, 2007). However, the prominence of family role in facilitating social control is becoming increasingly renowned. The failure and success of every child in formal education is largely a dependent factor on the parents' ability and capacity to provide the necessary resources to buy the needed texts and pay the school fees, understand the cultural values and assist them in identifying opportunities. Young persons from low-income families are often highly desperate to uplift their self-esteem and at the same time increase their status, so in the process of achieving this, they either through the act of omission or commission engage in juvenile criminal behaviour. The emerging disparity between the rich and poor has also brought about led to the appearance of "undesirable characters". The marginalisation of certain individuals is steadily a cumulative of financial problem, poverty, cracked social ties, and joblessness and individuality crises (Kelly & Wallerstein, 2006). The symbolic marginalisation from the world of juveniles who have committed even minor



offences has important repercussions for the development of delinquent vocations. Studies by Huang & Barreda (2004) shows that the act of labelling may lead to the self-adoption of a delinquent image, which later results in delinquent activity.

Youth policies seldom reflect an understanding of the role of the peer group as an institution of socialisation. Membership in a delinquent gang, like membership in any other natural grouping, can be part of the process of becoming an adult. Through such primary associations, an individual acquires a sense of safety and security, develops knowledge of social interaction, and can demonstrate such qualities as loyalty or leadership (Kelly & Wallerstein, 2006). In "adult" society, factors such as social status, private welfare, race and ethnicity are of great value; however, all members of adolescent groups are essentially in an equal position and have similar opportunities for advancement in the hierarchical structure. In these groups, well-being depends wholly on personal qualities such as strength, will and discipline. In other words, criminal activities can be linked to the deficiency, flawlessness and imperfections of family and school. Quite number of studies indicated that juvenile team members often see their group as a big family. Young person's join this group simply because they feel they are protected from undue oppression and maltreatment in the society. They simply join the gang to seek refuge. While those that do not belong to any juvenile group are often consistently faced with intimidation, threat of assault, harassment, repression, exploitation or extortion on the street or at school (APA, 1993).

In recognising the prevalent causes responsible for delinquency, it is imperative to identify which factors contribute to a delinquent identity and why some adolescents who adopt a delinquent image do not discard that image in the process of becoming an adult. Delinquent identity is quite complex and is, in fact, an overlay of several identities linked to delinquency itself and to a person's ethnicity, class and gender. Delinquent identity is always constructed as an alternative to the conventional identity of the larger society. Violence and conflict are necessary elements in the construction of group and delinquent identities. The foundations of group identity and activity are established and strengthened through the maintenance of conflict relations with other juvenile groups and society as a whole. Violence serves the function of integrating members into a group, reinforcing their sense of identity, and thereby quickening the procedure for adaptation and integration to the local environment. Other issues that may possibly provide inspiration for joining a bunch of criminals are the possibilities of economic and social development.

### **PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**

It is widely believed that early-phase intervention represents the best approach to preventing juvenile delinquency. Prevention requires individual, group and organisational efforts aimed at keeping adolescents from breaking the law. Various countries adopt several mechanisms to reduce antisocial and criminal behaviour. Some emphasizes on retributive and deterrence prevention to frighten would-be offenders by making them to understand the efficacy of severe punishment, or action may be taken to prevent recurring crime.

#### ***Educational Programmes***

The right to education is regarded as universal and inviolable. The international Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) states that education is bedrock for the development, progress and protection of individual disposition and traits. Education has become the fundamental aspect in facilitating self-reliance and reducing poverty and other social problems (Kelly & Wallerstein, 2006). According to International Standards, all children are entitled to free compulsory primary education, while states have an obligation to develop Secondary education and responsibility for developing measures to make it accessible for all children. General comment No. 13 of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights defines the right to education thus: "Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights".



Apparently, education should serve as the driving force through which individuals who are disregarded and marginalized can uplift themselves and acquire the means to contribute abundantly to community developments. Education has played a prominent role in endowing women, protecting children from exploitation, oppression and precarious labour, safe guarding the environment, and regulating the population growth. Increasingly, education is recognized as one of the best financial investment States can make. The significance of education cannot be quantified because individual who are educated will possibly be rational and proactive, with ability to think liberally and extensively and subsequently benefits human existence.

Educational programmes will significantly assist the young people to learn how best to engage in optimistic self-evaluation, deal with conflictual issues, and control violent behaviours. These programmes will help troubled youth to develop the social and cognitive skills necessary to avoid conflict and control aggression. Invariably, young people who benefit from quality education/schools, raised in stable families, and healthy communities will classically develop the necessary skills and abilities for success.

### ***Physical Planning***

There are problems underlying the view that crime may be directly linked with absolute poverty. Obviously, there are still some poor people throughout the world that would rather go hungry than steal, but research evidences does not provide much support for such a connection. A stronger link, however, appears to exist between crime and environment because of the high level of mobility among the area's residents which causes anonymity and no sense of community is thus able to develop (Millichamp, et al., 2006). At a practical level, lack of adequate facilities certainly has a part to play in this. The incidence and prevalence rates, as well as, patterns of delinquency are largely determined by the way a Society is organized.

- (a) The way resources are mobilized and distributed;
- (b) The patterns of distribution of political process;
- (c) The degree of popular and democratic participation in law-making;
- (d) The extent to which Judicial and Police power are subject to democratic control and public scrutiny in order to protect human rights; and
- (e) The character of laws and law enforcement.

Nigeria Political and economic structures are characterized by unfairness, fraud, prejudice and bribery resulting in extremely skewed accumulation of power and wealth. This has created mass poverty, high level of illiteracy, high and growing unemployment levels especially among the youths – resulting in crime, delinquency, family instability and other social problems. It is important for society to prioritize juvenile delinquency prevention programmes over measures designed to punish or treat juvenile offenders. Over the years, Programmes designed for restructuring of juvenile justice system has failed to address the essential sources of crime and delinquency and which continually aid incessant repression of victims which also influences socio-political and economic incapacities (Alemika, 2008).

Juvenile welfare problem is essentially an aspect of the social development problems where its dynamic and long term solution focuses on a more sensitive and more conscientious "social planning " especially in those measures designed to raise the quality of life of low income families and to minimize the scourge of poverty not only through the raising of the nation's productive capabilities but also through the elimination of gross inequalities and exploitation in economic and social relations. In order to design effective delinquency prevention and control programmes, it is necessary to understand the features of juvenile delinquency and the elements of social structure that create, precipitate, aggravate or perpetrate and control delinquent and criminal behaviours.

### ***Involvement of Youth in Communities Programmes***



Greater consideration has been given to the role and responsibility of local communities in fighting against delinquent acts and behaviours. It now becomes imperative to organize programmes and educate the young individuals in the local communities on the need to encourage people in constructive activities and fight against immoral and unacceptable attitudes. The idea that young people can and should work in partnership with adults to improve conditions in their communities has gained ground in the past decade. Young people are being inspired to awaken their entrepreneurial abilities, create opportunities and support community. Community-based developments in slums and ghettos settlements have the ability to prevent children wandering by the road side and to help reintegrate them into their neighbourhoods. This can also help street children to engage in hopeful self-evaluation that will eventually lead them to positive attitudes.

### ***Involvement of NGOS and Volunteers***

The role of NGOs cannot be over emphasized when it comes to juvenile offences. The involvement of NGOs and volunteers (students and pensioners, along with well-known and authority figures such as sportsmen, politicians and public figures) in community work is another potent measure. Generally, NGOs are expected to play a supportive role that integrates children and youth into organised group activities and establishing programmes that will prevent juvenile delinquency (Kohn, 2005). NGOs and volunteers are most effective when they are encouraged to design and implement programmes that will help to build on the strengths and interests of youth rather than focusing only on their problems or deficits. Institutional programmes aimed at providing social and psychological support for individuals and groups include camps, group homes, alternative schools and shelters.

### ***Build Positive Family Ties***

The family as one of the most agents of socialisation appears to play a prominent role in the prevention of child and juvenile delinquency. The most impressive and preventive efforts in reducing juvenile delinquency start from the family since young people with serious delinquent behaviour and problems emanated from a particular family. In this connection, distinctive attention must be given to street children and to children and adolescents who have lost their families. Distinctive programmes are needed to solve the problem of homeless children, including rehabilitation and restoration schemes that take children off the streets. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a framework for improving the living conditions of children.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This article extends the result of other studies by demonstrating that risk factors for juvenile delinquency exist within multiple social contexts. Although, peers are often thought of as the single most dominant influence on development of delinquent behaviour among juvenile, this article suggests that other structures within society such as the parent-child relationship, neighbourhood, mass media, poverty, also play important roles. There is therefore need for prevention and intervention strategies that target many systems in which juveniles live. In most areas of Africa, Nigeria inclusive, traditional regulatory mechanisms and practices have existed down through the ages for the prevention of juvenile delinquency. These comprise prescriptive taboos, avoidances, practices, and punishments put in place by local communities and constitute customary laws and tradition, which can be regarded as unwritten constitutions and laws passed on from one generation to the next. The emergence of nation states in Africa together with colonially derived legislative systems has created conflicts between traditional and western modes of heritage management. Most western-derived legislation still in use of post-colonial Africa takes no cognisance of community interests, aspirations, belief systems and mechanism of maintaining order in the society. Success of any treaty, guidelines, or laws thus depends on the interplay of different actors at all tiers. The importance of international laws in the treatment of juvenile offenders and



prevention of juvenile delinquency is only possible when international law is internalised in state-based laws, which in turn is harmonised with community-based laws and practices. Where there is no linkage, the two will float in different orbits and will remain parallel and never converge to address the problem of juvenile delinquency and protecting the interest of juvenile offenders. In the same way, state-based laws ought to be internalised and regulate the community-based customary (traditional) laws and practices. State-based laws on the management and treatment of juvenile offenders need to be changed to re-orient the relationship between state and community practices of regulating behaviours. Therefore, for any country to reduce the incessant level of juvenile delinquency, the two practices and approaches must be brought into a complementary and symbiotic relationship rather than one of antagonism and competition.

**REFERENCES**

- Acosta, J. and Chavis, D. (2007). Build The Capacity Of Communities To Address Crime. *Criminology and Public Policy*, 6(4): 651–662.
- Alemika, E.O. (1978). A Study of Socio-Cultural and Economic Factors in Delinquency among Kaduna Borstal Inmates. Unpublished B.Sc. Sociology Original Essay, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Alemika E. O. and Chukwuma, I.C (2001). *Juvenile Justice Administration in Nigeria: Philosophy and Practice*. Lagos: Centre for Law Enforcement Education
- American Psychological Association (1993). *Violence and Youth: Psychology's Response*. Summary Report of the APA Commission on Violence and Youth Washington.
- Bursik, R. and Grasmick, H. (1993). *Neighbourhoods and Crime: The Dimensions of Effective Community Control*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Coldman, S. (2000). *Criminal Justice Policies in Commonwealth Africa: Trends and Prospects*. Cape Town: University Of Cape Town, Institute Of Criminology.
- Gordon, T. (2000). *Parent Effectiveness Training: The Proven Program for Raising Responsible Children*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes Of Delinquency*. Berkley, Cal: University Of California Press.
- Huang, C and Barreda, A. (2004). A Comparative analysis of abandoned street children and formerly abandoned street children in La Paz. Bolivia: BMJ Publishing group and Royal College of Pediatrics and Child health.
- Ingale, I.L. (2009). Family Structure and Juvenile Delinquency: Correctional Centre Betamba, Centre Province of Cameroon. *Journal of African Law* 44(2):218–238.
- Kayode, Y. (1987). Beyond The Human Cage: Alternatives to a Decaying Institution. Papetr Presented At The Seminar On Crime And Social Control, Organised By The Department Of Sociology And Anthropology, Ile – Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University, July 27-30.
- Kelly, J. B and Wallerstein J. S (2006), *Surviving the breakup: How children and parents cope with divorce*. New York: Basic Books.
- Kohn, A. (2005). *Unconditional Parenting: Moving From Rewards and Punishments to Love and Reason*. New York, NY: Atria Books
- Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal Childhoods*. University of California Press. pp. 1–3. ISBN 978-0-520-27142-5
- Merton, R.K (1957). *Social Theory and Social Structure*, New York: Free Press.
- Millichamp, J., Martin, D., and Langley, A. (2006). "On the receiving end: young adults describe their parents' use of physical punishment and other disciplinary measures during childhood". *The New Zealand Medical Journal* 119 (1228): U1818. PMID 16462926.
- Okagbue, I. (1996). *Children In Conflict With the Law*. Lagos: Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (NIALS)
- Okorodudu, G. N. (2010). Influence of Parenting Styles on Adolescent Delinquency in Delta Central Senatorial District. *Edo Journal Of Counselling* 3 (1).
- Okpako, J. E. (2004). Parenting the Nigerian Adolescents Towards Smooth Transition to Adulthood. In I. A. Nwazuke; O. Bamgbose & O. A. Morokola. Ed. *Contemporary Issue and Research in Adolescents* (Ibadan: Omoade Printing Press. 275 – 288).
- Olutayo A.O and Okunola, R.A (1999). Youth and Crime: A study of Rural Hybrids in Ogun State, Nigeria. *Journal of NASA*; Vol 1, No.1.
- Organisation of African Unity and UNICEF, (1992). *Africa's Children, Africa's Future*, A Background Sectorial Article Prepared For The OAHU International Conference On Assistance To African Children, Dakar, 25-27, November 1992.



Oyafunke-Omoniyi, O.C (2014). Appraisal of The Administration of The Juvenile Justice System In Lagos State, Nigeria. *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis in Sociology, University Of Ibadan. Ibadan, Nigeria.*

Papalia, D.E., Wendkos-Olds, S., Duskin-Feldman, R. (2006). *A Child's World: Infancy Through Adolescence* (10th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Siegel, L. (2002), *Criminology*, West Publishing Company: St. Paul, Minn

Steingberg, L (2011). *Adolescence*. New York: Mcgraw-Hill. pp. 128–129. ISBN 978-0-07-353203-5.

Trojanowicz, M. (2002), *Juvenile Delinquency Concepts and Control*. New York; Ronald Press.

United Nations Children's Fund (2004). *The State Of The World's Children*, UNICEF New York

United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (The Riyadh Guidelines), Adopted and Proclaimed By General Assembly Resolution 45/112 of 14 December 1990, Available At [http://Www.Unhchr.Ch/Html/Menu3/B/H\\_Comp47.Htm](http://Www.Unhchr.Ch/Html/Menu3/B/H_Comp47.Htm).

*Child Rights Act* (No. 26 Laws of Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2003.