

PROBLEMS JUVENUE DELINQUENCY IN SOME SELECTED SCHOOLS IN ASKIRA/UBA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

*The study examined the problems of juvenile delinquency in some selected schools in Borno State, Nigeria, a total of 59 teachers were randomly selected across the six (6) sample schools to fill the questionnaire. A set of questionnaire for teachers and verbal/interviews were used in the collection of data for this study. Data collected were presented and analyzed using simple percentage. The result revealed that, the problems of juvenile delinquency raised from the community's or parents *laisser-faire* (indifference) attitudes towards character training in the home. The result also revealed that children with these problems performed poorly in schools. Based on these finding, recommendation were made to reduce the incidence of juvenile delinquency in our schools. Teachers and parents should be on the alert so as to check cases of delinquency among our youths. The research concluded that the problems of juvenile delinquency are due to community attitude towards adolescence and parent liaises faired attitude toward discipline in their homes.*

1.1 Background of the Study

Juvenile delinquency is as old as the human race. Anyone who doubts this should just cast his mind back to the biblical account of Cain who killed his brother Abel and the problems of the young committing crimes of various dimension is immediately brought into focus.

As define by the oxford learner's dictionary, juvenile delinquency is law breaking by young. This is the layman's understanding of this often used expression. However there are specialist's definitions. According to encyclopedia of education volume 5 (page 289) juvenile delinquency is any serious deviation by a youth from society's norms which result in his contact with the police (or law enforcement agents). Sociologists see juvenile delinquency as referring to the youth committing crimes against the law. In the sociological perspective therefore juvenile delinquency is any form of conduct which violates the norms of social expectation of a given group or society.

In Longman (1991) dictionary of contemporary English juvenile delinquency is behaviour especially by young person which is not in accordance with accepted social standard and offence against the accepted law.

Lastly from the religious point of view, juvenile delinquency is disobedience by God's law by the youth. This disobedience is manifested in the acts of unfaithfulness, injustice and unrighteousness. What has been said so far constitutes a universal view of juvenile delinquency. The researcher

intents to localize juvenile delinquency by focusing attention on the Nigerian situation. The pertinence of this pursuit is the more acceptable when one remembers that the problems of delinquency in Nigeria is a daily phenomenon which differs from society to society. Delinquency is of varying degree vis-à-vis.

1. Broken homes: where the father and the mother have separated
2. Drug addicts: misuse, abuse and selling of drugs by the young children's
3. Society influence: influence of peers groups, friends and other members of the society
4. Absence of morality: as a result of lack of adherence to religious principles
5. Bulling's of smaller children's by the bigger ones in schools
6. Failure by the parents to provide some basic needs to their children: especially girls
7. Truancy: pupils/ students who perpetually absent themselves from school may join other delinquency children and there by becoming a nuisance to himself, his parent, and the entire society.

1.2 Statement of the Problem. A child with juvenile delinquency is a normal child with a problem, juvenile delinquency has been a growing phenomenon that is to say it is what is happening since the creation of mankind. The problem is global even though it has its own area of peculiarity. In Askira/ Uba L.G.A in particular, and Borno State in general, juvenile delinquency is being experienced by teachers, parents, administrators and entire society as a result of their children exhibiting deviant behavior in schools and in public places.

Therefore for the above reason, the researcher wants to find out the following

1. Causes of juvenile delinquency among school going children that is primary and secondary schools in Askira/ Uba L.G
2. Signs of juvenile delinquency among children
3. Problems of juvenile delinquent children
4. Ways of minimizing the problems

1.3 Research Question

There are many juvenile delinquencies among adolescent children in Askira/ Uba L.G.A

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the problems of juvenile delinquency in schools in Askira/ Uba L.G.A and to find a way of solving the problems.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study will be significant for the following reason

It would be useful to parents, teachers, community and entire nations at large

1.6 Scope of the study

The study covers the six (6) schools in Askira/ Uba L.G.A the schools are

1. Central primary school Uba
2. Central Primary School Lassa
3. Muffa Primary school Uba
4. Government Secondary School Uba Borno
5. Government Girls Secondary School Lassa
6. Federal Technical College Lassa

2.0 Literature Review

In this chapter, related literature to the study reviewed under the following subheading

1. Juvenile delinquency
2. Symptoms of juvenile delinquency
3. Causes of juvenile delinquency
4. Factors

According to encyclopedia Americana (vol 16 p.270) any discussion of juvenile delinquency raises two fundamental questions. Who are the juvenile? And what constitutes delinquency? In order to answer to the first question, the most common criterion employed is chronological age. The vast majority of the laws dealing with juvenile delinquency throughout the world provide an age limit beyond which special procedures and measures meant for juvenile are in applicable. The age unit varies not only from one country to another, but also from state to state within a country as in the case of the United States. In Europe, the variation range from 16 years in Belgium to 21 years in Sweden. The majority of European countries however fix the age limit at 18 years. In Latin America, the range is from 14 years in Haiti to 20 years.

In addition to the upper age limit, most laws employ a lower age limit below which criminal responsibility in accordance with common law tradition cannot be attributed to juvenile. The majority of countries as thought-out the world accept either seven or eight years as the lower age limit, although there are some countries where it is higher, apparently the highest being found in Finland, where the lower age limit is 15 years. Most African countries put the age limit as from teenage to about twenty years.

The second question as to what constitutes delinquency is more difficult to answer. The word delinquency is derived from the Latin word delinquency meaning “neglect” and it may be interpreted in broad terms as neglect on the part of juvenile to conform the accepted standards of the behaviour in a given society according to English common law for example a boy under the age 14 years is presume to be incapable of having sexual intercourse and he cannot, therefore be found guilty of a sex offence in England. In United States of America they may be considered a delinquent

2.1 Symptoms of juvenile delinquency

According to Esther N. Aheme (1989) there are five (5) symptoms of juvenile delinquency.

- Male delinquency
- Female delinquency

- Alcoholism
- Prostitution
- Drug problem

MALE DELINQUENCY: the period of adolescence is one of crisis, when various forms of maladjustment are noticed in youths. There are some acceptable norms of behaviors or codes of conduct which we accept from children and others in society. Any abnormality discovered in the behavior of an individual is censured and the offender if caught is punishment by the laws of the society.

According to Njoku P.A (1980) in Eritain about 25 percent of persons connected for theft were under 17 years old. The juvenile delinquents were predominantly working class males on the surface therefore it would appear that the juvenile delinquency is highly concentrated in this class of society. Experience has shown that when a child enters the teens he or she becomes conscious of the silent but traumatic manifestation of maturation. Among the boys especially, this is the period at which dad's rebukes seem like the over blown premonition of a senile spoilt sport. They no longer fear the cane; on the contrary they challenge it. For them, this is the time to smoke, to drink or even keep out not only late nights but also start moving with female lovers without inhibition. They have arrived and therefore dad's rules have to be swept under the carpet. At school, the adolescent teenager suddenly becomes choose in terms of play mates for him, it is now popular 'guys' who are fit company since he now associate more with dropout, drug addicts and hemp smokers, he suddenly develops the habits of coming home late at night to him daddy is no Jupiter to curtail his freedom of moment and want. Academically delinquent youth becomes a truant, to him the essence of life is to lay about the street, gamble or visit cinema houses, he trek up and down believing that he has a swell time.

FEMALE DELIEQUENCY

Juvenile delinquency is also found among girls, adolescent girls regard themselves as ladies. They stop taking advice from their mothers and rather depend on their teenage friends for such pieces of advice which were previously given by the mothers. Such girls begin to move around with friends of both sexes, going to parties and keeping late night out. Occasionally there may be the high class jet setting under graduate female among her friends, they dress in such a manner as to immediately attract liable mind of the teenager as a suitable role model she begins to keep men friends who lavish upon her such things as would not normally be hers in the house. Consequently she begins to look down upon everybody, even mum who is now her own mistress and would even at times dictate to the mother on what she should be given to her for food. After all her socialization outside the house has given her such expensive tastes that far out-strip the norms in her family when mummy for instance make tuwo, it is then that our young women would insist on having rice, when she is not given what she wants she know how to have her way. After all with all the extra moneys coming from her men friends outside the world is hers to rule. Therefore she can afford to take at leisure, chicks/ friend rice, grilled beef or any other expensive dish soon the budding lady learns to take hard drugs, drink all drinkables, neither dad nor mum dare interfere in her affairs at this stage

the delinquent female teenage is so ego centric that she is the alpha and the omega to herself she might even go to the extent of meeting her male friends to her paternal home or at time stay away from home for weeks without giving notice or explanation. At school she looks down upon the teachers to her the female teacher is a colleague with whom she could easily rub shoulder. The male teacher is also no better than the man who are her lovers and who she calls by names. During examinations since she has neither been regular in classes nor consistent in her reading, she run helter shelters for illegal assistance. At the end, most often than not, she fails despite the assistance, she drops out of school. It is then music begins since naturally one step lead to another, her dropping out of school due to failure is just the initial step that slides her helplessly down the precipitous slop of juvenile delinquent.

ALCOHOLISM

Sam Bernard (1978) says that one form of abnormal behaviour among the youth is alcoholism. Sociologist defines alcoholism as a condition whereby drinking has reached a peak or a point where a person's social and physical lives are subjected to disturbance and disruption. Alcoholism results from social drinking. Alcohol influences man in various ways. First it intoxicates, when consumed in large quantity, it could be harmful, triggering off or contributing to the seriousness of such diseases as jaundice, kidney and diabetes and the rest. Habitual drunkards (alcoholics) usually are isolated from their families, lose jobs and friends. Alcoholism therefore become serious problems both in its own right and because of the social disruption it causes, yet despite his pernicious, personal and social effects, alcohol continuous to be one of the most attractive demons, making delinquents out of our youth today in Nigeria and elsewhere.

PROSTITUTION

Billy (1993) asserted that prostitution is promiscuity and sexual intercourse for financial gains. A prostitute could be a single female, a divorces or a widow. Also there are various types of prostitutes. There are the prestigious prostitutes who live in apartments; there are call girls who reside in hotels where the manager call for them when their services are needed. Some prostitutes hire rooms and pay for these from their incomes from meeting with men. Finally there are those prostitutes who are more or less street girls warming the streets in search of customers. Among those going into prostitution are frustrated homeless, isolated teenagers who have come to the end of the road may be academically and found that the only alternative left for them is to sell their bodies to keep body, soul and spirit together so that the teacher will help them to pass their subject.

DRUG PROBLEM

Igum (1985) states that drugs are essential for day to day life. However, there are some drugs which are socially acceptable and taking them is legal where as there are others which socially frowns upon and using them is not only illegal but ultimately harmful to the users. Some of these unacceptable and illegal drugs include cannabis, heroin, cocaine, L.S.D and host of others. Among the socially acceptable drugs some are still dangerous when overdosed. The drugs most popular among the youths are cigarette marijuana also called cannabis hashish, pot or Indian hemp heroin,

cocaine etc. hard drug taking is usually learnt from the peer group. Once a youth gets high on drugs, he get into a state on induced and hallucinatory euphoria which make him temporarily forget all problems. But the idea that drug roll away problems is both false and illusory on the contrary, getting high on drugs only aggregates an individual socially and physically disruption

2.2 Factors of juvenile delinquency

Having said this much in the symptoms of juvenile delinquency it is proper at this stage to highlight some of the factors responsible for juvenile delinquency, some of the factors are

- Parental negligence
- Over indulgence
- Broken home
- Lack of moral support from elders
- Environmental factors
- Modernization
- Employment and retrenchment
- Social Inequality
- poverty

➤ **Parental negligence**

Charity, they say, begins at home. Both sociologist and psychologist and even religious leaders have long recognized that the home is the proper foundation of a good nation. Where the home has a problem the overall effect is immediately transferred to the wider society. It is for this reason that one need to focus on the parental negligence and how it could be lead to juvenile delinquency, negligence is a failure to take proper physical, spiritual and mental care of one's child or children. Before the child begins formal education, the socialization process has actually started in the homes. All the information the child needs about his society's cultural norms and moral values are inculcated into him during ethic home education. Where this is well done, the result is a healthy, social, mental and spiritual maturation of the child in to balanced and socially acceptable adult

There may also be other parents who actually go about massing up, however they are so pre-occupied with their businesses and have so much confidence in material possession replacing parental affection and care that they spend very little time to sit down with their children to impart into them the much needed informal education. In this situation such neglected children may turn out later in life to be juvenile delinquent.

➤ **Over indulgence**

Fidelis (1989) opined that where some children turn out bad in life because they are neglected others may end up in the same valley due to over-indulgence. Over-indulgence is situations where parents fail to realize the need to use the carrot occasionally and stick at time in bring up children. For their parents, it is the carrot method all the way. As the children grow up they get used to having their way at all times. They become spoilt children uncontrollable both at home and outside

the home. Invariably, spoilt children end up in the rank of delinquents and leave their parent wondering what on earth they must have done left undone to make the children become deviant

➤ **Broken homes** According to Ciabbon and Finer (1977) when there is a problem in the marriage between two people and they divorce each parent the eventual loser are the innocent children suddenly thrown upon the mercies of a hostile and materialistic world. Broken home have impart, been described as the most potent factor precipitating juvenile delinquency in Nigerian society. Children from broken homes, most often than not, develop complexes who turn into social isolates and deviants. Eventually they let out their pant up feeling in antisocial acts which when calculated cost the nation much in terms of human and material resources.

➤ **Lack of moral support from elders** In all societies the youth lean from their elders, unfortunately it is sad to note that the example from the elders in Nigeria today is nothing to write home about. The average Nigeria adult today is highly immoral, vapacious, tribalistic, sectarian and unpatriotic. These traits have led to a lot of tension; the youth are being mix-shaped into delinquents, thereby destroying the fabric of future stability in the country. If the example of contemporary elders of our nation is anything to go by then the future is indeed very black for our youths of today. After all as the saying goes ‘if gold rusts, what will iron do’ (jean vacoves 1964)

➤ **Environmental factors**

Abang B.T (1986) stressed that the environment in which a child grows up has a vital part to play in that child’s life. Is the environment one that is morally uplifting? Is it a place of the worst crime; is it a place of violence or gentleness? Does the child growing up seeing more of sorrow than joy, anger and bickering rather than peace and stability. Does the child grow in want, while all round here is affluence and people make him regret over being born. Or is the child living and growing in such a luxury and comfort that he or she has become deadened to the plight of humanity seeing only the bright side of life all the time. These are all pertinent questions which Abang (1986) say we must find answer to urgently if we are to fully know the influence of environment in multiplying juvenile delinquents in our society.

➤ **Modernization**

The advance of westernization which is almost inseparable from the modernization process in Nigeria is another factor responsible for juvenile delinquency in the country. According to Miched Haralabu (1989) is the process of transition from the old to the new. It is a stage of adoption of new ideas, styles, tastes and institution. In the process of penetrating and colonizing Africa, Europe and the west generally come with new ideas which have been imbibed by the colonized people. The presence of the imperialist has not only polluted Africa culture but also accelerated the rate at which African institution and value are dying out. This process has been prompted by the appendages of westernization, like the media e.g. handset computers, television etc. this is not only the audio but

also a visual medium which therefore makes it impart on the youth more devastating. Early adolescence and unformed mind are assailed by the pictures of semi-naked women on computers, handset and television advertisement, future films etc. these naked women are held up by the advertisers as models worthy of emulation.

Furthermore, scenes of violence's, crimes and bloodshed are projected on the screen for the young one to see and copy. Gambling and the casino culture are also promoted via social media Cinema houses on its part not only show immoral rated films but also help to educate young ones on how to rob, kill or even impersonate people successfully. Bear parlor is another vice in the train of modernization, it help to basterdised the morals on our young ladies teaching them how to make quick gains by selling their bodies, modernization is therefore a necessary evils which has made many youths to end up as deviant.

➤ **Unemployed and retrenchment**

Gills (1990) is of the view that there are two problems facing Nigeria today. Due to the economic situation about 30% of the work force is unemployment while 20% of these working have lost their jobs . The unemployment and jobless are open to many temptations. One common temptation is the urge to steal in order to keep soul and body together .Hence, many unemployment and jobless women, for instant end up as prostitutes, stealing, prostitutions, unemployed and joblessness definitely lead to the rank of juvenile delinquency.

➤ **Social inequality**

Bendix (1959) stated that there has always existed a dichotomy between the rich and the poor in the society. This situation has undoubtedly helped to create delinquents out of the youths. Children from poor families are usually required as down trodden and they also unconsciously accept themselves as inferior. Rich children have the best education, eat well and engage in social activities which most families cannot afford. The poor families are therefore seen as slaves and kitchen boys to the rich. This situation is projected into maturity whereby the rich man secure well paid job after school and consequently becomes a manager but the child from the poor family end up as a messenger. The mental agony experienced by the poor in the face of such inequality of opportunities leads to delinquent behavior.

➤ **Poverty**

West (1972) said that, if youths are not provided with their basic needs such as good education, adequate moral instruction, food, shelter and clothes, they are likely to join the band wagon of juvenile delinquency.

3.0 Discussion.

A child with a delinquent behavior is a normal child only that he has problem due to one factor or the other.

Among the juvenile Delinquent children, majority of them are due to their parents' behavior which will eventually lead them to become delinquent. So, parents are strongly advised to take proper care of their children so as to reduce this problem of juvenile delinquency among our school age children.

During the research, oral interview were conducted in addition to the questionnaire. Questions of this nature were asked?

- What are the main causes of juveniles' delinquency in our schools? 90% of the people responded that broken home is one of the main causes of it. According to them, broken home as a result of death can be termed as a natural phenomenon but broken home by divorce or discord can be best described as a result of carelessness or irresponsibility of one of the parents. Whichever case, they said that the children suffer the break more than the parents. From all indications, children from broken homes face a lot of troubles. They become depressed, disruptive, lonely, sad, and unable to concentrate. Sometime, they may lose interest in school work or in social life which will eventually lead them to delinquent behavior.
- Another question asked is how then can we reduce incidences of juvenile delinquency in our society? Different people gave different answers; some of the answers given are in the recommendation but the major one is that, government should be properly counselled towards avoidance of the problems of juvenile delinquency. More than 50% of Nigerians are youths. Therefore everything should be done by the government, community leaders and religious leaders to bring up the children morally upright to take up leadership positions in the not too distant future.

3.1 Summary

The study examined the problems of juvenile delinquency in some selected schools in Askira/Uba Local Government Area.

Three (3) hypothesis were raised to ascertain the problems faced by juveniles in schools.

The tools used in the collection of data for this study were questionnaire and verbal interviews. Out of many schools in the Local Government area, six (6) schools were randomly selected for the study. These were; Government Girls secondary school Lassa, Central Primary School Lassa, Federal Technical College Lassa, Government Secondary School Uba/Borno, Muffa Primary School Uba and Central Primary school Uba.

The data collected were analyzed and discussed using simple percentage.

The study has confirmed that the community's attitudes towards adolescent contribute to juvenile delinquency. Also, parents' laissez faire (indifference) attitude towards discipline in the home leads to delinquent behavior, hawking by female students also contributes to delinquency in our schools. Bad peer group is another factor.

The study also revealed that some factors contribute to juveniles delinquency; such factors are; broken homes, parents negligence, over-indulgence, lack of moral support from elders, environmental factors, modernization, employment and retrenchment and inequality and deprivation.

3.2 Conclusion

From the finding of this study, conclusion can easily be drawn that the problems of juvenile delinquency are reality. The conclusion drawn from the questionnaires distributed to the six (6) schools is used to make a generalization that the problems or low breaking by the youth apply to other schools within the area of study are community's attitudes towards adolescence and parents laissez faire attitude towards discipline in their home.

3.3 Recommendation

The following are the recommendation that could help the government and the general public in eradication or reducing the problems of juvenile delinquency in our society.

- Parents responsibility / leadership awareness

Parents, elders, guardians and teachers should all be aware of the responsibility that devolves on them in bringing up the youths. Teachers also have a role to play. Since teachers are regarded universally as being next to parents they should recognize the quality of their dealings with the youths placed under their supervision.

- Provision of basic needs

All efforts should be made to ensure that the youths are provided with basic amenities for meaningful survival in life. Such needs as education, adequate moral instruction, shelter and clothes can never be glossed over. When these needs are not, we believe that children would not feel deprived and thereby gravitate to corruption.

- Task force on drug and alcohol abuse

There is the urgent need for each state government to set up a Task Force on drug and alcohol abuse. This task force should consist of the police, military personnel, state pharmaceutical inspectors and Local Government representatives to check against children falling into the trap of drug alcohol abuse.

- Education

The Government should endeavor to see that a greater percentage of the youths presently in the school are provided the chance of basic education. Disciplined teachers should be put in charge. Elders who have an interest in the life of the youths could also be involved in interest in the life of the youths. While teacher could be left in sole charge of the formal education, the retired people and the elders could be used in the ethical and spiritual education of our youths. In this way, the education of our youths would not be one of paper qualification along but a youth's holistic concern which attends to both the physical, mental and spiritual needs of the individual. When this is done it will be discovered that the home, the school and the society will become the spring boards of launching complete youths into decent life. Juvenile delinquency will therefore, on necessity, decrease even if it is not totally eradicated in the long run.

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