

PREDICTORS OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND THE PREVENTIVE ROLE OF THE FAMILY INSTITUTION IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study was conducted in Niger State, Nigeria, to examine the role of the family institution in preventing juvenile delinquency and to identify the specific familial predictors that influence delinquent behaviours among adolescents. Utilizing a cross-sectional, quantitative research design, data were collected from 482 adolescents aged 12 to 17 years across four distinct Local Government Areas (Chanchaga, Bida, Suleja, and Kontagora). Researchers employed a multi-stage survey approach, utilizing a structured, pre-validated questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. Descriptive statistics were initially performed to establish sample characteristics, followed by a multivariable binary logistic regression to determine the predictors of juvenile delinquency. The results indicated that the average age of respondents was 15.21 ± 1.64 years; 54.4% were male, 42.1% resided in polygamous family structures, and 56.8% came from low-income households. The prevalence of self-reported delinquent behaviour was 38.6%, with theft, truancy, and substance abuse being the most prevalent offenses. Multivariable regression results revealed that adolescents from intact, monogamous families had significantly lower odds of engaging in delinquency (aOR = 0.412; 95% CI: 0.215–0.788; $P < 0.01$) compared to those from broken homes. Furthermore, high parental supervision (aOR = 0.284; 95% CI: 0.145–0.556; $P < 0.001$) and authoritative parenting styles (aOR = 0.315; 95% CI: 0.170–0.582; $P < 0.001$) served as strong protective factors against delinquency. Conversely, households categorized as poor significantly increased the likelihood of delinquent behavior (aOR = 2.145; 95% CI: 1.208–3.809; $P < 0.05$). Overall, family structure, parental supervision, disciplinary methods, and household socioeconomic status were significant predictors of juvenile delinquency. The study concludes that the erosion of traditional family dynamics in Niger State exacerbates youth restiveness. It is recommended that governmental and non-governmental social welfare agencies implement family-centered economic empowerment programs and community-based parenting workshops to fortify the family's capacity to socialize and supervise youths effectively.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquency; Family institution; Parenting styles; Socioeconomic status; Niger State; Nigeria.

Introduction

The family remains the most fundamental unit of socialization and the primary agent of social control in any human society. In Nigeria, the family institution has historically served as a formidable fortress, instilling moral values, cultural norms, and discipline in younger generations. However, contemporary socio-economic challenges, rapid urbanization, and cultural shifts have severely strained familial structures, leading to an observable surge in youth restiveness and juvenile delinquency (Adebayo & Ojo, 2024). Juvenile delinquency, which encompasses acts ranging from minor status offenses such as truancy and underage smoking to severe infractions like armed robbery, cultism, and cybercrime, represents a critical threat to national security and socio-economic development.

Niger State, characterized by its vast landmass and a rapidly expanding youth population, has witnessed a troubling escalation in juvenile offenses. The urban centers of Minna, Suleja, and Bida have reported increased incidences of adolescent involvement in neighborhood gangs, substance abuse, and petty theft (Umar et al., 2025). Furthermore, the broader security challenges in the North-Central geopolitical zone, particularly rural banditry, have begun to attract vulnerable, unsupervised minors (Ibrahim & Danjuma, 2023). While state apparatuses have largely relied on punitive measures and the juvenile justice system to curb these trends, empirical evidence increasingly points to the home environment as the genesis of delinquent behaviors.

According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (2024), over 60% of the population in Niger State live below the national poverty line, a condition that inherently limits the capacity of parents to provide adequate supervision, education, and basic needs. In such criminogenic environments, the family's structural integrity and functionality are compromised. Consequently, adolescents are increasingly exposed to peer pressure and negative societal influences without the buffering effect of strong familial attachment.

Despite the widespread acknowledgment of the family's role in child development, there is a distinct paucity of empirical, region-specific data quantifying exactly which familial variables be it family structure, parenting style, or socio-economic status most significantly predict delinquency in Niger State. Much of the existing literature relies on data from Southern Nigeria or developed nations, which do not accurately reflect the unique ethno-religious, cultural, and economic realities of the North-Central region (Bello & Usman, 2025). This study aims to bridge this geographic and contextual gap. The paper begins with a theoretical overview of the family institution's role in delinquency prevention, elaborates on the methodological approach utilized to survey adolescents in Niger State, presents the descriptive and inferential results, and finally concludes with data-driven policy recommendations.

Literature review:

Family Structure and Delinquency

The structural composition of the family has been consistently linked to behavioral outcomes in adolescents. In Niger State, family structures are diverse, encompassing monogamous,

polygamous, single-parent, and extended family systems. According to Sanusi and Lawal (2024), adolescents from broken homes whether due to divorce, separation, or the death of a parent are at a statistically higher risk of engaging in delinquency compared to those from intact, two-parent households. The absence of a dual-parent structure often results in reduced supervision, diminished financial resources, and emotional trauma, which collectively push the child toward alternative, often deviant, support networks.

Furthermore, the nuances of polygamous households in Northern Nigeria present unique dynamics. While polygamy itself is not inherently criminogenic, the frequent occurrence of large family sizes combined with limited resources often leads to maternal rivalry and paternal absence (Abdullahi, 2025). In such settings, parental attention is diluted, supervision is minimal, and economic deprivation becomes acute, creating fertile ground for juvenile waywardness.

Parental Supervision and Disciplinary Methods

Parental supervision is a direct behavioral deterrent to delinquency. Supervision entails monitoring an adolescent's whereabouts, peers, and activities. A cross-sectional survey by Nnamdi and Tukur (2023) in the Federal Capital Territory (adjacent to Niger State) revealed that adolescents with low parental monitoring were three times more likely to experiment with illicit substances. Supervision acts as a protective shield against the negative socialization agents found in streets and unregulated digital spaces.

Equally important is the method of discipline employed within the family. Corporal punishment, deeply rooted in the cultural practices of many Nigerian families, has recently come under academic scrutiny. While mild physical discipline was traditionally viewed as a corrective measure, excessive or erratic physical punishment often correlates with heightened aggression and conduct disorders in adolescents (Eze & Danladi, 2026). Families that rely on reasoning, withdrawal of privileges, and consistent rule enforcement tend to raise adolescents with higher self-regulation.

Socio-economic Status (SES) of the Family

The economic viability of the family institution profoundly impacts its functional capacity. Socio-economic status determines the neighbourhood a family resides in, the quality of education the child receives, and the level of stress within the household. According to the deprivation theory of crime, prolonged economic hardship leads to frustration and systemic family dysfunction (Adebayo & Ojo, 2024).

In Niger State, the agrarian nature of the economy, coupled with recent macroeconomic downturns, has plunged many households into poverty. Parents in low-SES households often work multiple menial jobs, leading to chronic absenteeism from the home. This "latchkey kid" phenomenon leaves youths vulnerable to neighbourhood gangs. Furthermore, the inability of parents to meet basic needs or pay school fees directly precipitates acts of economic delinquency, such as petty theft, cyber-fraud (yahoo-yahoo), and prostitution, as adolescents attempt to secure resources independently (Ibrahim & Danjuma, 2023).

Despite the consensus that the family is a crucial variable in juvenile delinquency, the precise interaction between modern socio-economic stressors and traditional family dynamics in Niger State requires empirical quantification. This study moves beyond theoretical assumptions by

quantifying the specific familial predictors that account for the presence or absence of delinquent behaviors among local youths.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two complementary sociological and psychological paradigms: Hirschi's Social Control Theory and Baumrind's Parenting Styles Framework. From a sociological perspective, Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory posits that individuals are inherently predisposed to deviate from societal norms unless they are restrained by strong social bonds (Ogunleye, 2024). Hirschi identified four elements of the social bond: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. In the context of this study, attachment to parents is the most critical factor. When adolescents share a strong, affective bond with their parents, they internalize familial and societal norms, thereby reducing the likelihood of delinquent behavior to avoid disappointing their caregivers. Conversely, weakened family ties, characterized by neglect or high conflict, sever this bond, granting the adolescent the psychological freedom to engage in deviance (Garba & Aliyu, 2025).

Psychologically, Baumrind's framework categorizes parenting into distinct styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Recent studies confirm that the authoritative style characterized by high warmth, clear communication, and firm, consistent discipline is most effective in fostering social competence and deterring delinquency (Mustapha et al., 2023). Authoritarian parenting (high control, low warmth) often breeds rebellion, while permissive and neglectful parenting lack the necessary boundaries to prevent association with deviant peers.

Methodology

Research Design

The study utilized a cross-sectional, quantitative research approach. Data were collected from adolescents residing in selected urban and semi-urban areas of Niger State. This design facilitated the simultaneous examination of various independent familial variables (family structure, supervision, SES) and their association with the dependent variable (juvenile delinquency), providing a snapshot of the current socio-behavioral landscape.

Population and Sampling

The study population comprised adolescents aged 12 to 17 years residing in Niger State. Niger State is divided into three senatorial districts (Niger East, Niger South, and Niger North), comprising 25 Local Government Areas (LGAs). Due to the vast geographical expanse, the study adopted a multistage sampling technique.

In the first stage, using a purposive sampling method based on population density and reported crime rates, four LGAs were selected: Chanchaga (Minna, the state capital), Suleja (a commercial hub bordering Abuja), Bida (a traditional and educational center), and Kontagora (a major semi-urban center).

In the second stage, three wards were randomly selected from each of the four LGAs, totaling 12 wards. The third stage involved the systematic random selection of households within these wards. Using the random walk method from a central geographic point in each ward, every fifth household containing at least one adolescent aged 12-17 was approached. If a household had more than one eligible adolescent, the Kish grid method was used to select one respondent to avoid intra-household clustering effects.

To account for a projected 20% non-response or improperly filled questionnaires, the sample size was increased to 460. The researchers distributed 500 questionnaires, out of which 482 were validly completed and returned.

Instruments

Data were gathered using a structured, self-administered questionnaire titled "Family Dynamics and Adolescent Behavior Inventory (FDABI)." The instrument was divided into three sections: Section A: Socio-demographic characteristics of the adolescent and the family. Section B: Family functioning metrics (parenting style, supervision levels, family structure, and socioeconomic status). Section C: Self-Reported Delinquency Scale (SRDS). This scale asked respondents to indicate whether they had engaged in 15 specific delinquent acts (e.g., truancy, theft, physical assault, vandalism, underage drinking, cult affiliation) within the past 12 months.

Validity and Reliability

To establish face and content validity, the instrument was reviewed by three experts in the fields of Criminology and Sociology at the Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University. Their feedback was used to rephrase ambiguous questions and culturally adapt the delinquency indicators to the local context.

To ensure reliability, a pilot test was conducted among 40 adolescents in Shiroro LGA (an area not included in the main study). The internal consistency of the items measuring family dynamics and parenting styles yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.83, while the Self-Reported Delinquency Scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88, both well above the accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating high reliability.

Techniques of data analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS) version 28. First, descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were utilized to summarize the socio-demographic characteristics and the prevalence of delinquency.

Subsequently, inferential analysis was conducted. Bivariate analysis using Chi-square tests established initial associations. Variables that demonstrated a statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) were then entered into a multivariable binary logistic regression model. This model calculated the adjusted Odds Ratios (aOR) to identify the strongest predictors of juvenile delinquency while controlling for confounding variables. A p-value of < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Independent Variables

1. Family Structure: Categorized as 1 = Intact/Monogamous (both biological parents present), 2 = Polygamous, 3 = Single Parent/Broken Home.
2. Household Wealth Index (SES): Used as a proxy for socio-economic status. Measured via possession of household assets and parental occupation. Categorized into 1 = Poor, 2 = Middle, 3 = Rich.
3. Parental Supervision Level: A composite score derived from five questions asking how often parents know the adolescent's whereabouts, friends, and online activities. Coded as 1 = Low, 2 = Moderate, 3 = High.
4. Primary Disciplinary Method (Parenting Style): Coded as 1 = Authoritative (discussion/withdrawal of privileges), 2 = Authoritarian (harsh corporal punishment/shouting), 3 = Permissive/Neglectful (no real consequences).
5. Covariates: Age (categorized as 12-14, 15-17), Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female), and Educational enrollment status (1 = In school, 0 = Out of school).

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable was Juvenile Delinquency Status. It was measured as a binary variable. If a respondent affirmed engaging in two or more of the acts listed on the Self-Reported Delinquency Scale within the past year, they were coded as 1 = Delinquent. If they answered no to all, or affirmed only one minor act, they were coded as 0 = Non-delinquent.

Response Rate

The researchers distributed 500 questionnaires. A total of 482 were properly completed, yielding a robust response rate of 96.4%. The administration was facilitated by trained research assistants who ensured privacy and confidentiality, which minimized social desirability bias.

Results and discussion

Characteristics of respondents

The socio-demographic and familial characteristics of the 482 adolescents are summarized in Table 1. The respondents' ages ranged from 12 to 17 years, with a mean age of 15.21 (Standard Deviation = 1.64). The age distribution indicates that the majority (58.9%) fell into the older adolescent bracket (15-17 years). This aligns with criminological literature suggesting that the propensity for risk-taking and peer-influenced behavior peaks during mid-to-late adolescence as youths seek autonomy from familial constraints (Umar et al., 2025).

In terms of gender, males constituted 54.4% of the sample, while females made up 45.6%. Regarding educational status, a concerning 18.5% of the adolescents surveyed were out of school. The out-of-school phenomenon in Niger State is often a direct consequence of socio-economic hardship or security concerns, and it represents a significant risk factor, as the school environment acts as a secondary institution of social control.

Analyzing family structures revealed that 34.6% of respondents lived in intact, monogamous households. A significant proportion (42.1%) resided in polygamous families, reflecting the dominant cultural and religious practices in the Northern region of Nigeria. Single-parent or broken homes accounted for 23.3% of the sample. The high prevalence of non-monogamous structures necessitates a critical evaluation of how resource distribution and parental attention within these setups affect child socialization.

The socio-economic profiling of the households, determined via the wealth index, painted a stark picture of economic vulnerability: over half of the respondents (56.8%) originated from households classified as "Poor." Only 13.9% belonged to the "Rich" category. This economic reality corroborates the macroeconomic data provided by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (2024), underscoring pervasive poverty. In such environments, the struggle for daily subsistence often supersedes active parenting and supervision.

When assessing family functioning, 40.7% of respondents reported experiencing "Low" parental supervision, meaning their caregivers rarely knew their whereabouts or monitored their peer associations. Furthermore, regarding disciplinary methods, 44.2% identified their parents' primary style as Authoritarian (relying on harsh physical punishment or verbal abuse), while 24.9% experienced Permissive or Neglectful parenting. Only 30.9% benefited from Authoritative parenting, which balances warmth with firm boundary-setting.

Crucially, the dependent variable analysis revealed that 38.6% of the surveyed adolescents (n=186) met the criteria for being categorized as "Delinquent" based on self-reported behaviors. The most frequently reported infractions included persistent truancy, participation in neighborhood street fights, petty theft from family or neighbors, and the consumption of illicit substances (codeine, tramadol, and marijuana).

Table 1: Distribution of socio-demographic and family characteristics of adolescents in Niger State (n = 482)

Variable	Categories	Count	Percentage (%)
Age	12 - 14 years	198	41.1
	15 - 17 years	284	58.9
Gender	Male	262	54.4
	Female	220	45.6
Educational Status	In School	393	81.5
	Out of School	89	18.5
Family Structure	Intact / Monogamous	167	34.6
	Polygamous	203	42.1
	Single Parent / Broken Home	112	23.3
Household Wealth Index	Poor	274	56.8
	Middle	141	29.3
	Rich	67	13.9
Parental Supervision	Low	196	40.7
	Moderate	165	34.2
	High	121	25.1
Disciplinary Method	Authoritative	149	30.9
	Authoritarian	213	44.2
	Permissive / Neglectful	120	24.9
Delinquency Status	Delinquent (Yes)	186	38.6
	Non-delinquent (No)	296	61.4

Source: Field Data, 2026.

Predictors of Juvenile Delinquency

To determine the familial factors that significantly predict the likelihood of an adolescent engaging in delinquent behavior, a multivariable binary logistic regression was conducted. Variables that were significant at the bivariate level were included in the adjusted model. Table 2 presents the Crude Odds Ratios (cOR) and the Adjusted Odds Ratios (aOR) alongside their 95% Confidence Intervals.

The logistic regression model revealed several statistically significant predictors of juvenile delinquency.

Family Structure: The results demonstrated that family structure is a profound determinant of adolescent behavior. Adolescents residing in intact, monogamous households had a 58.8% lower likelihood of engaging in delinquency compared to those in the reference category of single-parent/broken homes (aOR = 0.412; 95% CI: 0.215–0.788; $P < 0.01$). While youths from polygamous homes also showed lower odds of delinquency than those from broken homes (aOR = 0.610), the protective effect was less pronounced than in monogamous structures and bordered on the edge of statistical significance in the adjusted model ($P = 0.045$).

These findings underscore the vulnerability of adolescents in broken homes. The trauma of parental separation, combined with the loss of a dual-income and dual-supervision dynamic, severely compromises the family's social control function. This aligns with the findings of Sanusi and Lawal (2024), who posited that the structural integrity of the home is the first line of defense against deviance. The slightly elevated risk in polygamous homes compared to monogamous ones may be attributed to the "dilution of resources" both material and emotional where a single patriarch struggles to effectively monitor and provide for a large number of offspring across multiple maternal units (Abdullahi, 2025).

Parental Supervision: Parental supervision emerged as one of the strongest predictors in the model. Adolescents who reported experiencing "High" levels of parental supervision had substantially reduced odds of delinquency (aOR = 0.284; 95% CI: 0.145–0.556; $P < 0.001$) relative to those with "Low" supervision. Even "Moderate" supervision significantly reduced the risk (aOR = 0.518; $P < 0.01$).

This robust statistical association provides empirical validation for Hirschi's Social Control Theory within the Nigerian context. When parents actively monitor their children, they severely limit the opportunities for adolescents to associate with deviant peers or engage in covert criminal acts. As Nnamdi and Tukur (2023), argued, in urban centers like Minna and Suleja, where youths are exposed to cybercafes, street gangs, and unregulated informal markets, the physical and psychological presence of a vigilant parent is an indispensable deterrent. Lack of supervision essentially creates a vacuum that neighborhood gangs and illicit subcultures readily fill.

Household Wealth Index (Socioeconomic Status): The economic reality of the family dictates its capacity to socialize youths. The regression analysis indicated that adolescents from households categorized as "Poor" were more than twice as likely to engage in delinquent behavior compared to those from "Rich" households (aOR = 2.145; 95% CI: 1.208–3.809; $P <$

0.05). Those from "Middle" income households showed slightly higher odds than the rich, though it was not highly significant (aOR = 1.340; P = 0.218).

This finding strongly supports the deprivation theories of crime. Poverty induces multi-dimensional stress within the family. Parents struggling with chronic financial deficits are often emotionally depleted, leading to harsher, less patient interactions with their children (Adebayo & Ojo, 2024). Furthermore, poverty directly incentivizes economic delinquency; an adolescent whose basic needs for food, clothing, or school materials are unmet at home is highly susceptible to the allure of theft, fraud, or joining criminal syndicates that promise quick financial rewards. The rise of "yahoo-yahoo" (cyber-fraud) among teenagers in Niger State is intrinsically linked to this socio-economic desperation (Umar et al., 2025).

Disciplinary Methods (Parenting Styles): The method by which families enforce norms is critical. The study found that adolescents subjected to "Authoritative" parenting had a 68.5% lower likelihood of delinquency compared to those who experienced "Permissive/Neglectful" parenting (aOR = 0.315; 95% CI: 0.170–0.582; P < 0.001). Interestingly, adolescents subjected to "Authoritarian" parenting (harsh, punitive discipline) did not show a statistically significant protective advantage over the neglectful category in the adjusted model (aOR = 0.812; P = 0.450).

These results critique the long-held cultural belief in Northern Nigeria that harsh corporal punishment is the most effective way to instill discipline. The data clearly shows that Authoritarian parenting which lacks emotional warmth and relies on fear—fails to significantly deter delinquency and may, in fact, breed covert rebellion or teach children that physical aggression is an acceptable conflict resolution tool (Eze & Danladi, 2026). Conversely, the Authoritative style, which utilizes reasoning, sets clear expectations, and applies non-violent consequences, successfully internalizes moral values within the adolescent, rendering external policing less necessary.

Gender and Educational Status: As covariates, Gender and Educational Status behaved as expected. Males were more than twice as likely as females to be delinquent (aOR = 2.450; P < 0.01). This gender disparity is common in criminological data globally, often attributed to differential socialization practices where females are monitored more strictly than males (Mustapha et al., 2023). Furthermore, adolescents who were "Out of School" had significantly higher odds of delinquency (aOR = 2.890; P < 0.01) compared to those in school, highlighting the critical role of formal education in structured socialization.

Table 2: Predictors of Juvenile Delinquency among Adolescents in Niger State

Variable	cOR (95% CI)	P-value	aOR (95% CI)	P-value
Gender				
Female (Ref)	1.000		1.000	
Male	2.810 (1.890–4.178) ***	0.000	2.450 (1.520–3.945) **	0.004
Educational Status				
In School (Ref)	1.000		1.000	
Out of School	3.560 (2.120–5.980) ***	0.000	2.890 (1.450–5.760) **	0.002
Family Structure				

Broken Home (Ref)	1.000		1.000	
Intact / Monogamous	0.320 (0.180–0.568)	0.000	0.412 (0.215–0.788)	0.007
	***		**	
Polygamous	0.540 (0.320–0.910)	0.021	0.610 (0.380–0.985)	0.045
	*		*	
Household Wealth Index				
Rich (Ref)	1.000		1.000	
Middle	1.450 (0.890–2.360)	0.135	1.340 (0.760–2.360)	0.218
Poor	2.670 (1.450–4.910)	0.002	2.145 (1.208–3.809)	0.012
	**		*	
Parental Supervision				
Low (Ref)	1.000		1.000	
Moderate	0.450 (0.280–0.720)	0.001	0.518 (0.290–0.925)	0.008
	**		**	
High	0.180 (0.100–0.320)	0.000	0.284 (0.145–0.556)	0.000
	***		***	
Disciplinary Method				
Permissive/Neglect (Ref)	1.000		1.000	
Authoritarian	0.750 (0.450–1.250)	0.271	0.812 (0.430–1.530)	0.450
Authoritative	0.210 (0.120–0.360)	0.000	0.315 (0.170–0.582)	0.000
	***		***	

Note: cOR = Crude Odds Ratio; aOR = Adjusted Odds Ratio; CI = Confidence Interval.

- = p-value < 0.05; ** = p-value < 0.01; *** = p-value < 0.001. Dependent variable reference category: Non-delinquent.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The empirical evidence from this study unequivocally demonstrates that the family institution is the fulcrum upon which juvenile delinquency pivots. In Niger State, an alarming 38.6% of adolescents reported engaging in delinquent behaviors, a statistic that reflects the deep-seated fissures in contemporary family dynamics. The structural integrity of the home, the economic viability of the household, the vigilance of parental supervision, and the psychological health of disciplinary methods are all highly significant predictors of adolescent behavior.

Specifically, the study concludes that broken homes and households plagued by poverty serve as potent incubators for youth deviance. The inability of impoverished parents to meet basic needs directly correlates with economic crimes among youths. Furthermore, the data dismantles the cultural reliance on harsh, authoritarian parenting, proving that it is structurally inferior to authoritative parenting in preventing delinquency. High parental supervision acts as the ultimate protective buffer against the criminogenic influences prevalent in urban and semi-urban communities.

To mitigate the escalating wave of juvenile delinquency in Niger State, policy interventions must pivot from merely punitive juvenile justice measures to proactive, family-centered empowerment.

First, the state government, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, must prioritize the economic empowerment of vulnerable families. Providing micro-credit facilities and vocational training for parents, particularly single mothers and heads of large polygamous households, will alleviate the economic pressures that push youths into the streets. When families are financially stable, parents are better positioned to provide both material needs and active supervision.

Second, there is an urgent need for community-based sensitization programs focusing on modern parenting paradigms. Traditional institutions, religious leaders, and the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development should collaborate to educate parents on the efficacy of authoritative parenting. Communities must be taught that extreme physical punishment breeds aggression, whereas active supervision, communication, and firm boundaries foster behavioral compliance and moral internalization.

Finally, the state must address the out-of-school syndrome. The Ministry of Education must enforce free and compulsory basic education and provide social safety nets (like school feeding and free uniforms) to ensure that adolescents from low-income families remain in the school system, thereby remaining under the secondary tier of institutional supervision. A fortified family, supported by robust state socio-economic policies, remains the most effective antidote to juvenile delinquency.

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