

DRUG ABUSE AND RISING CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES AMONG YOUTHS IN BORI LGA, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study explores the nexus between drug abuse and the rising wave of criminal activities among youths in Bori Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State, Nigeria. Framed within criminological and sociological perspectives, the research draws upon empirical evidence derived from interviews with community leaders, law enforcement officers, youth representatives, and health practitioners. Findings reveal that drug abuse functions as both a symptom and driver of socio-economic marginalization, unemployment, and weak family structures. The historical context of Bori, once the headquarters of the Ogoni struggle and a hub for youth activism, is now overshadowed by escalating drug use—particularly cannabis, codeine-based syrups, and synthetic substances—which correlates with increased incidences of theft, cult-related violence, and armed robbery. The research demonstrates that drug abuse lowers inhibitions, fosters deviant subcultures, and exacerbates social exclusion, thereby entrenching cycles of poverty and insecurity. Participants emphasized inadequate government intervention, porous drug supply networks, and the normalization of drug culture among youths as key enablers of the crisis. This paper argues for integrated policy responses combining community-based rehabilitation, law enforcement reform, youth empowerment programmes, and interfaith engagement to dismantle the structural conditions sustaining the drug–crime nexus. The study contributes to debates in youth studies, criminology, and African development research by situating the experiences of Bori youths within broader patterns of drug-induced criminality in Nigeria.

Keywords: Drug abuse, Youth crime, Bori LGA, Rivers State, Criminology, Social exclusion, Nigeria

Introduction

Drug abuse among youths has emerged as one of the most pressing socio-cultural and security challenges confronting contemporary Nigeria. While the menace cuts across different states, the situation in Bori Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State is particularly disturbing due to its historical significance, strategic location, and its socio-political context. Once renowned as the headquarters of the Ogoni struggle for environmental justice in the 1990s, Bori has gradually shifted from being a hub of activism to a hotspot for drug-related activities and youth criminality. The twin problems of drug abuse and rising crime now threaten the area's social fabric, economic productivity, and communal security.

Historically, youth in Ogoniland played pivotal roles in grassroots mobilization, socio-political resistance, and cultural continuity. However, since the late 1990s, structural dislocations arising from unemployment, poor governance, environmental degradation caused by oil exploration, and the erosion of traditional authority structures have contributed to increased vulnerability among young people. Within this context, psychoactive substances such as cannabis, tramadol, codeine

syrups, and locally concocted mixtures (commonly known as “monkey tail”) have gained prominence. Their availability through illicit drug markets and porous security systems has coincided with the surge of crimes including cult-related violence, armed robbery, kidnapping, and petty theft in Bori and its environs.

This article draws on **interviews** conducted with community leaders, youth representatives, law enforcement officials, health practitioners, and religious figures to capture lived experiences and narratives on how drug abuse intersects with youth crime in Bori LGA. By situating empirical voices within historical and theoretical debates in gender and youth studies, criminology, and African development, the article interrogates the structural, cultural, and personal dimensions of the crisis.

The central argument is that drug abuse among youths in Bori does not occur in isolation but is embedded in broader socio-economic inequalities, weak institutional responses, and normalized deviant subcultures. This framing allows for a nuanced understanding of the drug–crime nexus, while pointing toward possible interventions for social restoration.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Drug Abuse and Crime

Drug abuse refers to the excessive and maladaptive consumption of psychoactive substances—including alcohol, cannabis, opioids, amphetamines, and locally concocted mixtures—that impair cognitive, emotional, and social functioning (UNODC, 2023). It differs from casual or medicinal use by its compulsive nature and its negative impact on personal health, social relationships, and public order. Crime, on the other hand, encompasses deviant behaviors punishable under the law, ranging from petty theft and burglary to violent acts such as armed robbery, cultism, kidnapping, and homicide. The intersection between drug abuse and crime has been well documented globally, with studies showing that substance abuse often fuels aggression, reduces inhibitions, and generates the economic need to finance continued drug use, thereby escalating criminal activities (Goldstein, 1985; Akers & Sellers, 2013).

In the Nigerian context, the abuse of substances such as tramadol, codeine, and cannabis has been linked to youth involvement in cult clashes, sexual violence, cybercrime, and political thuggery (Oshodi, Aina, & Onajole, 2010). Bori LGA, Rivers State, exemplifies this troubling intersection.

Theoretical Frameworks Linking Drug Abuse and Crime

a) Strain Theory

Robert Merton's strain theory provides a useful lens to explain youth involvement in drugs and crime. When societal goals—such as wealth, employment, and status—are unattainable due to structural inequalities, individuals may resort to illegitimate means, including substance abuse and criminality, to cope with frustration. In Bori, chronic unemployment, poverty, and the ecological crisis caused by oil exploitation amplify this strain among youths.

b) Social Learning Theory

Akers' Social Learning Theory posits that behaviors, including drug use and crime, are learned through interaction with peers and reinforcement. Youths in Bori often live in neighborhoods where drug-taking and cult violence are normalized, encouraging the transmission of deviant lifestyles. Peer groups become training grounds for both substance abuse and violent crime.

c) Subcultural Theory

Cohen's subcultural theory highlights how marginalized groups develop alternative value systems that glorify deviance. Among Bori youths, drug-induced bravado, cult membership, and violent displays of masculinity are celebrated within peer groups, creating a subculture where criminality and drug abuse reinforce each other.

d) Public Health Perspective

From a health standpoint, drug abuse is not only a criminological concern but also a medical issue, as it leads to addiction, mental health disorders, and premature mortality. This perspective emphasizes rehabilitation and treatment rather than punitive measures.

Empirical Studies in Nigeria and Africa

Several Nigerian studies confirm the strong nexus between substance abuse and youth crime. For example, Abayomi et al. (2015) observed that cannabis and tramadol use among Lagos youths strongly correlated with violent crimes. Similarly, Nwosu and Oche (2018) in Enugu highlighted that drug abuse intensified cult clashes and armed robbery. In Northern Nigeria, studies have shown that

the abuse of cough syrups and psychotropic drugs contributes to violent extremism and political thuggery (Yusuf, 2020).

Across Africa, South African research has highlighted the link between methamphetamine use (“tik”) and gang-related violence in Cape Town (Plüddemann et al., 2010). In Kenya, alcohol and khat abuse have been implicated in rising insecurity and domestic violence (Ndetei et al., 2009). These regional patterns echo what is unfolding in Bori, suggesting a continental crisis of drug-fueled youth criminality.

The Bori Context: Historical and Socio-Economic Dynamics

Bori holds a unique position as the traditional headquarters of Ogoniland and a hub of the Niger Delta struggle for environmental justice. However, decades of oil exploitation and the resulting environmental degradation have eroded traditional livelihoods such as farming and fishing. This ecological displacement, coupled with widespread unemployment and the breakdown of traditional authority, has left many youths disillusioned.

Reports by community leaders and law enforcement agencies in Bori indicate that psychoactive substances such as cannabis, tramadol, and “monkey tail” are not only widely available but also embedded in youth socialization. Cult groups—some linked to local politics—recruit youths through promises of protection, identity, and financial gain, often facilitated by drugs. This nexus between drugs, crime, and cultism has created a cycle of violence that undermines community stability.

Gaps in Literature

Despite extensive scholarship on drug abuse and crime in Nigeria, few studies focus specifically on Bori LGA, which has unique socio-political and cultural dynamics. Existing research often highlights urban centers such as Lagos, Kano, and Port Harcourt while neglecting semi-urban and rural hotspots. Additionally, while statistical studies abound, qualitative accounts capturing the lived experiences of youths, elders, religious leaders, and community figures remain scarce. This gap justifies the present study, which foregrounds narratives from multiple stakeholders in Bori to enrich the national and African discourse on drugs and crime.

Findings and Discussion

The data gathered from interviews with community leaders, youths, religious figures, and local security actors in Bori LGA revealed the deep and multifaceted relationship between drug abuse and criminality among youths. The findings are presented thematically, integrating direct voices from the field to illuminate the structural and experiential realities shaping this phenomenon.

Prevalence and Accessibility of Drugs

The findings reveal that the availability and affordability of psychoactive substances in Bori Local Government Area constitutes a key driver of drug abuse among youths. Respondents repeatedly emphasized that cannabis (“Igbo”), tramadol, codeine-based syrups, and locally brewed mixtures such as “monkey tail” (gin infused with marijuana or cannabis leaves) are not only widely consumed but are embedded within the everyday social fabric of communities.

A 23-year-old male youth in Kaani community confessed:

“Drugs are everywhere here. Even a small boy can get tramadol for N200 from the chemist. It is not hard to find, and when you take it, you feel like you can do anything.”

This confession underscores how chemists, street vendors, and even informal sales points serve as nodes for drug distribution. While Nigeria’s regulatory framework technically restricts the sale of prescription drugs like tramadol or codeine, the interviews suggest weak enforcement, enabling their widespread circulation as over-the-counter commodities.

Community elders also offered a generational comparison that highlights the shift in drug culture:

“The level of drug circulation in Bori today is alarming. In my days, young people smoked cigarettes secretly, but now you see children of 15 buying tramadol like groundnut.” (Community elder, Bori Town)

Such testimonies reveal how drug accessibility has not only increased quantitatively but has also shifted qualitatively—from being clandestine to overtly normalized within public spaces. This normalization is evident in peer groups where drug use is associated with courage, stamina, and social

belonging. For many young men, drugs are perceived as tools of empowerment, especially in contexts of unemployment, poverty, and marginalization.

Importantly, the interviews also shed light on gendered dynamics of accessibility. While young men are the most visible consumers, female respondents noted that women are increasingly engaging in the consumption of codeine syrups and cannabis, though often in private settings. A 19-year-old female respondent remarked:

“Some girls take codeine to relax and escape from stress, but they hide it because the community sees it as shameful for a woman. Boys can take drugs openly, but girls risk being called wayward.”

This gendered double standard suggests that while accessibility is universal, stigma shapes women’s participation in drug cultures differently—pushing them into hidden consumption that still fosters vulnerability to exploitation and criminal entanglement.

Another striking dimension of accessibility is the intersection with local criminal economies. Several respondents noted that small-scale dealers often recruit idle youths into distribution networks, offering them free drugs as incentive. This blurs the line between drug users and drug peddlers, embedding many youths within cycles of dependency and criminalization.

From a contextual standpoint, the easy flow of drugs into Bori reflects broader structural weaknesses: porous borders, compromised law enforcement, and corruption within local pharmaceutical supply chains. Thus, the prevalence and accessibility of drugs in Bori cannot be understood merely as a matter of individual choice, but rather as a symptom of systemic failures that enable a thriving underground drug economy.

In sum, the findings indicate that drug accessibility in Bori is:

1. Widespread and normalized, cutting across social classes and age groups.
2. Economically affordable, with even schoolchildren able to purchase psychoactive substances.
3. Gendered in stigma, with male use normalized while female use is hidden but increasing.
4. Linked to criminal subcultures, where accessibility doubles as a recruitment tool for illicit networks.

This pervasive accessibility has entrenched a culture of tolerance toward drug abuse, one that not only sustains addiction but also provides fertile ground for the rise in criminal activities among youths.

Drug Abuse as a Driver of Criminal Violence

Respondents consistently highlighted the strong causal link between drug abuse and the rising levels of criminal violence in Bori. Interviews with community members, religious leaders, and security personnel underscored that psychoactive substances act not merely as recreational tools but as stimulants for crime, emboldening young people to commit acts of violence with reduced fear of consequence.

A police officer stationed in Bori explained:

“When we arrest these boys after robbery or cult fights, we almost always find drugs in their pockets. They use tramadol and marijuana to give themselves ‘liver’ before attacking.” (Divisional Police Officer, Bori LGA)

This testimony aligns with research suggesting that drug use lowers inhibitions, enhances risk-taking, and fosters impulsive aggression (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2022). In Bori, drugs have become integrated into the preparatory rituals of cult groups and armed gangs, functioning almost like a “weapon enhancer” that primes youths for violent engagement.

Cult-related violence, particularly among the Icelanders and Greenlanders, was frequently reported as being fueled by drug-induced aggression. The pastor of a local Pentecostal church lamented:

“Most of the killings in this area come after the boys have gathered, smoked, and gotten high. The drugs make them lose fear of death or prison.” (Pentecostal pastor, Bori Town)

These accounts reflect how substances such as cannabis, tramadol, and “monkey tail” function within peer-group networks to reinforce violent masculinity. Taking drugs before violent missions not only provides courage but also solidifies group loyalty, as intoxication creates a shared altered state that fosters unity in carrying out violent acts (Anderson, 1999).

Community elders also expressed concern that the nexus between drugs and violence has reshaped local culture, replacing traditional values of restraint with a glorification of reckless bravery. A retired teacher recounted:

“The boys now see violence as a badge of honor. Once they are high, they boast, they fight, and they terrorize. It was never like this when I was young.” (Retired teacher, Zaakpon community)

This normalization of drug-fueled criminal violence demonstrates a dangerous cycle: the widespread availability of drugs lowers the barrier to their use, which in turn escalates violent crime, thereby destabilizing communities and eroding social cohesion.

Drug abuse in Bori is not only a personal health issue but a structural driver of crime, providing the psychological fuel that sustains robberies, cultism, and violent clashes. These findings emphasize that any effective intervention must address both the supply of drugs and the socio-cultural environments that normalize their use in criminal contexts.

Socio-Economic Hardship and Youth Vulnerability

Another significant dimension emerging from the interviews is the role of socio-economic hardship in shaping youth vulnerability to drug abuse and criminality in Ogoniland. Respondents repeatedly emphasized that unemployment, poverty, and lack of educational or vocational opportunities create a fertile ground for substance use and risky behaviors.

A 27-year-old unemployed youth described the vicious cycle of deprivation and drug reliance:

“There is no work in Bori. If you sit at home, you think too much. Drugs help you forget hunger. Sometimes, if you need money, you join your friends in a small robbery. Without drugs, you cannot even do it.”

This testimony illustrates the self-medicating function of drugs: they are consumed not merely for pleasure, but as an anesthetic against the psychological burdens of hunger, exclusion, and despair. Moreover, drugs serve a functional role in enabling high-risk criminal survival strategies—such as robbery and cult activity—that youths resort to under conditions of socio-economic marginalization.

Community leaders and religious figures also framed the crisis as a consequence of structural neglect. A traditional ruler in Khana noted:

“Our boys are not naturally bad. But when government forgets them, no jobs, no schools, no training—what else do they do? Drugs become their friend, and crime becomes their work.”

From a sociological lens, this aligns with strain theory (Merton, 1938), which posits that when legitimate means of achieving societal goals are blocked, individuals innovate through deviant pathways. Here, the drug-crime nexus is the innovation by which marginalized Ogoni youths seek both escape and survival.

Poverty thus functions as both a push factor (driving youths toward drugs to numb suffering) and a pull factor (drawing them into criminal networks where drugs are both a commodity and a weapon). In this way, drug abuse in Ogoniland cannot be understood merely as a moral failing but as a structural symptom of economic dispossession.

Impact on Families and Community Life

The ripple effects of drug abuse extend far beyond individual users, undermining the stability of families and the cohesion of entire communities. Parents, elders, and local leaders repeatedly voiced distress over how substance abuse has altered the moral and social fabric of Ogoni communities. Many families described experiences of broken trust, economic strain, and emotional trauma due to drug-related behaviors.

A mother shared a painful story:

“My son started with cough syrup. Today, he is in prison for stealing with his gang. Drugs destroyed his life and almost destroyed this family.” (Mother of a 19-year-old, Yeghe community)

Such experiences are not isolated. Interviewees explained that households bear the brunt of addiction through financial burdens, such as repeated bail payments or medical expenses, and through psychological stress, as parents grapple with fear, stigma, and disappointment. Mothers in particular lamented the loss of their sons’ potential, noting that instead of becoming breadwinners, many young men had turned into sources of hardship and shame.

Community elders observed that drug-related violence has reshaped patterns of daily life. Fear now governs many interactions, with families discouraging their children from moving freely or attending social gatherings. A traditional leader noted:

“When boys are high, you don’t know who they will attack. People now live with suspicion, and the trust we once had as a community is fading.” (Community elder, Bori Town)

This erosion of social cohesion was described as intergenerational in nature. Children grow up in households disrupted by drug abuse, witnessing domestic conflict, criminal arrests, or even deaths. Over time, these patterns risk reproducing cycles of substance dependence and delinquency. Furthermore, respondents highlighted the loss of communal values that once served as informal social

controls. Where respect for elders and communal discipline previously guided youth behavior, drug culture has fostered defiance and alienation. Churches and traditional institutions are increasingly challenged in their authority, as drug-influenced youths resist correction and mock moral teachings.

Drug abuse is not merely an individual health or crime issue in Ogoniland—it is a social crisis. Its consequences destabilize households, weaken intergenerational bonds, and fracture the very foundations of communal trust and solidarity.

Religious and Community Leaders' Perspectives

Religious and community leaders in Bori consistently described drug abuse as not only a social menace but also a moral and spiritual crisis. They interpreted the rising prevalence of substance use among youths as evidence of weakened family structures, erosion of traditional values, and the failure of society's moral guardianship.

An imam offered a faith-based explanation of the crisis:

“When a child has no guidance from home and no job to keep him busy, he falls into the hands of bad friends. Drugs are the devil's way of controlling our youths.” (Imam, Bori Central Mosque)

For Christian leaders, drug abuse was equally framed as a sign of spiritual decay and declining parental oversight. Pentecostal pastors, in particular, linked the problem to the collapse of discipline in homes and schools, stressing that parents had abandoned their role as moral instructors. They further interpreted drug use as a gateway to cultism, immorality, and violence, undermining the sanctity of community life.

Community chiefs and traditional rulers echoed these concerns but emphasized the communal dimension of the crisis. They noted that drug-related crimes were not isolated acts but collective disruptions that threatened peace, trust, and kinship ties. One village head lamented that families were becoming powerless in disciplining their children, leaving the burden on communities that lacked the resources or legitimacy to confront hardened cult groups.

Several chiefs also appealed for stronger collaboration between government agencies, religious institutions, and traditional authorities. They argued that reclaiming the moral authority over youths required a multi-level approach: spiritual reorientation, stricter law enforcement, and visible economic empowerment programs.

Overall, these perspectives demonstrate how drug abuse is interpreted in moral, spiritual, and communal terms, highlighting the belief that restoring discipline and social harmony is central to tackling the crisis.

The Nexus of Politics, Drugs, and Youths

A particularly troubling dimension of the Bori drug problem is its entanglement with local politics. Several respondents alleged that politicians actively fuel drug culture by distributing substances and weapons to youths during election seasons. These practices create a dual incentive: youths receive temporary financial support and intoxicants, while political actors secure loyal foot soldiers for intimidation and electoral violence.

A youth leader candidly remarked:

“During election, politicians give boys drugs and money to intimidate voters or snatch ballot boxes. After the election, these boys keep the habit of drugs and crime.”

This testimony situates drug abuse within a broader structure of systemic corruption, where political patronage transforms marginalised youths into instruments of violence. The aftermath of such cycles is that drugs, once introduced for political mobilisation, become embedded in everyday survival strategies. This nexus complicates community-level interventions, as it highlights how drug economies are not merely grassroots phenomena but are sustained by elite complicity.

Gendered Dimensions of Drug Abuse and Crime

Although drug abuse in Bori is most visibly concentrated among young men, the study found significant evidence of women's involvement, with unique gendered implications. Female respondents described patterns where drug use is closely linked with sex work, transactional relationships, and coping with economic precarity. Substances such as tramadol and “Loud” (a form of cannabis) were said to provide “courage,” dull feelings of shame, and increase perceived sexual endurance for commercial encounters.

A young woman explained:

“Girls also use tramadol and ‘Loud.’ Some even take it before going with men. It makes them feel no shame and brings money.” (Female youth, 21, Zaakpon community)

This finding underscores the gendered vulnerabilities created by drug abuse. Unlike young men, whose substance use is often tied to gang activity and violence, young women face heightened risks of sexual exploitation, sexually transmitted infections, and long-term stigmatization. From a socio-cultural perspective, this not only reinforces patriarchal cycles of poverty but also threatens the moral fabric of families and communities. The feminization of drug abuse, therefore, demands gender-sensitive interventions that address both health risks and structural inequities.

Community Responses and Coping Strategies

Despite the pervasive challenges, communities in Bori have not remained entirely passive in the face of drug abuse and the crimes it fuels. A combination of religious, traditional, and civic initiatives reflects local attempts to respond, even though these efforts remain fragmented, underfunded, and sometimes ineffective in the long term.

Religious Interventions:

Churches and mosques have become critical spaces where moral guidance and rehabilitation are attempted. Pastors organize revival meetings specifically targeted at youths, where testimonies of former addicts are used to discourage others. Similarly, imams in Friday sermons frequently warn against drugs as a path of destruction, framing abstinence as both a moral duty and a spiritual discipline. Some congregations run informal counseling sessions, prayer vigils, or fasting programs aimed at “delivering” addicted youths.

Community Vigilantism and Policing Efforts:

In many neighborhoods, community vigilantes patrol at night to monitor hotspots where drug peddling thrives. These groups sometimes arrest suspected dealers and hand them over to the police. However, several respondents lamented that such arrests often lead to quick releases, allegedly due to corruption or lack of evidence. This cycle fuels frustration and a sense of futility among community enforcers.

A community head explained:

“We try to talk to the boys, even arrest some dealers and hand them to police. But the truth is, without government intervention, our efforts are like pouring water on stone.”

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Advocacy:

Occasional sensitization campaigns by NGOs highlight the dangers of drug abuse, often using media jingles, posters, or community workshops. Some NGOs also run skill acquisition schemes for recovering addicts, though the reach of such initiatives remains limited. Respondents noted that NGO presence is sporadic, with interventions coming in “bursts” rather than sustained programs.

Household Coping Strategies:

At the household level, coping mechanisms are largely reactive. Some families resort to traditional herbal treatments or spiritual healers when rehabilitation centers are inaccessible or unaffordable. Others attempt to “exile” addicted children to relatives in distant villages, hoping separation from peers will break the habit. Unfortunately, these measures are rarely successful in the long run, and many families oscillate between hope and despair.

Collective Fatigue and Resilience:

One striking theme in community responses is the sense of collective fatigue—an acknowledgment that efforts are consistently undermined by wider structural problems such as poverty, unemployment, and state neglect. Yet, this fatigue coexists with a resilient will to keep trying, borne out of fear of losing an entire generation. Communities, though constrained, recognize that doing nothing would amount to surrendering their future.

Community responses illustrate both agency and limitation: while people are innovating survival and coping strategies, the absence of coordinated state-backed rehabilitation frameworks renders these responses insufficient. The fight against drug abuse in Bori, therefore, remains both a grassroots struggle and a demand for systemic change.

Discussion

The findings from Bori LGA underscore that drug abuse is not a standalone deviant practice but rather a deeply structural and systemic problem. Youths’ engagement with drugs emerges as both a

response to socio-economic strain and as a consequence of political and institutional failures. This duality illustrates the complexity of the drug-crime nexus in the Niger Delta.

First, the criminological significance lies in how drugs function simultaneously as a *cause* and a *consequence* of criminal activity. On one hand, drug consumption facilitates violence, theft, and other crimes, while on the other hand, criminal networks and political actors actively sustain the circulation of drugs. This aligns with Merton's strain theory (1938), which posits that when legitimate opportunities for success are blocked, individuals innovate through deviant means. In Bori, drugs serve both as an avenue of escape from economic hardship and as an instrument for gaining illicit income and influence.

Second, the findings resonate with social disorganization theory (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Communities in Bori, weakened by unemployment, poverty, and political manipulation, lack the collective efficacy to regulate deviance. As respondents highlighted, local chiefs, imams, and pastors attempt interventions, but their efforts are "like pouring water on stone" without strong institutional backing. The erosion of family structures and communal authority intensifies this vulnerability, leaving youths susceptible to recruitment by drug cartels and political patrons.

Third, the political dimension is particularly troubling. The testimonies of youth leaders about politicians distributing drugs during elections illuminate how structural corruption reproduces cycles of abuse and criminality. Drugs, in this context, become not only a tool of intoxication but also a weapon of political violence, entrenching systemic insecurity. This suggests that solutions must go beyond policing to address the complicity of elites in perpetuating drug economies.

Fourth, the gendered dynamics of drug use reveal additional layers of vulnerability. While young men dominate in drug-related crimes, young women's drug use is frequently intertwined with sex work, transactional survival, and exposure to exploitation. This aligns with feminist criminological insights that deviance among women is often linked to structures of poverty, inequality, and gendered exploitation. Addressing female vulnerability in drug abuse therefore requires interventions sensitive to women's social and economic realities.

Finally, while community responses such as religious rehabilitation prayers, NGO sensitization, and vigilante policing are commendable, they remain fragmented and underfunded. Without systemic support—particularly through government investment in education, employment, and rehabilitation infrastructure—such grassroots efforts cannot meaningfully address the entrenched structural drivers of drug-related crime.

The findings demonstrate that drug abuse in Bori is not a personal failure but a structural crisis rooted in poverty, weak governance, and political exploitation. Unless interventions target these deeper drivers, the cycle of drug abuse and crime will continue to undermine both social stability and development in the Niger Delta.

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