



Effects of Drug Abuse on the Nigerian Economy

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact of drug abuse on the Nigerian economy. The objective of the study was to identify the causes, solution and the effects of drug abuse on the Nigerian economy, which are classified into social and economic effects. Drug abuse has been of major concern to the government, the academia, and the society at large. This has actually constituted a great effect on the socio-economic development of individuals, family, the community and the nation. The economic effect looks at the loss of potential manpower, low productivity, and creation of an unfavorable environment for investors which of course will affect the Gross National Income as well as the internally generated revenue. Government is spending a lot of funds on security and settlement of IDPs created by insurgent as a result of drug abuse instead of using such funds to provide basic needs and infrastructural development, Its tarnish the image of the country, encourage corruption, encourage looters to loot public funds and cause's political unrest in the country. "Change begins with me" is the focal point here as it breeds a change in the family, community, society, and the entire body polity. This is done via a collaborative efforts of the government to employ more personnel and equipments (gadgets) to NDLEA and NAFDAC, non-governmental organizations to provide support, community based associations to form committee as well as educational institutions to organize workshop and seminars

Keywords: Socio-economic effects; Drug abuse; NAFDAC, NDLEA, Government, Gross National Income

INTRODUCTION

Most of the researchers from various academic backgrounds such as medicine, pharmacy, and other related natural and social sciences have drawn lot of contributions to the uses, effects, and consequence. However in their attempt to check and proffer solutions, their efforts have really defied any cure. The story is the same over the whole world, and not different from the Nigerian experience. But neglecting the impacts of Drug Abuse on Nigerian economy which resulting to spending a lot of funds meant in controlling insurgency, crime, armbands herdsman clash and political unrest instead for infrastructure developments and basic needs caused by drug abuse which form my area of interest (academic gap) to conduct the research

Armed robbery, insurgency, crime armbands herdsman clash and political unrest are all caused by drug abuse and most of the looters looting public funds are drug barons. If government employ more security personnel (NDLEA & NAFDAC) and provide them with more gadgets will curtail this evil acts of Drug abuse

It is a popularly held belief that the youths of any nation are the leaders of tomorrow. They are the vehicles through which positive changes can be realized. This is why many tend to invest on the future development of its youths. Governments, parents, and guardians devote a lot of time and resources in order to explore and harness the potentialities of youth. Therefore, societies that neglect the youth development may negatively affect future national development. Youth when neglected, can

find escape and solace in such things as drug abuse, pick-pocketing, loitering, rape, auto-theft, truancy, delinquent or criminal act and insurgency (Radda, 2009).

Drug abuse is increasingly growing higher day after day with an accelerated decrease in socio-economic development. Thus at various levels, government has promulgated decrees and edicts (as in military regimes) and laws during the civilian administration to check and curb this problem. Buhari and Idiagbon in 1984 enacted a decree called the Anti-Cocaine decree which spelt death sentence for drug pushers as well as the abusers. This decree however, claimed many lives and was later abrogated and repealed by the Babangida's administration which established the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in January, 1990. Government's effort in subsequent regimes poised to checkmate this menace also led to the establishment of another sister agency called; National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC). In essence, NAFDAC is poised to check the excesses of drug production, circulation, quality, contents, distribution, and consumption.

Literature Review

Drug abuse or drug dependence (as preferred by the world health organization), is defined as "a state of psychic or physical dependence, or both on a drug, following administration of the drug on a periodic or continuous basis." Because WHO (1973) found the term "abuse" ambiguous, it abandoned its use; instead the WHO glossary speaks of "harmful use" and "hazardous use", which is defined as follows: i) Harmful use: A pattern of psychoactive substance use that is causing damage to health, physical or mental. Harmful use commonly, but not invariably, has adverse social consequences. ii) Hazardous use: A pattern of substance use that increases the risk of harmful consequences for the user. In contrast to harmful use, hazardous use refers to patterns of use that are of public health significance despite the absence of any current disorder in the individual user. In the context of international drug control, drug abuse constitutes the use of any substance under international control outside therapeutic indications, in excessive dose levels, or over an unjustified period of time Tupper (2012).

A society predominantly made up of unskilled young persons who indulge in drug abuse cannot be regarded as a healthy and a developed one, since the abusers lose their potentialities to this activity. The consequences of drug abuse are multifarious, and ranges from large numbers of untimely deaths such as suicides, and road accidents, violent crimes, laziness, mediocrity and subsequent impoverishment. To this end, homes are broken, dreams are shattered, and potential manpower is wasted as drug abusers struggle to sustain the habits embedded in this subculture. They therefore become burdens to themselves, families, the society, and the state at large. Unfortunately, young persons who are supposed to shoulder Nigeria's future development in terms of socio- economic aspect are constant promoters of this Sub-Culture, and anti-social activity of drug abuse.

In trying to establish the history of the use and abuses of drugs, Huxley (1957) wrote thus; "All naturally occurring sedatives, narcotics, euphorants, and hallucinogens, and excitants were discovered thousands of years before civilization; probably by the late stone age man who systematically started poisoning himself. The presence of poppy heads in the kitchen middens of Swiss Lake dwellers shows how in his early history, man discovered the techniques of self-transcendence through drugs. There were drugs addicts even before the early farmers".

On the reasons why people abuse drugs Ethel (1985) said "People, particularly the young ones use drugs out of experimental curiosity". The indication here is that the young people get initiated by testing the drugs which their peers or mates use or abuse. And out of this curiosity, the fail to know the repercussion. Ethel further reasoned that "a few people use drugs as a means of displaying their masculinity or feminism or showing how they can control themselves".

Furthermore, Prim (1991) was of the opinion that the use of illicit drugs serve as a recipe for youths who on daily basis cannot deal with their immediate environment which is replete of poverty, and hopelessness. Therefore to him "those who do not have access to good mental healthcare as a result stumble upon theses bad substance and start abusing it".

Davis (1984) postulated that alcohol in form of fermented or distilled liquor from varieties of plants is the most consumed drug, but it constitutes a threat to public health". A high proportion of hospital beds are occupied annually by the mentally and physically damaged victims of alcohol dependence". He continued.

Banging on the dangers of Drugs Abuse Adeku (1991) opined that the dangers or effects posed by narcotic drugs to our youths in Nigeria and the world over in a concerted effort to create an

appreciable level of awareness about the dangers of narcotic drugs, their production, demands, supply and consumption. According to him, "Jingles in the radio, television, symposiums and posters are obviously inadequate to achieve the stated goals. To achieve our goals, the controlled distribution and trafficking should attain a primary concern".

Ajibola (1991) stated that; "More statements on the control, supply, demand or eradication and substitution of illicit production and processing of narcotic drugs substances would purely be cosmetics unless the right follow up of mechanisms were put in place to ensure control". While demands remain high, any success in reducing production will only result in greater reward for the United Nations' (UNs') selected traffickers. He thus opined that we must pursue a comprehensive campaign against drug abuse in an aspect concerning traffickers not only eradicating of supply and suppression of illicit traffickers, but also on the prevention and reduction of demand".

With the above in mind, Abacha (1994) suggested that; "We should pursue strategies that are comprehensive and multidimensional in scope and that comprises measures to eliminate illicit demand for narcotic and psychotropic substances. It was against this backdrop that the Federal Government launched the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)". He further affirmed that; "I have no doubt in my mind that the plan of action initiated in National Drugs control strategy will succeed, making Nigeria a drug free nation".

Objectives of the study:

The objectives of the study were:

- 1) To identify the causes of drug abuse
- 2) To examine its effects on our society/Nigerian economy
- 3) To proffer solution and recommendation on the causes of drug abuse

Factor that Causes Drug abuse Among Nigerians (Male and Female)

There are many factors that contribute to the influence of drug abuse among Nigerians (Male and Female) the causes of drug abuse in Nigeria are

1. **Unemployment:** These situations have been aggravated by lack of skills, opportunities for training and re-training and lack of committed action to promote job creation by private and community entrepreneurs. Frustration arising from these problems lead to recourse in drug abuse for temporarily removing the tension and problems arising from it.

2. **Poverty:** Adolescents with personality problems arising from social conditions have been found to abuse drugs. The social and economic status of most Nigerians is below average. Poverty is widespread, broken homes and unemployment is on the increase, therefore our youths roam the streets looking for employment or resort to begging.

3. **Lack of parental supervision:** Many parents have no time to supervise their sons and daughters. Some parents have little or no interaction with family members, while others put pressure on their children to pass exams or perform better in their studies. These phenomena initialize and increases drug abuse.

4. **Advertisement:** youth are sensitive to advertisement and copy quickly. The glamour in advertising alcohol and cigarette smoking make the youth want to be the way the advert depicts.

5. **Peer Group Influence:** Peer pressure plays a major role in influencing many adolescents into drug abuse. This is because peer pressure is a fact of teenage and youth life. As they try to depend less on parents, they show more dependency on their friends. In Nigeria, as other parts of the world, one may not enjoy the company of others unless he conforms to their norms.

6. **The Need for Energy to Work for Long Hours:** The increasing economic deterioration that leads to poverty and disempowerment of the people has driven many parents to send their children out in search of a means of earning something for contribution to family income. These children engage in hawking, bus conducting, head loading, scavenging, serving in food canteens etc and are prone to drug taking so as to gain more energy to work for long hours.

7. **Availability of the Drugs:** In many countries, drugs have dropped in prices as supplies have increased.

8. **Emotional and psychological stresses,** such as anxiety, frustration, and economic depression people always take drug or drink alcohol in order to forget their problem when they are provoked.

9. **Experimental Curiosity:** Curiosity to experiment the unknown facts about drugs thus motivates adolescents into drug use. The first experience in drug abuse produces a state of arousal such as happiness and pleasure which in turn motivate them to continue.

10. **The Need to prevent the Occurrence of Withdrawal symptoms:** If a drug is stopped, the user experiences what is termed “withdrawal symptoms”. Pain, anxiety, excessive sweating and shaking characterize such symptoms. The inability of the drug user to tolerate the symptoms motivates him to continue (Ige, 2000).

11. **Non support of State Governors to NDLEA personnel:** Most of the state governors donate vehicles to security personnel like Nigeria police force but neglecting other personnel like Nigeria Drugs Law Enforcement Agency which they need support to enable them perform their function effectively

12. **Non support of NGO’s to NDLEA personnel:** Most of the NGO’s donate vehicles to security personnel like Nigeria police force but neglecting other personnel like Nigeria Drugs Law Enforcement Agency which they need support to enable them perform their function effectively

13. **Non support of Wealthy individuals to NDLEA personnel:** Most of the wealthy individuals like Aliko Dangote donated vehicles to security personnel like Nigeria police force but neglecting other personnel like Nigeria Drugs Law Enforcement Agency which they need support to enable them perform their function effectively

14. **Priority of sex by married men than other responsibilities:** Most of the women took drugs to enable them satisfy their husband or boy friend which later turn to drug addict

15. **Politicians:** Some of our politicians use our youths to achieve their aim of winning election at all cost which makes them took drugs before carrying out the operations

16. Lack of awareness by religious and traditional leaders, Government, NGO’s:

17. Lack of supervision by Drug controlling security personnel (NAFDAC)

18. Shortage of Drug controlling security personnel (NAFDAC)

19. Unnecessary granting of license to patent medicine store owner

20. Flexible law on drug abuse

21. Lack of volunteers

Signs and Symptoms of Drug Use

There are many signs, both physical and behavioral, that indicate drug use. Each drug has its own unique manifestations, but there are some general indications that a person is using drugs:

- Sudden change in behavior
- Mood swings; irritable and grumpy and then suddenly happy and bright
- Withdrawal from family members
- Careless about personal grooming
- Loss of interest in hobbies, sports and other favorite activities
- Changed sleeping pattern; up at night and sleeping during the day
- Red or glassy eyes
- Sniffle or runny nose

Solutions to the Factors that contributes to causes of Drug Abuse

1. Employment opportunities: Government should redoubled its efforts to create more employment opportunities and empowered youth and women to make them busy to avert drug abuse

2. Government should provide basic needs to its populace to make them a better today for the betterment of better tomorrow most especially youths to reduce frustration among them

3. Government should redoubled its effort on fighting corruption so that our leaders will use the available funds to provide basic needs to its populace to reduce lootings

4. Community Participation: There should be largely involvements of communities by forming committee to fight drug abuse among its societies. This is a group of people living in an area. Community has a big role to play in prevention of drug abuse.

These are some of the roles;

I. Creating of awareness in the community on the dangers of drug abuse.

II. Provision of alternative to drug abuse like recreational activities etc.

III Provision of job opportunities

VI Organizing teachings, seminars, workshops, symposium and conference to educate the youths on the dangers of drug abuse etc and how to resist drug

. V Community should minimize the rate of alcohol sales and drinking or prohibition of alcohol and drugs.

IV Establishment of a drug and alcohol vigilante groups that will monitor and punish drug traders, drug addicts and alcoholics.

IIV Embarking on mass media against drug abuse.

IIIV Embarking on campaign and demonstration against drug abuse. Providing homes for homeless youth's, orphans and widows

5. Increase number of security personnel (NDLEA) by employing more staff and provide them with gadget to enable them fight against drug abuse

6. State Governors should support (NDLEA) with vehicles and some logistics to enable them perform their functions effectively

7. Non-governmental organizations (NGO's) should support (NDLEA) with vehicles and some logistics to enable them perform their functions effectively

8. Aggressive and mobilizations by religious and traditional leaders to preach on the duties and responsibilities of marriage and danger of drug abuse among their followers

9. There should be proper supervision by security personnel (NDLEA) with equipments and their number be increased by employing more personnel

10. Stipend punishments to the sellers and buyers

11. There should be proper supervision by drug controlling groups like NAFDAC (National Agency for Food and Drug Abuse Control

12. Government should scrutinized before granting licenses to patent medicine store operators

13. Parents should care for their children, meet their physical needs etc and also supervise or monitor them very well. They should monitor their movement to make sure that they are making good company. If they are keeping bad company, they should be corrected immediately. They should not be over-pampered. Parents should not only educate their children on the dangers of drug abuse but they should establish and enforce family rules. They should also create an effective system of monitoring their children's activities.

Government's attempts to reduce drug abuse:

Several attempts were made to curtail the circulation and nay the consumption of drugs particularly among the young and productive age of Nigerians, which it was held that it was and is still a good source of inducement to work for the unskilled workers in Nigeria. Hence trailing this to the Nigerian experience, Buhari in 1984 issued a decree which spelt out penalties for both pushers and users of drugs illicitly. This could not deter both the groups. With the coming of Babangida, the law was repealed and later replaced with the establishment of the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). All these have been government's indication and concern for the problem, an effort to nip the problem to the bud but all without success.

Between January 21st and 24th , 1992, a joint session of academics, media practitioners, health and social workers and other related fields as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) converged at the National Institute of Policies and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, Jos Plateau State, for a national conference on the scourge of drugs abuse and trafficking. This gathering made several revelations which were worth noting:

First, it was opined that the menace of hard drugs itself is a product of the antisocial behaviors which are prevalent in the society, particularly corruption and the craze for ostentatious life styles which have driven people to this life styles in search for money at all cost.

Secondly, Nigeria has outgrown her unenviable stature of a mere conduit but has quickly grown to a drug consuming nation.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. G. G. Ganaka, the Catholic Bishop of Jos in his work; *The Role of Religious Organizations in the War against Drug Abuse* averred that " Everything God created is good including hard drugs, but the problem is that they are wrongly used". Hard drugs to him do not only destroy the body but also the soul of men.

Gannon (1987) views on attempt to prevent drug abuse shows; "that all attempts are spectacularly unsuccessful, this is because the numbers of news users and addicts grow daily. Maybe the time has come for reprisal, thus no matter how agonizing we are on, the way we have gone about dealing with drugs so far seems futile".

Lafiagi (2001) stated “for proper reduction of drug abuse, the NDLEA built community rehabilitation centers to provide appropriate services to the addicts. This war cannot be lost, and if the war is lost, the generations of Nigerians unborn would have been condemned to eternal damnation”.

The attempt to making Nigeria a drug Free State was born when Babangida (1991) in a paper titled; for a drug Free Nigeria said “It is a problem that poses threats to the health and survival of youths and it requires attention and cooperation of all nations of the world to make it”. This makes it indispensable that the claim cannot be derived, since no arrest of the abusers and traffickers have increased over the years”. This goes far to buttress the fact that the more government makes policies to this effect, it also flaunts the policy documents.

It was against this backdrop that government policy measures are very significant as noted, due to the rate of the increase, since 1984 the military regime of Buhari decreed death sentence and imprisonment of 14 years to traffickers and abusers. Babangida in 1985 repealed the decree and establish the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency. It was also against this backdrop that Obasanjo (1990) and Gumin (1992) stated that “It was as result of the growth in drug related offences like rape, theft, and other criminal insurgencies that the need to establish institutions that will coordinate and monitor the efforts of other institution and agencies for drug use, trafficking and related crimes necessitated the enactment of the decree which brought NDLEA as an institution under the Decree 48 of Babangida’s regime”.

Effects of Drug Abuse on Nigerian economy

The social and economic costs related to male and female drug abuse are high. The negative effects includes the financial losses and distress suffered by alcohol and drug related crime victims, increased burdens for the support of adolescents and young adults who are not able to become self-supporting, and greater demands for medical and other treatment services for these youth (Ashton, 1987). NDLEA operatives towards fighting the menace of illicit drugs production, circulation, marketing and consumption, more people are being recruited daily by drug barons to serve as couriers just as many more, especially youths and ladies are increasingly becoming addicted to assorted drugs From this work, it can be drawn that the effects of drug abuse can really be divided into two which are;

A. Social effects:

There are numerous number of social effects of drug abuse in Nigeria which include

1. The Social effect looks at issues dealing with increasing criminal activities associated with drug abuse like robbery, burglary, rape, vandalization of public properties, increasing rate of HIV/AIDS, the congestion of penitentiaries where the government spends more in the maintenance of prisoners, and of course the growing numbers of destitute which our social welfare administration system cannot carter thereby depleting government’s budget.
2. Drug abuse increase number of political thuggery which resulted to killing of innocent citizen
3. It increases number of insurgencies and unrest because 95% of the insurgent are drug addicted
4. Drug addict increases number of insane persons in the society
5. Its increases number of criminal offences like robbery, kidnap and arm bandits

B. Economic effects.

1. The economic effect looks at the loss of potential manpower, low productivity, and creation of an unfavorable environment for investors which of course will affect the Gross National Income as well as the internally generated revenue.
2. Government is spending a lot of funds on security and settlement of IDPs created by insurgent as a result of drug abuse instead of using such funds to provide basic needs and infrastructural development
3. Its tarnish the image of the country
4. Drug abuse encourage corruption among Nigerians
5. It also encourage looters to loot public funds
6. Its cause’s political unrest in the country

SUMMARY

This study has revealed that before committing any evil act of armed robbery, insurgency, crime armbands herdsmen clash and political unrest are all caused by drug abuse and most of the looters looting public funds are drug barons.

The study also revealed that unemployment, poverty, prostration and lack of parental supervision leads to drug abuse and Peer pressure plays a major role in influencing many adolescents into drug abuse. This is because peer pressure is a fact of teenage and youth life. As they try to depend less on parents, they show more dependency on their friends. In Nigeria, as other parts of the world, one may not enjoy the company of others unless he conforms to their norms.

The study has shown that the increasing economic deterioration that leads to poverty and disempowerment of the people has driven many parents to send their children out in search of a means of earning something for contribution to family income. These children engage in hawking, bus conducting, head loading, scavenging, serving in food canteens etc and are prone to drug taking so as to gain more energy to work for long hours. Finally, the study reveals that there is shortage of personnel (NDLEA) and (NAFDAC), no enough equipment to carry out operations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, it is a popularly held belief that the youths of any nation are the leaders of tomorrow. They are the vehicles through which positive changes can be realized. This is why many tend to invest on the future development of its youths. Governments, parents, and guardians devote a lot of time and resources in order to explore and harness the potentialities of youth.

Almost all the evil acts and crime being committed by arm robber, kidnapper, arm bandits, cultist, insurgency, and even public looters are all cause by drug abuse so government is spending a lot of funds in averting this crime instead of providing basic needs of its citizenry. If government and the society will adopt the following recommendations, government will save funds to provide a basic need and will reduce substantial drug abuse in our society.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, in an attempt to proffering some meaningful solutions to curbing the menace of drug abuse, the following recommendations are presented to both government and the society at large which include

1. Employment opportunities: Government should redouble its efforts to create more employment opportunities and empowered youth and women to make them busy to avert drug abuse. Government policies targeted at developing the society are more often than not mere paper work. Thus the government should ensure that through its policies, jobs are created, social services are rendered, and above all, its policies should be feasible and capable of implementation.
2. . Community Participation: There should be largely involvements of communities by forming committee to fight drug abuse among its societies. This is a group of people living in an area. Community has a big role to play in prevention of drug abuse. Individuals, families, communities, and the entire society should ensure that moral values are inculcated in the youths, by joining the government's fight against the menace.
3. Institutions like the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) should be empowered to squarely deal with "Drug Barons" as well their traffickers, peddlers, and conduits. This is because at times, their performances are undermined by the threats they get as well as the purported connections such barons and the traffickers have with people in higher authority.
4. The mass media should facilitate government's campaign against drug abuse, and avoid such thrilling advertisements and jingles like those of tobacco and alcohol (Liquor) etc. Meanwhile sensitization programmes should be channeled through this medium. On-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) should encourage the sensitization campaigns against drug abuse as well as engage in rehabilitation programmes.
5. Government should declare state of emergency in NDLEA and NAFDAC by employing more security personnel (NDLEA & NAFDAC) and provide them with equipment to avert drug abuse
6. There should be a proper scrutiny and licensing of patent medicine store, and such should be operated by well-trained Pharmacists. Alongside this, street drug hawking should be discouraged since this can promote accessibility to drug abusers. Hospitals and clinics should be well stocked with genuine drugs and trained physicians put in place to ensure proper

prescription of drugs while monitoring how the patients take such drugs to avoid over or under dosage tendencies which will lead to drug abuse.

7. Finally, educational Institutions at all levels whether public or private should organize workshops, lectures/symposiums to enlighten the people on the dangers of drugs and substance abuse.

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