

The Roles of Illicit Drug Trafficking On the Re-Occurrence of Drug Abuse and Related Social Vices in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Illicit drug trafficking is a serious issue bedevilling peaceful living in a global sphere. Nigeria is among the countries that have the highest number of drug traffickers globally and this is detrimental to the progress and development of our dear country's image. The reoccurrence of drug abuse and problems associated with it such as health and insecurity, crime, and deviance are closely connected with drug trafficking. The present study investigates the issues related to drug trafficking, the problems it causes to Nigerian society, the relationship between this menace and the prevalence of substance abuse, and the government control measures to curtail the menace. Qualitative technique is employed using secondary sources of data. Reputable journals, periodicals, textbooks, online sources newspapers and are used. The present study discovered that the agencies established to regulate, convert and curtail drug distribution, sales, abuse and trafficking as well as the county lawmakers (members of the National Assembly and Senate) are trying their best to control drug trafficking and abuse by enacting laws which establishing agencies to enforce the laws, the country's lawmakers are making efforts to review the existing drug laws to reduce the incidence of drug trafficking and abuse protect the lives and properties of the Nigerian citizenry. The study suggests that extra efforts be put in place on the parts of the established drug law enforcement agencies to enable them to effectively enforce the laws and the government should provide more funding more funding to the agencies especially those serving at the state and local level.

KEYWORDS: *Government, Illicit drugs, Insurgency, Law enforcement, Smuggling, Trafficking*

Introduction

The incidence of drug trafficking and abuse is of greatest concern to the government of the international communities. Their prevalence jeopardised the efforts made by the various governments to ensure the realisation of illicit drug-free nations. The prevalence of menace affects universal peace and harmony (Shehu 2018). It is said to be among the intractable problems that threaten world peace and a drug-free world. According to the International Narcotic Control Board (INCB) report (2012) Nigeria is the number one country in terms of drug trafficking in the whole West African sub-region. The report further stated that since the late 1990s, Lagos City, (Nigeria's most industrialised and commercialised city) was "amongst the centres for cocaine trafficking to Europe". More than 50 per cent of drug suppliers facing trial in 2011 who are of African origin were Nigerians. The UNODC (2023) reported that Nigeria is a major trafficking hub in Africa in the "consolidation of cocaine entering the sub-region and distribution to other countries, both within the sub-region and beyond". Nigerians were national were arrested for drug trafficking offences in almost 70 countries between 2010-2019 across the globe, a significant portion of the abused substances are illegally smuggled into African nations via our porous borders. The United Nations Office on Drugs Crime (UNODC) (2018) reported that toward the end of 2017, UNODC had experienced an increase in the reoccurrence of trafficking and abuse of Tramadol. The report further reiterated that the past 5 years saw an increase in the arrests from "300 kg to more than 3 tonnes. Benin, Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Niger, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, and Cote d'Ivoire were reported as the major transit routes or destination countries". The illicitly imported drugs are taken to the Sahel region where the terror and insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and Armed Bandits in Nigeria,

"and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in Libya, have partial control". The UNODC report further stated that Tramadol trafficking has contributed to destabilising the Sub-Saharan Africa region (World Report May 2018). This assertion is similar to research conducted by Ibrahim, et al. (2017) and Shehu and Durga Rao (2020) which narrated that out of 237 drug abusers who are hospitalised for de-addiction treatments in the neuropsychiatric hospital 129 patients were found to be Tramadol illicit users. This number shows that 54.4 per cent of the total number of persons interviewed abused Tramadol and the prolonged usage of the drug affected their mental health. A report from the government of the United States of America on the issue of drug trafficking (2019) revealed that Nigeria has occupied the first position in the global sphere in the issue of drug trafficking. The report stated that "Nigerian drug traffickers have strengthened partnerships with international cocaine and heroin distribution networks to procure and distribute significant quantities of drugs in the United States and other lucrative markets" (INCSR 2019:225).

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, report (2015) revealed, that drug trafficking has turned out to be a money-making business that seriously affects the good image of Nigeria. Therefore, serious and concerted joint efforts by the sister agencies must be taken to curtail the menace. To justify the assertion a total of 8,843 suspects of substance users which are about 339,968 kilograms were arrested by the officers of NDLEA in 2014. The category of persons arrested was mostly youth aged 16 to 40 years which pushed them to engage in illicit drug-abusing habits including a strong desire to acquire material wealth by all means, peer-group influence and ignorance (Ukwayi, Okpa and Akwaji 2019). Similar to the happenings in the past years in similar arrests cannabis, psychotropic drugs, and methamphetamine are the main substances captured during the arrest

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with 205,373killograms, 133,920killograms, and 340 kilograms respectively. The NDLEA Chairman Brig. Gen Buba Marwa (retired) reported that NDLEA arrested 52,000 drug traffickers between 2021-2024 and at the same time the agency “has seized 8.6 million kilograms of assorted illicit drugs and destroyed 1,572 hectares of cannabis farms.” (Sahara Reporters 2024). Substances such as marijuana were found to be illicitly planted and harvested in some parts of Nigeria times immemorial. The menace of drug trafficking by the Nigerian youth is not only happening within the country, many youths of Nigerian origin were arrested and detained in various correctional facilities worldwide for drug drugs trafficking-related crimes and were incarcerated serving multiple forms of the sentence from the death penalty to life imprisonment and detentions for years in international correctional centres. Countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Brazil, the United States, and India have the highest number of Nigerian Youths in their correctional centres (NDLEA 2019; Soniyi 2019). The present study examined the incidence of illicit drug trafficking and its effects in present-day Nigeria.

The Objectives of The Study

- To examine the nature of drug trafficking and how the availability of illicit drugs led to substance abuse in Nigeria
- To discuss the prevalence and consequences of drug trafficking and drug abuse in Nigeria
- To study the government program aiming at reducing the drug trafficking and menace of abuse in Nigeria.

Methodology

The present study used quantitative techniques to obtain data. The secondary data were sourced through the already existing literature to develop the article. Reports from various drug law

enforcement agencies, such as NDLEA reports, NAFDAC reports, National Drugs Control Master Plan (NDCMP), the United Nations Office of Drugs Crime annual reports were consulted and reports of the Federal Ministry of Health (FMH) and related agencies were reviewed. Other secondary sources including textbooks, journal articles, Newspaper reports, internet sources and periodicals were reviewed as the main sources of data used to develop this work.

Results and Discussion

Theoretical Framework

The present study utilises Robert K Merton's Strain Theory (1938) as a theoretical framework to explain the issue of drug trafficking and abuse in Nigeria. Strain theory states that “social structure within society such as lack of income or lack of quality education, may pressure citizens to commit a crime” meaning that societal pressure may instigate or push an individual to commit a crime to a certain level. Strain exists “between the socially-encourage goals of the society and the socially-acceptable means to achieve them”. Nigeria operates under a capitalist system almost all government assets and investments are privatised hardly a person gets anything for free maximisation of profit is the order of the day. Everything is obtained through money. Even the universal health care delivery and universal basic education which the Nigerian government claimed to render free, are indeed not so because they were been bastardised by those in power. This makes the Nigerian youths engage in get-rich get-rich-quick syndrome. In their efforts to enrich themselves, they refused to follow the socially-encourage goals of society which are through hard work and endurance and socially acceptable means to achieving them through education and becoming law-abiding, they ignored and followed the illegitimate quick money irrespective of the consequences and the dangers involved or associated with their actions.

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These are the people who resort to engaging in drug trafficking as the easiest and fastest way to get easy money. Robert K Morton identified those who accept both socially encouraged goals and socially acceptable means to achieve the goals through endurance and coupled with hard work despite the difficulties involved in the process as conformists. While Innovators are those types of people who want to get money and to occupy a high social status, unfortunately, they do not want to work hard to acquire the requisite knowledge and educational qualifications that will enable them to reach that level instead they devise another way to achieve their ends are those who engage in drug addiction and trafficking. Equally, those groups of individuals who refused to follow or accept both socially acceptable means to achieve their goals and decided to drop out of society, in general, are called the retreatists and Merton classified them as the categories who engage in drug trafficking because of the lucrative nature of the illegal business irrespective of the consequences and the dangers associated with the business.

Drug Trafficking Issues at Stake

The menace of drug trafficking in contemporary Nigerian society and the Nigerian youths living in the diaspora is an issue of concern to every enquiring mind citizen. The practice is tarnishing the image of our country in the global world. The United States International Narcotics Control Strategic Report (2019) reported that Nigeria is rated number one in the nation in the issue of illicit drug trafficking in the global sphere. Nigerian drug dealers are gradually becoming suffocated by the issue of both human and drug trafficking. They succeeded in forming a click and a network with a team of similar offenders in other parts of the world especially the drug pushers of the USA through Africa, North and South America, Asia and Europe. The report further reveals that “Nigerian drug traffickers have strengthened partnerships with international

cocaine and heroin distribution networks to procure and distribute significant quantities of drugs in the United States and other lucrative markets” (INCSR 2019:225). This trend by Nigerians within and outside the country has made drug abuse among the youth very rampant (Ukwayi, Akpa and Akwaji 2019). Adeleye (2023) reported that drug trafficking has become endemic in Nigeria as the syndicate has become more serious in Europe. Researchers have found out that student fraternities in Nigerian Higher institutions of learning recruited many youths into secret cults that engage themselves in drug trafficking worldwide. He further reported that “four members of Nigeria’s Black Axe mafia were arrested in Italy in 2022, for example, while Castel Volturno in Southern Italy, near Naples, has been turned into a hub for Nigerian organised crime”. The prevalence of substance misuse among Nigerians according to the UNODC (2019) report is roughly twice that of the “global average of 5.6 per cent”. Nigeria has a population of 200 million people and 14 per cent of this population “aged between 15 and 64 abuse drugs” (UNODC 2019) although cannabis cultivation and smoking are extensively taken together with other substances that are locally made (UNODC 2018; Kazeem 2019; Ukwayi, Okpa, and Akwaji, 2019). Tramadol appears to be the most commonly abused trafficked and most dangerous substance in Nigeria (INCSR 2019). Kazeem (2019) investigated the chain in which tramadol reached Nigeria, from the country in which the drug is being manufactured that is India to the country where the drug is trafficked to Nigerians in commercial quantities through the country’s seaports. Both legal “Indian pharmaceutical companies and illicit clandestine labs mass-produce and ship Tramadol and counterfeit Tramadol tablets in 200, 225, and 250-milligram dosages for the Nigerian market” (INCRS 2019: 226; Kazeem 2019). The Nigerian security personnel formed a joint tax force in 2018 which comprises the Nigerian Customs Services (NCS)

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National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). The team had succeeded and seized over five hundred million pills of Tramadol at the Apapa port in Lagos (INCRS 2019: 226; Kazeem 2019). Similarly, the NDLEA in 2019 recovered and seized 8,031,207 kilograms of assorted substances, in Kano State, cannabis appears to be the highest substance recovered in large quantity with “4,525.473 Kilograms”, then “psychotropic substances, 2,927,669”, the remaining drugs in the list were “heroin 160,900 kg and cocaine

3,455kgs”. Additionally, “160,900kgs of other exhibits during the period under review”. NDLEA men further confiscated, prosecuted and jailed 906 suspects, 103 women and 803 men respectively, this happening qualified Kano State to shift the status from the first position in 2018 to sixth position among the 36 states of the federation as the state with the highest prevalence of substances abuse in Nigeria (Sahara Reporters New York 2019; NDLEA 2019).

Table 1 Nigerians Detained for Drug Trafficking Crime OverSee

Name	Age in Years	Zone	Year	Drug of Arrest	Country of Arrest	Amount in Kg
Paul Osinakachi	31	South East	2019	Cocaine	Mumbai India	40g
Okichiku Matince,	35					
Godswil Chitachi,	27					
Reuben Godwin	26					
Anonymous			2017	Mephedrone rock and powder	Delhi India	101 kg
Christian Ugbechi	30	South East	2018	Heroin Hydrochloride	Darussalam Tanzania	947.57kg
Tammy Olaiya	40	South West	2019	Cocaine	US	7kg
Edwin Elochukwu	54	South East	2017	Herion	Johannesburg South Africa	29kg
Anyaoku, Lerato						
Diannah Mohai,	42					
Christopher Okonkwo	53					
Zainab Aliyu		Northwest	2018	Tramadol	Jidda Saudi Arabia	2,000 packages
Cosmas Ujukwu	30	South East	2017	Cocaine,	Hyderabad,	3kg
John Okorie	26			Amphetamine,	Palaparthi,	30kg
Okereke Cyril	31			Brown Sugar	Sangeetha, India	200kg
Anezi	34					300kg
John Paul Onyebuchi	31					
Ogunka Henry O.						
Maduka Jona S.	35	South East	2019	Methamphetamine crystal meth	Khmer, Cambodia	21kg
Davis Candkwdo	30					
Obiesie Chiemerie	25					
Ekene Etamba,	29	South East	2019	Methamphetamine	Lao Bao, Vietnam	4kg
	20					3.2kg

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Omeje Jonson Chibu, Waheed Somade		South West	2019	Cocaine	Jeddah, Saudi Arabia	7.5kg 1,135kg
Oparesi Oslum		South East	2019	Cocaine	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	227kg
Joseph Ukpa Osita	40	South East	2018	68 Capsule of Cocaine	Bangkok, Thailand	1,200kg
Odeomenan Kenneth O	23	South East	2014	Heroin	Delhi, India	330kg

Sources: Punch Newspaper, vangurdng.com, economicstime.com news,

Table 1 presents the various Nigerians incarcerated in foreign countries for drug trafficking offences. A significant number of them are young men and women in the youth category with their ages ranging from 20-53 years. The report shows the increase in the offence committed because the number of detainees in 2019 is almost the same as the total sum of the arrests made from 2014 to 2018, this may be the reason why the country is rated first

in Drug trafficking offences in the whole world. , Zainab Aliyu who was capture by Saudi Security at Jidda, Saudi Arabia was discharged and acquitted as she was confirmed innocent but was framed by criminal gangs amongst the airport staff where the drugs she was arrested with were unknowingly inserted in her luggage checking point airport. It was later confirmed by the security personnel and the culprits were arrested.

Table 2 The Number of Nigerians in Captivity Over See for Drug Trafficking Cases

Year	Number Persons Arrested	Country of Arrest	Type of Drugs	Penalty
2017	23	Saudi Arabia	Narcotics	Death row
2017	81	Malaysia	Cocaine, Heroin	Death row
2017	35	India	Cocaine, Heroin	Imprisonment
2017	350	Thailand	Cocaine, Heroin	Death row
2018	144	Brazil	Narcotics	Imprisonment
2018	650	Thailand	Narcotics	Death row
2018	73	Malaysia	Cocaine, Heroin	Death row
2018	10	Liberia	Cocaine, Heroin	Imprisonment
2018	43	Thailand	Cocaine, Heroin	Imprisonment
2019	119	Malaysia	Narcotics	Death row

Sources: FMT news, pulse ng news, Naija Dazz, **Kennedy L. Yangian**, kl.yangian@frontpageafricaonline.com

Table 2 represents the various Nigerians captured for drug trafficking globally. It is noticed that

over 1000 Nigerians were jailed on the death penalty awaiting execution; some were either

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been executed or about to be executed in the countries where the death penalty is allowed. This data is almost similar to what THISDAY Newspaper of 27th November 2017 reported that more than 600 Nigerians are on death row in various Asian countries for drug trafficking-related offences. It also tally with what Amnesty International (2019) revealed that out “of 568 foreign nationals on death row for various offences in Malaysia, 119 are Nigerians, the report said”. The table also shows that 300 Nigerians were incarcerated in foreign prisons serving various terms some even life imprisonment.

Drug Trafficking and the Reoccurrences of Substance Abuse in Nigeria

The increase in drug-related crime, armed banditry and kidnapping in Nigeria may not be unconnected with the issue of drug trafficking by many Nigerian youth both within and outside the country. Substance abuses global menace bedevilling peace and harmony in the global sphere. Its consequence of this illegal act affects both physical and mental health, problems such as liver disorders, inability to take care of one's physical health, and cardiovascular diseases, 'neuropsychological' problems such as “problems with decision making, reasoning, retentivity to problems with keeping a job” (Fernandez-Serrano et al. 2009). The drugs may lead to psychiatric problems as well as serious physiological problems. the word Drug Addiction is not directly mentioned in the classification of diseases by the International Classification of Diseases 10th revision (ICD 10). The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) report (2012), narrated that Nigeria is occupied the first position on the issue of drug and human trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report added that approximately 50 per cent of African drug pushers arrested abroad in 2011 were Nigerians. The press release by the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) of

2018 narrated that Drug abuse in Nigeria was increasing rate and the number of drug users in Nigeria is an issue of great concern. It is indeed a serious problem that threatens the lives and the future of the country (Akkina et al. 2012). According to Nigeria Health Watch (2018), over 3 million bottles of codeine syrup were consumed daily in Kano and Jigawa States. NDLEA further stressed that it had arrested and detained over 2,205 persons in 2015 for crimes related to drugs and substance abuse in the North. Some of the widely abused drugs nowadays are cough syrup, cigarettes, inhalants, cannabis, and alcohol (Akinola 2015). This led to the deterioration of the security situation in Nigeria, read any newspaper or electronic media one will find cases of insurgency, kidnapping, armed banditry etc. which occurred under the influence of drugs.

Consequences of Drug Trafficking and Abuse

Substance abuse and trafficking have adverse effects on the health and security of the citizenry and Nigeria in general. It is a well-known phenomenon that psychoactive drugs contributed to fueling crises, social unrest and associated social vices such as; criminalities insurgencies and terrorism. Majority of these social problems do occur with the help of illicit drugs (United Nations Drug Control Program 1998). Such consequences on “social, economic, political and health problems include insurgency, social unrest, poverty, political violence, physical health issues; hepatitis, HIV/AIDs, cardiovascular diseases, depression, psychoses, anxiety” etc. illicit drugs such as Tramadol that find its way into our communities through traffickers were used to cause the above mentioned social problems. The growing increase in terrorist activities, kidnapping and the prevalence of armed banditry and herders-farmers conflict will not be unconnected with the illicit drug trafficking through the country's weak borders and abuse by members of these groups to stimulate them to perform their illegal acts. drug

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abuse and criminality are among the major threats to national security in Nigeria. “The use of illicit drugs among the youth population fueled armed banditry in Nigeria. Popular hard drugs for armed bandits include tramadol, codeine, intravenous drugs, marijuana, Boska, hydro-caffeine, and Pentazocine” (Ojo, Onyewe and Aina, 2023).

Tramadol and Boko Haram Insurgency

The smuggling of illicit drugs and its use by some Nigerians and insurgent groups posed a serious challenge to national security. The NDLEA and INCRS report that Tramadol is illicitly smuggled into the country. Some national dailies reported the statement made by arrested Boko Haram members that before they launch any attack they are forced to take plenty of Tramadol tablets (Obaji 2019). This statement was contained in the interview with a Boko haram escape who narrated they were given plenty of Tramadol tablets before carrying their weapons for the attack. “*Everyone took it before leaving the camp. Even if there was nothing else in the camp, there was always Tramadol,*” (Obaji 2019). In many instances, NDLEA was found to capture a large amount of Tramadol tablets which is believed to be supplied to the terrorist group. Though this tablet was meant for painkilling, multiple intakes provide the same sensation as heroin. In another instance, the former militants narrated that “*Whenever we took Tramadol, nothing mattered to us anymore except what we were sent to do,*” says Musa. “*Because it made us very high and very bold, it was impossible to go on a mission without taking it*” (Obaji 2019). According to the Capricorn Development Foundation (CDF) a Non Governmental Organization operating in Nigeria to aid Boko Haram victims “It is not very easy to find anyone who lived in a Boko Haram camp without a problem of Tramadol addiction. It was like food for those who were there. They took it every day and night” (CDF 2018). To justify this, claim a Nigerian Police officer was arrested by NDLEA together with a trafficker carrying a

large quantity (59 KG) of Tramadol table to Boko Haram terrorists. “He claimed that the drugs were part of consignment seized by the Nigeria Customs Service during its operations in Lagos, and were sold to him at the cost of N6m while the actual market value stands at N24m” (Sahara Reporters- New York 2018, The Cable New 2019; Punch 2019). According to the UNODC 2018 reports toward the end of 2017, the organization witnessed the rise in the menace of trafficking and the use of Tramadol. The report further reiterated that the past 5 years saw an increase in the arrests from “300 kg to more than 3 tones. Benin, Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Niger, Sierra Leone, Cameroon and Cote d’Ivoire were highlighted as the major transit or destination countries”. The illegally imported drugs are taken to the Sahel region where the terror and insurgent groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, “and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in Libya, have partial control”.

Consequences of Drug Trafficking and Abuse on Health

The persistence of drug abuse-related health issues and drug-induced crime occurrence is closely related to drug increase in trafficking in Nigeria. The issue affects both drug users and non-users in many instances. There exists a series of health issues associated with drug abuse. The health issues may be related to physical or mental health, both of these impairments are of greater concern to the government and policymakers. People who engage in drug abuse may be infected with heart-related ailments e.g. (high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, musculoskeletal, neurological, and respiratory diseases). This is because substance use and abuse “does not only affect the brain but also destroy the organs of the body” (Keaney et al. 2011). Those drug addicts who engage themselves in injecting hard drugs through their blood have a high risk of HIV and AIDs infection, “Cancer of the lungs, throat, stomach, Liver cirrhosis, Hepatitis B and C”.

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Other health defects that drug addicts may maybe affected by are “reproductive problems (impotence, low sperm count) tuberculosis diabetes mellitus Injuries obtained from road traffic accidents low birth weight babies, babies with fetal alcohol syndrome” etc (Ekpenyongi 2012). Studies conducted on the negative consequences of psychoactive drugs such as cocaine lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) amphetamines show that their intake causes “sleeping disorders, poor appetite, restlessness, irritability, suicidal depressions, ecstatic paranoia, hallucinations, panic reactions, sensory disorientation” and in some instance lost of lives (NDLEA, 1997). Parsons reported abusing heroin and was discovered to have suffered from “dependence, blood-borne viruses’ psychological abnormalities” (Teeson 2002).

Marijuana smokers get infected from anaemia and scratchy eyes, “dry mouth and throat, increased appetite” and in some cases being hypertensive it is very dangerous to those who suffer from cardiovascular problems because it increases heart bit. Cannabis users also stand a higher risk of lung cancer. Research findings from relevant bodies revealed that marijuana distorted brain functioning. It also leads to poor academic performance among users, this is because the cannabis toxic substance harms memory recall and attentiveness. In a situation where the user decides to quit the intake of cannabis, may encounter with following symptoms; “irritability, decreased appetite, sleep disturbance, sweating, tremor, vomiting and diarrhoea. Heroin is another psychoactive substance which causes health impairments. Heroin affects the “central nervous system, causes respiratory depression, nausea and vomiting” (Carson et al. 2000). Heroin hardly dissolves when it comes to the blood circulation which may lead to clotting and lead to damage of body organs such as lung, liver, kidney and heart. The person suffering from these impairments stands a higher risk of losing his life. Another

risk factor for the heroin user is the possibility of being infected with HIV/AIDS during injection when the users share needs. Cocaine is another danger associated with cocaine intake is paralysing death, and cardiac attack (Craig and Baucum 2001). It arouses sexual desire and encountering difficulties in remembering, sometimes it leads to the distortion of memory and may in some cases also lead to infections such as HIV/AIDS. Methamphetamine is another dangerous substance to the life of the users. A strong desire to use this substance occurs when the frequently used, withdrawal leads to many adverse effects and can easily relapse. The findings of many scholars who conducted a study on the adverse effects of amphetamine stated that the drugs may cause “damage to the brain, affecting both dopamine and serotonin systems”. When taking the drug, instantly a person would feel a strong feeling, named a “rush” or “flash”, for a very short period. Consumption or intake of this drug causes “euphoria, a high, but not a rush, wakefulness, and insomnia, decreased appetite, irritability, aggression, anxiety, nervousness, convulsions, and heart attack”.

The effects of drug trafficking and drug abuse on mental health cannot be overemphasised. Addiction causes serious mental health problems and also its withdrawal affects the mental health of the user (Link et al. 1999). Drug abusers are liable to mental retardation and disorders, it may be a mild mental disorder (neurosis) or severe mental disorder (psychosis) depending on the frequent usage of the drug: frequent intake may lead to problems like: “substance use disorders (insomnia, restlessness, auditory and visual hallucinations,). Abandonment or withdrawal of tobacco and other substances with high nicotine content may result in the following mental health problems: “nervousness, anxiety, lightheadedness, headaches, fatigues, constipation and diarrhoea, dizziness, sweating, cramps, tremors, palpitations”. Tobacco smokers display some kind of anti-social and deviant

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behaviour the same as attitudes of the heroin-addicted persons especially when the supply of the products is reduced or stopped. Marijuana smokers suffer from various mental problems such as loss of memory and learning, “distorted perception of sight, sound time and touch, trouble with thinking and problem solving”. This is common among college students who engage themselves in marijuana and other cannabis substance abuse. Heavy smoking of marijuana in some cases causes the user to get affected with drug-induced psychoses, hallucinations, delusion, fear and phobia, Cocaine is another dangerous substance which directly affects the health of the user. Cocaine causes serious mental health impairments, the major adverse effects are “nervousness, irritability and restlessness, mild paranoia, physical exhaustion, mental confusion, loss of weight, fatigue or depression”. It affects the brain and alters brain normal function as the abuser suffers from psychotrauma confusion, anxiety, and depression. Excessive cocaine usage may lead to “cocaine psychosis” which is a severe mental disorder due to cocaine addiction. Other mental disorders are “hallucinations and delusions and insects crawling under their skin” (NIDA 2018).

Programs to Control Drug Trafficking in Nigeria

Due to the importance attached to the issue of drug trafficking, the Nigerian British Colonial Administration introduced the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance in 1935 (NDLEA 2018) which spelt out a comprehensive guideline on how Law Enforcement Agencies would handle the issues of drug trafficking-related cases (Nwannennaya and Abiodun 2017). After 25 years of the country's independence, the Military administration of General Muhammadu Buhari promulgated Decree No. 20 of 1984 amends the death penalty for drug traffickers (NDLEA, 2018). “The Special Tribunal (Miscellaneous Offences) (Amendment) Decree of 1986 that replaced the

death penalty with life imprisonment” was introduced (Klein 1999; NDLEA 2018). The government in 2005 established the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) under the CAP N30 LFN 2004. The agency is charged with the responsibility of “controlling illicit drug cultivation, abuse, possession, manufacturing, production, trafficking of narcotics drugs, psychopathic substance, and chemical precursors” (NDCMP 2015-2019:18). The newly established agency has done well in the areas of curtailing the menace of drug trafficking in Nigeria. The giant efforts of NDLEA encourage international communities’ particularly the US government to assist the agency “to intelligent-driven one through mentoring and investigative support”. This support boosted the morale of the agency, before the end of the third quarter of 2018; the agency had arrested 4,736 drug traffickers and confiscated nearly 59 “metric tons (MT) of cannabis; 119 kilograms (kg) of methamphetamine; 17 MT of Tramadol; and approximately eight MT of codeine-infused cough syrup” and burned 267 MT of the confiscated drugs (INCRS 2019).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study discussed the incidence of drug trafficking and the prevalence of substance misuse in Nigeria which became a problem very difficult to handle in Nigeria, The problem has persisted to the extent that the number of individuals using illicit substances is geometrically increasing in Nigeria. Also, the number of drug traffickers arrested in foreign nations who are of Nigerian origin in the Asian continent such as India, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia is alarming. Over 1000 Nigerians were on death row in 2017, and two years later, in 2019 about 119 Nigerians were on death row in Malaysia, some had already been killed while others custody waiting to be killed.

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Some were serving life imprisonment and others were serving various terms. Tramadol and marijuana are the most widely abused substances and cocaine and heroin are the hard drugs mostly trafficked. Drug trafficking leads to social, economic, political and health consequences. Cattle rustling Crime, insurgency, banditry and other criminal cases are very common in contemporary Nigerian society. drugs such as Tramadol negatively contributed to fueling the Boko Haram militant attacks as it has been observed that the terrorist group used Tramadol tables excessively before carrying out the attacks. The use of counterfeit drugs led to various health problems for the users both physical and mental health problems. This made the Nigerian government to review drug distribution plans. The strain theory of Robert K Merton is adopted as a theoretical standpoint that would better explain this study. The study revealed that the Nigerian government has made adequate laws to address the menace of drug trafficking and abuse. The NDLEA official are carrying out their activities diligently but they are constrained. They need to be provided with official vehicles. [They need to be provided with official vehicles, offices and logistics support to improve the work.](#)

Recommendation

The present study recommends more efforts be put in place by the government to encourage the effective enforcement of the drug laws. Similarly, National Assemblies should revise some of these laws. [Similarly, National Assemblies should revise some of these laws](#) and more funding is needed to enhance successful law enforcement. The government should also recruit more staff to manage the agencies. The staff of NDLEA should discharge their duties assigned jointly with other sister agencies. The paper recommends further research on the areas of drug trafficking and abuse because of the intricate nature associated with Drugs.

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