

Drug Crime and Societal Instability in Nigeria: A Historical Examination of the Relationship Between Drug Trafficking and Social Disorder, 1989- 2022

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Abstract

This research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between drug trafficking, social disorder, and state stability in Nigeria. By examining the historical context of the drug problem in Nigeria, this study seeks to identify the key factors that have contributed to the country's vulnerability to drug trafficking and abuse. The study will employ a qualitative historical research approach, utilizing primary and secondary sources, including archival records, newspaper articles, and interviews with key stakeholders. The research will focus on the period from 1989 to 2022, which coincides with the establishment of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in 1989. This research is significant because it will contribute to the existing literature on drug crime and societal instability by providing a historical perspective on the drug problem in Nigeria. The study's findings will have implications for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and public health officials seeking to address the drug problem in Nigeria. By examining the historical relationship between drug trafficking and social disorder in Nigeria, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex factors that have contributed to the country's vulnerability to drug crime. Finally, the study will inform the development of effective strategies for addressing the drug problem in Nigeria and promoting societal stability.

Introduction

Nigeria, located in West Africa, has struggled with the menace of drug crime and its attendant consequences on societal stability for several decades. The country's geographical location, economic factors, and cultural practices have contributed to its vulnerability to drug trafficking and abuse. This research seeks to examine the historical relationship between drug trafficking and social disorder in Nigeria from 1989 to 2022.

Drug crime has become a pervasive threat to global peace and security, with far-reaching consequences for individuals, communities, and nations. In Nigeria, the drug problem has assumed alarming proportions, with significant impacts on public health, national security, and socioeconomic development. The country's porous borders, corrupt

institutions, and economic instability for instance, have created an environment conducive to drug trafficking and abuse. The historical roots of Nigeria's drug problem date back to the 1980s, when the country became a major transit point for cocaine and heroin trafficking. The introduction of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in the 1980s, which led to widespread poverty and unemployment, further exacerbated the drug problem. The rise of militant groups, such as Boko Haram, has also contributed to the proliferation of drug trafficking and abuse in Nigeria. This early period of 1980s were also important because it was when drug crime began essentially and gradually to occupy the attention of policy-makers and the wider public up till 1989 when the NDLEA was established to 2022, the terminal date of the present study, debates have raged as to its effects on politics, the economy, health sectors and sub-sectors of the security.¹

Early public evidence of the significance of the trafficking challenge was noticed through the acceleration in the number of Nigerians arrested within the country, the West African sub-region and overseas for drug offences, as well as the growing quantity of drug seizures connected to the traffickers originating from the country. No parts of the world were exempted in this regard, as Nigerian nationals trafficking as mules for barons at home and abroad were arrested in growing numbers in Asia, Europe, North America, the Middle East, and Latin America. Regardless of this, subsequent evidence has further pointed to a growing domestic market in Nigeria for drugs. At present, every indication tends to suggest that the country is a source of production of drugs, a site for their global re-distribution, and an emerging market for their consumption.²

The relative ease and speed with which drug cartels were able to establish a foothold in Nigeria were known to be connected to the aforementioned socio-economic conditions and chronic political instability, which served the cartels well. Once established in the country, the presence and activities of the drug cartels were also able to have far-reaching implications. Unpacking the implications of drug trafficking to Nigeria, as elsewhere in the world, is fraught with methodological challenges. These challenges centre on the type and quality of the evidence that is available as to permit a meaningful quantification and measurement of the problem and its impact. Precisely, due to the illegal nature of the drug business and the secrecy that surrounds it, most of the evidence that has been produced, can only be partial, frequently comprising an admixture of publicly available /published information, security intelligence material, which is not readily available in the public domain, and the best guesses and extrapolations that the circumstances permit. However, the relationship between drug crime and societal instability in Nigeria has been a subject of interest among researchers and scholars.

The review of literature has therefore examined the historical context of the relationship between drug trafficking and social disorder in Nigeria from 1989 to 2022, drawing on the

works of scholars like, J. Akinsanya who examines the historical roots of drug trafficking in Nigeria, tracing the phenomenon back to the 1980s. He argues that the country's geographical location, economic factors, and cultural practices have contributed to its vulnerability to drug trafficking and abuse. Akinsanya also highlights the role of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in combating drug trafficking and abuse in Nigeria.³

A. Odejide while investigating the impact of drug abuse on social disorder in Nigeria, noted that drug abuse has contributed significantly to social problems, including crime, violence, and family disintegration. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the drug problem in Nigeria, including prevention, treatment, and law enforcement.⁴G. Ijaiya and J. Akinsanya on the other hand examine the relationship between drug trafficking and terrorism in Nigeria. He pointed to the fact that the Boko Haram insurgency has been fueled by the illicit drug trade, with the group using drug proceeds to finance its activities. He concluded by highlighting the need for international cooperation in combating drug trafficking and terrorism in Nigeria.⁵

A. Oyebade explores the impact of drug trafficking on Nigeria's economic development. The author notes that the illicit drug trade has undermined Nigeria's economic growth, corrupted its institutions, and diverted resources away from legitimate economic activities. Oyebade also emphasizes the need for the Nigerian government to adopt a more effective approach to combating drug trafficking and promoting economic development.⁶Similarly, O. Agbu examines the role of the NDLEA in combating drug trafficking and abuse in Nigeria. The author argues that the NDLEA has made significant progress in disrupting and dismantling drug trafficking networks, but notes that the agency faces significant challenges, including inadequate funding, corruption, and lack of effective collaboration with other stakeholders.⁷

However, the aforementioned literature on the drug situation in Nigeria has examined the historical context of the relationship between drug trafficking and social disorder in Nigeria from 1989 to 2022. The reviewed authors have consequently highlighted the complex factors contributing to Nigeria's vulnerability to drug trafficking and abuse, including geographical location, economic factors, and cultural practices. The authors have also emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the drug problem in Nigeria, including prevention, treatment, law enforcement, and international cooperation.

Theoretical Framework

In an attempt to present a vivid analysis of the historical context of Drug crime and societal instability in Nigeria, and the relationship between drug trafficking and social disorder 1989-2022."The researcher reviewed the following under listed theories.

Social Disorganization Theory

This theory suggests that social disorganization leads to increased crime rates. In Nigeria, social disorganization can be attributed to factors like poverty, unemployment, and family structure. The theory can be applied to understand how drug trafficking and abuse contribute to social disorganization and instability in Nigeria.⁸

Conflict Theory

This theory proposes that social conflict arises from competing interests and unequal distribution of resources. In Nigeria, the conflict theory can be applied to the struggle for power and resources between different ethnic and religious groups, which can be exacerbated by drug trafficking and abuse.⁹

Rational Choice Theory

This theory assumes that individuals make rational decisions based on their own self-interest. In the context of drug trafficking and abuse, rational choice theory can be applied to understand why individuals engage in these activities, despite the risks involved.¹⁰ However, it is not always possible to separate and pinpoint the particular share of drug trafficking in the Nigerian society, considering the other factors that include the following:

The Security and Political Implications of Drugs

Many counties are known to have re-evaluated and shifted their national security policies in accordance with the rising non-state threats. In this context, it is acknowledged that trans-national drug cartels pose a serious threat to national and international security with their tremendous annual turnover, insidious nexus with terrorism and the capability to corrupt government institutions. Concomitantly, drug trafficking is known to have moved from being a mere criminal-justice issue to national security agenda for many governments. International security literature often projects drugs as a national security challenge for weak states, in addition to tarnishing the country's image. It was based on this fact concerning the challenges and issue of Nigeria's image and security threat, that the Nigerian Senate in July 2016 predicated upon a motion brought by Senator Gbenga Ashafa (APC, Lagos East) where they drew the attention of their colleagues to the drug trade and consumption situation in Nigeria, and stated a public opprobrium that the country's image was into disrepute among the comity of nations.¹¹

Implications of Drugs Trafficking on Nigerian National Security, Economy and Health

Facts have proven that drug trafficking and other trans-nationally organised crime pose a significant and growing threat to national and international security, with dire implications for public safety, public health, democratic institutions, and economic stability in the country and the world at large. Not only are criminal networks expanding, but they also are diversifying their activities, resulting in the convergence of threats that are once distinct and today have explosive and destabilising effects.

From a political point of view, drug trafficking is known to have had the capability to hijack the entire policy and political processes of governments in a nation, and also institutionalise criminality in the conduct of public affairs, which play themselves out in terms of the way in which the cartels, as a powerful, well-financed and highly organised special interest groups, takeover policy-making through proxies, and sponsor political advocates and protectors, whose day-to-day dealings effectively put criminal interests ahead and above all other interests. The most evident expression of this hijack of policy and politics by drug cartels is their successful penetration of political parties and security institutions. A study of Guinea Bissau stands out as an example in West Africa as an institutional infiltration and outright hijack by drug barons. The main objectives of their institutional infiltration were specifically to control all affairs of the government, so as to perpetrate the easy flow of their businesses.¹²

It is evidently clear that narcotics traffickers all over the world are governed only by their greed and lust for wealth. Therefore, the ideologies of these barons are basically a pursuit of profit, and to achieve this basic objective, the barons grouped themselves and operate in well-organised groups (mafia). They are powerful, meticulous, tactful, mercilessly violent and opulent, and are ready to exploit every possible advantage at their disposal to achieve their ends. Although, they cannot be correctly described as political terrorism or insurgent, the fact is that they use planned sophisticated, high-threat violence to achieve goals and interests. Even in the absence of political agenda, terrorism as has been so labeled in Peru, Colombia, and Mexico.¹³ The security threats caused by drug trafficking can impact all levels of society: from state apparatuses such as the military down to the family. Beyond the Guinea Bissau and northern Mali cases, though, in West Africa there is still limited evidence linking drugs and political violence or drugs and the type of urban violence experienced in parts of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is, however, important to acknowledge that drug trafficking, like other forms of organised criminal activity, generally only draws attention when connected to overt violence.¹⁴

The tendency to assess the impact of drug trafficking by the degree of violence it provokes or its links with terrorist groups can mean that important structural relationships between drug traffickers and political and business elite are overlooked. Mali instance provides an excellent example of how external actors either “underestimated or ignored the destabilising impact of these types of relations.”¹⁵ As noted by Wolfram Lacher, “Governments that lack the capacity to counter such penetration, or that acquiesce in it, run the risk of becoming criminalised or “captured” states over time.” The latter can have a significant impact on stability and general human security if left unchecked.¹⁶ As a follow up to Lacher’s view, the researcher emphasised that the structural challenges in the sub-region such as porous borders, weak institutions, corruption and political patronage, poverty and ethnic or informal social networks are prevailing conditions that run through almost all existing reports on drug trafficking in the region. These conditions are exploited by trans-national criminal networks for the transfer of all kinds of illicit commodities including drugs, cigarettes, fake medicines, small arms and light weapons, human organs, persons, and so on. Territories with a history of state neglect and different sources of tensions in particular represent havens for drug traffickers, facilitating these kinds of trans-national activities across national and international borders and at times, providing havens for radical groups.

There have been reported cases of dealing in drugs for arms, the financing of terrorists and other political insurgencies through illicit narcotic activities. In Nigeria, for instance, there are serious security challenges that face the country. Apart from conventional crimes such as armed robbery, rape, theft, and fraud, militia insurgents of different shades of opinion and in the recent past there have been reported ethnic-religious backgrounds which have continued to threaten national, state and local authorities. The manner these groups operate, especially the most dreaded of them, the Boko Haram insurgents, suggests that they might have a link with other highly organised criminal groups such as illegal arms and drug dealers. Several studies have linked armed groups to organised and syndicated criminals dealing in illicit commodities which lead to the emergence of the popular narco-terrorism. Arising from the current insecurity in Nigeria, economic development and growth are adversely affected as the much needed foreign and local investors are wary to invest in the country for fear of either being kidnapped, robbed or killed.¹⁷

All of these tend to pose severe threats to the national security of the producing nations and to the prospects for successful narcotic controls. Illicit drug or narcotic trafficking and smuggling rings and organisations are known to control sufficient wealth and power to threaten the very security of some states. Indeed, the sheer financial power of these trafficking organisations is known to have threatened the political *status quo*, with

traffickers using their millions of dollars to influence political decisions.¹⁸ In Nigeria, there are incidents of drug trade fueling high level corruption, which sometimes include top government and drug law agency officials, which further weakens drug control effort. For instance, the first Chairman of the NDLEA and former police boss, Mr. Fidelis Oyakhilome, reportedly left office in ignominious circumstances, due to an alleged complicity with some drug barons and one female socialite, Mrs. Jennifer Madike, in 1991.¹⁹

Also, the next chairman of the agency, Fulani Kwajafa, left office ostensibly on health grounds, although, public speculations also remarked that he, too, was swept off by wholesome practices in the narcotics war. Similarly, Rappah Jamoore Mohammed took over the office, but got entangled in a Joe-Brown Akubueze drug case, which was reported to have imported 248.3 kilograms of heroin, valued at 651 million dollars at the time.²⁰ The foregoing accounts and more, tended to hoist on the NDLEA a negative image problem and identity crisis, which made the federal government to set up a task force, headed by the then Brigadier-General Musa Bamaïyi, to investigate the problems of the agency and proffer solutions to redeem it from the abyss of corruption. General Bamaïyi was reported to have done a good work resulting in his being appointed as the next NDLEA chairman. Under the Bamaïyi administration, the NDLEA assumed a new positive, but, fearsome image that sent many drug-pushers, "419ners"(short term for Advanced Free Fraud in Nigeria, section 419 in Nigerian criminal code)²¹and "money launderers" scampering to their villages, away from their former Lagos horizon, in an attempt to evade the no-nonsense Bamaïyi and his men.

This probably led the Editor-in-chief of *Newswatch magazine*, Mr. Ray Ekpu, to write then that: "Drug pushers have now known that the fear of Bamaïyi is the beginning of wisdom".²² However, Nigerians later complained seriously against what they termed Bamaïyi's high-handedness and contempt of court orders. Meanwhile, Bamaïyi had succeeded in reducing drastically the involvement of Nigerians in illicit drug businesses, the notorious "419" and money laundering, while other die-hard drug pushers shifted their base outside Nigeria to other West African and South African countries. In line with the universal demands of the advancing civil rule, the military General Bamaïyi was replaced by police commissioner, Ogbonnaya Onovo, who was said to have held fort creditably when appointed.²³

There is also evidence that some of the NDLEA officials are reported to sometimes collude with criminals to circumvent the law. A good example was the disappearance of 18 bags of Indian hemp and two suspects from the custody of the NDLEA in 1998.²⁴ There was also a disappearance of same drugs kept in the agency's custody in 1994,²⁵ in addition with a reported indictment of some NDLEA officials who facilitated the release

of 197 drugs convicts from the prison between 2005 and 2006.²⁶ Similar to the issues of corruption among the NDLEA officials, in 2005, a former NDLEA boss, Mr. Bello Lafiaji, was dismissed by the then president, Olusegun Obasanjo, along with one of his closest aides on account of allegations of corruption and abuse of office.²⁷ All these were serious issue of threat to national security in Nigeria.

There are other aspects where drug trafficking and consumption pose a threat to a country's national security. In a UNODC report, cited in a journal publication entitled "Drug Trafficking and the Threat to Nigeria National Security" it was said that nearly 250,000 people lose their lives due to drug consumption. Some of these users are mainly parents, who died prematurely from overdoses or other drug illnesses, leaving their children in the care of relations or foster care. Sometimes in the absence of guardianship from relations, most of these children grew up in the streets, thereby exposed to hard way of life.²⁸ Examples of such people are the popular "Area boys" in Lagos, "Alamajiri" in the northern parts of Nigeria. These situations have led to a growth in the literature in perceived drug abuse as social, criminal and health problem rather than a national security in Nigeria.²⁹

Moreover, strategic power projections of the states rely on the sustainable economic backup. As in the cases of Afghanistan and Guinea Bissau, for instance, the states often fail to provide security to their citizens, when there is lack of economic resources. Underpaid law enforcement and military officers often fight for the drug lords rather than their governments. Intensive flow of narcotics generated significant amounts of dirty money in the Nigerian economy. Before 2015, the total retail estimated value of the seized drugs in Nigeria together with West Africa was around \$1.1 billion for heroin; \$1.2 billion for cannabis; \$44 million for cocaine; and \$110 million for the Amphetamine –Type-Stimulants (ATS).³⁰

At first glance, it might be argued that the drug trade bolsters financial reserves, generates capital and creates employment, which accrues to overall economic growth. In reality, however, drug money is known to have no significant macroeconomic effect and makes no meaningful contribution to the prosperity of any nation's community. The high-risk, high-gain nature of the illicit drug business is rather known to hinder sustainable input into productive sectors of the national economy. Drug production and trafficking rather undermine export-oriented sectors and currency stability. Illicit drug economy can have direct and indirect costs on the nations. Field investigations have revealed that it undermines economic development and financial stability in any country. First, drug generated money is infiltrated out of the pockets of national tax-payers and transferred to trans-national criminal networks. The money is never taxed and used for sustainable

investments. Organised crime syndicates exploit the money to purchase additional drugs, weapons and shares of companies.³¹

On many occasions, drug money is invested in off-shore banks, casinos and hotels in Cyprus, Switzerland, Iraq, United Arab Emirate (UAE) and Central Asia. Drug money is mostly untraceable, as it is transferred through the Havana system, mainly by means of jewelries and exchange shops. Astute traffickers never buy property in their names. Real estates, cars and land are registered in the name of one the relations. A significant portion of the money in some instances is known to be spent for hiring gunmen, concealment makers, couriers and new vehicles for transportation. Major drug traffickers have a common tendency of buying luxury goods such as gold watches, weapons and expensive cars. This creates inflation in the districts where there is intensive drug trade.³²

In addition, the cost of the war on illegal drugs also readily comes to mind and calls for scrutiny. Nigel Walker cited in D. Whitaker's *Punishment, Danger and Stigma, the Morality of Criminal Justices*, suggests that criminal law should be determined on grounds of classical economic cost-benefit, not morality.³³ The cost, unarguably, eats deep into the treasury of Nigeria meagre resources. The true gauge of the success of the war on drugs is thus better measured in the amount of financial assistance that each state devotes to the efforts. In 1989, the UN with a total budget of \$1.76 billion allocated about \$37 million towards the war against drugs. Currently, it is estimated that about \$100 billion are spent globally on drug law enforcement.³⁴ In Nigeria, however, the amount of money spent on the war on drugs is hard to come by but certainly on the high side, and currently runs into billions of naira. Even as some analysts believe that every kobo spent on checking the traffickers and users is worth it, the impact of these billions of Naira on the socio-economic development of a country like Nigeria, which struggles to grapple with development and growth, is certainly enormous and cannot be ignored. Put lucidly, the war is irrefutably expensive.³⁵

It is a crusade that entails an elaborate and expensive institutional apparatuses, as well as a long-time frame. In Nigeria, the NDLEA is duplicated in all the 36 states of the federation, including Abuja, the country's capital. Maintaining the staff and equipment in all these states is financially burdensome. At the end, it is the Nigerian taxpayers who bear the financial brunt of a policy that is increasingly being jettisoned by practising nations and states across Europe, South America and some states in the U.S.³⁶ The reader may see the table below for further details:

Table 4. Summary of Funding for the Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Naira (N), 2000-2007.

Year	Personal cost	Overhead cost	Capital expenditure	Remarks
2000	737,625,208	110,246,000	37,803,333	
2001	789,434,817	186,796,800	31`4,244,106	N250 was supplementary budget
2002	936,631,205	83,796,800	Nil	
2003	935,000,000	66,520,699	Nil	
2004	1,316,467,750	140,000,000	200,000,000	
2005	1,854,114,252	152,000,000	261,660,000	
2006	1,876,086,024	110,246,000	109,500,000	Capital not implemented
2007	3,372,769,820	93,204,909	330,059,136	Capital not implemented

Source: NDLEA Annual Report for 2008

What may be clear from the foregoing table is that the amount of money spent by the NDLEA, especially on personnel costs, continued to rise even as it was described as paltry. One frustrating area of the war, which built up the cost at the time, was the criminal justice system.³⁷As an outgrowth of the war on drug; all phases of the criminal justice process were increasingly “drug driven.”³⁸

Secondly, drug trade is known to generate an unrestrained and large black market. The uncontrolled and untaxed income is known to downgrade financial stability of the economy. Thirdly, drug consumption is believed to erode productivity of the labour force. Premature mortality, illness, and injury leading to incapacitation, and imprisonment all serve to directly reduce national productivity. Public financial resources expended in the areas of healthcare and criminal justice, as a result of illegal drug trafficking and use, are resources that would otherwise be available for other policy initiatives.³⁹

There is also a great deal of loss of productivity associated with drug-related premature mortality. In 2005, 26,858 deaths were unintentional or undetermined-intent poisonings; in 2004, 95 per cent of these poisonings were caused by drugs. Although, it may be difficult to place a dollar value on a human life, a rough calculation of lost productivity can be made based on the present discounted value of a person's lifetime earnings. There

are also health-related productivity losses. An individual who enters a residential drug treatment programme or is admitted to a hospital for drug treatment becomes incapacitated and is removed from the labour force. According to Tenders Electronics Daily data, there were so many numbers of admissions to state-licensed treatment facilities for illicit drug dependence or abuse before 2015.⁴⁰

Productivity losses in this area alone are enormous. Health-related productivity losses are higher still when lost productivity associated with drug-related hospital admissions (including victims of drug-related crimes) is included. The approximately one-quarter of offenders in state and local correctional facilities and more than half of offenders in federal facilities incarcerated on drug-related charges represent an estimated 620,000 individuals who are not in the workforce. The cost of their incarceration, therefore, has two components: keeping them behind bars and the results of their non-productivity while they are there.⁴¹

More on Health Implications

The most obvious effects of drug abuse which are manifested in the individuals who abuse drugs include ill health, sickness and ultimately death in most cases. Similarly, the most particularly devastating to an abuser's health is the contraction of needle-borne illnesses which includes venereal diseases, hepatitis and HIV/AIDS through injection drug use. For instance, a study of the United States NSDUH data indicated that in 2004, over 3.5 million individuals aged 18 and older admitted to have injected an illicit drug during their lifetime. Of these individuals, however, 14 per cent (498,000), according to the statistics, were under the age of 25. In that same information, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 123,235 adults living with AIDS in the United States in 2003 contracted the disease from injection drug use, and the survival rate for those persons was less than that for persons who contract AIDS from any other mode of transmission. The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention further reported that more than 25,000 people died in 2003 from drug-induced effects. A similar case scenario also indicated that in Nigeria, majority of the people living with HIV/AIDS today were people who contracted the virus through injection of illicit drug in their body by sharing of needles.⁴²

Similarly, drugs abusers are known to be generally immature, and suffer from mental and physical health hazards, emotionally disturbed and psychopathic in nature, beyond the personal health issues, beyond the devastating effect on families, drugs abuse are known to be responsible for overall social disorder in the society. For instance, in Nigeria illicit drugs like marijuana are commonly used, possibly because of their accessibility and affordability, and often times they pose considerable health and safety implications for the

users themselves, their families, and above all, communities. Decades of findings into the use and effects of the drug have found an array of negative consequences. Research findings have proven that approximately nine per cent of marijuana users become dependent, and the younger a person starts using it, the more likely he or she is to become dependent on marijuana or other drugs later in life. These are not the only problems connected to marijuana use. For example, marijuana use can have implications for learning and memory, and its effects can last from days to weeks after the acute effects of the drug wear off, particularly in chronic users. The study reveals that adolescents' long-term use of marijuana begins during adolescence is associated with an average eight-point lower IQ later in life.⁴³

Psychological Effects of Drug Addiction

The psychological effects of drug addiction are known to come from the reason the user is addicted to drugs, as well as the changes that take place in the brain once a person becomes a drug addict. Initially, many people start using drugs to cope with stress or pain. An effect of drug addiction is creation of a cycle where anytime the user encounters stress or pain, they feel the need to use the drug. This is one of the psychological effects of drug addiction involved in "craving" of the drug. Craving is an effect of drug addiction whereby the addict is obsessed with obtaining and using the drug, to the exclusion of all else. Other psychological effects of drug addiction include wild mood swings, depression, anxiety, paranoia, violence, decrease in pleasure in everyday life, Complication of mental illness, hallucinations, confusion, and psychological tolerance to the drug's effects creating a desire to do ever-increasing amounts of the drug, desire to engage in risky behaviour.⁴⁴

Violent behaviour is also associated with effect of drug consumption. It is most closely tied to alcohol use and alcohol abuse is responsible for the disability of 58.3 million people worldwide. It is estimated that the effects of drug addiction can cost the society billion of Naira for treatment. This number represents healthcare expenses, lost wages, prevention programme costs and criminal justice system costs, among others.⁴⁵ For instance, the cost unarguably, eats deep into the treasury of Nigeria meagre resources. In other words, the consequences of uncontrolled use of these drugs have significantly placed a burden on Nigeria's healthcare sector.

Physical Effects of Drug Addiction

Physical effects of drug addiction vary by drug but are typically seen in all systems of the body. Some of the primary physical effects of drug addiction take place in the brain. Drug addiction changes the way the brain functions and impacts how the body perceives

pleasure. These effects of drug addiction are because the drug repeatedly floods the brain with the chemicals dopamine and serotonin during drug use. The brain adapts and comes to expect, and depend on these drug-induced highs. Physical effects of drug addiction are also seen in babies of drug abusers as well as in mortality statistics. One effect of drug addiction is seen in children born to drug-using mothers who can be cognitively affected throughout life. Regarding mortality, one-in-four deaths is due to the effects of drug addiction.⁴⁶

In addition, physical challenge pose by drug addiction in the brain effects the future and wellbeing of an individual, an example of such physical effect is the situation once faced by a popular reggae singer and guitarist Majekodunmi Fashek, popularly known as Majek Fashek, who was discovered to have disappeared from his estate at Egbeda, Lagos state in December 2017, resulting from mental challenge associated with drug addiction. Though he was said to have been rehabilitated, but the effect of such situation on his physical life as well as the moral precept on youth, who follows his example are enormous.⁴⁷

Other physical effects of drug addiction include contraction of HIV, hepatitis and other illnesses, heart rate irregularities, heart attack, respiratory problems such as lung cancer, emphysema and breathing problems, Abdominal pain, vomiting, constipation, diarrhea, kidney and liver damage, seizures, stroke, brain damage, Changes in appetite, body temperature and sleeping patterns. There are also health-related productivity losses. An individual who enters a residential drug treatment programme or is admitted to a hospital for drug treatment becomes incapacitated and is removed from the labour force. According to Tenders Electronics Daily's data, there were so many numbers of admissions to state-licensed treatment facilities for illicit drug dependence or abuse before 2015.⁴⁸ Productivity losses in this area alone are enormous. Health-related productivity losses are higher still when lost productivity associated with drug-related hospital admissions, Nigeria is not is left out in this regard.

Emotional Impact of Drug Addiction on Families

For the family members or loved ones of a drug addict, the emotional trauma of their addiction can be devastating. Drug addiction is likely to result in domestic violence that is targeted at children or to a spouse or loved one. These sometimes result in family members trying to cover up the addiction of a loved one in order to reduce the negative attitudes that are directed toward the individual. But this does not work perfectly, probably due to the fact that the family members who most times cover up the addiction are left with severe emotional strain. Families are sometimes broken hearted as a result of drug addiction. An example of such predicament could be likened to an interview with Mrs. Abimbola Fashola,⁴⁹ a widow, whom two of her sons, Taiwo and Bankole were

studying abroad before they became addicted to illicit drugs. In her words, “shame” which her sons had brought to their family, because of their recent behavior occasioned by hard drug addiction, gave her a lot of concerns, nobody according to her, respects them again, family members, neighbours have isolated them. They are being stigmatized because of her sons’ current situation and their status as drug addicts.

Furthermore, it may also be recalled that addicts’ withdrawal from their loved ones may cause further emotional pain for those who care. Depression is very common for family members, who are impacted by drug addiction. Children of addicts may suffer from anxiety as a result of the fear or loneliness that comes from drug addiction.⁵⁰ In Nigeria society, children of individuals who abuse drugs often are abused or neglected as a result of the individuals’ preoccupation with drugs. National-level studies have shown that parents who abuse drugs often put their need to obtain and abuse drugs before the health and welfare of their children.

In addition to the foregoing, when someone chooses to do drugs for recreational intent, they are deciding to alter their brains in such a way that can bring harm to themselves and others. Often time drug users claim that it is their choice and their actions are only harming themselves, but the researcher believes that is not true of the situation. For instance, an oral interview with one Mr. Gabriel Njoku, a worker with General Hospital Owerri, came up with a counter view when he narrated his eye witness account involving how a family lost three members of their family in a short period, due to Drug abuse, resulting from wrong prescription drug overdose in a quack chemist before being admitted in the general hospital, and since that time according to him he came to see drug abuse as an extremely self-centered thing to do.⁵¹ Njoku’s narrative is one of those drug abuse issues which oftentimes leave severe emotional strain and broken hearted on families as a result of drug addiction.

Emotional Effects of Drug Addiction on the Addict

Emotionally, the individual suffering from drug addiction may feel depressed, anxious, sad, angry, or a whole range of emotions. When using the drugs, many addicts may sometimes feel “better” but then once the effects of the drugs wear off, the addict will again be depressed or anxious to get more drugs. Sometimes the addict will feel regrets for using the drugs previously but yet cannot seem to find a way to stop the addiction. This can cause the feelings of anger or resentment. Drug addictions are known to cause psychological dependence that makes it difficult for even the strongest willed individual to stop using drugs. Socially, the addict becomes withdrawn and set apart from their loved ones. The result is further an emotional trauma for the addict and for the family members. Drug addiction is also known to interfere with the ability of the brain to release dopamine,

which is the pleasure neurotransmitter. As a result, people who use drugs may have a difficulty with maintaining the desired level of pleasure without using drugs.⁵² The case of Uche Obiekwe is a clear example of emotional effects of drug addiction.⁵³

Moral Implications

A lot of bad things are attributed to trafficking, consumption and addiction of illicit Drug. For instance, the involvement of high percentage number of some unscrupulous Nigerian, who are involved in drug trafficking all over the world has for far exposed and dented the image of Nigerians abroad. For that reason, therefore, innocent Nigerians travelling abroad are always exposed and subjected to all sort of disgrace and humiliation in different ports of entry of their various destination abroad.⁵⁴ Secondly, in the aspect of criminal justice as mentioned elsewhere in the study. The Increasing court backlogs threaten the legal system's infrastructure and efficiency, interdiction, access to suspect's bank account, the seizure of assets and imprisonments. These key approaches of this war have created significant corrupting influences and pressures. This corruption affects the police, court officials, members of the military, customs agents, and employees of the correctional services. These people are often implicated in drug deals and this raises a number of ethical and moral questions about the war.⁵⁵

Thirdly, drugs trafficking and consumption causes individuals to lose all sense of morals and ethics, some start killing for drugs, others start stealing for drugs, others engaged in drugs and drive a car which increases the chance of killing someone else. And not only that, it even causes damages to oneself. If we see how many people got caught up in the spiral of drugs, it is clear they are immoral. Drug addiction lead people to different vices. For example, sometimes drug addicts, who cannot pay for their addiction, engage in prostitution, steal and snatch people's items, like cars, mobile phones, gold ornament, to mention but a few, in order to sell in exchange of money to buy hard drugs.⁵⁶

An example of the foregoing is an eyewitness account of a young lady, Sandra Nkechinyere Ndukwe a drug addict, who lives with her parents in Owerri. Regrettably, the young lady engages in street prostitution, or what is generally known nowadays as "hookup". This action according to her explanation, was driven by her consciousness to service her urge and desire for hard drug consumption.⁵⁷ In another vein, there is also a case of young family in South America, who their family members were shot by criminal gangs for not producing enough cocaine, all these are the immoral effects of drug dealings and aftermath of illicit drug addiction.⁵⁸ In addition to this development, a pharmaceutical outlet was burnt down in Kano State for its refusal to sell tramadol to some drug addicts. It was a painful fact, that Kano tops the drug abuse chart in Nigeria, a trend that all hands must be on deck to change if we are to save our upcoming generation from ruin.⁵⁹

In another development, when a person is physically dependent on a substance and craves a drug, their decision making, goes out of the window and what was once a rational human being is now making decisions all in line of how to get more of drugs. I know this may not be as much of problem for richer people, who are involve in substance use, but for poorer people who cannot afford a drug habit, these decisions will typically lead to criminal activity and not a legal type job. Drug dealers and drug users, most of them at some point, made the decision to get involved in the habit. The decision to get into this type of lifestyle is immoral, when you consider the fact that costs are not only placed on an individual's own autonomy and their ability to make legal/moral choices, but also because of their cost on society. The sustaining of this cycle, by people who continue to decide to involve themselves in the world of drugs, is often uninformed, but, being uninformed, is no excuse to be exempt from justice. Mercy is never an obligation.⁶⁰

Summary and Conclusions

This research examined the historical relationship between drug trafficking and social disorder in Nigeria from 1989 to 2022. The findings of this study revealed that drug trafficking has contributed significantly to societal instability in Nigeria, fueling violence, corruption, and social disorder. The study also identified the historical roots of Nigeria's drug problem, including the country's geographical location, economic factors, and cultural practices.

The research showed that the NDLEA, established in 1989, has made significant efforts to combat drug trafficking and abuse, but its efforts have been hindered by inadequate funding, corruption, and lack of effective collaboration with other stakeholders. This study concluded that addressing the drug problem in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the historical, social, economic, and cultural factors that have contributed to the country's vulnerability to drug trafficking and abuse.

Key Findings

Drug trafficking has contributed significantly to societal instability in Nigeria:

- i. The NDLEA has made significant efforts to combat drug trafficking and abuse, but its efforts have been hindered by inadequate funding, corruption, and lack of effective collaboration with other stakeholders.
- ii. Addressing the drug problem in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the historical, social, economic, and cultural factors that have contributed to the country's vulnerability to drug trafficking and abuse.

Implications

The findings of this study have implications for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and public health officials seeking to address the drug problem in Nigeria. The study's recommendations, including strengthening the NDLEA's capacity, intensifying public awareness campaigns, and enhancing inter-agency collaboration, can inform the development of effective strategies for combating drug trafficking and abuse in Nigeria.⁶¹

Research Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to address the drug crime menace and promote societal stability in Nigeria:

Short-Term Recommendations:

- i. **Strengthening NDLEA's Capacity:** The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) should be strengthened through the provision of adequate funding, training, and equipment to enable it to effectively combat drug trafficking and abuse.
- ii. **Intensifying Public Awareness Campaigns:** Public awareness campaigns should be intensified to educate Nigerians about the dangers of drug abuse and trafficking. This can be achieved through the use of various media channels, including television, radio, and social media.
- iii. **Enhancing Inter-Agency Collaboration:** Collaboration between the NDLEA, Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Customs Service, and other relevant agencies should be enhanced to share intelligence and coordinate efforts in combating drug trafficking and abuse.

Medium-Term Recommendations

- i. **Establishing Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers:** Drug treatment and rehabilitation centers should be established in all states of the federation to provide treatment and rehabilitation services to drug addicts.
- ii. **Implementing Alternative Development Programs:** Alternative development programs should be implemented in rural areas to provide alternative livelihoods for farmers and communities that have been involved in illicit drug cultivation and trafficking.
- iii. **Strengthening Nigeria's Border Control:** Nigeria's border control should be strengthened through the provision of adequate funding, training, and equipment to enable the Nigeria Customs Service and other relevant agencies to effectively monitor and control the country's borders.

Long-Term Recommendations

- i. Addressing the Root Causes of Drug Abuse: The root causes of drug abuse, including poverty, unemployment, and lack of education, should be addressed through the implementation of policies and programs that promote socioeconomic development and improve the standard of living of Nigerians.
- ii. Establishing a National Drug Control Policy: A national drug control policy should be established to provide a framework for coordinating the efforts of all stakeholders in combating drug trafficking and abuse.
- iii. Enhancing International Cooperation: International cooperation should be enhanced through the signing of memoranda of understanding with other countries to share intelligence and coordinate efforts in combating drug trafficking and abuse.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can effectively combat drug trafficking and abuse, promote societal stability, and improve the standard of living of its citizens.

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