

## **GLOMMING TO GLOOM: THE RAGING PERIL OF DRUG ABUSE AND TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA**

**Babatope Matthew Ajiboye**

Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Faculty of Social Sciences,  
Department of Peace and Conflict Studies,  
P.M.B 373, Km 3 Oye-Afao Road, Ekiti State, Nigeria  
e-mail: [babatope.ajiboye@fuoye.edu.ng](mailto:babatope.ajiboye@fuoye.edu.ng)

### **Abstract**

Drug abuse has long taken center stage among youths, adults, and the aged in Nigeria. However, rising apprehension is built on the mammoth surge of cartel groups, organised syndicates, and modish brokers, who are utterly engrossed in or specialised in drug trafficking, within and outside the country. According to logical assessment, revenue from drug trafficking is not only an incentive for existing subscribers, but also an incentive for new entrants into this business. In addition to the danger this practice poses to the continued existence of the country, a multiplier effect will reverberate through society in the near future. Hence, this article interrogates the characters, trends, techniques, and drives responsible for the surge in drug trafficking practices in the country, using Albert Bandura's social learning theory as the substratum of rationalisation. The article submits that, if concerted efforts are not made to reduce drug abuse, discourage trafficking trends, and halt the flow, Nigeria may well be on the verge of unprecedented crime, ultra-catch-22, and epic violence that have never been experienced.

### **Keywords**

Drug; Abuse; Youth; Barons; Trafficking; Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

Drug abuse and trafficking are clearly a global threat, upsetting both developed and developing countries in no small measure. According to the World Drug Report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [1], more than 35 million people, globally, suffer from substance abuse disorders, and needing treatment. The consumption rate is predominantly high amongst youths worldwide, and this is a major problem that has elicited concern from different individuals and groups [2]. Drug abuse and trafficking are not only stern health issues but also have social implications for almost all countries, both openly and circuitously. Ghada Walay, the Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), affirms that 'the world's drug epidemic disproportionately affects vulnerable and marginalized populations, such as youth, women, and the impoverished. When our health and social institutions have been pushed to the breaking point and our society is trying to cope, the COVID-19 issue and economic depression threaten to aggravate drug hazards even more' [3]. Lately, the drug abuse and trafficking scenario in Nigeria has assumed a multi-dimensional trend, cutting across all age groups (youths, adults, and the elderly), educational strata and climes. It has culminated to a serious social problem, with hazardous impacts or consequences on all segments of society. The effects can be seen in the health and well-being of persons, spousal/domestic violence, and relationship collapse, among others [1]. These growing concerns have snowballed in patterned proportions in society.

Cases of drug abuse among youths have continued to be on a meteoric rise. During a recent public campaign ‘War Against Drug Abuse with Students as Positive Agents of Change at the Zamfara State College of Health Science and Technology’. Mr. Landan Hashim, who doubles as the Deputy Commander of Narcotics and Assistant State Commander, Drug Demand Reduction of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Zamfara State, released a report stating that 172 youths have developed psychiatric problems owing to drug abuse in Zamfara State in the last six years, [4]. The breakdown also reveals that between January and September 2021, the NDLEA arrested 221 people in connection with drugs, 211 of whom were males and 10 females. In addition, 152 people were interrogated. In 2020, however, 14 psychiatric patients’ mental disorders were reported to have been caused by drug abuse [4]. The violent attitudes, habitually exhibited by youths, who have recently replaced food with drugs, have continued to be a course of concern for all and sundry. For instance, one case that agitates the mind in this regard is that of the 21-year-old undergraduate student of Mass Communication at the University of Lagos. After taking Rohypnol (refnol), Chindima Ojukwu stabbed her partner to death following a violent argument that escalated after taking the substance. Also added to the series of consequences of drug abuse is the death of Francis Chibuike, a 400-level Optometry student at Abia State University Uturu (ABSU), who, after taking the hard drug codenamed “Colorado”, went into a frenzy and jumped off a three-storey building [5].

Drug trafficking and distribution has catapulted Nigeria not only to the forefront of sub-Saharan Africa, but also around the world. This is not because Nigeria is making exemplary progress or breakthroughs in curbing this phenomenon, but on the contrary, because many notorious Nigerian individuals, gangs and syndicates are more often intercepted or arrested upon arrival than departure with illicit substances. As a result, the country has since become known as a “transit route” for all types of illicit drugs to the outside world. This explains why Nigeria is considered a transit/trafficking point for Category A drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and other illicit substances destined for the European, East Asian, and North American markets [6]. The rapid succession of events related to drug trafficking has shown that we are regularly confronted with a spate of news stories about young Nigerians being arrested for attempting to traffic hard drugs such as cocaine and heroin inside and outside the country [7].

In what appears to be a crusade against drug trafficking, in less than twenty-four hours, at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), on July 27, 2021, two Nigerians, Egbon Osarodion and Echendu Jerry Maduakolam, were intercepted by officers of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). They had attempted to traffic drugs to various destinations in Italy and Turkey. Egbon Osarodion was arrested with large quantities of 225mg of Tramadol and Rohypnol, concealed in foil papers wrapped in a polythene bag [8]. Echendu Jerry Maduakolam was caught with 78 grams of cannabis mixed with dried bitter leaves during outward clearance of Egypt Airway to Istanbul, Turkey. As if the two cases were not enough, NDLEA operatives on the same day recovered 35 wraps of cocaine from the underwear of a woman, Okafor Ebere Edith, during the outward clearance of passengers on Air Côte d'Ivoire, to Monrovia, Liberia, from MMIA, Ikeja, and Lagos [8].

Ostensibly, concerns about drug trafficking and abuse are worrisome. For instance, Klantschnig tagged Nigeria as one of West Africa most notorious “drug hubs” that attracted attention long before the current concerns with cocaine trafficking in the sub-region. The problem of drug abuse and trafficking is truly damaging since it is a social evil taking on a new and dangerous dimension with implications for the security of lives and property across Nigeria [9]. President Muhammadu Buhari stated that “drug trafficking and abuse pose a greater threat to the stability of the nation than banditry and insurgency which are prevalent in some parts of Nigeria” [10]. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has

provided statistics that confirm this: “In the last five months, no fewer than 2,180 suspected drug traffickers, including five drug lords, arrested nationwide” [10].

Correspondingly, the Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency reported that most of the cocaine smuggled from South America into Europe and North America passes through Nigeria [11]. The passage or leeway Nigeria provides to other nations in terms of drug trafficking has further affected the country’s standing in the community of nations as it is a vulnerability to these nations. Therefore, this article examines the individuals, trends, artists, techniques, and drives responsible for the recent rise in drug abuse and trafficking in Nigeria. It is intended to help increase vigilance to combat this growing scourge of drug abuse and trafficking in Nigeria. The recommendations contained therein should be practical for government, policy makers, civil society groups, non-governmental organizations, community leaders and other key stakeholders in the fight against the common enemy.

## **1 Conceptualising Drug Abuse and Trafficking**

Prior to bringing up details about or conceptualising the term drug abuse and trafficking, it is proper to establish the bedrock of connotation for drug, as a substance, first. A drug is any elemental stimulant that sways or changes the reaction of the body’s systems, altering either the brain or function of the body. In this case, it triggers the brain or the body towards a speedy or slow reaction, depending on the substance and the body chemistry. A drug is any psychoactive substance that can alter the way the mind or body works, regardless of its legal status or medical approval. It can be synthetic or produced from natural sources; it can be used for varieties of reasons, including medicinal, recreational, and spiritual [12]. Again, for the purpose of emphasis, drug is a substance that modifies perceptions, cognition, mood, behaviour, and general body functions [13]. However, it must be stressed that there are two main categories of drugs. The first class involves drugs that are medically approved psychoactive substances. These are primarily used for clinical purposes and controlled or backed by State law. The second types of drugs are grouped as *quasi-legal*, illicit, and outlawed drugs. The use of such drugs amounts to contravention, which subsequently attracts punishment.

Drug abuse refers to any act that is contrary to the medical or cultural application or prescription of use. In other words, it is a deliberate abrasion of the function a drug is medically meant to perform. The patterned habit is what constitutes an offence interpreted as misuse or abuse of drugs. Drug abuse depicts utilisation of hard drugs. These could include any of the following substances: Marijuana (cannabis), psilocybin, Rohypnol (flunitrazepam), mescaline (peyote), ketamine, codeine, tramadol, cocaine (blow, coke, crack), heroin (big H, black tar, dell dust, smack, and thunder), among other narcotic and psychedelic drugs. Drug abuse is defined as a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite its harmful consequences [14]. On the other hand, drug trafficking is a transnational activity that centres on shipping and peddling illegal substances across local and international boundaries. In the same vein, drug trafficking can be said to be a global chain of trade that involves cultivating, manufacturing, distributing, and selling substances that are prohibited by law [15].

### **1.1 Theoretical Perspective**

The study applies the social learning theory. Julian Rotter, Robert Sears, Walter Mischel, and Ronald Akers are early proponents of this theory. However, in 1977, Albert Bandura advanced a radical departure from the erstwhile proponents through his work, branded ‘the study of modelling (vicarious learning) as a form of social learning’ [16]. The major postulation of the theory is that individuals learn some manners through observing, copying,

and imitating other people's behaviours. These forms of behaviours are learned from parents, teachers, peers, and relatives, friends/associates, and others they regard as their mentors or role models. Social learning theory affirms that young individuals maintain the connection with mentors who are habitually glued to the abuse and trafficking of drugs. In other words, they are more likely to be influenced or co-opted into drug abuse and trafficking by those they love or follow closely.

Bandura, additionally, believes that a young person learns about things in life by observing what others are doing [16]. In essence, the individual then adopts the behaviour of others. A person becomes a drug addict or trafficker when the majority of the ideas they are exposed are pro-drugs. Meanwhile, it can be stated, expressly, that learning, exhibition, and replication of drug-related behaviour (abuse and trafficking), by new entrants of a syndicate group, is as a result of first-hand experience gotten from a methodical guide or mentorship by hardened forebears from whom they have steadily picked up and formed their own habit. The relevance of the theory lies in its affirmation that teenagers and young people learn to abuse and traffic drugs by way of assiduous learning, copying, and internalizing.

## **2 Synopses of Drug Abuse and Trafficking in Nigeria**

Nigeria's image has been battered due to notorious crime rate and various cases of drug abuse. Unsurprisingly, it is averred that the annual prevalence rate of cannabis abuse among the African population, aged 15–64, is estimated at 7.8 percent (range: 3.8–10.4 percent), which is higher than the global average of 3.8 percent (range: 2.8–4.5 percent). West and Central Africa are the sub-regions with the highest rates of occurrence. This is estimated at 12.4 percent (range: 5.2 - 13.5 percent). Within that sub-region, the highest annual national rate of cannabis abuse is in Nigeria, with 14.3 percent of the entire population, aged 15–64 [17]. In 2019, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported that Drug use is common among those between the ages of 25 and 39 years, while Cannabis is the most used drug [1].

Apart from the fact that cannabis consumption has become a common occurrence, and that, generally, drug abuse is not as rare as it ought to be in the country, Nigeria is well known for its louche and rakish routes for all manners of drug trafficking. According to one of the officials of the Indian Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), in a magazine published in 2015, more than ninety percent of persons arrested in the year 2014 for involvement in various cases of drug trafficking, in the country, are of African descent, particularly from Nigeria [18]. This report is not too dissimilar to the 2012 report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) that tipped Nigeria as the highest trafficking and drug use nation in West Africa. The report further indicates that, in the last 15 years, West Africa has become the new transit hub for cocaine coming from Latin America but destined for Europe. In Nigeria, Lagos is not only seen as the commercial capital but also noted as the most active centre for the air trafficking of cocaine. The report shows that close to 50% of Africa's drug couriers arrested in Europe in 2011 were citizens of Nigeria. The nation also topped the list of major transit routes of heroin to Europe [17].

A typical motivation for drug trafficking in Nigeria is the prevalent poverty rate and stunted economic sustainability of citizens. To this end, drug trafficking has continued to play the role of auxiliary/alternative vocation, or a lucrative business venture, not only to serve their daily living but also as a surreptitious conduit for eking out surreal cash. This trend has continued to thrive because the prospect is lucrative. This, of course, comes at the detriment of the country's image as average Nigerian travellers to other countries. They are subjected to detailed search because they are suspected to be budding peddlers of drugs. Oftentimes, planes that arrive or stopover at Nigerian airports are usually thoroughly searched, and many

Nigerian travellers are subjected to very humiliating and embarrassing search [19]. Because of the battered image of the country, there are usually red alerts in most international airports whenever Nigerians are on board an incoming flight [19]. However, the way innocent Nigerians embarking on voyages are treated with disdain elsewhere, is disturbing and ridiculing. They are profiled or judged by the crime committed by their fellow citizens (syndicates) who are involved in drug trafficking.

Additionally, it must be emphasized that drug trafficking is one of the world's biggest money-spinning businesses. As such, it is fastened to a well thought out strategy capable of breaking barriers set out to counteract its execution. After undergoing the rigmarole involved, and masterfully digesting the plans, the recruits are hypnotized and must take an oath before high priests in shrines, exchanging blood to seal the vow. This is to prevent the initiates from committing treason. Again, ad hoc recruitment takes the form of frequent recruitment of vulnerable individuals as mules, often at great risk to their lives and welfare. However, those involved in such arrangements include recruiting agents, native doctors who often perform initiation to control the recruits who would master the art within a short period, agents who help to launder the proceeds of trafficking through real estate or other transactions, and travel agents who arrange the deal with the foreign agents who receive substances from the assigned peddler on arrival. They also foot their bills by providing required services such as shelters, security, clothes, food, etc.

Drug abuse and trafficking are dangerous to both individuals and society. They spur crime; act as catalysts for violence, and presents distinguishable threats to community security. Most pressing is the violence associated with street-level drug dealing, particularly crack cocaine [20]. Moreover, it is consequential, robbing the society of future leaders (youths) who are psychologically and physically warped. In the global context, as established by the Vienna Conference, 26 June 2019, with the caption 'Improved research and more precise data', it is indicated that the negative effects of drug use are far more severe and widespread than health [1]. The result of recent survey suggested that no fewer than 36 million people suffer from drug use disorders around the world. UNODC's International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, with the theme "Share facts on drugs, Save lives" [21], underscored the importance of strengthening the evidence base, and raising public awareness, so that the international community, governments, civil society, families, and youth can make informed decisions, target their efforts at preventing and treating drug use, and tackle world drug challenges [21]. This again reaffirms the earlier position that "no country alone can stem the drug trade within its borders". The implication here is that no country or individual is completely immune [2]. Though the Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) was established, in Nigeria, to fight every form of cultivation and trafficking of drugs, there are also formalized laws promulgated against drug trafficking. However, these have not yielded the expected results, in terms of deterring people from engaging in trafficking.

## **2.1 Drug Trafficking in Nigeria: Scope and Methods**

The trend of drug trafficking is evolving. In fact, one can say that it has culminated to be one of the many lucrative, morally wrong businesses in Nigeria, dovetailing dexterously masterful dealers and clients. Numerous facets are noticeable in the perpetration of drug trafficking in Nigeria. One of such crafty schemes is the extremely stylish and predesigned manner, which, of course, involves hiding under registered pharmaceutical companies to smuggle narcotic substances and prohibited drugs inside and outside the country. Recently, how drug traffickers exploited pharmaceuticals as disguise strategy to traffic drugs were uncovered between and among Nigerian and Ghanaian syndicates. It has been reported that tramadol exchanges for cannabis are frequent between the two nations. This was realized through operational seizures

of tramadol, codeine, diazepam, and other products all cunningly packaged together in warehouses in Nigeria and Ghana. In the same vein, there are established connection between pharmaceutical product traffickers and drug dealers. Part of the finding is that there is a trafficking route connecting Nigeria and Ghana, which is consistently used to smuggle both illegal tramadol and Ghanaian skunk (cannabis). Traffickers, who return to Ghana with illegal tramadol [21], import skunk into Nigeria. In short, it is not uncharacteristic, nor does it require a rocket scientist to aver that some of the pharmaceutical agents hide under legal certificates, issued to them, or under the pretence of using such drugs for the production of useful medical psychoactive drugs. In other words, such substances are concealed within legitimate products for onward delivery to designated places or persons.

The next crafty means is through diplomatic immunities and privileges. This technique is based on immunity clauses enjoyed by foreign envoys and consular officers. It is important to note that they do not directly carry out the act of trafficking drugs under the umbrella of diplomatic envoys, ambassadors, and consular officers but by a traveling entourage, comprising family members of diplomatic envoys, their official or domestic staff, or family members of their official staff, who also benefit from the immunity, by extension. In addition, it should be noted that many of the ambassadors were politicians in their homeland before their appointment. In a bid to emerge victorious at the polls, many may have associated and fantasized with traffickers for sponsorship of their candidates, who later appointed them as emissaries in foreign countries as a compensation. Obviously, elected candidates either tend to “own” political parties through privately funding or enlisting the support of friends, regional allies, and ethnic base, which may include traffickers. According to a report published by the West African Commission on Drugs in 2014, ‘traffickers appear to easily connect with people of influence and are able to establish and operate informal social networks, allowing them to avoid detection by the formal security apparatus or co-opt it when necessary’ [22].

Another channel open for drug traffickers is through courier services meant for postal deliveries (the post and fast parcels). For instance, on December 3, 2014, agents from the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), in Chennai, apprehended a Nigerian national who was attempting to traffic 2 kg of pseudoephedrine and 100 grams of heroin through the Indian postal system to South Africa and Guinea [18]. Again, as the online provides an alternative for marketing on daily basis, it has created an avenue for customers using online services to buy varieties of commodities, including drugs, counterfeit and contraband tobacco products, among other illegal commodities, there are other electronic means to traffic these substances to their destinations [23]. Another method is through container shipping, via haulage companies used to transport drugs on land and via ferries to ROI and NI ports [23]. It is necessary to emphasize that the trafficking/shipment process is often facilitated by cooperation between the employees of various shipping companies and the staff of the ports. According to one of the officials of the Narcotics Control Bureau, it is an organized process ensuring the sender’s secrecy, and consignment rip-offs at destinations prior to Customs clearance or involvement of courier Company personnel; the conclusion here is that trafficking via couriers is a less risky alternative [18].

Connectedly, a Nigerian woman was arrested by Saudi authorities in Medina in December 2018. She was accused of illegally transporting 2,000 tramadol packs in a bag, which was labelled in her name and left at the airport. Ensuing investigations led to the arrest of six airport employees of Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Nigeria, who had planted illegal drugs in one of the passengers’ luggage [24].

There are various module-operandi devised to hide drugs away from customs officers and other security agencies saddled with clearing of both export and import goods. Some of the

tricks frequently used for trafficking drugs are hiding them in low-value items such as hardbound books, files, photo frames, talcum powder boxes, sculptures, women's handbags, shoes, and even cricketers' thigh pads, water purifiers, machines, soaked textiles, among others. For instance, on January 8<sup>th</sup> 2022, the NDLEA Lagos Command foiled the efforts of some illicit drug merchants/traffickers from exporting 73 parcels of cannabis (34.05 kg) concealed in food containers to the United Kingdom, via the NAHCO export shed of the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, MMIA, Ikeja Lagos [25]. The same mode was used to intercept 50 parcels of cannabis consignment (27.25 kg) destined for the United States on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022; three suspects were apprehended [24]. However, it should be reiterated that drug trafficking is not solely focused on exportation or shipment outside the country. It also includes drug importation into the country. Essentially, the process is a complex network-like operation. For the purpose of comparison, on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022, NDLEA operatives intercepted 94 parcels of cannabis indica (Colorado) weighing 43.4 kg, being trafficked into the country through the Tincan seaport in Lagos, were intercepted in a 40ft container from Canada. The drugs were cleverly hidden inside a Toyota Camry. Similarly, another 59 parcels of Colorado (17.3 kg), concealed in a Mercedes Benz vehicle, being imported from Canada, were discovered on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at the same seaport [25].

The most embarrassing channel of drug trafficking/networking is the involvement of security agents. This happens within and outside the country. Naturally, when an allegation of this magnitude is made against those charged with combating drug trafficking, it is readily met with a significant number of sceptics. There is evidence to refute the scepticism among the public. One of the unusual scenarios that easily debunks the adherence to the view that such allegations about the involvement of security officials and agencies are mere speculation is the recent blockbuster – the drug trafficking saga of the country's Commander of Intelligence Response Team (IRT) at the Force Intelligence Bureau of the Nigeria Police Force, DCP Abba Kyari, nicknamed 'super cop', alongside his team members: ACP Sunday Ubuja, ASP Bawa James, Inspector Simon Agrigba and Inspector John Nuhu's. They were said to have had ties with drug barons and courier groups in Brazil and Ethiopia. According to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency's (NDLEA) spokesperson, Mr. Femi Babafemi, 'investigation has revealed that the celebrated Kyari is a member of a drug syndicate operating across the globe' [26]. To further show how drug trafficking has become enmeshed with security agencies in Nigeria, barely 48 hours after the unfolding of Kyari's escapades, serving military personnel attached to the 145 Battalion of the Nigerian Army formation in Abia State, Yusuf Gongpolai Adams was apprehended by the Nigeria Police Force in possession of 81 parcels of cannabis in Bauchi State. According to the Bauchi State Commissioner of Police Umar Sanda [27]:

*“On 06/02/2022 at about 1200hrs, our Safer Highway Patrol along Bauchi-Darazo Road, Bauchi State while on routine Stop and Search intercepted a Toyota Highlander vehicle driven by one Yusuf Gongpolai Adams attached to the 145 Battalion, Abia State and presently on Development course at the Nigerian Army School of Environmental and Science Technology Benue State. He further revealed that in the course of interrogation, the suspect confessed to the crime.”*

With the current spate of engagement of the security forces in drug trafficking, as evidenced by the involvement of high-ranking police officers, and military personnel of different agencies, it is logical to conclude that this is a practice among the rank and file (both senior and junior) officers of these major security outfits.

## **2.2 Drive Responsible for Rise in Drug Abuse and Trafficking**

There are numerous factors responsible for the rise in drug abuse and trafficking in the country. One of such motivators is divorce or break-up of marriages and relationships frequently experienced. Excessive drug use is another significant factor. For instance, disproportionate consumption of drugs is considered as a healing or coping strategy by some people who suffer heartbreak arising from divorce or break-up with their partner. Break-up in a relationship is extremely painful; that is why many people end their lives with heroin, meth, cocaine, and other drugs, in order to put the experience behind them quickly [28].

Massive youth unemployment is another factor responsible for the rise in drug trafficking in the country. It is a well-known fact that Nigeria annually turns out graduates without provision of means of engagement upon completion of their studies or youth service. This hopeless situation has led to an increased interest in drug trafficking. The frustration caused by failure to find adequate employment also encourages drug consumption, thus creating a vicious circle [29]. Drug trafficking is a source of income for many unemployed people. Therefore, financial fulfilment is a huge inducement for engagement in drug trafficking [7]. For instance, a March 2014 CNN World story reported that Mexican drug cartels alone made between \$19 and \$29 billion dollars in sales per year. This huge amount means that people are willing to take massive risks to perpetuate their drug trade [30].

Widespread poverty among Nigerians has also been tipped as a catalyst or drive for the meteoric rise of drug trafficking. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) stated that a stunning 82.9 million Nigerians, that is, or 4 out of 10 individuals, have real per capita expenditures of less than 137,430 Naira (\$381.75) per year, an amount that is below the country's poverty line [31]. By implication, many citizens are unable to feed themselves three square meals a day. This makes them easy targets for induction into or recruitment to the drug trade by traffickers. Furthermore, societal pressure, arising from the desire to live a frugal life, or the urge for material possessions, serves as another factor, giving rise to drug trafficking in Nigeria. As a matter of truth, of course, in Nigerian parlance, 'a man's worth or importance in society is measured by his material possessions' [32]. To fulfil this urge, many people are daily drafted into drug trafficking because of its multibillion-dollar nature. Thus, the substantial financial incentive in the trade serves as an inducement for engagement in drug trafficking [7].

The lack of synergy among security agencies is another factor contributing to the rise of drug trafficking in the country. It is obvious that intelligence gathering, within the security circle in Nigeria, is weak, and more alarming is the intelligence sharing and cooperation among the various security outfits. The failure of Security agencies fail to track the activities of drug barons and traffickers efficiently, thus giving rise to trafficking of drugs within and outside the country. Not too dissimilar to the foregoing is the fact that when some the drug barons are apprehended, they are shielded from facing the full wrath of the law. This boils down to connivance with law enforcers, and the weak justice system that the country currently operates as regards punishment for drug trafficking and related abuses. As a result, arresting drug traffickers, prosecuting those arrested, and securing convictions have been made cumbersome.

## **3 Steps Required in Curtailing Drug Abuse and Trafficking**

While it is easy to argue that the need for broader internal cohesion among security operatives to advance balanced and integrated criminal justice responses to drug abuse and trafficking underscores a readiness to combat the menace, it is also deserving and appropriate to advocate for concrete and practical steps to be taken in curbing drug abuse in the country. Therefore, to



curtail drug abuse in the country, genuine steps must be geared toward addressing complications that often spring up due to divorce and break-ups in marital and social relationships. The government can hire therapists, and relationship experts to help people who have recently experienced a break-up or a divorce.

In addition, there is a need for the introduction of psychotherapy as a therapeutic alternative to attending to the mental and emotional well-being of those who have long been addicted to drugs. This will help the addicts develop mental stability and awareness of the need to eschew drug abuse. In this regard, psychologists and psychiatrists could be saddled with higher responsibilities, which should include meeting the specific needs that got the drug addiction victims into it. It has been argued that these groups of individuals deserve our collective empathy, understanding, and support to promote timely intervention and recovery through treatment, care, and social integration [4]. Doing this will certainly help a great deal, in addressing victims who have taken solace in drug abuse as the only way to get their problems off their minds.

In addition, efforts must be tailored towards addressing the growing unemployment peril, which, of course, has become the major driving force behind the debacles of drug abuse and trafficking that Nigeria is currently dealing with. It is also important for the government to introduce meaningful social welfare intervention programmes capable of drastically reducing poverty in the country. There is also the need for sound education at homes, schools, churches, and mosques aimed at instilling virtues, values, and the right orientation in teenagers, young people, and adults of the overriding importance, as well as the need to stay away from drug abuse and trafficking. It is also suggestible that civil society groups and non-governmental organizations should raise the bar of the public campaign against drug abuse and trafficking. Doing this will certainly serve as a wake-up call for the government to reposition the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and, more importantly, work on the psyche of drug abusers and traffickers. This effort is required to meet the new dynamics of curtailing drug abuse and trafficking.

Moreover, it appears that the life-cord of Nigerian security agencies depends more on rivalry than the application of better ideas, or workable solutions to issues. Such can come in form of synergy and collaboration among various state actors/security agencies. This can be expressed particularly in terms of intelligence sharing and tactics that can guarantee the burst of activities of drug traffickers. In essence, they must work as a united force in combating the syndicates involved in the business. Adopting this modus operandi will, in no doubt, contribute to checking the illicit activities carried out by these groups; it will, indirectly, cut off the supply chain which will then translate to a reduction in the cases of drug abuse and trafficking in the country. Similarly, there is a need for intense training of the enforcement officials in appropriate investigative techniques to better uncover the dynamics of drug trafficking. There is also a need for the judicial system to be strengthened. The government can do this by improving the working conditions of judicial officers, and by providing an enabling environment akin to quick and fair dispensation of the law without interference and protection of sacred cows. There should be equity in the punishment for drug traffickers in the country.

## **Conclusion**

Following the extensive interrogation of the phenomena of drug abuse and trafficking, this article contributes to a growing body of knowledge on the aforementioned phenomena. It thus concludes that the phenomena have taken the most dangerous dimensions in the country. They have become the most dangerous factors befuddling the nation's serenity, peace, and reputation than insurgency in the north and militancy in the Niger Delta. This statement is

based on the fact that a significant number of citizens in the six geopolitical zones are affected. Even more worrying is the fact that the country is daily cornered by social ills such as violence, crime, and harassment caused by drug users. The country's image is being affected by the activities of drug traffickers and pushers and is being cast in a bad light in the eyes of the world. If concerted efforts are not made to contain the fast-spreading tentacles, discourage the players and tackle the business head-on, the proceeds (profits) from the trade will continue to rise and more hard-core players may be lured to join, expanding the cultivation of drug abuse and trafficking and turning the scenario in the nation from "grim to gloomy".

## Literature

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## ROSTOUCÍ NEBEZPEČÍ OBCHODOVÁNÍ S DROGAMI A JEJICH ZNEUŽÍVÁNÍ V NIGÉRII

Tento článek zkoumá osoby, trendy, techniky a pohnutky, které jsou zodpovědné za nedávný nárůst zneužívání drog a obchodování s nimi v Nigérii. Jeho cílem je přispět ke zvýšení ostražitosti v boji proti této rostoucí tendenci zneužívání drog a obchodování s nimi v Nigérii. Doporučení v něm obsažená by měla být praktická pro vládu, politiky, občanské iniciativy, nevládní organizace, vedoucí představitele komunit a další klíčové zúčastněné strany v boji proti tomuto společnému nepříteli.

Pokud nebude vyvinuto společné úsilí o omezení zneužívání drog, odrazení od trendů obchodování s nimi a zastavení jejich toku, může se Nigérie ocitnout na pokraji bezprecedentní kriminality, ultra zločinů a násilí, jaké dosud tato země nezažila.

## DIE WACHSENDE GEFAHR DES DROGENHANDELS UND DEREN MISSBRAUCH IN NIGERIA

Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit Personen, Trends, Techniken und Beweggründen, welche für den neuerlichen Anstieg des Drogenmissbrauchs und –handels in Nigeria verantwortlich zeichnen. Sein Ziel besteht darin, einen Beitrag zur Wachsamkeit im Kampf gegen diese wachsende Tendenz des Drogenmissbrauchs und –handels in Nigeria zu leisten. Die hierin enthaltenen Empfehlungen sollen der Regierung, den Politikern den Bürgerinitiativen, privaten Organisationen, leitenden Vorständen von Gemeinschaften und anderen wichtigen beteiligten Parteien im Kampf gegen diesen gemeinsamen Feind als Handreichung dienen.

Wenn keine gemeinsame Anstrengung um Einschränkung des Drogenmissbrauchs, Abkehr von den Trends des Drogenhandels und deren Fluss entwickelt wird, wird Nigeria an den Rand einer nie erlebten Kriminalität, schwerster Verbrechen und Gewalt driften, wie sie das Land noch nie erlebt hat.

## ROSNĄCE ZAGROŻENIE HANDLEM I NADUŻYWANIEM NARKOTYKÓW W NIGERII

Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest badaniom osób, trendów, technik i motywów, odpowiedzialnych za niedawny wzrost nadużywania i handlu narkotykami w Nigerii. Ma on się przyczynić do zwiększenia czujności w walce z tym rosnącym trendem nadużywania i handlu narkotykami w Nigerii. Zalecenia zawarte w opracowaniu powinny być praktyczne dla rządu, polityków, inicjatyw obywatelskich, organizacji pozarządowych, liderów społeczności i innych kluczowych interesariuszy w walce z tym wspólnym wrogiem.

Jeśli nie zostaną podjęte wspólne wysiłki w celu ograniczenia nadużywania narkotyków, odwrócenia trendów handlu i powstrzymania ich przepływu, Nigeria może znaleźć się na skraju bezprecedensowej przestępczości, ultra zbrodni i przemocy, jakich kraj ten nigdy wcześniej nie doświadczył.