



FACT SHEET THREE

Innovative Use of Drugs in Kano

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Introduction <<

THE MENACE OF DRUG ABUSE AND TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA has reached an intolerable level, hence the concerted agitation by various stakeholders that it should be put on a leash. The prevalence of drugs in Kano is shaped by the size of the population which provides a readymade market. The population of Kano (estimated at 19m) and its status of being a commercial nerve centre of the entire West African states, coupled with the illiteracy level, provides a fertile ground for trafficking in and abuse of the drugs. A report by the Bayero University on ‘Drug Abuse Perils Nigeria’s Future’ revealed that the NDLEA confiscated about 47 tonnes of illegal drugs in 2017 and in 2018 to date 30 tonnes were taken from drug dealers in Kano. the Command also confiscated 367 kg of cannabis, 6 tons of synthetic drugs, 10 gram of cocaine and 3.2g of heroin amongst other drugs. An arrest of about 250 persons were made and out of which 53 were convicted while 98 counselled.

Drug abuse has been found to be the underlying factor of political thuggery; politicians have been found to exploit drug users for electoral violence or intimidation during campaigns. A 2017 report by NSRP presented that 73% of respondents to a research survey in Kano and Kaduna admitted that local candidates had given them drugs and money, with one of the respondents saying he had been ordered to “snatch ballot boxes”.

The role of some politicians in exploiting drug users in this manner was cited by law enforcement officials, community leaders, vigilante group members who participated in the

focus group discussion carried out by researchers. The report was based on perception but were made by reputable members of law enforcement and civil society. Others referenced first-hand experience of being given drugs to carry out electoral violence. The assertion should not be seen to tarnish the Nigerian electoral process, but it does speak to the way drug use is exploited to provoke political conflict and undermine security.

Drugs of Abuse Prevalent in Kano <<

DRUGS OF ABUSE THAT ARE PREVALENT IN KANO INCLUDE, among others:

A. Cannabis Sativa or Marijuana, a highly addictive substance that acts on the central nervous system and causes some hallucinogenic effect. It is prohibited by law to possess but is one of the most commonly abused drugs in Kano. It is one of the cheapest drugs of abuse and always available. It is in fact second to tobacco. Those who abuse it cut across youths and adults, men and women, including literate and the illiterate persons. It quickly creates in the individual user some traits that could easily be noticed by creating an intense feeling of happiness, wellbeing, and self confidence in the individual user. Mostly found in dried weeds form marijuana depresses mental relaxation, depresses acute pain and increases appetite. It is common because it grows in most parts of the country, especially South West and South-South. According to Nigeria’s National Bureau of Statistics, taken from an NSRP 2017 report called ‘Out of the shadows’ just under 9,000 arrests were made in 2014 for drug offences, with nearly 166,000

kilogrammes of drugs seized, majority of which was marijuana of that number, 7,522 in Kano. The NDLEA in turn has seized about 250 kilograms of it in 2018, the average age of initiation of cannabis use among the general population is 19 years.

B. Cocaine: Cocaine (or coke as it is sometimes called) is a powerfully addictive stimulant made from the leaves of a coca plant. It stimulates the brain at a very high speed. It is mostly in powdery or crystal form. Cocaine mostly originates from South American countries and Asia. This drug is found and sold in Kano although in negligible quantity due to its cost. This may be the reason why it is mostly abused by the middle class and the elites. It is mostly traded in Kano in areas of Sabon Gari, Hadejia Road and some hotels. It is traded in a very discreet way which explains why a more professional endeavour is required to locate and identify it. But an online news report revealed that two suspects were arrested by the NDLEA with 2.927 kilogrammes of the substance in April 2019 for the first time in Kano.

C. Heroin: This is a drug made from seed pod of the opium poppy plant. It is made from morphine a natural substance taken from the seed. Heroin is highly addictive. An illegal and highly addictive drug, heroin is one of the most dangerous and most addictive drugs made from morphine. Deaths can easily occur as a result of overdose of heroin. It is also a pain killing drug and its abuse produces a form of euphoric feeling in the individual user. It is also found and sold in Kano mostly in areas where cocaine is procured.

D. Codeine: This is an opiate used to treat pain, cough and diarrhoea. It is typically used in the treatment of mild to moderate degree of pain. It is less potent than morphine but still holds very powerful and addictive properties for the people that abuse it. The use of codeine starts innocently with a prescription for a codeine-based cough syrup. It is one of the most commonly abused drugs, especially by both married and unmarried women and youths in Kano. According to a report and a documentary titled 'Sweet Sweet Codeine' by the BBC Pidgin, the Senate estimated that 3 million bottles of codeine syrup are consumed daily in Kano and Jigawa State, respectively and since the documentary on the codeine abuse was aired, the syrup was banned and about 2.4 million bottles of the syrup were recalled from the market. Prior to the ban on the substance in 2018, codeine was excessively abused, but with the

exorbitant price it now attracts owing to the ban that resulted in a drastic decrease in its availability and abuse. It is extremely habit forming and causes addiction. The distribution and sale of this drug was not restricted to pharmacists and chemists which gave rise to its availability. The drug is widely consumed by youths between the age range of 15-33years old and has no gender disparity. A married woman in Kano narrated how drug use, specifically codeine, became her only recourse after her husband married a second wife.

D. Tramadol: This is a prescription drug that is used to treat pain in its moderate level, and analgesic medication. Excessive use of this drug over time can lead to addiction and can result in slurred speech and seizures without one having a history of epilepsy, impaired coordination, nausea or vomiting.

The prevalence of the abuse of this drug as a stimulant is mostly associated with those performing hard labour or other menial jobs. This is the more reason why here in Kano, it is mostly abused by people loading and off-loading goods in market-places, ware-houses, construction sites and those pushing water on wheeled barrows. It stimulates and energises the individual user by giving him an added energy to carry out a difficult task. Massive arrest of vendors who go about to hawk these drugs made it a bit uneasy to access and the prices have increased to unimaginable levels. About three to four years ago, a sachet containing ten tablets of 225mg of tramadol was sold between 100 and 150 naira but as we speak today, a single tablet of this same tramadol is sold between 300 and 350 naira. This is occasioned by a ban on the product and massive arrest and seizures of those found in their possession illegally. The abuse of tramadol has been recognised as a concern in the North West region, with the *Wall Street Journal* publishing a special report in October 2016 calling it the "opioid crisis for the rest of the world". Kano state police command in the month of May intercepted 303 cartons of tramadol and a number of five arrest was carried out of suspected dealers of the hard drugs.

More so, a survey conducted by the *American Journal of Nursing* on the determinants of substance abuse among commercial bus drivers in Kano revealed that 80.6% of bus drivers abuse tramadol. Investigation have indicated that

tramadol gets to Niger, Chad and Cameroun before it gets to Libya and Algeria where it attracts higher prices.

E. Valium or Diazepam is a medication that is used to produce a calming effect. It is used in the treatment of anxiety or seizures. It has a longer lasting effect than other drugs of its class and causes drowsiness. It comes in tablets and injectable form. It is mostly abused by the lower class of abusers who cannot afford to buy Rohypnol. It is equally very common here in Kano and mostly handled by the most improbable groups of people like the elites in Kano.

F. Rohypnol: This drug is a tranquilizer about ten times more potent than diazepam (Valium). It mostly comes in tablet form. It is a very powerful sedative and a depressant. It depresses the central nervous system of the individual user. It is commonly called a 'date rape drug' and it relaxes the muscles. Sedation mostly occurs 30 minutes after ingestion. It slows the psychomotor responses. It causes loss of inhibition and consciousness. It is widely abused by young ladies and gentlemen. In Kano, the abuse of this drug has become as rampant and wide-spread as codeine syrup even though the prices have appreciated, thereby making it unaffordable to many users. The prices of a sachet of ten tablets before, now goes for two tablets.

G. Pentazocine: This is an injectable drug used to manage moderate and severe pains, and as an anaesthesia for surgery. It is mostly abused by people who have history of an ailment that gives them severe pain, after having it prescribed by a physician. People with sickle cell anaemia mostly abused it as a self-mediation. Sometimes referred to as a narcotic and it acts fast on the central nervous system. Some of the resultant effects of its abuse include among others skin changes (especially where the injection was given), irritation, noisy breathing, dizziness, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting. It is indeed the worst drug of abuse as it is associated with other attendant health issues such as transmission of HIV and AIDS due to exchange of syringe and needle among users. About 90% of injection drug users (IDU) fall victim of infecting HIV and other blood-related diseases that could occur from transfusion due to exchange of syringe and needles.

H. Solvents: These are aerosols and other gaseous glues. The discovery of these solvents and other gaseous substances and their widespread availability coupled with cheap prices have plunged a large percentage of our school

age children into substance abuse. "Suck and die", a liquid chemical substance used in mattress making factories and preservation of dead bodies, is widely abused. Rubber solution is another solvent used by vulcanizers in mending tubes and tyres. Both substances have the potentials of making one high when inhaled or snorted. "Suck and die" is cheap and readily available as there is no law restricting its production or possession. This has attracted very young boys from the ages of seven to twenty into drug abuse. In Kano, it has deeply affected children from broken homes, the Almajiri's, the children of the IDPs, and other fatherless children whose mental and general health status are gradually deteriorating.

How Are These Drugs Being Used? <<

THIS SUBHEAD REFERS TO THE METHOD OF ADMINISTRATION OF the drug into the system to provide the desired effect. The way and manner the drug is being used is mostly determined by its peculiarity and the desired outcome. The modes of administration include, among others:

A. Smoking: This is the process of inhaling and exhaling the smoke of a substance of abuse. The substance is burned and the resulting smoke breathed in to be tested and absorbed into the blood stream in order that the desired effect is felt. Smoked substances are mostly in dried leaves form, the leaves are rolled into a paper or put into a smoking pipe and fire is ignited on one end while the smoke is absorbed from the other end. The harmful effect of smoking even ordinary tobacco is no secret to anyone. The substance most abused by smoking is *Cannabis sativa* or marijuana. The active ingredient in cannabis, known as tetrahydrocannabinol, produces the effect and thereby destroys the lungs of the individual user, thus inhibiting the proper functioning of the respiratory system.

Fresh cannabis leaves are sometimes boiled to make a tea-like drink or boiled in porridge. It could also be chewed. A recent discovery has shown that in some motor parks in Kano, a tea-like drink called 'Lipton' is sold to commuters and drivers. It is prepared by soaking cannabis in water and adding some roots to conceal the weeds therein.

B. Swallow: This is the act of using water or other beverages to take into the body through the mouth a drug

of abuse. Drugs such as tramadol, diazepam, pemoline, exol are swallowed.

C. Sniffing: This is the process of administering drugs through the nose. Bare hands or pipes could be used to get the drug into the body system through the nose. This is method is mostly used if the drug is in powdery form such as cocaine and heroin.

D. Snorting/Puffing: This method is deployed when the substance is in liquid or gaseous form. The vapor is puffed through the mouth by way of breathing in and out. Sometimes cocaine or heroin could be cooked and the vapor is absorbed through the mouth. Other substances abused through this method, are “suck and die” and rubber solution. The vapour or fumes from ‘suck and die’ are taken into the body from the container by way of breathing in while rubber solution is squeezed into an empty ‘pure water’ pack where its vapour is absorbed through the mouth by breathing in and out. The substance is then absorbed by the brain and the effect is felt by the user.

E. Inhalation: This is also known as inspiration. This happens when air or other gasses get into the lungs. It’s a process of drawing air and other substances such as fumes, vapor, dust or mist into the lungs.

F. Injection: This is the act of administering a liquid drug into a person’s body using syringe and needle. Pentazocine is abused through the use of syringe and needle. This act provides a very rapid result and it is the most dangerous source of administering and abusing drug. There is high degree of chances of transmission of HIV and AIDS due to exchange of syringe and needles.

Ways of Identifying a Drug User <<

DRUG USERS ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE CHARACTERISED BY THE following signs or behaviour.

-Red or bloodshot eyes: This is not to say that all those with red eyes are substance abuse victims.

-Black/burnt lips: The resultant effect of a substance abuser is having a black or burnt lips which occurs as a result of continuous abuse of the drug over time.

-Dark palm and burnt fingers: This is mostly a characteristic of those who abuse *Cannabis Sativa* which provides smoke in the course of using it.

-Body odour: The odour in substances such as cannabis, rubber solution lingers on the body of the user.

-Possession of paraphernalia or the drug itself: The presence of the drug itself or its associated items will depict a user.

-Using of dark glasses and thick clothing even during hot seasons. This is a strategy deployed by a drug user to conceal their identity as a substance abuser upon sighting.

-The red and bloodshot eyes and dilated pupils is concealed by a dark sun glass.

-Change of friends and behaviour: when a person moves around with friends other than the ones they are originally known with and a sudden change in their behaviour pattern goes a long way to show that they are likely into drugs. They might be violent or aggressive towards parents or younger ones at the slightest provocation or disappointment.

-Adoption of drug culture: This could be the possession of magazines on drugs, imitation of ways of appearance, and way of life of known reggae musicians that are known to have made weed their second food.

-Changes in eating and sleeping habits: It could be loss of appetite or increased appetite depending on the drug of abuse. Their sleeping habit could be excessive or find it difficult to sleep.

-Looking very untidy and unkempt: Their level of body hygiene is drastically diminished.

-Slurred speech: The way they talk is mostly inhibited due to congestion in their respiratory tract.

-They could be staggering while walking.

-Always demanding for money: This pushes them to steal money or other household items that could fetch them money to meet their drug needs.

-*Coughing*: Due to blockage or congestion in their lungs and nasal cavity, they may tend to cough simultaneously.
-They are highly secretive: They hardly divulge what they are into, or accept that they are into drugs.

-They are truant in schools; they normally absent themselves in school.

Recommendation <<

SEVERAL EFFORTS IN ENACTING DRUG PROHIBITION LAWS, people constantly violate these laws thereby creating serious challenges to conformity. Consequent upon the above, the following recommendations are put forward:

- ❖ Strengthen the regulation of dangerous prescription drugs such as tramadol, codeine, cocaine and Marijuana, and levy stiff penalties on pharmacies and manufacturers who sell to minors and anyone without a prescription from a doctor.
- ❖ Public awareness campaigns about drug abuse that inform the public about the risk and dangers that using drugs poses on the health and human interaction be done in earnest. The campaign design should be drawn from the expertise of health professionals and law enforcement officers.
- ❖ Additional resources should be devoted to drug treatment facilities in Kano for drug abusers to include vocational training, counselling and follow up with outpatients, also ensuring that these facilities are affordable for the poor.
- ❖ Looking at drug abuse as one of the prevalent crimes in Kano, the National Drug Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), police and medical regulatory bodies should develop a synergy driven approach in curbing the menace.
- ❖ Investigation on high level dealers, street dealers and abuser should be prioritised and strict penalties like the death penalties obtained in other countries should be encouraged.
- ❖ Crack down severely on corruption in the ranks of law enforcement by establishing internal mechanisms

through which officers can report malfeasance by their peers and which are able to investigate and levy penalties on offenders.

- ❖ Finally, the NDLEA should be properly equipped with ultra-modern weapons such as surveillance cars, walkie-talkies, night vision glasses, geo-spatial intelligence systems, close circuit televisions systems (CCTVs) etc. This will aid crime reduction in the state. Also, the issue of increased manpower, training and retraining of the law enforcement officers cannot be over emphasised.

Conclusion <<

THE POSITION OF KANO AS A COMMERCIAL NERVE CENTRE, THE routes it has to other countries, the illiteracy level and the presence of air, road and rail transportation, the insurgency faced by the North Eastern state of the country all aided in making the trafficking and abuse of drugs to thrive in the state. Drug abuse can hardly be addressed frontally if trafficking is not curtailed.

In spite of the daily crackdown by security operatives and other volunteer groups on drug barons and chronic drug users in the state, fighting the drug war remains a herculean task that must be handled with a more degree of seriousness looking at the alarming rate at which drug abuse is taking a destructive toll on the lives of many young and enterprising youths who are supposed to lead the fight against the menace.

In this regard, therefore, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency is seriously in a more committed collaboration with sister security agencies, NGOs, traditional institutions, communities volunteer groups, schools and other concerned groups and individuals in order that the menace could be brought to the barest minimum.

However, the efforts of these agencies, institutions and group will not be adequate if the government continues to pay lip service in these efforts to curb the menace.

Useful Resources to Consult <<

Drug abuse rate dropped to 1% in Kano state — NDLEA
<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/drug-abuse-rate-dropped-to-1-in-kano-state-ndlea.html>

Drug Abuse Among Adolescents In Kano Metropolis, Nigeria ILIMI JOURNAL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (IJASS) Volume 2 No.1, May/June, 2016 Mohammed Mustapha Namadi, Ph.D., Department of Sociology, Bayero University, Kano Nigeria. Phone Number: 08033138920, Email: mmnamadi2@gmail.com
<https://oer.fukashere.edu.ng/uploads/oer/434-ILIMI%20JOURNAL%20IJASS%20VOL%2002%20NO%2001%2018.pdf>

Drug Abuse and Political Thuggery among the Youth in Kano Metropolis: A Modern Civilization or Resource Mismanagement? Ali Ado Siro, Department of Criminology and Security Studies, Federal University Dutse, Ibrahim Aliyu Bye-Pass, P.M.B. 7156, Jigawa State, Nigeria. Research on Humanities and Social Sciences www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1719 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2863 (Online)

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<https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/RHSS/article/viewFile/11305/11613>

Dr Mairo Mandara, the Nigerian Country Representative for Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, explained that the prevalence of drug abuse among girls is aimed at exploiting their sexuality by making them "unconscious".

"At a young age, life and livelihood for girls is very important; and this is unique to girls. It is because they have a product that can be used. A lot of time, most of the girls are drugged so that you can get them off their mind, off their guard. A typical Hausa girl to have sex with two men and others are watching? It's not regular," she says. "The vulnerability of girls is not just to have them on drugs but to have them on drugs for the purpose of exploiting their sexuality."

She also harped on marital negligence as cause of the menace. This, she said, has a more pronounced effect on the women.

"You find a husband who is not able to cater for his responsibility. In the north, even if you're a billionaire, you expect your husband to shelter you, clothe you — no friends, no job, stress, yet no care from their husbands. It's more of circumstantial."

Asked if the Sharia Law against the intake of alcohol has in any way fuelled the spread of the abuse of hard drugs, Dr. Mandara replied thus: "In Islam, alcohol is not the only thing that is forbidden. Everything that intoxicates is forbidden. We need to redefine the definition of intoxicants among Muslim clergies."

She blamed the government for not putting up measures to forestall the sale of codeine even though it has been banned.

She then charged the elite to break their silence and work on discontinuing the menace by speaking and taking charge.

"At family level, we need to take our family more seriously. Honestly speaking, in the north, men need to take their family more seriously — because they are relegating the responsibility to the women. In the north, men are in charge of the home. At 18, if a mother talks to her child, the child would probably think you are a parrot."

Kano Hisbah Board As Moral Police

Hisbah Board in Kano is referred to as the moral police. At the time of visit, there were about 14 to 21 young girls in their custody who were seen at inappropriate locations "at the most inappropriate hours" and picked up.

<http://saharareporters.com/2019/02/02/how-drug-abuse-wrecking-female-lives-northern-nigeria>