

# Drug Abuse and Trafficking as Impediments to Socio-Economic Development and National Security in Nigeria

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**Abstract:**-Drug abuse and trafficking constitute two problems face by nation across the globe. The two problems have negative effects on socio-economic development, national and international security. While government at various level are applying control measures, the problem continue to exist especially in developing countries with weak rule of law. Drug baron and cartels continue to threaten countries with weak governance and corrupt officials which easily become victims of the machinations and trick of traffickers. The paper addresses the problem of drug abuse and trafficking as impediment to socio-economic development and national security. Based on the findings of the paper, the paper recommends among others; enhance intelligence and information sharing; protect financial system and strategic markets against trafficking and other transnational organized crime; strength interdiction, investigations and prosecutions; disrupt drug Trafficking and its facilitation of other transnational threats; and build international capacity, cooperation, and partnerships.

**Key words:** Drug abuse, trafficking, Socio-Economic Development and National security

## I. INTRODUCTION

“Drug trafficking is the most serious organized crime problem in the world today. The drug trade generates billions of dollars for organized crime each year, imposing incalculable costs on individuals, families, communities, and governments worldwide. But drug trafficking is the only part of boarder unified phenomenon, which also include illicit use of drugs. It is drug users who finance organize crime through their drug purchase, and it is them who must accept responsibility for broad range of cost associated with the drug industry”

(US President's commission on organized crime, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012:1)

“Drugs need to be approached as development problem as much as security issue, with a new focus on employment and alternative agricultural and business opportunities at all levels.” (ICG Report 2012)

Drug abuse and trafficking constitute two problems face by nation across the globe. The two problems have negative effects on socio-economic development, national and international security. While government at various level are

applying control measures, the problem continue to exist especially in developing countries with weak rule of law. Drug baron and cartels continue to threaten countries with weak governance and corrupt officials which easily become victims of the machinations and trick of traffickers. The paper addresses the problem of drug abuse and trafficking as impediment to socio-economic development and national security. We shall proceed by first defining our terms – drug abuse, trafficking socio-economic development and national security. We then proceed to discuss the health hazard of drug abuse; extent of trafficking in the world-narrowed down to Nigeria; specific on drug abuse and trafficking as impediment to socio-economic development and national security; and finally a suggestive framework for checking drug abuse and trafficking.

## II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

### *National security*

Traditionally, security is conceived in National terms and usually in relation to the viewed from the perspectives of Carl von Clausewitz, which focused on state and military concerns. The state was thus the referent object of security (Muhammad-Bande, 2015). National security has been defined therefore in term of protection against something that might happen in the future or the activities involved in protecting a country, building or person against attack, danger etc (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 8<sup>th</sup> Edition Hornsby, 2010:1335). National security should be seen in terms protection against all possible dangers to live and property of citizens; protection of bodies and minds individuals; protection against what Olurunto (2008) identified as six crimes that are priority of government at all levels. These are armed robbery, kidnapping armed hostage taking; cultism; gruesome murder and association; rape, child defilement and assault; corruption and looting of public treasury. All these and other crimes like arson, ethnic violence have drug abuse and trafficking as predisposing factors. As we shall see later abuse and trafficking has been incriminated as casual factors in this criminal threats not only to national security but also socio-economic development. Indeed these criminal temptation acts as impediments to socio-economic development and national security. They act as cogs in the

wheel of progress of nations toward socio-economic development and meaningful state of national security.

#### *Socio-Economic Development*

The economists and administrators are, of course explicit, defining development in terms of increases in elaborate quantitative indices of national product, income, consumptions, etc., though there are, sometimes contradictory definitions (Dansabo, 2014). Pitt (1976:32) uses development in the very general sense of the perceived increased effectiveness of social and economic activities and functions of the society or situation and in the range of options open to people. Ultimately, Pitt sees development as the perceived improvement in the quality of life, even when this means fewer goods and services. According to Walter Rodney (1972), development is a many-sided process in human society. At the individual level, it means increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, self-discipline etc. At the societal level, development encompasses an overall approach in which a particular society has become capable of realizing its potentials in several spheres of life-political, economic, social etc.

Historically, the meaning of development or development of society was equated to economic growth. Adam Smith (1776) in his classical economic theory developed the idea that for a society to develop, it needs first, economic growth i.e economic growth is equal to development. The classical theorists believe that development will come about naturally if there is increase in income, production of goods, services and wealth (Dansabo, 2006:73).

Development, on the other hand, is multi-dimensional (Seers, 1973:82). Seers accepts the economic meaning to be central having radical implications on the political, social and cultural aspects. This implies that development may be equated to economic growth provided that the latter leads to the combating of social and political problems. In his article 'The meaning of development' Seers identified three fundamental questions to be asked about development of a country. These are "what happened to poverty?" "what happened to unemployment?" and "what happened to inequality?" If these variables are on the decline from high level, then, beyond doubt, there has been a period in development of the country concerned. But if one or two of these central indicators go worse, it would be strange to call the result as development, even if the national income has developed like in the case of Nigeria. Considering the level of poverty and unemployment and the wide gap between the rich and the poor, one can argue that this assertion is relevant in an attempt to establish a link between these problems and the level of development in the country.

There are many types of development such as economic development, social development, political development, cultural development and administrative development. For the purpose of this paper, two types of

development i.e economic and social development shall be considered.

Jary and Jary (2000:173) is of the view that social and economic development has to do with any change which results in increased economic productivity and prosperity, and new and more complex forms of social structure and organization. The study of such development was a central concern of classic sociological theory. Economic and social development is usually used to refer to the specific process of industrialization in both its socialist and capitalist forms.

Social development should be seen in conjunction with cultural development. Social development is a reflection of the quality of life of individuals and groups in a society and the way they perceive and interpret the world around them. It could also be understood in reference to the existence and access to the ordinary human of certain basic facilities which enhance their wellbeing. The availability of these physical facilities should also enable the enhancement of psychological wellbeing of the people.

Social and economic development therefore connotes the idea of development in the social and economic spheres of life. It carries the ideas of the progress of society in tackling problems of life, meeting basic and other needs of life-the need for food, shelter, clothing, housing, health, education justice, equality before the law, enjoyment of rights and freedoms economic growth e.t.c.

#### *Drug trafficking*

We shall follow the 1988 UN convention against illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substance in defining drug trafficking as production, manufacture, extraction, preparation, offering for sale, distributions, sale, and delivery on any term whatever, brokerage, dispatch, dispatch in transit, transport, importation, exportation, exportation of any narcotic psychotropic substance.

The concept of drug has been defined in a number of ways by different organizations and writers. The world health organization expert committee on the use of essential drugs (1973) define drug as any substance in pharmaceutical product, which is use to modify or explore physiological system or pathological state for the receipting". Reeves (1972) define drugs as "any chemical substance or agent that affects the physiological and/or psychological and/or social functions and is taken for comfort, stimulation or pleasure". We follow walson-jack (1993) in asserting that while there may be poetic differences in doffing drug, must definition emphasize on drug capacity to alter physiological or psychological conditions of the user. Thus any material substance used in order to change the state of the body and mind can be regarded as drug.

Drug abuse, as a concept refers to an unusual, wrong and excessive use of substance that qualifies the definition of drug. The abuse could be in form of excessive consumption or application of drugs with or without prescription. When this

wrong use continues the body becomes used to the drug. There will be continuous crave for the drug. When this happens, the concept of addiction becomes a reality. In the final analysis, the abuser becomes dependant on the drug. Thus the concept of abuse, addiction, and dependence are concepts that define similar state in which one becomes a slave of drugs. The entire life process of the person is led through drugs with serious negative health implication as we shall show.

### III. EXTENT AND EFFECTS OF DRUG ABUSE

Various studies have highlighted the extent of drugs in Nigeria. Many of these studies have indicated the dominance of youth in drug abuse. A study by Obot (1989) on alcohol abuse in middle belt discovered that young people majority of the under 20 years of age reported drinking at least one in a day. In a study of 97 women involved in the brewing **burukutu** in the middle belt, ojiji et all (1993) reported 45% of the women give alcohol o children of their friends and relatives. 35% reported that their friend or their relatives give alcohol to their children too. Olamedimeji and Fabiyi (1993) have highlighted on a progressive increase in the incidence of alcohol use among undergraduates of Obafemi Awolowo University. Whereas 66.4% students admitted drinking in 1984, there was up warding increase to 84% in a988. A study by Obot (1995) showed that SSS III in four schools had prevalence rate of 3.9% for give for petrol, and 7.8% for sprays. Olaruntoba (2008) has indicated that more than 50% of individuals arrest for violence crimes tested positive for drugs at the time of their arrest. more than 60% of commercial motorcyclist in our cities are on drugs while riding. About 60% of Danfo and molue drivers are on drugs while driving.

### IV. HARMFUL EFFECTS OF DRUGS

Opium	Withdrawal from the drug engangers abstinence syndrome characterized by diarrhea, dehydration and malnutrition.
Herion	Abusers face the risk of overdose and death. Use of unsterilized needles increase risk of various infections including HIV and AIDS (wilkie, 1992; varga 1997).
Cocaine	Disable mental effects; risk of anxiety paranoid mental status; reduced work performance, impairment of memory and lathergy; it is also a leading factor in psychiatric hospital admissions (WHO, 1983).
Cannabis	Many abusers of the drugs are admitted to mental hospitals for "cannabis associated psychoses".
Hallucinogens	Generate acute psychotic reaction high doses could lead to psychotic like symptoms; unpredictable and aggressive behavior and confused and agitated state of mind.
Amphetamines	Create paranoid reaction high dose could lead to outright death; use of needles increase the rate of HIV/AIDs, violence and crime may also occur.
Khat	Could create psychological dependence and reduce work performance.
Barbiturates	Barbiturates abuse may result in death due to circulatory collapse renal failure and respiratory complications. Other hazards include impaired

	judgement and reduce motor coordination
Volatile solvent	Solvent such as paints, glues including rubber solution and battery concoction have intoxicating effect some may cause illusion and visual hallucination. Regular abuse of these solution could also severe tissue damage of various international organs as liver and kidney
Cigarettes/Tobacco	Lung cancer and other life-threatening disease like heart disease emphysema and chronic bronchitis (WHO,1983)
Alcohol	Acute abuse may lead to impairment or functioning and controls leading accidents at home and highways unstable eye movement; poor speech; other include hand and feet tremor; failure to recall events and information; inability to learn or form new memories aggressiveness, accident cirrhosis malnutrition and alcohol dependence. (Friendman,1985)

From what has been established as harmful effects of drug abuse it is clear that drug abuse could jeopardize socio-economic life of a nation and national security

Health is wealth and drug threatens the health of a people. The varid infection, abnormal mental state; reduction of work performance; violence and crime are no doubt a threat to socio-economic development of any country.

The drug abuser is a big burden to him/her self, the family and society as a whole. The economics of drug abuse show that money meant for self and family are wasted. In the event of ailments the abusers also have to expand money that could have been put into proper use for self, family and society's development.

As noted by American president's commission on organized crimes, drug abuse ruins individual lives, drains billions of dollars each year from American society and erodes nation's quality of life---illicit drugs are an attack upon integrity character and health of the individual.

Specific studies linking drugs with socio-economic development include Otapkor's (2006) which linked drugs with health and social problems such as loss of parental control by parents of abusers; accidents; involvement in crime; truancy, increased drop-out in schools and family breakdown.

Similarly, Oleyede (2002) has highlighted on how lack of productivity connected to drug abuse is a key impediment to economic development.

### V. DRUG TRAFFICKING: THE GLOBAL PICTURE

As indicated in the opening, illicit drug traffic is a worldwide phenomenon. The phenomenon continues to survive because of its lucrative nature and collusion with the law enforcement agents in many part of the world.

In El Salvadore individuals who make up the texit cartel reportedly had links with government and security forces (Pachino, 2012:1). In colombia, a retire police general

mauriao santoyo and ex-president's security chief has been known for collaborating with the drug traffickers.

Various other countries are victim of trafficking in drugs. Burma Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, Panama, Guatemala have turned into theatre of war between different drug cartels. Afghanistan produce 90% of world opiate and this is sent to lucrative markets in Russia and United States (UNODC, 2009).

In the West African, countries such as Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, and Nigeria are increasingly turning into hubs for drug trafficking.

In 2008, UNODC regional office for West Africa reported that between 2005 and 2008, 46 tons of cocaine were seized in West African traffickers were caught on commercial flights from West Africa to Europe. Out of the 1357 couriers caught, Nigerians were 57% of the total. In 2005 Nigerian traffickers constituted 53% of traffickers caught in South Africa. Among the traffickers caught in France, Nigeria constituted 32% of the total. Emafor (1997:40-41) has identified the key factors that made Nigerians venture into trafficking. These factors include the desire to make wealth at all cost, the desire to gain respect of society through accolades granted to the rich irrespective of how wealth is made; the desire to gain power, authority and influence that society places on the rich; the desire to meet society acceptance of squandering of resources in the weddings, funerals, birthdays and other ceremonies; the use of illicit drugs trafficking as a form of employment; greed associated with wealth acquisition; the knowledge that corrupt officials may not adequately enforce law when given bribes and the knowledge that proceeds from trafficking can be used to influence governments decision or even install governments. These factors contribute greatly to illicit trafficking by Nigerians.

#### VI. SPECIFICS ON DRUGS ABUSE AND TRAFFICKING AS IMPEDIMENTS TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY

- Drugs are hazardous substance consumption of which negatively affects health through various diseases.
- Health, which is said to be wealth is very necessary for any meaningful socio-economic development in any society.
- Social problems such as truancy in schools, crimes, accidents, etc negatively affect socio-economic development.
- The predominance of youth in drug abuse and trafficking means that many countries of the world, Nigeria inclusive, have no future. As youth are largely involved, the assets for socio-economic development are fully mortgaged.
- As Nigerians continue to be involved in drugs abuse, the future of the country cannot be fully guaranteed.
- Traffickers threatens the security and socio-economic development of nation by creating distortion in economic as their ill-gotten wealth is

hardly used for investment purpose. A Brussels-based international crises group (ICG) (2012) has hinted that:

- "The drug trade impedes economic because this income is rarely transformed into productive capital investment which are necessary for long term and sustained economic expansion".
- In some nation ill-gotten wealth of traffickers is actually used to sponsor banditry, terrorism, and insurgency thereby disrupting peace and stability which are necessary for meaning socio-economic development and security of citizens
- By dumping variety of dangerous drugs in countries, traffickers face the risk of damaging the image(s) of their own nations creating the disrespect and lack of cooperation from the international community.
- By dumping dangerous drugs in their and other countries traffickers are architects of ruining lives of citizens. They aid the destruction of human capital/manpower which is necessary for socio-economic development.

#### VII. CHECKING DRUG ABUSE AND TRAFFICKING

The national and international community must follow, the America strategy mapped out as follows:

1. Enhance intelligence and information sharing;
2. Protect financial system and strategic markets against trafficking and other trans-national organized crime;
3. Strength interdiction, investigations and prosecutions;
4. Disrupt Drug Trafficking and its facilitation of other transnational threats; and
5. Build international capacity, cooperation, and partnerships.

(Strategy o Combat Transnational Organized Crime, July, 2011)

At the level of a nation, Nigeria must ensure what has been prescribed by Olu (2008) must work against various threats such as distortion of economic growth and progress by traffickers; ensure peaceful coexistence of all persons; take appropriate measures against trafficking to ensure good reputation as a nation; ensure that Nigeria does not graduate into a drug user country.

Key challenges for Nigeria include ensuring the strengthening of rule of law, punishing traffickers approximately once they are caught; ensuring good logistics as well as adequate financial and human resources available to law enforcement agencies to fight traffickers; collect and use data and statistics on security matters; provide opportunities for employment to youth who have been employed to service the trafficking enterprises;

To arrest the twin problem of drug abuse and trafficking, Nigeria needs to intensify anti drug mobilization campaign; intensify war against drug trafficking; provide



adequate drug education; insist on voluntary group and community initiatives; create city and village drug abuse surveillance; check prescription habits of health personnel; intensify rehabilitation; and provide youth development and leisure facilities. In addition, Nigeria needs to cooperate with international community and ensure strict compliance with money laundering laws to prevent traffickers from using their ill-gotten wealth to disrupt and distort socio-economic development and national security.

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