

# A Theoretical Discourse of Substance Abuse and Security Threat among Nigerian Youths; Current Literatures and Interrogations

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47175/rissj.v3i2.435>

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## ABSTRACT

*The ever increasing menace associated with substance or illegal drug consumption among the Nigerian youth is endemic and it has posed as serious challenges and threats toward achieving progressive growth and development on the part of the families, community members, medical practitioners, social workers and other researched area throughout the world. Several publications articulated claim that youths are the future leaders of tomorrow due to their unique characteristics. Unfortunately when denied access to showcase their talents, the situation result to antisocial behaviour (trauma, dependency, larceny,/thefts, poor manpower development among others) that may hampered human and societal development Strain theory, Rational Choice theory and Structural Functionalism were adopted. Content analysis method was adopted in reviewing various publications from Jstor, Scopus, PDF, and Scholarly Google among others. The consequence of increase in security issues can be related to several factors which include illicit drug usage, poor parenting style, peer pressure, poor role modelling. On these grounds, the following recommendations were make- the parent should by all means socialized their children in the way of the Lord so that they will not depart from it, de-associate themselves from negative or bad company as friends or role model, the government at all levels should create recreation, sports centres for the youths to channel their youthful energy, more of public awareness should be carried out in various communities to awake the moral consciousness of the youths concerning negative consequences associated with illicit drug intake*

## KEYWORDS

*substance; abuse; insecurity; youths*

## INTRODUCTION

In all human society, the growth and development of any nations depends largely on the quality of services rendered by the youths towards achieving progressive developmental projects. This is the more reason behind the explanation of the youths as wheelers of societal and human development. However, Ajufor (2013) supported the claim where he lamented that youths in Africa hold great potential position in every society as drivers for achieving quality political reforms, good governance and progressive economic growth through their participation in labour market. Statement of the Problem

Evidence gathered from publications reviewed indicated that Insecurity is a global threat to developmental project in the world. This the statement was supported by Chris (2016) and Bartlett (2014) when they lament that high rate or occurrence of insecurity in

any State will greatly affect nation building in a retrogressive dimension socially, politically, physical, economically, educationally and psychologically. They went further arguing that the high level of youthful exuberance among the youths make large number of the elite to use them as a weapon of destruction during anomic related issues all over the world. The Nigerian youths are faced with lots of insecurity issues in terms of assessing basic needs to promote healthy standards ranging from unemployment, poverty, poor nutrition, poor housing, irregular payment of salaries and several other vices. Thus these set of people (youths) are prejudged to be the hope of tomorrow but their today is faced with serious challenges all over the world. Theorists such as Merton (1963) explain that when large numbers of the people (youths) are denied the opportunity to demonstrate their potential gifts; they can easily change their decision for survival that may negate human development without looking into the punishment associated with the action. This is one of the reasons for Elis and Walsh (2010) assertion how Nigeria youths are labelled as a violent prone segment of the society because there are undeniable statistics relating to deviant behaviour in Nigeria carried out by the youths.

The rate at which illicit drugs are consumed all over the world called for collective actions to save the nation from experiencing other forms of social problems such as high rates of armed robbery, kidnapping, terrorism among others. The United Nations Office of Crime and Drugs (2016) aver that the rate of illicit drug consumption among the youths is a global debate. They assert that one of the endemic and epidemic problems commonly found among them is the use of illicit drugs without medical prescriptions. However, the use of illicit drugs has been related with severe negative implications on society and human enhancement in different dimensions and degrees which may equally negate societal development. In furtherance, lots of Nigerian youths that engaged in illicit drug consumption explain that the use of drugs is a process of getting along among peers or colleagues or making them to be more significant in the society. In Nigeria, drug addiction is common and Nigeria as a country has changed as a drug consuming nation to a drug manufacturing country (NDLEA, 2013). The aftermath of drug addiction, abuse, trafficking or peddling of drugs by the youths is devastating; however, youths are vulnerable to hard drug consumption with severe adverse effects on the community (Ajibulu, 2014).

Scholars are of the opinion that the correlation between illicit drug intake without professional prescriptions and security threat cannot be overlooked due to negative rewarding ends which might pave ways for a bi-polar nexus. For Daniels & Adams (2010) in Nigeria, unemployed youths are found engaging in violent actions because they are products of abject poverty. And people suffering from lacks of opportunities in the country. But in order to meet their needs they (youths) try to organize and supervise their personal norms and values so as to develop subcultural rules which may negate the generally accepted rules and regulations leading to antisocial behaviour. Nayak (2012) argues that labelling Nigerian youths as a violence-prone segment of the nation is derogatory toward human development; However in Nigeria evidence gathered from several print media attributed a lot of significant proportion of crimes and delinquent activities in Nigeria to the youths.

Youths that indulged in illicit drug consumption are used by political elites to achieve their vested interests and also labelled as a violent prone segment in Nigeria because of the high level of the intake of the un-prescribed illicit drug. Thus older adults opine that uncontrolled intake of the stimulant mostly propels youths to indulge in the deviant or criminal acts. However, when a great number of the youths are denied the opportunity to enjoy the societal resources they feel marginalized, subjugated and not recognised in the society. Therefore, the only way to stimulate themselves is to indulge in illicit drug intake.

which may leads to mental health disorder, physical damage as a result of over dose, increase in lunatic rate, dependency, vandalization of properties, psychological traumatisation, increase in criminal activities and delinquency and retrogressive economic growth among others in our nation These are the reasons for justifying the below stated questions

- 1) What are the reasons for persistence security threat among the youths in Nigeria?
- 2) To what extent has illicit drug intake affect insecurity among youths in Nigeria
- 3) What are the strategies put in place by the Nigerian Medical Association and Nigerian Pharmacists in curbing the problem of illicit drugs and security issues among the Nigerian youths?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In any theoretical field the role played by the theorists in explaining events, situation and phenomenon cannot be underrated because theory shed logical meaning to a research work in a sequential order Thus, three theories were adopted namely Strain theory, Rational Choice theory and Structural Functionalist theory. The Strain theory adopted was rooted to the scholarly work of Robert Merton (1963) which opines that the problem over growing nature of illicit drug intake among youths and insecurity issues in any countries is rooted back to the failure of the government and its agents in controlling and combating the issues. Thus, Merton explains that in every society the State government must enacted laws and stipulate how to go about achieving success in every human society. The government that stipulate that the only culturally and legitimate ways to make success is through hard work, discipline, reinvestment of our quality time, dedication to work process and commitment to work processes that can bring about progressive development rather than experiencing retrogressive development. He stressed that the some governmental agent mostly failed in discharging their obligation to their citizens in term of distributing the societal resources equally among the citizens. This is the reason for the explanation of antisocial behaviour such as involvement on illicit drug and increase in security threat in the country

In relation to Nigeria, it is argued that the Nigerian government and its functionary's are constitutionally designed to enacted progressive law but the problem of quality implementations mostly negates what is real in the country. This is because societal resources are not equally shared among the citizens, therefore, individuals operate in isolation with their personal interest at the detriment of the general interest in the country The Nigerian youth are currently facing great unemployment challenges and other social vices, Therefore, the only way the youths can stimulate each other's is to indulged in illicit drug usage so as to reduce the way they feel about the country situations or stimulate them or encouraged them to indulged in antisocial activities in Nigeria. Transparent International Organisation (2010) rated Nigeria as one of the corrupt countries in the world behind Bangladesh and Haiti. The second theory adopted was centred on Rational Choice theory by James Coleman. The fundamental tenet of Coleman is that for every action demonstrated by individuals, families or group of people, there are reasons for every actions or reactions. He argued that human beings are rational animals that calculate the differences and relationship between suffering and enjoyment. He stressed further that if the suffering or punishment associated with a particular actions or reactions is more destructive they will never want to take the risks but if the enjoyment outweigh the punishment they will like to repeat such actions or reactions. In relation to Nigeria, the Nigerian laws and the agencies established by law to fight against insecurity and illicit drug in take are not effective about how they carry out their duties. Some believed that

laws are for common and poor citizens while the rich or important personality understood laws and uses it the way that will suit them and their families Most youths throughout the world that perpetrated violent are products of extreme poverty, illicit drug usage, mass unemployment among other vices. The last theory is anchored on structural functionalism by Talcott Parsons an American scholar. According to Parsons the only way to achieve development in any society is for the identified parts in the society to mutually contribute their quota toward the support of the whole society. Failure of any of the parts in relationship will affect the growth and development of the whole society. In relation to Nigeria, before the problem or menace of youth involvement in illicit drugs intake and the issues of security threat can be combated, all Nigerians institutions such as the families, the governments and its functionary, the religious leaders, the health practitioners, the youths, community elders, businessmen and all multinational organizations must work hand in hand for effective control of the issue so as to save the lives of the Nigerian youths and to restore sanity into Nigeria.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

Content Systematic method was adopted for researching into the review of secondary data which was structured behind the use of the stated specific research questions formed to guides the outcome of the inquiry. Secondary data from publications were purposefully gathering from several publication sites such Pubmed, Jstors, EBSCO, Elsevier, Scopus among others to justify the outcomes of the inquiry for drawing out the conclusion of the inquiry. The secondary data are generated from several publications nationally and internationally to include journals, articles, textbooks, magazines conferences papers and annual reports from NDLEA among others from different search engines.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Research Question 1-----What are the reasons for persistence security threat among the youths in Nigeria?***

Scholars are of diverse opinion concerning the causes of illicit drug intake and antisocial behaviour among youths which may gear towards crime and delinquency. According to Ogunmefun & Okuneye (2020) which was also validated then by Pretorius in 2010 that most youths are exposure to uncontrollable alcohol consumption in the family which may later in their life time increases their chances of indulging in uncontrollable alcohol consumption and increases their demonstration of risky behaviour such as been rebelliousness or indulged in social vices More so, youths that lived with parents or guardians that drink may perceived and encourage drinking of alcohol which make it more easier or increases youths involvement in the risk of heavy drinking (Ethelbert, 2015). Another scholar Mohasoa (2010) reported that most of the youth uses substances because they are overwhelmed with the negative opportunity open to them in the society which makes them vulnerable to illicit drug intake that increases act of committing crime or indulging in delinquent actions in their younger age. The high rate of youth involvement in illicit drug intake is worrisome and poses as threat to national development. Most scholars agreed that youths are more vulnerable to illicit drug intake and criminal activities because they are at the phase of substantial experimentation either positive of negative in their youthful age among other (Kaadalie and Thomas, 2013; Parry et al, 2012). According Ramlagan (2009), environment or geographical location where youth stay or lived with family household and neighbourhood, school and peer pressure can also be held responsible as one of the several factors that propelled youth to indulge in illicit drug intake and involvement in constant security threat in Nigeria in different dimensions.

Ghuman et al (2012) argued that youths that select wrong role model who indulged in illicit drug intake without societal control or measure put in place to checkmate such antisocial behaviours. Such antisocial behaviour may contribute to youth involvement in substance abuse. They advanced that once the role models are not apprehended by the security agents for illicit drug intake in the community such act for youth may be perceived as or become accepted norms which may likely repeated among youths in the community at any point in time. The situation may stand as encouragement to the youths in their community to act in line with such behaviour since the behaviour is considered as normal behaviour According to Daniels and Adams (2010) unemployed youth are likely to be found indulging in violent action due to several factors ranging from abject poverty and others factors, But in order to meet the needs of these youths in antisocial behaviour in any community, the youths try to organize, supervise and develop self-rule and norms which may negates the generally accepted rules and regulation in the society leading to criminal or delinquent behaviour

***Research Question 2----To what extent has illicit drug intake affect insecurity among youths in Nigeria?***

There are several negative consequences that may rise as a result of youth involvement in illicit drug usage in any country. Although, these aftermath can be related to either micro or macro levels or sometime both, Seedat et al (2009) laments that there are serious linkage between illicit drugs intake and delinquent behaviour which may equally leads to other social vices such as murder and robbery among others. More so, Magidson et al (2016) discovered that the prevalence of illicit drug intake and alcohol are tied with the reoccurrence of violent activities carried out by youths and ever increasing sexual abuse such as rape or molestation experienced among both male and female youths. This is because illicit drug usage tends to encourage impulsive behaviour and impair people judgement towards carrying out negative actions at the detriment of the general wellbeing of the people in the society. Bouchery (2011), laments on how illicit drug consumption without expert prescription among the youths may likely result or affect interpersonal relationship resulting into social problem such as poor man power development, psychological trauma, high rate of crime and delinquent behaviours, poverty, social exclusion and violent behaviour Jewkes et al (2010), avers that illicit drug intake among the youths without expert prescription is linked with interpersonal violence including gender based violence and sexual assaults in many societies. They further stressed that illicit drug consumption may leads to family dysfunctional relationship poor financial management and distress among others, In addition, Melisa et al (2014), gives comprehensive report on the adverse effect of methamphetamine intake on psychological balance or fitness, and financial wellbeing of the drug addicts. More so, they explains that drug addicts have higher chances of dropping out of school and been incarceration for drug offenses. Harker (2008) described consistent ways for combating persistent drug abuse by youths and how to reduce insecurity in any countries. Thus he argued that reducing antisocial behaviour should be based on the readiness of the interventionists and techniques that will be adopted for combatting the menace. More so, interventions strategies, techniques or methods adopted should ideally targets reduction of youth gaining access to drugs, arrest drug peddlers and strengthen societal norms such as encouraging self-policing or collective responsibility for promoting and redressing the menace associated with youths involvement in illicit drug intake without medical prescription in our society. In addition, strict regulation and enforcement of law should be respected and allow to play a key role in reducing drug abuse and the prevalence of insecurity in our community.

**Research Question 3---What are the strategies put in place by the Nigerian Medical Association, and Nigerian Pharmacists in curbing the of illicit drugs and security issues among the Nigerian**

Publications articulated on the control of drugs in Nigeria deciphers that several Nigerian government and drug control agencies are established in the past and recently to tremendously fighting against the use of illicit drug and insecurity issues in Nigerian. The current situation the Nigeria relating to illicit drug in take by the Nigerian youths is alarming and the situation has gone to the stage whereby the societal values, norms, and traditions are misplaced in the country. This avers that large number of the drug related agencies must be actually empowered to carry out their historical and constitutional obligations. Nigerian youths are known to be addicts in term of the way they uses drug without medical prescriptions The preconceived notions most people established about drugs is that most Nigerian youth are drug addictive in the way they indulged in the use of drug

In the history of Nigeria, October 1<sup>st</sup> 1960 remains a remarkable day in the history and for all the Nigerians. The issue on drug is a global perspective affecting the developmental project of any states. According to Oloruntoba (2005), the first enacted Law for controlling drug abuse and peddling is known as Dangerous Drug Ordinance in 1935. The purpose of the ordinance is to control, regulate and prohibit manufacturing of drugs such as opium and other dangerous drugs. In 1960 in Nigeria, the classification of drugs intakes including successive consumption of alcohol which become major public issue in Nigeria due to the fact that large number of drug are seizure and end users are also arrested and prosecuted for illicit drugs consumption known as cannabis (Obot, 2004). History recorded that in Nigeria, there are two dimensional and important changes that occurred in the statute books of Nigeria on policy adopted and laws enacted on illicit drug intake during military eras 1980s and 1990s. The first enacted law that change is the amendment and subsequent repealing of the already amended in 1975 Indian hems Acts or Decree which brought back strict and stiff penalties for trafficking or sales of cannabis while the second enacted law brought about changes in the law which pronounce creation of special Tribunal (Miscellaneous Offences). The decree prescribed by the established Special Tribunal prescribed death penalty for drug dealing in cocaine or related drugs (Federal Military Government, 1984b) In Nigeria since the introduction of drug regulation in the country, the rate at which the youths indulged in illicit drug intake without expert prescription is high and the needs to curtail sales and uses should be the primary and major concerns of the government, researchers and pharmacists Association in Nigeria. Ever since domestic legislations were enacted focussing on the control and prohibition of drugs especially hemp became entrenched. For example, Oloruntoba (2005) laments that efforts of made by the Professional bodies and government agents to fight against illicit drug in intake and peddling in contemporary Nigeria has proved to be uncontrollable because Nigeria as a country is known as a transit zone for drug couriers and users in the world

By 1980s the rate at which Nigerians were arrested and detained for illicit drug trafficking shows clearly that more Nigerians were getting involved in the distribution of drugs nationally and internationally. The continuous growing rate of Nigerian apprehended for drug related offenses shows needs for development of drug enforcement agency in Nigeria which gave birth to the creation of NDLEA (National Drug Law Enforcement Agency). The NDLEA Agency was established by law in 1989 by decree 48 in Nigeria. Thus the decree created an enforcement agency and institutional framework charged with the responsibility of regulating what was perceived to be an ever increasing trafficking and abuse of illegal drugs. Analysing the Nigeria drug policies, in 1992 the NDLEA noticed

that illicit sales and usage was more widely used e among urban youths in Lagos and Kano in Nigeria reports gathered from the agency deciphers that more urban secondary schools youths were familiar with substances abuse, other stimulants and depressants

According to Gyong & Tanimu (2010) in a research carried out in Nigeria gives report that there is a steady increase in arrested suspects for drugs related offences. They gave estimation that in 1991 the number of suspects arrested for drug related offences was at 293 persons in 1991 to a maximum of 6, 323 persons in 2006. The result shows that there is an of 2, 158% and is till increasing daily. More so, the study avers the growing strength of the total number of female involvement in drug related offences from 61 females in 1994 to the increasing number of 440 in 2006 compared with the older result that stand to less research into the rate at which female get involved in illicit drug intake. They also concluded that between 1979-1988 a total of 14, 833 arrests and 4, 574 convicted for drug related offences especially in trafficking involving Nigerians were recorded in foreign countries alone. In the first three months of operation of NDLEA agency in Nigeria in 2009 a total of 38 persons at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport Lagos were arrested. The agency disclosed that total numbers of 6,308 suspects were arrested in 2007 and 7,899 in year 2008. The result deciphers that an increase of 1,591 cases representing 20.14 per cent increase was recorded within a year In Nigeria several drug related cases were reported by the NDLEA officials in Nigeria but research still shows that the case was still under reported compared to what is obtainable in the developed countries

**Table 1.** The table below show the statistics of drug related offences between 1990-2011) in Nigeria

SN	Year	Cannabis	Cocaine	Heroin	Others	Total	Male	Female
1	1990	170.6	110.6	861.25	NA	1,142,45	NA	NA
2	1991	1,496.61	545.39	66.82	15.72	1,124,54	NA	NA
3	1992	2,508.11	415.67	690.84	3.51	3,618,13	NA	NA
4	1993	7,378.78	1,293.69	283.51	1.87	8, 957.96	NA	NA
5	1994	19,732.66	90.76	91.65	94.3	20,009.37	632	61
6	1995	15,258.74	15.91	30.27	210.39	15,515,31	732	66
7	1996	18,604.72	6.16	19.38	1,203.79	19,834.04	1,099	88
8	1997	15,904.72	31.9	10.49	1,736.01	17689,12	2,208	164
9	1998	16,170.51	9.26	3.62	2.609.74	18.793.14	2.610	204
10	1999	17.691.14	15.64	81.35	322,25	18.110.28	2,380	121
11	2000	272.260,92	53,42	56.6	234.28	272,604.32	2,253	132
12	2001	317.950.20	195.82	46.63	308.84	318.501.49	2.693	136
13	2002	506,846,09	35.35	55.62	791	507.728,06	2.549	108
14	2003	535,693.75	134.74	87.58	937.41	536.753.48	2,316	174
15	2004	68.310.07	124.47	90.94	233,83	68,759..31	3,382	318
16	2005	125,989	395.91	70.42	88.72	126,543,65	3,181	292
17	2006	192,368.30	14,435,88	33,09	515.57	207,352.84	5,883	440
18	2007	210,262.90	393.678	120.638	699.735	211.476.00	5,891	417
19	2008	335,535.34	3,654.904	116.054	5,305.033	336.442,84	7.584	315
20	2009	-	-	-	-	-	6.700	342
21	2010	174,661.59	706.433	202.08	2, 550,622	178,120.725	6.296	492
22	2011	191.847.92	410.805	39,752	2,982.45	195,283.917	8,639	567
<b>Total</b>		<b>3, 027.851.50</b>	<b>19,781.24</b>	<b>2,854.83</b>	<b>16,071,17</b>	<b>3,085,355.25</b>	<b>47,028.00</b>	<b>4.437.00</b>

Source- NDLEA 2012 Annual Reports

The result gathered from the NDLEA 2012 Annual Reports shows that there is a need for adequate research into drug related offences in Nigeria. For example Obot (2004), explains that the policy of war against indiscipline policy adopted by the Nigerian Military on drugs related offenses in Nigeria was a fiction because there is a need for the Nigerian Military to achieve the United States benchmarks on fight against illegal drug trafficking. The drug offenses related policy adopted from the United States benchmarks on drug offenses by the military personnel consequently led to the failure of the Nigerian government to develop home grown solution to fight against the menace associated with the problems of drug offenses in Nigeria. The outcome of the international policy adopted for controlling drug related offenses in Nigeria implies that drug policy launched by the military in Nigeria on drug trafficking reduction among Nigeria was not properly implemented which resulted in significant economic, social and psychological consequences for Nigeria and Nigerians all over the world. Even at the point, the drug policy began to fail in addressing or achieving the purpose of getting illicit drugs out of Nigeria,

In Nigeria, the prosecution of war against illicit drugs trafficking and intakes rest in the hands of Nigeria Drug Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the war cannot be strictly fought by the NDLEA alone. Therefore there is a need for relentless collaborative efforts of the Nigerian police, customs, immigration, army and the recent civil defence corps to stem the cultivation of the most commonly trafficked and used drug in the country. For example in Nigeria, the Cable News Network (CNN) reported how NDLEA patrol the Southern forests especially in Ondo and Delta states in search for hidden cannabis farms for eradication. The eradication is carried out through clearing of farmlands by spraying pesticides. Also they engaged in the seizing drugs en route to and from Nigeria, they clandestine smugglers of illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin and synthetic drugs (UNDCP Reports, 2008)

## **CONCLUSION**

The outcome of the research inquiry has tremendously contributed to the theoretical understanding of the research because during the research inquiry several literatures articulated demonstrate the relationship between poverty, unemployment and other social vices as the major causes of insecurity in the country. It is concluded that African youth are marginalised, subjugated and deprived in most development projects that can foster progressive growth and development in the country. Nayak (2010) laments that when great numbers of the youths in any country are deprived the potential opportunities in achieving their major purposes they intend showcasing their needs through illegal means that may negate societal improvement.

More so, several drug laws or policies enacted in the past to fight against the occurrence or recurrence of drug usage without medical prescription but all proved abortive in the area of implementation. There is a need for adequate and proper research on the policies to reproduce solutions that will fight against drug abuse and insecurity in Nigeria

On these grounds the following recommendations are enacted to provide empirical solutions to fight against the rate of insecurity and drug misuse among the youths in Nigeria. This is because the position they occupied in the society is sensitive and needs proper monitoring of all

- 1) There must be established norms to fight or target market where drugs are peddled or openly sales for end users- it brings about a decline in the consumption of the substance thereby reducing demand

- 2) Adequate funding and proper training of security Operatives- This means that adequate training either yearly or quarterly should be considered and remain permanent for the training of the security operatives in having access to proper and modern knowledge of carrying out their jobs
- 3) Constant orientation and education of the Nigerian youths- The Nigerian youths need to be properly trained and orientates on the negatives consequences associated with illicit drug use without medical expert prescription
- 4) Modern technology Apparatus must be put in place in the country- modern technology such as CCTV Cameral should be fixed in strategic place to monitor the dealers of drugs and the users in Nigeria
- 5) Strong law and enforcement should be strictly follow and implemented to ensure the safety of our future leaders of tomorrow
- 6) The collective efforts of the community elders, neighbour in the hoods, individuals, families governmental organizations and multinational organizations are required in the fight against the problem of illicit drug usage and insecurity in Nigeria

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