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Editorial Note

In this issue, we continue to engage in how social and economic dynamics influence the family. The irrefutable point that the family is the basic unit of every society is made with the fervent belief that it nurtures its members and releases them to society. The failure or success of a society is intricately connected to how the family grooms its members. The inevitable conclusion is that the stronger the family in contemporary society, the better for all. In this light, Ayantayo blazed the trail by arguing that the traditional roles played by members of the family in the past have been affected by the ever-changing socio-economic factors in contemporary society. This dynamic and forward-looking social reality immediately suggests that members of the family must assume new roles that align with the demand and expectations of society. However, he argued that we must holistically develop a family based on blending treasured traditional values with contemporary dynamic values.

Alawode and Aderele examine the causes, effects, and solutions to substance abuse by members of the family. According to them, the rate at which the youth use or abuse substances has become so alarming that it requires deft musicological intervention. They argued that musicologists must take it as a point of duty to engage and minister to youth involved in substance use to restore them to fellowship with their families and Christ. Asaolu argued that although conflict is natural, marital conflict is complex and has serious implications for the family and society. Since conflict is human-made, Asaolu identified natural and potential causes of conflict in marriage and suggested that there are irreducible ethical prescriptions whose adoption and application can help to minimize conflict in the family. Salifu and Hammans's empirical exploration of drug abuse among the youth in the Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria, clearly shows that it has assumed a dangerous trend that requires urgent intervention by government institutions and the family. They suggest that ethical principles are required to address this trend through socialisation as well as the spiritual exercise of

faith. Adeola's article centers on how flexibility is a virtue that couples should cultivate to navigate traditional impositions that might negatively affect the family. He adopts a theological standpoint that argues that consistent and mutual fellowship together in the family helps prevent external infiltration into the family.

Odeleye and Adeyanju examine the necessity of resolving conflict among young couples. As part of the mandate of pastoral care ministry, pastors should ensure that their ministry intentionally cares about the health of young people's marriages. As a result of the potential consequences of failure in early marriages, the moral burden to guide and guard against unnecessary conflict in young homes must be borne by pastors by deploying their spiritual and moral training and authority. Oyedele specifically examines the roles of pastoral care in infidelity in Christian homes. He argues that one of the causes of conflict in the family is sexual infidelity by a spouse. This, he argues, can lead to the breakdown of marriage if pastoral care is not given in such a way as to ensure forgiveness. Still, on pastoral care, Adeyanju unfurls the complexities that COVID-19 imposed on communal coexistence. Social distancing affected the communal setting in that members of the community had to deliberately keep some reasonable distance to be safe. At such a moment, Adeyanju thinks that pastoral care ministry is critical in mitigating the consequences of social distancing and keeping healthy by all.

Kelechi and Oderinus's interest is in unhealthy rivalry among siblings in the family. The adverse effects rivalry has on the family call for critical attention to be paid to it. They suggest that parents must conduct themselves do not suggest that they love one child more than the other. Ogundipe returns to the role of the pastoral care unit in fostering unity and resolving marital conflict. To correctly resolve conflict, each issue that causes conflict must be examined on its own rather than deploy one solution fits all approach. This is where the dexterity of pastoral care comes in. Oluwaronke believes that Christian parenting is a critical means of mitigating social vices that

have continued to plague contemporary society. Oluwaronke itemizes and also proffers solutions to the causes of social vices that require good parenting and counseling to resolve. Victor re-examines the concept of one flesh marital bond as a quintessential measure couples need to take to resolve their conflict. The one flesh approach argues that conflict inflicts self-pain on the couples, and they should see each other as one. And finally, Ayinde explores the impacts of social media on Christian youth couples. She argues that time is essential in developing relationships in marriage. Consequently, when more time is spent on social media to neglect the spouse, conflict is bound to arise. Christian principles are thus recommended to ensure a balanced use of social media for the family's health.

I, therefore, welcome you to explore in detail the arguments and issues raised in this issue.

Prof. Benson Ohihon Igboin
Editor in Chief

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUTHS IN DEKINA AREA OF KOGI STATE

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria is widely recognized as the giant of Africa. Its greatness is attributed to its huge territory, the endowment of natural resources, and energetic, youthful population. However, the menace of drug abuse is seriously threatening the youthful population. The aim of this study is to provide an overview of the ethical implications of drug abuse among youths in Dekina Area of Kogi State and provide valuable information for stakeholders. The study is basically qualitative. It made use of unstructured interviews and observation methods in data collection. A simple Random Method was used to select 15 interview respondents across the three districts (Okura, Biraidu, and Dekina) that made up Dekina Local Government Area. The study findings reveal that drug abuse among youths in the study area is accompanied by severe ethical problems such as drunkenness, promiscuity, stealing and robbery, and truancy with obvious consequences that manifest in avoidable death, insanity, terminal disease, high rate of crime violence and poor academic performance. Thus, the study recommends that the government, religious leaders and religious institutions, schools, and traditional leaders who are the major stakeholders in the society should be involved in the fight against drug abuse among the Dekina youths that will ultimately lead to its decrease.

Keywords: Ethical implications, Drug abuse, Youths, Dekina Area of Kogi State.

Introduction

In Nigeria, the youths seem to be more involved in drug use and abuse. The theoretical foundation is the Socio-cultural Theory of Drug Abuse, which asserts that drug Abuse is determined by the sociocultural values of the people (Abudu 2008, 34). This theory has its root in the world of scholars like Oshodi, Aina, Onojale (2010, 52-57), and Oshikoya, Ali (2006, 133-139). The popular opinion held by them is that among some tribes in Nigeria, their culture permits the consumption of alcohol and marijuana, while other cultures do not. Among the tribes in Nigeria, for example, Edo, Ijaw, Igbo, Ibibio, Urhobo, Itsekiri, and Yoruba, alcohol is used in cultural activities. This theory is applicable to the Igala people of Dekina Area, whose main aim of consuming alcohol is cultural. Hence, the validity of the theory. Considering the delicate and sensitive position of the youths within the country, drug addiction among them remains a significant threat to national growth and development (Amadi and Akpelu 2018, 21).

According to Kazeem (2009, 67), nearly 15% of adult populations in Nigeria (around 14.3 million people) are involved in psychoactive drug substances. The data Kazeem used which is apparently obtained from Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the centre for Research and information on Substance Abuse (CRISA) shrived the high levels of drugs. Sedatives, heroin, cocaine, and non-medical use of prescription opioids were also noted. The survey excluded the use of tobacco and alcohol. Again the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA 2018) has also expressed concern over the increasing level of drug abuse and drug trafficking among Nigerian youths. According to the NDLEA, the situation has been worsened by the affordability of substance abuse.

Odebunmi (1994, 42) linked the problem of indiscipline in schools to drug use when they claimed that the current trend y indiscipline among students in school and Nigerian youths in general has become so rampant that recessive governments have bought for ways of combating its problems.

In another study by Gobir et al. (2006, 4), the determinant of drug abuse included the type of family and occupation.

Adenike et al (2014, 22-24) revealed that a significant relationship existed between drug abuse on youth development and academic (failure). Abdu – Raheem (2013, 25) study showed a significant relationship existed between family background, peer influence, family cohesion, and drug abuse.

The study also revealed that drug abuse negatively affects students' academic performance.

Apart from Adenike et al. and Abdu – Raheem's work showed a correlation between drug abuse and youth development, especially in academic performance. Other studies identified above revealed significant indicators and factors of youth engagement in drugs, yet they did not consider the ethical implications of drug abuse among youths, how it can affect their involvement in crime, Academic Performance, avoidable death, insanity (mental health) and the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. The study attempts a clearer analysis of the ethical implications of drug abuse among youth in the Dekina Area of Kogi state. The study, therefore, seeks to address the following research question, which will serve as a guide.

1. What is the nature of the substance abuse in the Dekina area of Kogi state?
2. Are there some ethical problems identified with drug abuse among youths in the Dekina Area of Kogi state?
3. What are the ethical implications or consequences of drug abuse on youths in this area?

Conceptual Clarification

What is Drug Abuse?

Humanity had always depended on herbs, leaves, and plants to treat themselves from various ailments, and their uses never constituted any danger because correctly administered drugs become medicine while the unprescribed application becomes abuse.

Therefore, a drug, according to Ogunbiyi (2018, 24) is a substance used for medical purposes that changes the state or function of the body. It is considered as a substance that modifies discernments, cognition, mood, behavior, and general body functions (Balogun 2006, 19). Likewise, Fawa (2003, 42) asserts that a drug is any substance that is used for the treatment or prevention of disease in man and animals. Based on these definitions, we can infer that when drugs are misapplied, they become or constitute abuse. Then, what is drug abuse?

Drug abuse may be defined as the habit of over-dependence or miss – use of one precise drug with or without a prior medical diagnosis from qualified health practitioners (Lakhan pal, Agnihotri 2007, 1-11 and Oluremi 2012, 342-374). The abuse of legal drugs can happen when people use the drugs in a manner other than directed by the manufacturers or for legitimate purposes (Ogunbiyi 2021, 18). According to the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC 2018), drug abuse is seen as excessive and persistent self – administration of a drug without regard to the medically or culturally accepted patterns. Similarly, The World Book Encyclopedia (2004, 250) vicious drug interferes with a healthy and productive life. According to World Health Organization (2018, 66), substance abuse is the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs.

Salifu (2021, 93) opines that youth is a period of time that begins when puberty starts but continues longer in some cultures than others. Youthfulness includes puberty, but it also has to do with changes in the roles and attitudes that are part of the culture in which the individual lives. According to Oderinde (1998, 144), young age is difficult for both parents and youths. During this stage, adults are prone to say, “I just don't know what is the matter with them.” He further stated that youth is an extension of childhood and thereby presents unique characteristics.

In developing countries for which Nigeria is referenced, youth is about 29 percent of the total population and is declining as a

proportion of the total population while still growing in absolute numbers, altering the landscape for many social and financial policy issues (Nugent 2015, 34)

According to the United Nations, for statistical consistency across regions. (UNESCO 2017), defined “youth” as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Taking into consideration the Youth Bulge Theory (Tendaishe 2014, 43) identifies young men or women as a historically volatile and ever-increasing population. It explores the idea that the presence of more than 20% of young people raises the potential for rebellion and unrest. The concept specifically equates a large percentage of young men with an increased possibility of violence, particularly in the global south, where youths often account for 60% of the population. Wikipedia considers youth as the time of life when one is young, especially the period between childhood and maturity, the early period of existence, growth, or development

According to Mariam Webster, “the passage from a dependent childhood to independent adulthood.” When young people are in transition from a world of rather secure development to a world of choice and risk.

Nature of Drug abuse in Dekina

Dekina Local Government Area is Located in the Eastern part of Kogi State and situated in the tropical middle belt region of Nigeria. It is located between latitude 7°20N and 7°50N and longitude 6°50E and 7°30E (Ucholi 2007, 4). In the Dekina area today, the youths have access to narcotics or hard drugs. They are considered dangerous drugs because they negatively impact the health of persons who take them without medical prescriptions or advice (Salifu 2021, 84). Narcotic drugs include marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and opium.

These drugs have medicinal value. Doctors use them for selected medical problems, but their effects are too strong for ordinary people who use them freely without control. In the course of our investigation, Momoh, Ocheja, and Angela (Interview

respondents) note that cigarettes and alcohol are the gateway drugs (initial drugs taken before they progress to harder drugs) taken by youths in the Dekina area. These drugs are eaten, smoked, swallowed, drunk, or injected into the veins. Their effects are destructive and powerful. It was discovered that some youths emulate the drug use pattern of their parents. They say this was due to the nature of the occupation they grew up seeing their parents doing. Such occupation includes local lumbering, Indian hemp plantation, and tobacco farming for commercial purposes.

On the other hand, youths in the Dekina area are increasingly becoming increasingly engaged in taking alcoholic beverages. The abuse here is that they drink more than they actually need for an ordinary taste for drinking alcohol. Excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages has increasingly intensified the incidence of drunkenness and multiplied the number of drunkards among the youth. Intoxication has become a phenomenon in which Dekina youths find pleasure. Corroborating this, Emmanuel, Elizabeth, and Abigail (interview respondents) posit that alcohol has been accepted as a social drink. And that there is virtually no area in Dekina that does not brew local alcohol such as “Ebecha”, “Alah”, “Aguye” and “Akpayingo” all of which are the brands of “burukutu” (an alcoholic drink made from millet). In line with the above submission, Pastors Inalegwu, Sunday and Idoko (Interview respondents) affirm that the majority of youths drink regardless of their religious background because alcohol, be it industrially or locally brewed, is allowed to be consumed as a symbol of social identity during the various festive periods such as Egbe, Ibegwu, Okwulla, Itallo, Salla and Christmas festivals in Dekina Local Government Area.

There is an argument that traditional drinks, such as palm wine, and locally made gin (ogogoro or kai-kai, burukutu etc) are improved than that of foreign alcohol. Whether local or foreign, they are all very hazardous to the body if taken consistently. Many youths in the remote spaces are prone to abusing drugs, especially locally made gin (kai-kai), palm wine and brukutu. Brukutu, typically called BKT is an intoxicating drink initiated mostly in the northern part of

Nigeria. It is a very solid and intoxicating drink made of guinea corn. Even though it is a strong wine that is being abused, it is said to contain protein. "It is often stated that alcoholism would conquer among the natives, even if there were no import of spirit" (Albert 1995, 34).

Aka et al (2003, 22-24) reveals that cannabis was brought into Nigeria by slave traders and soldiers who returned from the world wars. Millions of people broadly use this drug because of its efficacy in mood alteration. Research has revealed that it is being abused by all grades and strata of Nigerian society, especially the youths and adolescents in Dekina.

Causes of Drug Abuse

There are a lot of features that cause drug abuse among the Dekina youths;

- a. **Peer Group:** This is one of the mutual causes of drug addiction and abuse. It is a form of societal stimulus on the affected youth. A peer group is a group of people of the same age or social status. A lot of evil, like drug abuse, armed robbery, and rape, among our youths in Nigeria and beyond are caused by peer groups. Someone can be influenced to become a drug addict by his friends who are drug addicts.
- b. **Family:** The parental background of a child can expose a child to all sorts of evil, including drug abuse. This could be due to family problems like broken homes, polygamous families, poverty, cultural influence on children, having a father who is a drug addict, etc. if a child has a father who is a drug addict, it is likely that the child will become a drug addict, "like father like son." As the child watches his father, there is every tendency that the child will become a drug addict or smoker, and from cigarette smoking, he will graduate to other hard drugs.
- c. **Frustration:** This is another fast and shared factor that leads to drug abuse. Many youths are irritated in our society today. Many of our youths' desires or dreams are unfulfilled. Some are in higher institutions without graduating because of references and other hidden things that are setting them back.

- d. **Search for a Dreadful Identity:** This is commonly found on the streets, in some secondary schools, and higher institutions. Some youths like to have a bad look, they like to be identified as “bad guys” and to be feared.
- e. **Occupational pattern:** Alcohol (Burukutu) production and sales in this area encourage consumption among youths. Likewise, the farming of tobacco. Cannabis and tobacco are mostly consumed during hunting and lumbering activities at night.
- f. **Social factor:** Alcohol is considered a drink for social identity during occasions such as naming ceremonies, marriages, funerals, and festivals (Egbe, Itallo, Ibegwu, Ogede, and Uchuito).

Ethical Problems of Drug Abuse Among Youths in Dekina Area.

Some of the moral problems associated with drug abuse by youths in the Dekina area include the following:

1. Promiscuity

Among the youth in Dekina Area, promiscuity has been noted as a growing phenomenon. In night parties and clubs, there is indiscriminate sexual intercourse. Such prostitutes drugged themselves before attempting such an immoral adventure. This promiscuous act promotes fornication and adultery in society. Deborah, Rebbeca, and Akogwu (interview respondents) state that female students get themselves drugged before going out with men to lodge in hotels such as Abuchi, Kapitool, Obeya, wildlife and Lambina in Anyigba town.

2. Drunkenness.

Youths in the Dekina area are increasingly becoming increasingly engaged in taking alcoholic beverages. The abuse here is that they drink more than they actually need for an ordinary taste for drinking alcohol. Excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages has been increasing the incidence of drunkenness and multiplying the number of drunkards among the youth.

3. Stealing and Robbery.

In Dekina area, most youths involved in robbery use the drug as a means to an end. They operate under the influence of an illicit drug such as marijuana, ogoro and burukutu (alcoholic drink). Some of them steal to satisfy their drug cravings.

4. Truancy

In Dekina area, there are many youths who idle away from schools or offices, their precious time without good excuses. On this ground, Idoko, Aminu, and Okolo (Interview Respondents) assert that truants in this category turn their attention to roaming in the streets, dancing at musical shops, playing games, gambling for pleasures, drinking beer at kiosks or beer palours, taking narcotics or engaging in other frivolous activities when they are supposed to be at school or in the place of work.

Ethical Implications of Drug Abuse Among Youths

1. Avoidable death

It has been shown that alcoholics hardly live as long as non-drinking fellows. An officer of the Road Safety Commission, Dekina branch, states that the high incidences of road traffic, and industrial and domestic accidents in our society are attributed to drug abuse. A road accident due to drunk driving has claimed the lives of many in this area. He further cites an example that the majority of the road accidents between 2015 to 2016 were mostly fatal with no survival of lives, and hence it was discovered from an investigation that eighty percent of those drivers were under one drug influence or another, especially alcohol and cannabis.

2. Insanity

For many addicts in the Dekina area, life is a waste, having lived life unable to benefit themselves or their communities. Most of their time is spent taking drugs or nursing the effects of the drugs thus rendering them useless to themselves and to others. Often time, they are so deformed that they are unable to perform any physical or mental function. Most young people who take to drugs tend to lose interest in all other things except drugs. They do

not care about their looks and personal hygiene, often looking dirty and wearing unkempt hair and beard. Their bodies are always oozing out the offensive odour. Their lives revolve continually around drugs only.

3. Terminal Diseases

Deadly infectious diseases such as hepatitis and HIV AIDs (oga alokili), capable of causing premature death are contracted through the exchange of needles contaminated by infected adults during drug rounds. And it was reported that over the span of 5 years, 26 youths have been lost to other diseases like (uko owe) tuberculosis (ofu ojedo) anthritis-B and (Edo wuna) liver inflammation, especially those addicted to Indian hemp and alcohol. It was affirmed that “most of these youths come for treatment when their condition is at the irredeemable stage.

4. High Rate of Crime/Violence

Youths engaged in drug abuse usually start committing minor crimes. It is important to note that drugs are the principal motivation of crimes like stealing, burglary, prostitution, cultism, armed robbery and financial scams. In other words, it is correct to say that drugs and crime are inseparable. It does not matter to the addict how he gets the money; what matters is being able to satisfy his drug need.

5. Poor Performance in Academic Works

In Dekina, youths who have formed the habit of going to school late miss a lot of periods almost every day, affecting their academic performance in school. Because they could not, at the end of the day put their notes together, and during the examination, they definitely could not do well. They then resort to cheating in the examination as they want to pass at all costs. One realizes that at the end of every term and session, a lot of them are asked to repeat their classes or withdraw from the school because of their poor academic performance (Salifu 2021, 93)

Recommendations

Based on the discussions, the following recommendations were offered.

Religious Leaders/ Religious Institutions

Religious leaders in the country and particularly in Kogi State should focus much of their attention on moral regeneration instead of materialism. Religious organisations in the society and on campuses should be more aggressive in their drive to win souls. Religious differences should be set aside, and collective efforts geared towards cleansing the society should be embraced. People cannot be religious in the real sense of it, and oppress, suppress, intimidate, harass, commit incest, rape and kill fellow human beings. Religion promotes love, peace, tolerance, obedience, loyalty, confidence, trust, commitment and conformity among members of a particular social group. Therefore, we should go back to religion for the successful moral regeneration of members of the institutions and society in general.

Traditional Leaders

- a. Every individual is his brother's keeper – This value is fundamental in the practice of extended family relationships, which is cherished in Nigeria and all over black Africa. By this value, it follows logically that his brother has been part of his family throughout his life. At his death, his immediate family becomes his direct responsibility. His children and his wife are supervised and guided by him
- b. Corporate responsibility of bringing up children. All adults in society must correct offending children. If the children persist, they can be punished by the adults without their parents taking any offense.

School

The school has an important role to play in the prevention of drug abuse. Some of the roles are as follows:

- a. To teach the students the dangers of drug abuse
- b. Caring and monitoring the students
- c. Organizing lectures/seminars for parents and students on the

dangers of drug abuse.

- d. Having workshops, conferences, and symposia on drug abuse and its effects on students.
- e. Counseling centers should be opened to discourage the students from even attempting to give their a first trial.

Law Enforcement Agencies

Law Enforcement Agents, Civil Defence, and Police should avoid collaborating with criminals. They should ensure that any erring youth should be punished accordingly. In regulating conduct, the law rewards complaints, persuades, recalcitrant, coerces, intransigents, and punishes offenders. The law enforcement agents include the court, the police, prisons, and legal practitioners. They deal with delinquents, deviants, and criminals. Effective enforcement of law implies indirect enforcement of public morality. This is because the law encourages and promotes moral restraints.

Government

Regrettably, the recent depressed economy in the country apparently renders the government at all levels incapacitated and unable to live up to the youths' expectations in the area of employment opportunities. Hence, some of the youths in the country and Kogi state in particular, use this as an excuse to engage in all kinds of fraud. This is morally significant because it is the popular belief across the world that idle youths are workshops of the devil. Idle youths resort to criminal activities of all sorts. But this is not to suggest that all the employed youths are free from immoral activities, hence the need for government to provide opportunities for youths in the area.

Conclusion

The abuse of drugs constitutes ethical problems among the youths in Dekina area. It is also important to emphasise that youth development in this area is negatively affected as a result of these eminent consequences on them.

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