

DRUG ABUSE: CONCEPT, CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES, EFFECTS AND ISLAMIC ANTIDOTE

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Abstract

Drug abuse is one of the contemporary issues threatening security, peace, stability, tolerance, health, education, good citizenship and sustainable development not only in Nigeria but also worldwide. It augments hostility, conflicts, rivalries, kidnapping, illegal sexual intercourse, dehumanization and all other vices. Islam, as a complete way of life, has brought divine injunctions for eradicating social vices which drug abuse is their mother as Prophet (PBUH) said “avoid the intoxicants, because it is the mother of all evils” (Al-Nasai). This paper intends to discuss the concept of drug abuse, contemporary challenges, effects and remedies in Islamic perspective. Then, recommendations are made to the stakeholders (teachers, political leaders, researchers, NGOs, etc.) in terms of their contributions towards eradication of drug abuse for sustainable development in our society.

Introduction

In the name of Allah the most gracious, the most merciful, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon the prophet, his family, his wives, his companions and all the righteous brothers and sisters till the Day of Judgment.

Drug refers to any substance which when taken into the body may modify or cause changes in the body or mind and sometimes both (Halima, 2008). Abuse refers to deliberate negative and unfair actions or inactions attitudes or dealings whether emotional, financial, institutional, social or verbal perpetrated against the individual but aimed at hurting, injuring or destroying individual (Akinade, 2015). Therefore, drug abuse means the use of a drug without proper prescription, or self administration of a drug in such a way that deviates from the approved medical and social pattern within a given culture.

Drug abuse is one of the major contemporary challenges threatening peace, security, sanity, stability, morality, health, good citizenship and human development

not only in northern Nigeria, Nigeria as a whole, but also worldwide. A condition described by African Council on Narcotics, inter ministerial Committees on Governmental Organizations, World Health Organization etc. as a “Monster” which does not only rob children, adolescents and adults of their cherished dreams or goals in life but has also succeeded in punctuating their lives prematurity, living behind bitter memories. Drug abuse to everyone, to every society and religion is not a desired character. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said “it is a mother to all social evils (Al-Nasai)”. Presently, world is witnessing the translation of this Hadith practically. Therefore, scholars, researchers, government and general public must turn their concern to this problem and give their contribution towards eradicating or minimizing the problem. It is in line with this that, the paper intends to discuss: definition and concept of drug abuse, its prohibition in Islam, why it is a contemporary challenge, its causes and effects, and Islamic antidote to it. Then, summary, recommendations and conclusion are equally discussed. Library method,

interview and observation would be used to accomplish the research.

Concept of Drug Abuse

Drugs have been defined in different perspectives by various individuals. Halima (2008), defined drug as any substance that may be purchased legally with prescription for medical use in the composition of medicine, or illegal substance which is taken by users for the purpose of getting high or changing mental state of the user under influence. The World Health Organization (2008), defined drug as any substance of biological or chemical origin which, when taken into the living organism, may modify one or more of its function.

Traditionally, the term drug abuse referred to the use of any drug prohibited by law, regardless of whether it was actually harmful or not. For example, any use of marijuana, alcohol, cannabis, inhalants, hallucinogens, etc even if it occurred only once in a while would constitute abuse, because it is illegal (Halima, 2008). Gagara cited in Komolafe (2004:199) defined it as unmedical and self prescribed use of drug for whatever. Therefore, a drug whether legal or not when taken by an individual as a way of self medication, over dose of the prescribed drug given by medical personnel, buying unrecommended drugs from a chemist or over the counter, from peddlers at the motor park, on journeys and indiscriminate consumption of antibiotics are all forms of drug abuse. Moreover, with the frequent use of drugs, a user becomes dependence or addicted to it. Therefore, drug addiction can be defined by three basics of its characteristics. First, users continue to take a drug over an extended period of time. The length of the period depends on the drug and the user. Secondly, drug users usually find it difficult to stop using the drug and they seem powerless to quit or stop the habit. In many cases, users

take extraordinary and often harmful measures to continue using the drug. Thirdly, if users stop taking their drug, that is, if their supply is cut off or if they are forced to quit for any reason, they will undergo painful physical and mental distress. Such users will experience withdrawal distress called withdrawal syndrome (Lexicon Universal Encyclopedia, 1989:347).

Prohibition of Alcohol and Intoxicants in Islam

Islam prohibits drug abuse more than any other religion, civilization or culture .Allah the Almighty says:

O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks) and gambling, (divination of) stones, and arrows for seeking luck or decisions are an abomination of devil's handiwork; eschew such (abominations), that you may prosper. Shaytan wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and prayer. So, will you not then abstain? (Q5:90-91).

The Prophet (SAW) said:

Avoid the intoxicants, because it is extremely evil (Al-Nasai: 5666)

The above mentioned divine texts show that, drug abuse is prohibited by both Qur'an, Hadith and Ijma, so who does not avoid, he had disobeyed Allah and His Messenger, and he deserved the punishment by his disobedience of Allah and His Messenger (Emarah, 2008:103).

Wisdom of the Prohibition

The basis of all meaningful, responsible action and accountability is intelligence. Therefore, Islam prohibits intoxicants that impair the activity of the mind and degrade mankind. Alcohol and

other hard drugs are the major causes of heinous crime because it impairs the brain (Jaafar, 2010:136). He further elaborates that, the penalty in Islamic law for public intoxication is flogging so as to eradicate the vice and to serve as a deterrent to others. He also stated that, Allah (SWT) states in the Glorious Qur`an thus:

O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (divination of) stones, and (divination by) arrows are an abomination of shaytan`s handwork; eschew such (abomination), that you may prosper: shaytan`s plan (is/but) its exile enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and groundling, hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and prayer (Q5:80-81).

Putting the above verses into cognizance and by implication, Islam forbids the manufacture, sale and consumption of all kinds of alcoholic beverages and intoxicants. Islam discourages the promotion of such alcoholic beverages in the society, even if the promoter or salesman himself does not drink it or use it. This prohibition is based on the Ahadith of the Messenger of Allah (SAW). For example, Ibn Abbas reported that I heard the Messenger of Allah (Pbuh) saying:

(Angel) Jibril (AS) came to me and said; "Allah has cursed the wine, its consumers, its seller, its buyer, who manufacture it, to whom it was crushed, who carry it, to whom it is carried, the cupbearer and who drinks it" (Ahmad).

The above mentioned Qur`anic verse, Hadith and many others strongly prohibit alcohol and all intoxicants or drug abuse. Also, Muslim jurists unanimously agreed that drug abuse is prohibited.

Contemporary Challenges

Drug abuse has become a contemporary challenge hindering general

development in Northern Nigeria in particular or the entire nation at large. It involves youth, both males and females, whom all our hope of development rests on them. It can be observed on our streets a number of drug addicted persons showing consumer habits either through his/her speech or abnormal behaviors. Media and general public are always discussing on this problem showing their fear on its consequences presently and in future. For example, B.B.C. International Radio station in its Hausa program called *Ra`ayi-riga* on 6-7-2018 reported that 3,000,000 bottles of Benylin Syrup are being exhausted daily within Katsina, Kano and Jigawa States. In their discussion, they explained that this is because many people, especially youth males and females, are using them anyhow, some as intoxicant and some to get sleep. F.M. Radio Station Katsina in its Hausa program *Timbin-giwa* reported that a *court* in Katsina destroyed three cartons of alcohol three million naira on 21/09/2018.

Some religious organizations and preachers used to enlighten the public about this cancer that is trying to destroy our general development. For example, *Jamaatu Izalatul Bidia wa Iqamatus Sunnah* Katsina State made this problem to be its agenda in its end of year general meeting held in Katsina on 14th August, 2018. Malam AbdulRahim Sabiu Rafindadi, one of the Muslim preachers in Katsina State, talked at length, he said:

Drug abuse is the major predicament threatening our present and future development, because many of our youths involved in this disaster which leads them to all kinds of social evils like homicide, illegal sex, various conflicts, disobedience, etc and unpatriotic activities like selling or tearing their voters` cards. Therefore, unless we tackle this problem collectively, or it will

destroy our future by producing, among us, many mad and drug addicted citizens.

Muslim Students Society in Nigeria, Federal College of Education, Katsina Branch, during its 2018 annual lecture, chose it to be a topic of discussion. Also Ahmad Ibrahim Yakasai, a strong member of one of the Nigerian Pharmaceutical Associations, during his interview with B.B.C Radio Station on 25/09/2018, showed the concern of their association on the problem of drug abuse in Nigeria, which forced them to go to the Senate President and called for declaring state of emergency against the problem of drug abuse that becomes rampant and it constitutes a serious threat to the sustainable national development.

All the above mentioned are evidences that show that, drug abuse is a contemporary challenge that needs everybody to give his contribution towards its eradication or reduction. It is in line with this that this paper brings Islamic divine provisions to be used for sustainable remedies.

Causes of Drug Abuse

1. The attitude of some parents towards drug is likely to have effect on their children. For instance, in a home where one or both parents take wine/alcohol on regular basis can probably influence the children negatively, or in a situation where parents smoke even in the presence of the children and sometimes they are even sent to buy it for them. This can also influence them later in life to indulge in smoking. Therefore, cigarette, alcohol/wine should not be available at home in order to prevent young children from having access to them.

2. Peer group influence is another major cause of drug addiction, since students attend schools and cannot be prevented from interacting with their colleagues who have been exposed to drugs.

If care is not taken, they can easily influence the innocent students into the problem.

3. Frustration in Life: It is observed that, psychological factors like insecurity, stress, anxiety, unhappiness, lack of motivation and inability for a student to achieve success in what he wants, result in anxiety or tension, drug addiction could therefore be seen as a solution to this problem.

Similarly, some parents do force their children to read medicine or law whereas, the child is not science inclined or is not quite good in English language. This unrealistic level of aspiration by parents could frustrate the child and could eventually become a drug addict.

4. Athletes are usually involved in drug abuse habit in order to enhance their performance on the field. Also, on winning a game, they tend to show pleasure and happiness as a result of taking drugs, thinking that, this is the only way to show their happiness. Similarly, when they are blessed with new marriage or children. They organize parties at night or in the bush inviting males and females to drink and dance as a way of showing their joy (Gafai, 2003:5).

5. To get some relief from pains: The drug may be taken overdose or without doctor's prescription as a result, they tend to have an unusual sleep or may not sleep at all. Therefore, they will continue with that habit increasing its quantity to sustain the unusual sleep or denying sleep at stipulated time, until they become drug addicts with serious effects on their intellect and health.

6. Political campaign activities: The nature of Nigerian politics has contributed a lot in escalating the problem. Politicians used to supply drugs to their supporters so that they can lose their senses and do all rubbish against their opponents such as using abusive words, injuries or even killing,

while children of their political bosses are abroad furthering their studies.

7. Easy access to the drug: The mass media, writers etc have contributed a long way in increasing the incidence of drug abuse among youths and adolescents. This is done through their glamorous advertisements, which expose victims to new information regarding the names, taste, application method and the use of certain drugs in such a way that, the youths are likely to try them and eventually go on using them.

8. Poverty and Strenuous jobs: Some drugs are extra energy producing and those who are engaged in strenuous jobs; sometimes use such drugs in order to do certain works which would ordinarily be impossible under normal circumstances. Examples of these people are drivers, criminals etc who abuse drugs in order to induce the state of mind they find appropriate of committing crimes or driving anyhow to meet their target.

The above and many more factors contribute to the drug addiction among our contemporary citizens which degrades their dignities and serve as a threat to their character, life, economy, security, stability and general development of our society. This is why Islam is so particular in alleviating alcoholism and other things that intoxicate the mind, so that there will be peaceful coexistence in the Muslim community in particular and world at large.

Effects of Drug Abuse

Spiritual effects

A part from the verses and ahadith that prohibited alcohol and other intoxicants many specify different spiritual effects. For example, Prophet Peace be upon him said:

Drunkard is like the worshipper of an idol (related by Ahmad)

He will not enter paradise; the disobedience (i.e for his parents)

and alcohol drinker (related by Bukhari and Muslim)

Allah has cursed wine, the drinker, its seller, its buyer, who crush it, to whom it was crushed, who transported it and to whom it is transported (related by Abu Dawud).

The first mentioned Hadith teaches that, alcoholism can nullify a person's religion (Islam) and make him like an idol worshipper in the sight of Allah. The second Hadith clearly shows that, in the hereafter, a drunkard will not enter paradise and this means he/she will enter hellfire. While the third teaches that, anything related to alcohol or intoxicant was cursed by Allah and lacks Allah's blessing.

Social Effects

1. It impairs cognitive function in the area of intelligence, reasoning and general judgment (Halima, 2008:301). A drunkard loses his sense to the extent of being mad and students who are alcoholic end up not doing well academically. More over, when making judgment, there would be confusion and full of mistakes, which can even bring serious conflicts in a family or society.

2. Effects of drug abuse on health: Drugs enter the body through a variety of routes. The drugs then make their way to the blood stream and go straight to the brain where they exert their harmful effects. Scientists have found that most addictive drugs initially affect the human brain. This part of the brain affects us when we do many things e.g. eating, drinking, etc Cells in this part of the brain release chemical that makes us feel it good when we engage in the behaviors. Drugs teach us to take more drugs if use continues, the harmful effects of drugs gradually change the user's brain and lead to drug addiction (WHO, 2008). For

example, tobacco smoking affects respiratory system which causes dizziness and headache, both pulse rate and blood pressure are increased, and they may lead to injury of the tissues like gums and pharynx (Lawal, 2013:13).

3. Effects of drug abuse in socialization: Drugs have no rightful place anywhere in the society. However, they have even less place in academic environment where teens are living in their formative years. It is costly in terms of poor academic performance if severely imparted, along with his/her level of responsibility, such as skipping classes failing to complete assignments and generally neglecting their academic responsibility (Ibid).

- i. Isolation: Isolation is the most common social effects of drug abuse. The drug addict eventually maintains a connection only with his drug of choice.
 - ii. Relationship: Close connections to the drug abuser is affected. Relationships become dysfunctional, as the co-dependents recognize the effect of the drugs.
 - iii. Family: Social affection cannot be felt along with addiction. The family can be dissolved, parent/children siblings can develop emotional issues and trust can be shattered (Tahir, 2010:3).
4. Promoting anti-social behavior e.g protest, nakedness, unreasonable statement, fighting. Misuse of wealth, funds and property which lead to poverty, unemployment and low moral standard (Gafai, 2006:10).

Islamic Antidote to Drug Abuse

Islam prescribes several ways to curb or prevent the excesses of drug abuse in the society which includes:

- i. It gives proper education to parents to be role models for children as Almighty Allah said:

O you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones... (Q66:6)

This verse enjoins the parents to guard their children against all social evils like drug abuse which may destroy their lives in this world and hereafter. Therefore, parents should know that, it is obligatory on them to take all Islamic teachings against this contemporary problem of drug abuse such as; those who drink or smoke would endeavor not to do this before their children who learn better by doing what they see. Not sending them in buying or producing any form of intoxicants. Be vigilant on their children and stop any abnormal attitude and bring the children closer to them in order to teach children good and bad at any point of life.

- ii. It enjoins seeking education on every citizen male or female. The Prophet (SAW) said:

“Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim” (Albani, 1988).

Commenting on this Hadith, Al-Akhdari, (nd) said that it is not lawful for anybody to do any act until he knows its position in the shari`ah. Therefore, as we earlier discussed that, intoxicants or drug abuse is strongly prohibited in Islam, all what is needed now is to know that it is prohibited by our Creator. It is harmful to our lives, health, economy, politics, social relations and general development, hence everybody must shun away from it.

- iii. It enjoins on government to safeguard the sanity (minds) of its citizens. Ibn Fodio explained that in Islam, citizens have rights on their leaders to, among others: access to leaders, education, justice delivery, security and benevolence, welfare, enforcement of religious obligations; and

changing the evil deeds in the society (Ibrahim, 2010:102). The Prophet (SAW) said:

Allah does not punish the individual for the sin of the community until they see evil spreading among themselves, and while having the power to stop it, do not do so (Ahmad:537).

Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said that those who are in authorities are of two groups; the Scholars and the Rulers. If they are upright, the people will be upright; and if they are corrupt, the people will be corrupt (Modibbo, 2012).

Therefore, it is obligatory on our leaders to be models and serious on the problem of drug abuse, sponsoring public enlightenment activities against it by scholars and experts. Stopping its dealers and producers as well as executing appropriate punishments to dealers and drug abusers.

Recommendations

- Parents should be role models to their children, shun drug abuse, educate their children against all social evils including drug abuse, monitor their social interactions with peer groups and take appropriate measures as soon as possible.
- Scholars should turn their attention to this problem and give all their contributions to its solutions through; including it in their regular Friday sermons, local to international preachings and in their classroom teachings.
- Researchers should contribute by finding causes of spreading this disaster, as well as finding effects and possible solutions to it, for guidance to authority and awareness to general public.

- National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) should organize workshops and seminars involving scholars, political leaders, NGOs and general public on drug free education. And intensify their efforts in finding and punishing all those involved in spreading the problem.
- Curriculum Planners should include moral and religious instructions that could be used to curtail drug abuse, in all Nigeria post primary schools.
- General public should show their resistance to dealers of prohibited drugs and drug users by counseling them and reporting them to appropriate authorities.
- Above all, the government should evolve relevant and realistic support and campaign against drug abuse. Use effective legislations against indiscriminate advertisement and selling of drugs prohibited and commonly abused by individuals. Implement laudable policies and programmes that will eliminate the causes of drug abuse. For example, alleviate poverty among Nigerian populace thereby, discouraging them from engaging in drug abuse. The mass media should, instead of such advertisements, rather be used to educate the general public on the evil effects of drug abuse.

Conclusion

From the afore mentioned discussion, it is apparent that, the abuse of drugs constitutes a threat to national development and has a devastating effect on Nigerians. It destroys one's future, health, mental, intellect, reputation, wealth, life as well as peace and security in our society. To find a solution to this problem which is daily becoming worst and more complex, the parents, scholars, researchers, school

administrators, individuals, members of the large society, NGOs, the press and the government must pool their resources together to wage a concerted war against this social menace

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