

TRAJECTORY AND INTERSECTIONALITY OF DRUG-SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN PERI-URBAN STRIPS OF KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper discussed how drugs abuse and misuse have complicated social interactions and livelihood systems in Katsina State. Data and other information for this research were obtained from direct field survey based on 384 questionnaires administered to drug (substance) abuse respondents, although only 351 of these questionnaires were found valid for the purpose of analysis. In addition, focus group discussions and key informant interviews were held. Descriptive statistics was used in the analysis and presentation of results. Evidence shows that there is a general increase in drug abuse and misuse among young adults within the semi-urban communities of the State, and this presents significant threats to the achievement of the sustainable development goals of the country. Cough syrups, cannabis and cigarettes are the commonly abused and misused drugs or substances in the study area. Drugs and substances such as heroin, cocaine, ecstasy and glue are hardly used though they are well known among youths as drugs and substances that can be abused or misused. Associated criminal acts with drugs or substance abuse and misused in the area include rape, reckless driving and armed robbery. Drug and substance abuse and misuse within the study area is found to result from structural tensions and a lack of moral regulation within families. Hence, social re-orientation campaigns that aim at ensuring that aspirations of youths align with available rewards need to be intensified by religious authorities and parents. Also, capacities should be improved within families and communities to bear personal and family burdens, risks and responsibilities rather than transferring these to government institutions, thereby scaling back governments' efforts in creating opportunities for employment, education, and health in the area.

Keywords: Cough syrups, criminality, drug abuse, peri-urban, youths

INTRODUCTION

Youth substance abuse is among the major social problems in Nigeria. This problem is highly pervasive, and knows no boundary with regard to sex, social class, or place of residence. Indeed, nearly all categories of youths in Nigeria are actively involved in the consumption of illegal substances (Faroe, 2012; Abudu, 2008). Although it is a global phenomenon, however, the growing number of youths involved in substance abuse in Nigeria, as well as the continuing fall in the age of entry into the act makes it a serious a problem that requires urgent attention (Oshodi, Aina and Onajole, 2010). For instance, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency's (NDLEA) 1997 report indicates that the use and abuse of drugs by adolescents have become one of the most disturbing health related phenomena in Nigeria (NDLEA, 1997). Today, more Nigerian youths are becoming drug dependents, while Nigeria is gradually transiting from the status of a drug-consuming nation to that of a drug-producing one.

Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO) has indicated that alcohol and substance abuse are major health issues globally in all areas of economic development, human health and wellbeing (WHO, 2011). Substance abuse and its associated problems are inimical to the survival and effective functioning of human societies (Amosun, Ige and Ajala, 2010). The costs of substance abuse include the direct cost of health-care delivery, treating the consequences of use, the expenses related to criminal prosecution and incarceration, drug and alcohol-related traffic fatalities, the wide-ranging harm to families of users, and the impact on economic development and productivity (Landless and McBride, 2013). In Nigeria, the consequences of substance use are diverse, including acute and chronic health, social as well as psychological problem; there is also the disruption of interpersonal relationships particularly within the family, marginalization, criminal behaviour, school failure, vocational problems, and a threat to the attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The problem of narcotic drugs in Nigeria is manifesting in the cultivation, trafficking and abuse (Alemika, 1998). Drugs ranging from alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, cocaine, heroin to hashish and many others are readily available to youths in Nigeria and this has made many of them to be perpetrators of social vices in the society (Yusuf, 2007). Most young people begin their use of drugs with alcohol and cigarettes and later progress to more dangerous substances such as cannabis and cocaine (Obot, 1999). In Katsina State, there is a growing concern about youth substance abuse. In 2013 alone, the Katsina State command of the NDLEA declared that it arrested 164 drug suspects and seized about 1511.53kgs of drugs (Leadership, 2014). Although the problem of youth substance abuse in Nigeria has been discussed by different scholars (Oshodi, Aina and Onajole, 2010; Fayombo, 1998), however, there is dearth of empirical data with regard to its extent, characteristics, and its associated problems in the peri-urban Katsina State. Therefore, the major objective of this study is to examine the prevalence and social consequences of youth substance abuse in peri-urban areas of Katsina State, Nigeria.

STUDY AREA

Katsina State (Figure 1) is located between latitude 11°00'N and 13°20'N and longitude 7°00'E and 8°55'E. It shares boarder with Niger Republic to the North, Kaduna State to the South, Jigawa and Kano States to the East, and Zamfara State to the West.

The climate of Katsina State is the Tropical Continental Climate (tropical wet and dry type) classified by Koppen as Aw climate. Rainfall is between May and September with a peak in August (Abaje, Sawa and Ati, 2014). The average annual

rainfall varies from less than 600mm in the extreme northern part of the state (around Kaita, Mashi, and Mai'adua) to about 1000mm in the southern part (around Sabuwa, Funtua, Danja, and Dandume) (Abaje, Ogoh, Amos and Abashiya, 2015). The pattern of rainfall in the state is highly variable. As a result of the large inter-annual variability, the state is subject to frequent floods and dry spells which can result in severe and widespread droughts that can impose serious socio-economic constraints (Abaje, Ati and Iguisi, 2012).

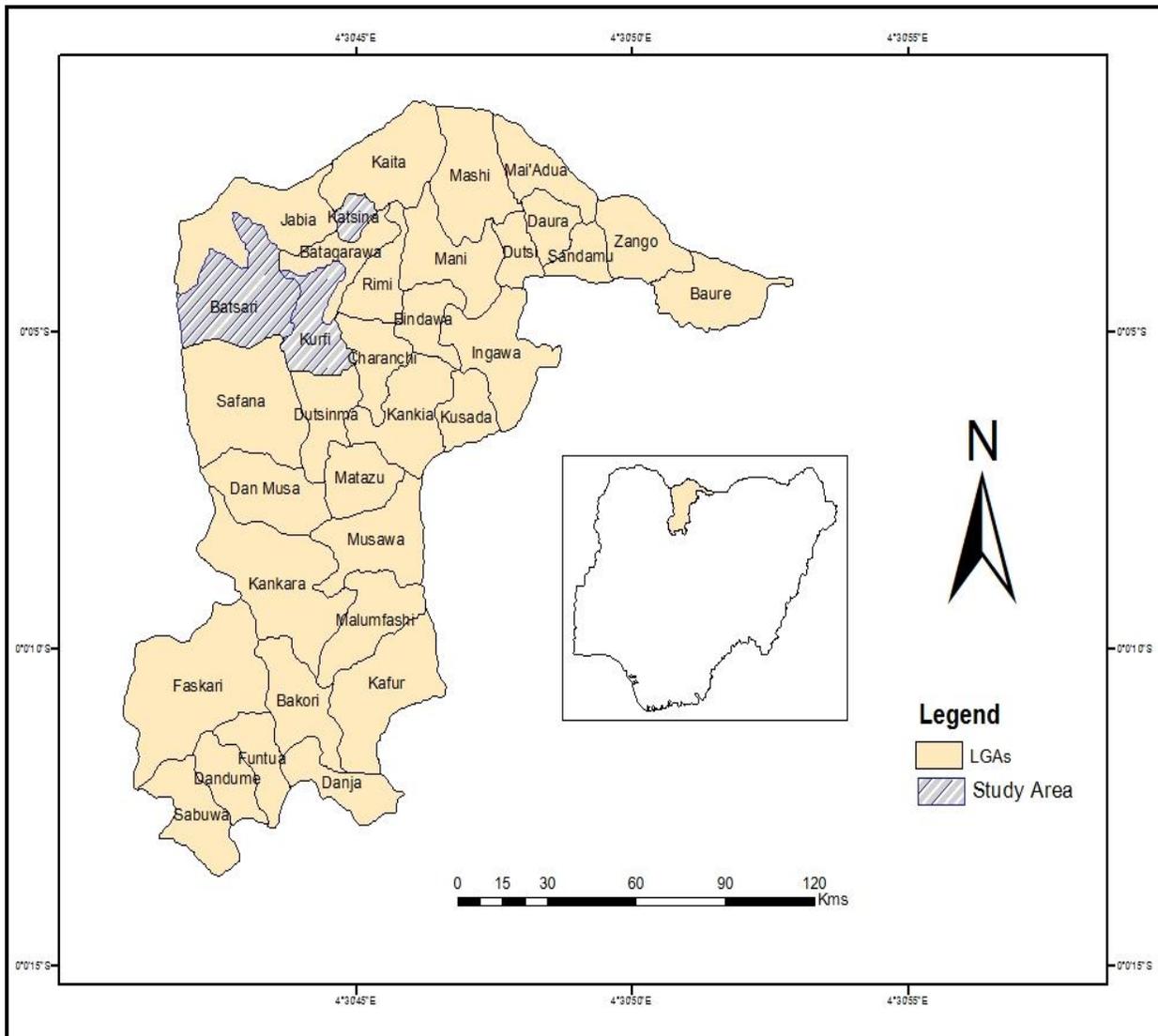


Figure 1: Katsina State Showing the Study Area

Temporal characteristics of temperature are steadier than those of rainfall, but the highest diurnal ranges of temperature are in the dry season. The highest air temperature normally occurs in April/May and the lowest in December through February (Abaje *et al*, 2014). Evapo-transpiration is generally high throughout the year. The highest amount of evaporation occurs during the dry season. Sunshine hours vary with latitude and with season. Values are high during the dry season mainly because the sky is less cloudy than during the rainy season (Abaje *et al*, 2014; NIMET, 2015).

Katsina State is one of the most densely populated states in the Federation. This is as a result of its hospitality nature as it accommodates people of diverse culture. It has a population of 5,801,584 people with an annual growth rate of 3% during the 2006 census (FRN, 2010). The state has 34 LGAs and the people are mainly Hausa and Fulani. The State has a large deposit of kaolin and asbestos. In terms of agricultural productivity, the State is one of the highest producers of cereal crops in northern Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study LGAs (Kurfi, Batsari, and Katsina) during the 2006 census had a total population of 642,706 people with an annual growth rate of 3.04% (FRN, 2010). The population of each of the LGA was then projected to the year 2015 (Table 1) for the purpose of this study using the method of Mehta (2004). The method is determined as:

$$P_n = P_o (1 + R/100)^n$$

where: P_n = population in the current year

P_o = population in the base year.

R = annual growth rate.

n = number of intermediary years.

Table 1: Selected Local Government Areas and Number of Respondents

Selected LGAs	Population (2006)	Projected Population (2015)	Number of Respondents
Kurfi	116,700	152,267	70
Batsari	207,874	271,228	124
Katsina	318,132	415,090	190
Total	642,706	838,585	384

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Data on trajectory and social consequences of substance (drugs) abuse among youths in the study area were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires based on simple proportion (see Table 1), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interview (KII), and field observations. In order to determine the sample size of the population, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) method of determining sample size of a given population was adopted. Based on the method, the sample size used for this research work was 384. The formula is given as:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

where: S = sample size.

X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be 0.50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05)

The study utilized snowball sampling technique in sampling the respondents. This sampling technique was based on previously identified respondents (substance abuse respondents) to recommend others who have or share the same characteristics as the respondents already in place. This technique really helped in gathering information from hidden respondents that were difficult for the researchers to access. In addition, convenience sampling method was equally utilized. Six (6) Research Assistants (RAs) that understand the local dialects of the people were recruited and trained to work with the principal investigator and research team members. A total of 384 copies of a questionnaire were administered, but only 351 of these questionnaires were found valid for the purpose of analysis. One FGD was held in each LGA of the study (Kurfi, Batsari, and Katsina town), and the number of participants in each group was between 8 and 12 persons. The age group was between 15 and 45 years. KII was held with the officials of NDLEA and WHO, leaders of community youth organizations, and personnel of the Nigerian Police. Descriptive statistics was used in the analysis and presentation of results of the responses using Microsoft Excel Tool (2013) and SPSS 21.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic characteristics

Table 2 shows the result of the socio-demographic characteristics of the three hundred and fifty-one (351) respondents who were interviewed using the structured questionnaires. Out of this number 272 (77.5%) were males, while 72 (20.5%) were females; whilst 7 (2.0%) did not indicate their sex. This result indicates that drug (substance) abuse by youths in Katsina State are dominated by males. Most of the respondents were both married (47.0%) and singled (46.7%), and mostly between the age of 26-45 years (68.1%).

Table 2: Summary of Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Respondents' Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	272	77.5
	Female	72	20.5
	No response	7	2.0
Age (years)	≤ 15	7	2.0
	16-25	58	16.5
	26-45	239	68.1
	46-65	42	12.0
	≥ 66	5	1.4
Marital Status	Single	164	46.7
	Married	165	47.0
	Divorced	14	4.0
	Widowed	8	2.3
Educational Level	Postgraduate qualification	17	4.8
	Degree/HND	48	13.7
	NCE/OND or equivalent	92	26.2
	SSCE or equivalent	106	30.2
	Primary/Quranic education	49	14.0
	No formal education	33	9.4
	No response	6	1.8
Religion	Muslims	330	94.0
	Christians	17	4.8
	Traditionalist	2	0.6
	No response	2	0.6
Occupation	Self-employed	242	69.0
	Civil servant	109	31.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Surprisingly, most of these youths are literate. Out of the 351 respondents, 30.2% have the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) or its equivalent. This is followed by NCE/OND or its equivalent (26.2%), while Degree/HND and Primary/Quranic education had 13.7% and 14.0% respectively. Some of the learned respondents believe that substance or drugs abuse would increase ones level of reasoning and performance academically. In terms of their religion, majority (94%) are Muslims while Christians and Traditionalists are 4.8% and 0.6% respectively. The high percentage of Muslims is not unconnected with the fact that the study area is dominated by Hausa-Fulani speaking people in which Islam is their major religion. Most of them (about 69.0%) are self-employed (farming, livestock production, trading, craftwork, driving, and motor park workers) while only 31.0% are civil servants.

Criminal behaviour of peri-urban youths in Katsina State

Various difficult living conditions in terms of the material, educational, physical, and psychological conditions exist within peri-urban spaces of Katsina State. Due to poverty and inadequate social amenities in these areas, the basic needs of young people living in these areas are not always met. The state of their poverty and deprivation is perceptibly reflected in their non-

school attendance, undernourishment, and inappropriate medical services. Within these areas also, the following criminal behaviours have ascended to alarming levels in the past five years: theft, robbery, reckless driving, and rape. Accounts of socio-economic characteristics of parents do have significant association with rates of substance abuse and youth criminality within Katsina State.

A poignant rendition also emerged that established that neighborhood or spatial characteristics are more useful in explaining criminality within peri-urban spaces of Katsina State than individual characteristics. In broad terms, adjoining characteristics unknotted basically two factors that largely contributed to substance abuse and criminality within these areas; these include: substance attractiveness and accessibility. Substance attractiveness refers to how beautifully well packaged these substances appear; and accessibility had to do with how easy these substances were reached by interested users.

Patterns of drug-related criminality within peri-urban spaces of Katsina State

Drug abuse is a serious threat to sustainable development in Nigeria. Within peri-urban or semi-rural areas of Katsina State, the most commonly used and abused substances include cough syrups (benelyn, diazaferm), cannabis and cigarettes. In this sense, illicit use of cough syrups and cigarette smoking is recognized as a public health concern in the State. The abuse and misuse of these substances has also been recognized as representing one of the leading causes of preventable death, illness and injury among the population in the State. The abuse and misuse of these substances usually occur in the form of increasing amounts consumed, frequency of use and groups involved.

On the whole, the pattern of youth criminality within peri-urban spaces of Katsina State appears to follow Lawrence Grossberg's discussion of the changing meaning of 'youth'. According to this description, the meaning of youth within Katsina State does not simply reflect 'a changing reality'; rather, the meaning of youth within this space helps to create 'the reality it describes'. Youth discourses and practices within peri-urban spaces of Katsina State were seen to have evolved through two principal phases: at the advent of structural adjustment programme (SAP) in the 1980s, where the meaning of 'youth' discourses within Katsina State and northern Nigeria in general were more concerned with the ideas of childhood and adulthood than with the idea of youth. Childhood during this period was seen as a period of innocence. Parents here had the sole responsibility of protecting their children against the premature loss of innocence. The second phase of youth discourse as identified was the period after the introduction of SAP in the 1980s, where the idea of youth as an extended transitional period between childhood and adulthood became increasingly important. The state of 'youth' was seen at this time as a time of 'fun', a time in which one could take risks and dare things, including substance abuse; also, this state of 'youth' was perceived as a period that posed a huge threat to society. Evidence also prevailed to demonstrate that it was at this phase that young people in Katsina created their own culture that tended to exist outside the family system.

Nonetheless, a common narrative emerged that described how SAP also destroyed the welfarist characteristic of the Nigerian state bequeathed at colonialism. According to this narrative, political power was organized deliberately under SAP to intensify the play of market forces in narrowing the extent of insecurity among the people by not enabling individuals and families to meet certain social contingencies (for instance, sickness, old age and unemployment). Consequently, young people who were strained had no option than to be engaged in criminal behaviour in order to 'cope' of the changing times. Likewise, the following types of strain were found to contribute to the development of criminal behaviour among young

people in peri-urban spaces of Katsina State: child abuse or neglect, severe physical punishment by parents, negative relations with parents, homelessness, neighbourhood spillover, stressful life events such as divorce or death of parents.

The trajectory of youth criminality within peri-urban spaces of Katsina state followed these two distinct patterns: first, when young people felt they were prevented from achieving their goals; and second, when things they value were taken away from them. The first trajectory revealed tales where some of the respondents acknowledged that when their parents do not give them the money to buy the clothes they want or finance the social activities they loved to be involved in, this makes them *feel* bad, angry, frustrated, depressed; thus, they would then be compelled to resort to substance and drug abuse as a *corrective* action that creates a satisfying feeling that takes them away from this state of despondency.

By and large, the study findings reiterated that substance abuse and associated criminality within peri-urban spaces of Katsina State is a function of forces that are external to the young people involved in this abuse. As revealed in the study, substance abuse and criminality tend to be lower in the following types of family and school structure: small families and schools with good resources. Families and schools with good discipline where there are clear rules for behaviour and these rules are consistently enforced in a fair manner. Families and schools that have high expectations for their children and students and that make rigorous but realistic work demand on them. Families and schools that provide opportunities for children and schools to succeed, and that praise their accomplishments. Families and schools where parents and teachers have positive attitudes toward their children and students, creating pleasant physical space for their work.

In attempts to check the incidence of substance abuse and youth criminality within peri-urban spaces of Katsina State, three types of social control processes were found to occur in these areas: processes that ensured the internalization of society's normative expectations; processes that assured the structuration of the social experience of the youths; and processes that employed both formal and informal social sanctions to safeguard social order within the community. Respondents identified the first genre of the social control processes as the most potent in instilling acceptable moral values of discipline, honesty and hard work in children as it incorporates standards of behaviour acceptable within larger society in individuals' personalities; however, they bemoaned that this genre of social control mechanism within peri-urban spaces of Katsina State has become non-existent and impotent in recent times. Respondents also acknowledged that critical steps to social control through internalization involve learning what the acceptable societal norms are, and learning to believe that these norms are legitimate.

CONCLUSION

Substance abuse as experienced within peri-urban Katsina State is both a private trouble and a public issue. Quite obviously, the resulting loss and injury that victims of substance abuse suffer revealed the highly personal nature of the problem. Within the state, the 'epidemic' of violence and other associated crimes with substance abuse makes this problem a matter for intense public discussion and political debate. This therefore means that the people's personal troubles with substance abuse provide the building blocks out of which public issues are constructed. Thus, in fully understanding the emerging trend of criminality within peri-urban Katsina, this involves reflecting on the prevailing social conditions experienced by young people in the area. Since substance abuse have contributed to the emergence of swelling criminality within peri-urban spaces, the study

findings confirmed a significant link between substance abuse and increased wave of criminal behaviour that have an intersectional character within peri-urban spaces of Katsina State. It is therefore important to consider this factor in understanding the peculiarities that complicate the lives of young people in Katsina State. In this context, future studies on substance abuse and criminality must not only try to better understand the effects of substance abuse, but also the consequences of other mind-altering substances across the segments of the population of Katsina State and their adverse effect on human settlements and health.

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