

The Nigerian law on family addiction prevention: challenges and way forward

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Abstract

Background: Addiction is one of the most serious menaces affecting the world population today. In recent time, it has started eating deeply into the bedrock of the society (i.e., the family) from which every addict comes. There are many laws, at the state, regional and international level, yet, what has been a surprise to many is that in spite of the multiplicity of various legislations at all levels of governance, such efforts have neither translated to reduction of addiction in the society, nor to the elimination of the scourge. In this paper, we shall explore some of these legal regimes to see how effective these laws are, some challenges in some of their provisions and enforcement. The paper provides some suggestions that would provide a way forward for their effectiveness in curbing the menace of all forms of addictions in our society.

Methods: The method of research here is doctrinaire, which necessitate exploring some of the relevant available literature on the topic, the statutes applicable and court cases (where available). are also examined.

Results: The result shows that prevention of addiction at the family level is not getting the attention it deserves. One of the problems identified is that some provisions in some statutes (that has something to do with the family i.e., the Child Right Act (CRA), Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) etc., can be problematic. The morality which some of the laws tend to promote is secular as they allow some drugs or substances of abuse to be regarded as licit, which goes against the religious and custom of larger members of the society. This position as well constitutes a barrier to fighting all forms of addiction or the process of eradicating them altogether within the family and the society at large.

Conclusion: There are surely many legislations on prevention of addiction at the family level, but it suffers from being ineffective due to the uneasy contradiction inherent in the law itself on one hand, and poor mechanism of enforcement of the available legislation on the other hand. The country, or the world at large, needs not to dwell much in excessive proliferation of law, rather, what is required is to enforce the needful one.

Key words: Addiction, family, substance abuse, legislation, menace, prevention.

Introduction

Generally, the statistics on the prevalence of addiction in this country is really frightening or alarming. The social consequences of drugs and other addictions are also evident in Nigeria. The effect of these has led to

major social upheavals such as organised crimes (like terrorism, banditry, kidnappings, armed robbery), and in fact loss in productivity and sudden population disruption in family lives like what is seen in the Internally Displaced Persons [IDP]

camps everywhere. It is true that some legislations are available at the various level of governance, national, regional, continental, and international to regulate drugs, its use, and spread, yet, the enforcement mechanism put in place has not been enough to rid this country of its nuisances. This is posing serious challenges to the citizens as the effect of the addiction is breeding more crimes, violence actions and even death. There is need to be proactive and do the needful action or omission before the scourge destabilises the entire country.

Methodology/Results

There are relevant laws at the national, regional, continental and international arena that attempt to minimize, limit, or eradicate drugs and substance of addiction in our society. On examination, some of the legal regimes are found to be addressing the scourge of addiction on one hand, while on the other hand, there are also evidence of overlap or repetition of the legislation on the issue of addiction thereby making their enforcement very difficult. Some provisions of the law itself may be problematic as it makes the enforcement impossible. The way forward is to streamline the relevant law and make them effective in their

application and outcome. And to remove clog in some provisions in some statutes that seems to be counterproductive - like in the CRA and CEDAW.

Definitions of Terms

For us to appreciate the focus of this paper, it is important to start by defining some key terms that are at the centre of this discussion. These definitions are as follows;

Family - this is the microcosm, the unit block, the origin or basic source of every society. Of course, it is similar to a biological cell, from which develop the tissue, the organ, the system and then the individual. It is also from this unit that a community, state, nation and in fact the world population was derived. Ordinarily, the word family has the root from the Latin word, *familia*, Which in Roman law, as cited by Rutherford and Bones (1998), include among others, “all those persons who were subject to the *potestas* of the same individual, whether it is the children, grand children etc.;...” In fact, Black (1968) further defines it as a “collective body of persons who form one household under one head and one domestic government and who have reciprocal natural and moral duties to support and care for one another.”

Addict – the law does not define addiction but that of addict. As such, Black (1968) defines

an addict as “ one who has acquired the habit of using spirituous, liquors or narcotics to such an extent as to deprive him of reasonable self-control.” To Nchi (2000), addicts is a “person who habitually uses something especially hard drugs, as to have lost his self-control in respect of such habitual use.”

Nigerian Law – Ordinarily, the Nigerian law is of triple heritage combining the Common or Received English Law, the Islamic law and the indigenous customary law in one legal system. Each of these laws is recognised vide Section 5 (a) – (i) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) with its court system. In this section, the English, the Shariah, and the Customary Courts were mention, which implies the recognition of their respective laws. However, one important fact we must not forget is that although the Nigerian legal system recognises the other the Islamic and Customary law (as evidenced in the section cited above), yet, when it comes to the law regulating against drug of addiction or substance of abuse, the law are derived only from the ‘received’ English Common law,

without any input from the Islamic and Customary law.

In addition, when we say Nigerian law, it must be realised that it also includes any other law, treaty, convention or legislation etc., which the country is a signatory to, or has ratified, or domesticated. Where effort is made by the country through accession or ratification , such law would be regarded as part of the Nigerian law.

Relevant Legal Regimes on the Prevention of Addiction

The purpose of law is for the re-engineering of the society for the best just as we know that law is the tool to regulate the conduct of the people living in it. Therefore, it is not surprising that efforts have been made to rid the country of the scourge of drug addiction through various legislations. Thus, at various levels of governance - national, regional and at the international level, specific types of law or interventions are provided. For some decades now, regulation of these substances have been made through local legislation, treaty, convention and other bilateral agreements (with binding clauses), which have become part of the Nigerian law. In the following lines, we shall mention some few of them that are relevant to this paper;

National/Municipal Law on the Prevention of Addiction

At the national level, much legislation has been provided to address the issue of illicit drug and substance abuse. Large parts of such legislation are part of the old 'received' English law by Nigeria, with or without modification, while other few ones are made through the Act of National Assembly. Examples of these laws are;

1. **The Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, 1935** was enacted to control drug trafficking and abuse- especially 'raw opium' 'coca leaves' and 'Indian hemp.' When this ordinance was amended, it becomes the **Dangerous Drugs Act 1950**.
2. **The Indian Hemp Decree No. 19, 1966**. The Federal Military Government, in 1966 prescribed in this decree a stiff punishment of death penalty or 21 years of imprisonment for the cultivation, 10 years of imprisonment for exportation and for smoking it or being in possession of it. This Decree was amended in 1975 to become the **Indian Hemp (Amendment) Decree No. 34, 1975** distinguished from that of 1966 as this removed death penalty and reduce the punishment for smoking to six months or fine. On 27 August 1985, the Decree was repealed when a new military government led by General Ibrahim Babangida came to power.
3. **The Special Tribunal (Miscellaneous Offences) Decree,**

1984. By Sect 3 (2) (k) of the decree, offender is only held for the crime and if found guilty would be convicted under Section 6 (3) (k) to death penalty by firing squad for buying, selling, exposing or offering for sale or luring somebody to buy, sell, use, smoke, or inhale the illegal drug.

4. **The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Decree 48, 1989** was amended at different intervals as National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Decree 33, LFN, 1990; National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), (Amendment), Decree No.15, LFN, 1990 and finally as National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Decree 48, 1989. The law's main mandates are four: Eradication of illicit drugs; protection and maintenance of the image of Nigeria; arresting and handover of any drug abuser to police; and confiscation of ill-gotten wealth from hard drugs. The Decree specified punishments for illicit drug use and trafficking, including life imprisonment for 15 years but not exceeding 25 years for trafficking, possession or use of the illicit drugs.
5. **The Money Laundering (Miscellaneous Offences) Decree No.3, 1995**. This Decree confers greater power on the NDLEA to mount secret surveillance on the bank accounts of suspected traffickers. It places a ceiling on cash payment and mandated banks to report deposits beyond the limit set, and as well allow it to eavesdrop on any suspected person's telephone line.
6. **Poison and Pharmacy Act-** the Act identifies some drugs as poison

- and laid regulation on its restriction or prohibition.
7. **Food and Drug Act.** Section 4(a) of the Act prohibits any substance which may cause injury to the health of the user thereof.
 8. **National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC).** Formerly Decree No 15 of LFN, 1993. The law also requires the Agency to ensure that the use of narcotics and psychotropic substances are limited to medical and scientific purpose only.
 9. **Narcotics/Psychotropic Substances and Controlled Chemicals Decree** No 19 of 1993.
 10. **Counterfeit and Fake Drugs and Unwholesome Processes Foods (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act.** The goal is to prevent some of these provisions from being used as source of addiction.
 11. **National Tobacco Control Act, 2015 LFN 2014.** In recent time, the anti-Smoking law was passed which would prohibit smoking in public gatherings but not stopping it in spite of the health hazards it causes.
 12. **National Lottery Act, LFN, 2005,** creates the National Lottery Commission, but stops short in combating all forms of gambling and other game of chance.
 13. **Cybercrime Prevention Act LFN 2015.** The Act provides for about 60 offences, like child pornography, identity theft and impersonation, cyber terrorism, fraudulent issuance of e-instruction etc. The Act provides for 3-7 years imprisonment or N 2, 000, 000 fine or both in some of these violations. However, this law does not mention internet or digital addiction.

14. **National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) Act 2007,** although it is to regulate how information and technology affects the life of the people. But even as the chief regulator of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), addiction is not mentioned in the Agency's 24 points mandate.

Further to all these regulations, and in order to coordinate effective means and resources to combating the menace of drug addiction and substances abuse at the domestic level, the Federal Government of Nigeria, in 1994, created an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Drugs Control (IMC), which ended in producing the first ever National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP) in 1999. Thereafter, the 2nd edition of the plan covering 2008-2011 (extended to 2013), and afterwards, the 3rd edition of the NDCMP (to cover 2015-2019) was produced, which is expected to enhance adequate coordination in fighting the drug menace in Nigeria.

Besides the national law, Nigeria is also a signatory to many other regional, or continental plan or interventions. This includes the following;

Regional and Continental Intervention on the Prevention of Drug Addiction

Beside the national law on the prevention of addiction, there are other legal regimes, especially at the regional level. These are:

- Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drugs Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crimes in West Africa (2008) - This arises out of the concern on how to stop drug abuse within the region.
- Regional Action Plan to Address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drugs Trafficking , Organized Crimes and Drug Abuse (2008-2011) but extended to 2013
- African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2007-2012) - At the continental level, the moves to eradicate drugs proliferation was considered as urgent issue that requires immediate action of member's countries.
- African Union, 'African Common Position on Controlled Substances and Access to Pain Management Drugs', *Fifth Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Drug Control (Camdc5), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia* (2012).
- African Union, 'Common African Position (CAP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda' [2014] Addis Ababa.
- African Union Plan of Action on Drugs Control (2013-2017).

International Instruments on the Prevention of Addiction

In addition to the above regimes both at the national/municipal, regional and continental level on how to curb the misuse, abuse and illegal proliferation of drugs or other forms of addiction, there are also efforts at the international level to achieve similar objective. Some of these international human rights instruments include the followings;

- The International Opium Convention, 1912
- The First Geneva Convention, 1931
- The Convention for the Suppression of Illicit Traffic in Dangerous Drugs, 1936
- The Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs, 1961
- The Convention on Psychotropic Substances , 1971
- The Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs, 1972
- The UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, (known as the 1988 Vienna Convention)
- The UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and Its three Protocols, 2003
- The UN Convention against Corruption, 2005.

In addition to the above international regulatory efforts at the international level, the United Nations (UN) went farther to create a special office for fighting the menace of drug addiction was created under

the name, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). In fact, in 1989, the same UN with a total budget of \$1.76 billion allocated about \$37 million towards the war against drugs. Currently, it is estimated that about \$100 billion are spent globally on drug law enforcement. By 2016, the UN known as the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS) established another platform against addiction.

The Unexpected Consequence

However, despite all these efforts, the desired good results of all these regulation are not commensurate with the reality on ground. The unexpected consequence happened: instead of observing decreasing menace of addiction, the country continue to witness an increase. In the past year, it is estimated that 14.4 per cent or 14.3 million people between the age of 15 and 64 years in Nigeria are affected by drug addiction. In fact, it has been noted that the extent of drug use in Nigeria is comparatively high when compared with the 2016 global annual prevalence of any drug use of 5.6 per cent among the adult population.

In the UNODC World Drug Report 2018, the statistics were that, among the population, 10.6 million people are cannabis users and that 1 in 3 of these

users is dependent; another 4.6 million are addicted to opiod and 1 out 5 is dependent ; 481,000 people abuse tranquilisers and sedatives ; 340,000 men and women abuse ecstasy drugs ; 300,000 others use solvents and inhalants ; over 238,000 people use amphetamines and prescriptive stimulants, and 1 in 5 is dependent and 92,000 individuals are found to be illicitly addicted to cocaine.

In a study carried out by Abasiubong et al on youth from Uyo, Akwa Ibom State and Kiru, Kano state of Nigeria, the researchers findings show that “(T)he use of alcohol in various forms was high in Uyo, compared to inhalants, sleeping drugs, cough syrup in Kiru. Cigarettes and Indian hemp were high in both cities. Reasons for use were similar. This study has shown that substance use cuts across all boundaries in Nigeria.”

In another similar study conducted in some selected secondary schools of an urban community of Oyo-state, the researchers, Idowu et al, state that alcohol is abused next to the use of Tramadol. In fact, at the end of the research, the result shows that there is insufficient information as to the negative consequences of the substance of abuse. The evidence reflects the fact that the “proportion of respondents who were

substance abusers was significantly higher among students who had not received any formal lectures on the subject at school compared to those who had.”

Beside addiction to drug and substance abuse, we must not forget that there are similar but equally gloomy statistics on addiction to alcohol, substance abuse, gambling, internet or technology addiction. But while much emphasis is made on drugs and substance abuse, there is a regrettable silence on the terrible consequence on alcohol and tobacco, which to the government of this country and somewhere else all over the world, are illicit substances. But, scientifically and socially, it has been admitted that these two permitted substances were worse than the proscribed drug of addiction. In a South African Court, particularly in the case of in *South Africa v Seru Mala*, the court establishes this fact when Van den Heever J., rightly held that;

Experience teaches us that alcohol addicts are usually more harmful to society than those addicted to the relevant listed drugs. In the criminal courts, the evidence shows more often than not that alcohol was the cause

for one person assaulting or even killing another person. Other drugs are seldom mentioned as the cause of many divorces while the use of other drugs are seldom mentioned in this regard.

Wayne Hall et al in a report prepared for the World Health Organisation (WHO), the researchers after studying the psychological consequences or effect of alcohol, Cannabis, nicotine and opiate on the health of the individual and the society state that the public health consequence of alcohol and tobacco pose much danger than the actual drug of addiction on the crime list . According to them; “(O)n existing patterns of use, cannabis poses a much less serious public health problem than is currently posed by alcohol and tobacco in Western societies...”

Challenge at the Family Level On Prevention of Addiction

According to Nwogugu, a family is made up of the father, the mother, the children and other members of the household. Generally, the family is the unit of every society, which suggests that every addict (of whichever form of addiction), comes from such a unit. And certainly the spread of this scourge

could not have spread except through multiple members of different and many families involving in it. The preservation of the family is the preservation of the entire society just as its failure is the failure of the society. The dictum, “saves the family and you save the world” cannot be appreciated except if we accept this connection and appreciate the importance of the family in the whole setting .

However, there are some challenges in some of the laws meant to protect the family itself. This is why some parts of the existing law on the family (like the wife and child) may constitute a barrier in prevention of addiction among them. It is evident that some of these regulations adversely affect the core value of the family itself- especially a Muslim family. The issue is, where the rights of the child or the mother are so defined in such a way as to make both of them independent of the father, or where the father’s role become redundant, then, the part the family would play in addiction prevention may be jeopardised.

For the purpose of explanation, a child here in Nigeria, through the Child Right Act (CRA), vide Section 7, has “a right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.” If this right is allowed to be

enforced, according to Badamasiuyy it means that a child born in a Muslim home can change his religion, or hold ideological, philosophical and social belief contrary to that of his parents. The implication is that if he chooses Rastafarianism as religion, he can choose to smoke cannabis as it is part of the ritual of that religion; just like he can drink alcohol if he chooses religion, which condones the drinking of wine as permissible.

Secondly, a child control is taken out of the hand of the parents if one of his/her right vides sect. 12 (1) of the CRA include “rest and leisure, engage in play, sports and recreational activities appropriate to his age.” Such rights extend to full participation in the cultural and artistic activities of the Nigerian, African and world communities. If this provision is taken for granted, it allows the child to participate in dangerous cultural practice – like the celebration of Halloween in western world.

By Halloween, we means (as defined by the dictionary) celebrating “the eve of All Halloween’s Day on the 31st October in a cultural activity celebrated in the United Kingdom, Canada, United States and Ireland by children going in costume from door-to-door and demanding candy from the people

with menace. Some parts of the celebration negatively affect the culture of Islamic respect for parents, which is inimical to the physical and spiritual growth of children in Islamic environment.

Besides legal challenge, there are some societal challenges that may lead to legal implications. The fact is that there are many laws but regardless of this, the menace keeps on increasing with such fierceness that baffles the mind of every concerned individual. But the premise upon which some of the laws are made are in recent time considered as the likely reason for such problem. That is why, the more the burning of the intercepted drugs, the more they keep on resurfacing in our market.

One of the cogent reason adduce for this failing may not be unconnected with the inadequacy in the enforcement of the existing law thereby creating a toxic cycle going out of control. It is thus not surprising that the more the NDLEA burns the Indian hemp farm and arrest the farmer, the more the next farmer (who is closer to the arrested farmer) and who was not caught by the enforcement agents get chance to shift his farm to somewhere else where such can be protected.

Ordinarily, the source of the drugs is well known and the market for it is still thriving despite several laws and mechanisms put in place to stop it. This shows that, however strict the law is, it would only be enforceable where factors like adequate awareness, faith, morality and discipline become the mainstay of the psychology of the individual and were incorporated as other fighting mechanism. Otherwise, all efforts would be in futility and unfortunately some of these moral factors are lacking thereby making it difficult to realise the objective of the law.

It is true that many sociologists, psychiatrists, psychologists etc., may differ in their view of the problem of enforcement, the fact is that, addiction has been recognised in scientific purview, as a form of disease. As such, if anyone thinks he can use the instrument of the law to stop such identified disease in a swipe, he is really mistaken. It thus means that a system that emphasise on the use of legal approach only to treat a medical, psychological/ spiritual case, may be faulty at the best, or time wasting at the worst.

The kind of approach of trying to solve this addiction issue (which goes beyond physical diagnosis) within the exclusive prism of the

law, is one of the mistakes our politicians and lawmakers make. In fact, Guido de Ruggiero (while criticising this approach of tackling a complex issue with instrument of law) condemned this attitude when he writes that;

The love of rationalistic simplification... leads people to think that in the mere technicalities of law they possess the means and the power to effect unlimited changes...(such an illusion is) cherished by the lawyers who imagine that, by drafting new constitutions and laws they can begin the work of history all over again and know nothing of the force of traditions, habits, associations, and institutions.

One of the reasons why this problem persists is that the Common law we practice in Nigeria makes a distinction between the law and morality. This legal system is a set of system that allows individual to obey the law publicly and act contrary to the law in private room without been considered a disobedience citizen so long he/she is not

caught by the instrument of the law. Such system allows cigarette, beer, and drugs to be sold in the public but with the warning that “one who smoke is liable to die young,” “if you drinks don’t drive,” or “use drugs responsibly etc.”

Another challenge in the enforcement of the relevant law is issue of corruption. Corruption is one of the most serious factors that affect eradication of illicit drugs in the society. In this wise, enforcement agencies such as the police, court officials, members of the military, customs agents, and employees of the correctional services, are fingered as one of those behind the inability to win the war over this menace. Ordinarily, they are the one responsible under the law to prevent the offender from indulging in the crimes, but, unfortunately, they are most often implicated in drug deals and this raises a number of ethical and moral questions about the war.

On so many occasions, the enforcement agents - police, immigration ,custom, civil defence, or NDLEA officers etc., are often fingered in the disappearance of unauthorised drugs in their custody only to find it in the market thereafter. Sometimes, the police arrest the drug baron, NDLEA officers investigate it only to see the

offenders being released because of the “high connection from the above.” Within some minutes those drugs are cleared and those caught are nowhere to be found. In other words, the drugs been burnt were just too little compared to those that find their ways back to the people. The result is that, nearly one quarter of high-risk drug users had been arrested, prosecuted, sentence to imprisonment or fines or both.

It is true that some of the provisions in the current laws may be helpful in minimising the scourge of the addiction, and in some instance have charted a new course in the progress of slowing the scourge further. However it must be admitted that it has not succeeded in stopping the spread completely. One fact remains, evidence has shown that it is not the number of legislations, treaties, or platforms of actions that can change the scourge of addiction. Rather, it is to see it, besides being a medical case, as extension of psychological/spiritual problems that mimic some physiological symptoms. And to solve this menace, a holistic approach is the best solution.

The Way Forward

Drugs and substance of abuse needs not to be tolerated, so calling it different names –

like licit or illicit etc., to trivialise its consequence does not remove the fact. Addiction is like cancer cells. For anyone to label it with another lighter name like “tumour,” “abnormal growth,” “unwanted tissue development,” “benign,” “malignancy,” etc., does not reduce the deadliness of the condition. The right thing to do is to remove it if it is not too late already (that is, if metastasis has not occurred). So, similarly, addiction must be eradicated as much as we can.

It is true that while a problem persist, one must keep on searching for the solution until it is solved. But the best medicine throughout the history of mankind is to never allow a problem to happen rather than trying to solve it. Similarly, in case of addiction, prevention has been found to be better, less costly and effective. Although, there is emphasis on how to cure this addiction malady, practical reality has shown that more successes are witnessed in prevention than in cure. As such, we may have as many laws as possible, but it becomes meaningless if all these laws are unenforceable or serve no purpose of their creation.

In essence, it must be said that in order to prevent addiction in the family and the

society at large, there is need to take some proactive steps, which the writer suggest may be of help in this situation. These ideas require the following;

- i. Blocking the Source of addiction** - We all know the sources from which these drugs, are produced or peddled. These are through direct contact, farming or cultivation (like Indian hemp, poppy etc), trafficking and so on, which are carried out alongside the porous border and ineffective security system thus making it easy for all sorts of drugs to come and leave the country. There are many incidences of illegal funding through money laundering, which if effectively checked would help in preventing the spread of the scourge of addiction. People use drug or substance of addiction because it is easily available. If the access to it is blocked completely, there is probability that such efforts would minimize their spread.
- ii. More of Enforcement, Less law** – It has become clear that multiplicity of law have not translated to the success we expect to happen. This implies that what we need is not more law but to have handful ones that are enforceable and serve the purpose aright. Ordinarily, the

market for illicit drugs keep expanding and more of these illegal drugs gets through the populace through illegal channel. But, if a strict enforcement of statute like the Money Laundering Act is carried out, such efforts would have been impactful than mere chasing the hawkers around.

- iii. Removing all Routes of Corruption** - If a third of the money spent by politicians in organising their political party is spent in the prevention of addiction, there is this every likelihood that more success would have been recorded in the fight against addiction. However, corruption has eaten deep in to our social fabric: every corruptive act or omission contribute to the proliferation of illegal drug or substance of addiction in the country. Everyone can be bought just like the way people have become less conscientious when issue of exposing people behind corrupt practices. This task is everyone's duty as no government can police the entire nation however large is resources or numbers of its enforcement agents.
- iv. Amendment of the Law** – Some of the existing Nigerian laws promulgate to fight problems of drugs or substance abuse are outdated- they do not conform

to the reality of modernity. Thus, charging a fine of 2million (as in Cybercrime Prevention Act) for offence bordering on cybercrime that involved the sum of about 200 million is unfortunate. Just like sending a drug trafficker to 25 years imprisonment (as provided in NDLEA Act) is like sending him to school to learn how to perpetrate the crime. A peddler who traffics illegal drugs or substance of abuse that render the entire youth of the society permanently useless for life, is not one that deserve to be fed free three square meal. Giving out such careless or reckless sentencing or punishment encourages recidivism- the consequence of which is what we are witnessing today. Therefore, our legislature should be responsive and responsible to amend the law that serves not the people and the society.

- v. **Fast tracking Relevant Law-** Law making in Nigeria is slow and when it is even passed, becomes unenforceable due to much flaws inherent in it. Where a good bill is submitted to the National Assembly, it must be sped up for the benefit of the masses. Ordinarily, the process of law making should be the business of only responsible and

qualified legislatures so that good law can be made.

- vi. **Participating in the Governance** - The Muslim community have to participate in the law making process to ensure all laws conform to the needs, aspiration and local circumstances of the populace. This cannot be achieved by an unconcerned attitude or complacency in allowing any Dick, Tom and Harry to be leading us. The system recognized pressure group (through media or peaceful protest etc.), or advocacy on any harmful policy taking by the government.

- vii. **Spreading the Campaign and Networking** - The campaign on addiction prevention should be taken down to all strata of the society especially schools where the leaders of tomorrow are born and being groomed. Forming network of organization to enlighten people about addiction in all instances should be encouraged. The Green-Crescent Health Initiative (GHI) promoted by the Islamic Medical Association of Nigeria (IMAN) should form a strong network of advocacy group to promote anti-addiction campaign all over the country at the

primary, secondary, tertiary and even at the post-graduate level.

- viii. Living Up to Our Responsibilities** - Government Agencies entrusted with mandate to fight addiction should live up to their responsibilities and ensure they recruit the right people for the right jobs. Employing wrong persons means that the job would not be effectively and efficiently done.

Conclusion

Addiction in the family is the most serious issue in the society, which requires urgent action. As the unit of the society, every addict starts from a family, which spread to others through social engagement in the school, at the market and in fact, in any gathering of two or more people as it takes two to tango. Although there is more legislation – local, national, regional and international, aimed at preventing addiction, reality has shown that it is not the multiplicity of law that can guarantee prevention of addiction but how to enforce them.

Another point we must not forget is that, prevention of addiction in the family is not the job of the government alone; rather, it requires the efforts of every member of the society and through a holistic approach

instead of total reliance on one method of action. However, one of the most effective ways, which is scientific, cost effective, reliable and time saving is prevention just as we all know that “prevention is better than cure.”

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Conflict of interest: Nil