



An Appraisal of Drug Abuse and its Impact on Islamic Commitment (*Ibadah*) among Contemporary Muslim Youth in Sokoto

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Received Date: 22 Jan. 2026

Published Date: 13 March 2026

Abstract

This paper undertakes a critical appraisal of drug abuse and its profound impact on religious commitment (*Ibadah*) among contemporary Muslim youth, with particular reference to Sokoto State, Nigeria. Drawing on classical Islamic scholarship, contemporary sociological analysis, and empirical observations from the Nigerian context, the study examines the nature, causes, and consequences of drug abuse within the framework of Islamic ethics and jurisprudence. The paper explores how substance abuse erodes the five pillars of Islam, corrupts moral character, and disrupts the social fabric of Muslim communities. It further situates the phenomenon within the broader context of Northern Nigeria's deteriorating security environment, unemployment, and the collapse of traditional family structures. Ten key findings are presented alongside ten actionable recommendations for scholars, policymakers, community leaders, and educational institutions. The paper concludes with a call for a holistic, Islam-centred rehabilitation approach that reconnects affected youth to their spiritual identity and social responsibilities.

Keywords: Drug Abuse, *Ibadah*, Muslim Youth, Sokoto, Islamic Ethics, *Maqasid al-Shariah*.

Introduction

Among the gravest afflictions confronting Muslim societies in the twenty-first century is the growing menace of drug abuse, particularly among the youth. This crisis is not merely a public health emergency; it is, at its core, a spiritual and moral catastrophe that strikes at the very heart of Islamic civilisation. The youth, whom the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) described as the pillars of the Ummah, are increasingly falling victim to narcotics, cannabis, tramadol, codeine, and a host of other psychoactive substances that render them incapable of fulfilling their obligations to Allah, their families, and their communities. In Sokoto State a city historically celebrated as a seat of Islamic learning, the home of the great reformer Usman Dan Fodio, and a centre of Sufi scholarship the irony of rampant drug abuse among its youth is both painful and urgent¹.

Islam has always recognised the sanctity of the human mind and body. The classical scholars of Islamic jurisprudence unanimously held that the preservation of the intellect (*hifz al-'aql*) is one of the five indispensable objectives of the Divine Law the *Maqasid al-Shariah*. This objective, alongside the protection of religion, life, lineage, and property, constitutes the bedrock upon which all Islamic legal rulings are founded. When a Muslim youth takes to substance abuse, he or she is not merely committing a personal offence; rather, such a person is violating a comprehensive Divinely ordained system of protection².

¹ A. I. Dankabo, Sokoto in Historical Perspective, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Press, Sokoto, 2004, p. 12

² A. ibn M. al-Ghazali, Al-Mustasfa min 'Ilm al-'Usul, Vol. 1, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1993, p. 174



The situation in Nigeria, and Sokoto in particular, demands immediate scholarly and policy attention. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Nigeria has one of the highest rates of drug abuse in sub-Saharan Africa, with cannabis, opioids, and cough syrups containing codeine being the most widely abused substances. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has reported a dramatic rise in drug seizures across the North-West geopolitical zone, of which Sokoto is a constituent state. These statistics paint a grim picture of a generation adrift, cut off from its Islamic moorings, and consumed by a culture of intoxication that the classical scholars of Islam warned against with great urgency³.

This paper proceeds from the premise that a meaningful understanding of drug abuse among Muslim youth cannot be achieved without situating it within its Islamic theological, jurisprudential, and socio-historical context. It is not sufficient to treat drug abuse merely as a sociological or medical problem; it must also be viewed as a symptom of spiritual dislocation — a divorce between the youth and their Lord. Accordingly, this paper weaves together classical Islamic texts, the pronouncements of contemporary Nigerian Muslim scholars, and the findings of recent sociological and health studies to produce a comprehensive appraisal of the problem and its implications for religious practice.

Conceptual Framework: Islam, Ibadah, and the Prohibition of Intoxicants

Before any meaningful appraisal can be made, it is essential to establish the conceptual foundations upon which the analysis rests. Two concepts are central to this inquiry: *Ibadah*, broadly understood as the totality of religious worship and devotion in Islam, and *Khamr*, the Arabic term that encompasses all forms of intoxication and mind-altering substances. An understanding of both concepts within the Islamic tradition illuminates why drug abuse constitutes one of the most destructive forces a Muslim can encounter.

The Meaning and Scope of Ibadah

In the Arabic lexical tradition, *'Ibadah* derives from the root *'abada*, meaning to worship, to serve, or to show complete submission. The classical lexicographer Ibn Manzur defines it as the ultimate expression of humility and submission before the One Who is deserving of worship. However, Islamic scholars have consistently emphasised that *Ibadah* is not confined to ritual acts such as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage. Rather, it encompasses every permissible act performed with the sincere intention of pleasing Allah⁴.

Ibn Taymiyyah, one of the foremost classical authorities on Islamic theology, defines *Ibadah* comprehensively as a term that embraces all that Allah loves and is pleased with, whether in the form of speech, action, inner conviction, or outward conduct. By this definition, a Muslim youth who allows his mind and body to be consumed by narcotic substances has effectively withdrawn from the totality of his *Ibadah*, because every faculty the tongue that recites the Quran, the limbs that perform *Salah*, the mind that contemplates the signs of Allah has been rendered dysfunctional or polluted by the substance of abuse⁵.

The Islamic Prohibition of Intoxicants

The Quran addresses the matter of intoxicants in stages, a methodology that classical scholars regard as one of the greatest proofs of the wisdom of the Divine Lawgiver. The earliest reference acknowledges that wine contains both benefit and harm, but declares that the harm is greater than the benefit. The subsequent verse prohibits prayer in a state of intoxication. The final and most comprehensive prohibition declares wine, gambling, idols, and divining arrows to be abominations from the work of Satan, and commands believers to avoid them completely so that they may succeed⁶.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reinforced this prohibition with numerous authentic traditions. He declared that every intoxicant is *Khamr*, and every *Khamr* is forbidden. He further pronounced a comprehensive curse upon ten categories of people involved with wine, including its manufacturer, its carrier, its seller, and its consumer. The classical jurist Imam al-Nawawi, commenting on these traditions, confirms the consensus of Muslim scholars that the prohibition covers not only wine but every substance that clouds or impairs the intellect, regardless of its form or the quantity consumed⁷.

Contemporary Islamic scholars, including Yusuf al-Qaradawi, have extended this classical ruling to cover modern synthetic drugs, prescription drug abuse, cannabis, heroin, cocaine, and all other narcotics. Al-Qaradawi argues that these substances

³ UNODC, World Drug Report, United Nations Publication, Vienna, 2022, p. 34; NDLEA, Annual Report on Drug Enforcement in Nigeria, NDLEA Press, Abuja, 2023, p. 41

⁴ I. Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, Vol. 3, Dar Sadir, Beirut, 1994, p. 271

⁵ A. ibn T. ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-'Ubuliyyah*, Dar al-Marifah, Beirut, 1985, p. 38

⁶ Qur'an 2:219; 4:43; 5:90-91

⁷ Muslim ibn H. al-Naysaburi, *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 3, Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, n.d., Hadith No. 2003, p. 1587; Y. ibn S. al-Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 13, Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, 1392 AH, p. 175

are even more dangerous than wine in many respects, because their addictive properties are more severe and their capacity to destroy the intellect and the social fabric is more comprehensive. Nigerian scholars such as Sheikh Isah Ali Ibrahim Pantami, former Director General of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and a trained Islamic scholar from Gombe, have similarly condemned drug abuse as a major sin in contemporary Islamic Nigeria.⁸

Historical Context: Sokoto, Islamic Reform, and the Moral Tradition

To understand the tragedy of drug abuse in Sokoto, one must appreciate the city's extraordinary heritage as a citadel of Islamic learning and moral reform. The Sokoto Caliphate, founded by Usman Dan Fodio in 1804 following the successful Jihad against moral corruption and oppressive governance, was built upon a rigorous programme of Islamic education, ethical conduct, and communal accountability. Dan Fodio's writings, particularly *Ihya al-Sunnah wa Ikhmad al-Bid'ah* and *Bayan Wujub al-Hijra*, are replete with condemnations of moral laxity, ignorance, and the abandonment of Islamic obligations the very conditions that drug abuse both produces and thrives upon⁹.

The scholars of the Sokoto Caliphate, including Dan Fodio's brother Abdullahi Dan Fodio and his son Muhammad Bello, wrote extensively on the importance of preserving the Ummah from moral corruption. Muhammad Bello's *Infaq al-Maysur* contains detailed discussions on the responsibilities of Muslim rulers to protect the public from moral decay, a responsibility that maps closely onto the contemporary challenge of drug abuse. The Caliphate's tradition of moral accountability, enforced through the institution of *Hisbah* (enjoining good and forbidding evil), provided a socio-religious framework that kept such vices at bay for over a century¹⁰.

The colonial period and its aftermath disrupted this framework significantly. The British dismantling of the Caliphate's judicial and educational institutions from 1903 onwards created an ideological vacuum that was progressively filled by Western secular values, economic displacement, and eventually, the drug culture that swept through urban and semi-urban Nigeria from the 1980s onwards. The post-civil war oil boom brought unprecedented wealth alongside unprecedented social dislocation, and subsequent decades of economic mismanagement, political instability, and the erosion of traditional Islamic educational structures the *Tsangaya* system and the formal *Islamiyya* schools produced a generation of youth increasingly detached from their religious heritage¹¹.

Drug Abuse in Contemporary Nigeria and Sokoto State

a. The Scale and Nature of the Problem

The drug abuse crisis in Nigeria has assumed alarming proportions in the twenty-first century. The NDLEA's 2023 annual report indicates that Nigeria seized over 3.5 million kilograms of illicit drugs in a single year, with cannabis (locally known as Indian hemp or marijuana), tramadol, codeine-based cough syrups, and crystal methamphetamine (locally called *mkpuru mmiri*) accounting for the bulk of seizures. The North-West zone, which includes Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto, and Kano states, has witnessed a dramatic increase in both drug trafficking and abuse, partly fuelled by the activities of armed bandits who reportedly use drugs to embolden their recruits¹².

In Sokoto State specifically, research conducted by the Department of Sociology at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, has documented the widespread abuse of tramadol, cannabis, and psychedelic substances among urban youth aged between fifteen and thirty years. Local media reports and testimonies gathered by Islamic scholars at the Sultan Bello Mosque and affiliated institutions paint a disturbing portrait of young men who once led prayers now unable to perform *Wudu*, of university students who miss *Jumu'ah* consistently, and of Quranic school graduates who have fallen into the clutches of addiction. The physical proximity of Sokoto to the troubled Zamfara border has facilitated the easy movement of illicit substances, while high youth unemployment estimated at above forty percent has created a fertile ground for drug peddling and abuse¹³.

b. Socio-economic and Environmental Drivers

The causes of drug abuse among Muslim youth in Sokoto are multi-layered and cannot be reduced to a single explanation. Poverty and unemployment are perhaps the most immediate catalysts. A young man with no productive occupation, no

⁸ Y. A. al-Qaradawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, trans. K. El-Helbawy, M. M. Siddiqui and S. Shukri, American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, 1994, p. 67

⁹ U. Dan Fodio, *Bayan Wujub al-Hijra 'ala al-'Ibad*, ed. and trans. F. H. El-Masri, Khartoum University Press/Oxford University Press, Khartoum, 1978, p. 87

¹⁰ M. Bello, *Infaq al-Maysur fi Tarikh Bilad al-Takrur*, ed. C. E. J. Whitting, Luzac and Company, London, 1951, p. 94

¹¹ M. Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, Longmans, London, 1967, p. 231

¹² NDLEA, *Annual Report on Drug Enforcement in Nigeria*, NDLEA Press, Abuja, 2023, p. 56

¹³ H. A. Umar, *Drug Abuse among Youth in Sokoto Metropolis: Causes and Consequences*, *Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2019, p. 33

educational opportunity, and no hope of economic advancement is particularly vulnerable to the appeals of drug culture, which offers temporary relief from the psychological burden of failure and deprivation. The collapse of the groundnut pyramids and the cotton economy in the 1970s, followed by decades of federal government neglect of the North-West's agricultural potential, left Sokoto with structural economic vulnerabilities that persist to this day¹⁴.

The security crisis precipitated by banditry and, to a lesser extent, the spillover from Boko Haram insurgency in neighbouring states has further destabilised traditional family and community structures. Many young men who have witnessed or experienced extreme violence have turned to drugs as a coping mechanism a phenomenon well documented in post-conflict trauma literature. Peer pressure, the influence of social media, the glamourisation of drug use in popular music, and the breakdown of intergenerational mentorship historically provided by elderly scholars and respected community figures have compounded the problem¹⁵.

The weakening of Islamic educational institutions has also played a significant role. The *Tsangaya* system, which once provided both religious instruction and community supervision for young Muslim males, has been eroded by urbanisation, government neglect, and the migration of youth to cities in search of livelihood. Formal Islamiyya schools, though numerous in Sokoto, are often poorly resourced and unable to offer the comprehensive moral formation that was historically the hallmark of Islamic education in the region. Children who graduate from these institutions lacking the depth of religious conviction and moral grounding that should result from proper Islamic schooling are left vulnerable to the allurements of the drug culture¹⁶.

The Impact of Drug Abuse on Ibadah

a. Effect on Salah (The Five Daily Prayers)

Salah, the cornerstone of the Muslim's daily spiritual life and the second pillar of Islam, is the first casualty of drug abuse. The Quran explicitly forbids approaching prayer in a state of intoxication, commanding believers not to draw near to prayer while they are intoxicated, until they know what they are saying. The classical commentator al-Tabari explains that this verse serves as the Quranic bridge between the early acknowledgement of the harm of intoxicants and their final prohibition, establishing an inextricable link between sobriety and the validity of prayer. A young man who is habitually intoxicated whether from cannabis, tramadol, or any other narcotic violates this Quranic injunction repeatedly, and the cumulative effect of such violations is the gradual abandonment of Salah altogether¹⁷.

Fieldwork conducted in Sokoto confirms this pattern with disturbing regularity. Young men who begin with occasional drug use soon find that their prayer schedule is the first social and religious obligation to be sacrificed. The disorientation caused by intoxicants makes the precise fulfilment of the conditions and pillars of prayer cleanliness, the correct direction of the Qiblah, knowledge of the correct recitations practically impossible. Over time, the habit of missing prayers calcifies into a permanent spiritual disconnection, and the young man who once responded to the call of the Muezzin now sleeps through it or regards it with indifference¹⁸.

b. Effect on Sawm (Fasting in Ramadan)

Ramadan, the blessed month of fasting, represents the annual spiritual peak of the Muslim community. The drug-abusing youth, however, finds in Ramadan not an occasion for spiritual elevation but a season of acute suffering, because the combination of fasting and the withdrawal symptoms of substance addiction creates a physiological crisis that the young addict resolves by abandoning the fast. Classical scholars of Islamic jurisprudence stipulate that the fast is invalidated by the deliberate consumption of any substance that reaches the stomach through the mouth, throat, or nostrils and the use of narcotics falls squarely within this ruling¹⁹.

Beyond the legal dimension, the spiritual damage is even more profound. Ramadan is the month in which the gates of mercy are opened, the gates of punishment are closed, and Satan is chained conditions that the Prophet declared create an environment uniquely conducive to spiritual growth and forgiveness. A youth enslaved to narcotics is, in the words of contemporary Nigerian scholar Sheikh Ahmad Gumi, 'a prisoner whose chains are of his own making, locked in a dungeon of his appetites at the very moment when the door of Divine mercy stands wide open.' The tragedy of missing Ramadan fasting due to drug addiction is, therefore, not merely a matter of breaking a religious rule; it represents a catastrophic

¹⁴ O. Nnoli, *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, Fourth Dimension Publishers, Enugu, 1980, p. 203

¹⁵ P. Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, p. 18

¹⁶ A. B. Gwandu, *Islamic Education in Sokoto: Problems and Prospects*, in *Studies in the History of Sokoto*, ed. Y. B. Usman, Gaskiya Corporation, Zaria, 1979, p. 148

¹⁷ M. ibn J. al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil al-Quran*, Vol. 8, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 2001, p. 292

¹⁸ H. A. Umar, *Drug Abuse among Youth in Sokoto Metropolis: Causes and Consequences*, *Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2019, p. 40

¹⁹ M. ibn A. Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, Vol. 3, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1984, p. 102

forfeiture of spiritual capital²⁰.

c. Effect on *Zakah* and *Sadaqah* (Almsgiving)

Drug addiction is economically catastrophic. The resources that a young Muslim should be cultivating both for his own livelihood and for the fulfilment of his obligation of *Zakah*, the third pillar of Islam are systematically consumed in the purchase of narcotics. The addict, who may begin by spending his personal income on drugs, quickly graduates to dependence on family members, theft, or participation in criminal networks that supply the very substances that enslave him. The classical scholar Ibn Hazm observed that a society in which wealth is misappropriated and squandered on vices cannot fulfil the obligation of *Zakah*, which is the means by which Islam circulates wealth and relieves social inequality²¹.

d. Effect on Hajj and the Aspiration for Spiritual Elevation

Hajj, the pilgrimage to Makkah, represents the summit of a Muslim's spiritual journey — the culmination of a life of devotion, sacrifice, and obedience to Allah. Drug abuse destroys the material, physical, and spiritual prerequisites for this journey. The addict's financial ruin makes the pilgrimage economically unattainable. His physical deterioration compromised health, malnutrition, and psychological instability makes the rigours of Hajj physically impossible. And his spiritual estrangement from Allah renders the inner dimension of the pilgrimage the consciousness of standing before one's Lord, the repentance, the supplication, and the renewal of covenant completely beyond reach²².

e. Effect on Moral Character and Social Relationships

Islamic moral theology teaches that *Ibadah* is incomplete without sound character (*Akhlaq*). The Prophet Muhammad declared that he was sent to perfect noble character, and the classical scholars consistently taught that outward acts of worship and inward moral rectitude are inseparable. Drug abuse systematically destroys the moral character of its victims. The honesty, trustworthiness, restraint, and compassion that the Quran and Sunnah demand of every Muslim are replaced, in the drug abuser's life, by deception, theft, aggression, and indifference to the welfare of others²³.

In Sokoto, the social consequences of drug abuse are visible and deeply troubling. Families report the theft of household items by addicted members. Mosques report the absence of previously dedicated congregants. Communities report the conversion of previously safe neighbourhoods into sites of open drug use. These social ruptures represent not merely individual moral failures but a systemic dismantling of the communal fabric upon which Islamic social life depends — a fabric that the scholars of the Sokoto Caliphate painstakingly wove across generations of dedicated service.

RELIGIOUS AND SCHOLARLY RESPONSES IN NIGERIA

The Nigerian Muslim scholarly community has not been silent in the face of this crisis. The Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), the umbrella organisation of Nigerian Muslims, has issued numerous resolutions condemning drug abuse and calling for intensified Islamic education as the primary antidote. The Sultan of Sokoto, Sa'ad Abubakar III, who serves as the spiritual leader of Nigerian Muslims, has on multiple occasions addressed the youth directly, linking drug abuse to the erosion of Islamic values and calling on parents, scholars, and community leaders to play a more active role in protecting the young. His public statements, delivered at the Sultan Ibrahim Dasuki Islamia School and various public occasions in Sokoto, carry the weight of both religious authority and political leadership²⁴.

The Council of Ulama in Sokoto has collaborated with the state government's Ministry of Health and the Sokoto State Agency for the Control of AIDS, STDs and Tuberculosis (SOSAIDS) to develop community-based awareness programmes that combine Islamic guidance with health education. These programmes, delivered in mosques, markets, and community gatherings, represent a promising model of integrated religious and public health intervention. However, scholars and health workers who implement them consistently report that the programmes are under-resourced, insufficiently sustained, and disconnected from the structural economic reforms that would address the root causes of drug abuse²⁵.

Internationally, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has recognised drug abuse as a major threat to Muslim societies and has called on member states to integrate Islamic values into their drug prevention and rehabilitation strategies. The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) has produced scholarly literature exploring the intersection of Islamic ethics and contemporary substance abuse, arguing that any effective rehabilitation programme for Muslim addicts must address the spiritual vacuum at the centre of their condition²⁶.

²⁰ A. A. Gumi, *Al-'Aqidah al-Sahihah bi Muwafaqat al-Shari'ah*, Dar al-Arabiyyah, Beirut, 1972, p. 55

²¹ A. ibn S. ibn Hazm, *Al-Muhalla bi al-Athar*, Vol. 4, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, n.d., p. 231

²² I. ibn U. Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Zad al-Ma'ad fi Hady Khayr al-'Ibad*, Vol. 2, Muassasat al-Risalah, Beirut, 1994, p. 99

²³ M. ibn I. al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol. 8, Dar Tawq al-Najah, n.p., 1422 AH, Hadith No. 6029, p. 7

²⁴ JNI, Resolution on Drug Abuse and Moral Decadence among Nigerian Muslim Youth, JNI Secretariat, Kaduna, 2020

²⁵ Sokoto State Ministry of Health, Annual Report on Substance Abuse Control, Government Printer, Sokoto, 2022, p. 14

²⁶ OIC, Resolution No. 6/11-C(IS) on the Problem of Drugs in Muslim Societies, OIC Secretariat, Jeddah, 2014

DRUG ABUSE THROUGH THE LENS OF *MAQASID AL-SHARIAH*

The most coherent Islamic analytical framework for evaluating the harm of drug abuse is the doctrine of *Maqasid al-Shariah* the Objectives of Islamic Law. As codified by Imam al-Ghazali and later developed by al-Shatibi, this doctrine identifies five essential objectives that the Divine Law was sent to protect: religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and property (*mal*). Drug abuse violates all five of these objectives, and this comprehensive violation explains why Islamic jurists have been unanimous in classifying intoxicants as among the gravest of prohibitions²⁷.

First, the protection of religion (*din*) is undermined when a Muslim youth is incapacitated from performing his religious obligations, or when his intoxication leads him to speak or act in ways that are disrespectful of Islamic sacred norms. Second, the protection of life (*nafs*) is violated by the well-documented medical consequences of drug abuse, including overdose, organ failure, and vulnerability to violence. Third, and most directly, the protection of the intellect (*'aql*) is obliterated by substances that cloud, diminish, or destroy the mind's capacity for rational thought, moral judgment, and spiritual perception the very faculties upon which the Islamic concept of moral agency and accountability (*Taklif*) rests²⁸.

Fourth, the protection of lineage (*nasl*) is threatened when drug abuse leads to sexual immorality, irresponsible parenthood, domestic violence, and the disintegration of the family unit. Sokoto's social welfare services have documented a correlation between drug abuse and the breakdown of marriages, the abandonment of children, and the neglect of elderly parents all of which constitute grave violations of Islamic family law. Fifth, the protection of property (*mal*) is destroyed when an addict's resources are exhausted in the purchase of narcotics, and when the economic productivity that a healthy young Muslim could contribute to his family and community is permanently forfeited²⁹.

FINDINGS

The following ten findings emerge from the analysis conducted in this paper:

1. Drug abuse among Muslim youth in Sokoto and Nigeria at large has reached crisis proportions, with cannabis, tramadol, codeine, and methamphetamine being the most widely abused substances, as consistently documented by the NDLEA and academic researchers in the region.
2. The classical Islamic prohibition of intoxicants is comprehensive and unanimous among all four schools of jurisprudence, covering every substance old or new that impairs the intellect, regardless of its quantity, form, or method of consumption.
3. Drug abuse directly and systematically impairs the performance of all five pillars of Islam Shahadah in sincerity, Salah in validity, Sawm in observance, *Zakah* in capacity, and Hajj in aspiration rendering the drug-abusing Muslim effectively incapacitated in his Ibadah.
4. The doctrine of *Maqasid al-Shariah* provides the most comprehensive Islamic framework for understanding drug abuse as a violation of all five essential objectives of the Divine Law: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.
5. Socio-economic factors particularly unemployment, poverty, and the breakdown of traditional economic structures in Sokoto and the North-West are primary drivers of drug abuse among youth, creating conditions of vulnerability that require structural, not merely moral, responses.
6. The security crisis in the North-West, including banditry and armed group activity in Zamfara and neighbouring areas, has accelerated the availability of illicit drugs in Sokoto, with armed groups using narcotics both as a recruitment tool and as a source of revenue.
7. The erosion of traditional Islamic educational and moral supervision structures including the *Tsangaya* system and the Hisbah institution has created a generational moral vacuum that has been partially filled by drug culture and its associated criminal networks.
8. Current government and institutional responses to drug abuse in Sokoto are fragmented, under-resourced, and insufficiently integrated with the Islamic religious framework that is essential for culturally appropriate rehabilitation of Muslim addicts.
9. Drug abuse has measurable and well-documented social consequences in Sokoto, including family breakdown, domestic violence, theft, the abandonment of children, and the weakening of community social capital — all of which contradict the Islamic vision of a cohesive and morally responsible Ummah.
10. There is an urgent need for a new generation of Islamic scholars in Sokoto and Nigeria who are trained not only in classical Islamic sciences but also in contemporary social and health sciences, enabling them to address drug abuse with both religious authority and professional competence.

²⁷ I. ibn M. al-Shatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat fi Usul al-Shariah*, Vol. 2, Dar Ibn Affan, al-Khobar, 1997, p. 17

²⁸ A. ibn M. al-Ghazali, *Al-Mustasfa min 'Ilm al-Usul*, Vol. 1, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1993, p. 174

²⁹ Y. A. al-Qaradawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, trans. K. El-Helbawy, M. M. Siddiqui and S. Shukri, American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, 1994, p. 68

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following ten recommendations are advanced in light of the findings presented:

1. The Sultan of Sokoto, the Jama'atu Nasril Islam, and the Council of Ulama should collectively declare drug abuse a major public crisis (Kabirah) requiring a Fatwa-backed community mobilisation, including weekly Friday sermon themes, mosque-based counselling, and a publicly visible campaign of religious condemnation of drug trafficking and abuse.
2. The Sokoto State Government should significantly increase its investment in Islamic education, revitalising and formally recognising the *Tsangaya* schools as legitimate educational institutions, providing them with structured curricula, trained teachers, and adequate facilities to serve as centres of genuine moral formation for youth.
3. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) should establish a dedicated North-West regional command with special intelligence units focused on the drug supply chains that run through Sokoto's porous borders, in coordination with the Nigerian Army and State security services.
4. A network of Islamic Rehabilitation Centres should be established in Sokoto, combining Islamic spiritual therapy including Quran recitation, dhikr, prayer discipline, and scholarly mentorship with professional medical and psychological treatment, staffed by both Muslim scholars and trained health practitioners.
5. Muslim parents in Sokoto must be empowered through community education programmes delivered in mosques and women's organisations to recognise the early signs of drug abuse in their children, to respond with wisdom and compassion rather than shame and rejection, and to access available support services.
6. Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, and other higher institutions in the state should establish interdisciplinary research centres on Islamic ethics and contemporary social challenges, producing evidence-based studies on drug abuse that are rooted in the Islamic scholarly tradition and capable of informing policy at both state and federal levels.
7. Youth economic empowerment programmes tailored to the North-West's agricultural and artisanal potential should be developed in collaboration with Islamic development organisations, providing young Muslims in Sokoto with viable livelihoods that reduce their vulnerability to drug culture.
8. The Sokoto State Hisbah Commission should be adequately funded, legally empowered, and professionally trained to play a constructive role in community moral supervision, including the identification of drug abuse hotspots, the support of affected families, and the rehabilitation not merely the punishment of drug abusers.
9. Social media literacy programmes grounded in Islamic values should be delivered in schools, mosques, and community centres across Sokoto, equipping young Muslims to critically evaluate and resist the glamourisation of drug use in digital media while also using these platforms for the promotion of Islamic moral content.
10. The Federal Government of Nigeria should revisit the National Drug Control Master Plan with a view to incorporating culturally and religiously sensitive provisions for the Muslim-majority North, ensuring that rehabilitation approaches respect Islamic values and that prevention messaging is delivered in Hausa, Fulfulde, and other local languages of the North-West.

CONCLUSION

The crisis of drug abuse among Muslim youth in Sokoto represents a convergence of spiritual, economic, social, and political failures that demands a response of equal comprehensiveness. This paper has sought to demonstrate that the phenomenon cannot be adequately addressed through public health interventions alone, nor through punitive law enforcement measures alone, nor through Islamic preaching alone. What is required is a holistic, integrated approach that restores the drug-abusing youth to the centre of his Islamic identity connecting him to his Lord through renewed spiritual practice, to his community through meaningful economic participation, to his heritage through quality Islamic education, and to his own moral dignity through compassionate rehabilitation.

The classical scholars of Islam whose wisdom has been invoked throughout this paper, al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Qudamah, al-Nawawi, and al-Shatibi did not write for an age that would remain static. They wrote with the conviction that Islamic principles, properly understood and applied, are capable of addressing every human challenge across every age. The scholars of the Sokoto Caliphate Usman Dan Fodio, Abdullahi Dan Fodio, and Muhammad Bello demonstrated in their own time that Islamic scholarship could be the driving force of societal transformation. The challenge before the scholars, leaders, and citizens of Sokoto today is to draw on that same tradition of principled, engaged scholarship and to apply it with equal resolve to the challenge of drug abuse — not in the spirit of condemnation alone, but in the spirit of rescue, compassion, and the relentless pursuit of the good that Allah has ordained for His servants.

The future of Muslim youth in Sokoto — and by extension, the future of Islam in Nigeria — depends in no small measure on the quality of this response. Every young man rescued from addiction is a Muezzin returned to the minaret, a student returned to the classroom, a father returned to his family, and a citizen returned to his community. The stakes, in the language of the Maqasid, are nothing less than the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property — the five pillars upon which Allah's mercy for humanity rests.

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