

# CHAPTER FOURTEEN

## A HISTORY OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND REHABILITATION AMONGST NIGERIAN UNDERGRADUATES: A CASE STUDY OF REDEEMER'S UNIVERSITY (2005-2017)

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### Introduction

Substance abuse is a global health and social problem. The abuse of psychoactive substances amongst youths and students has become a matter of public concern. This is because this phenomenon is capable of causing intentional and unintentional health and social risks to the abuser and the society at large. Drug abuse and addiction are a universal threat that transcends cultural, socio-economic, religious, and ethnic boundaries. In Nigeria, there has been a constant and rapid rise in the number of cases of drug addiction, especially among adolescents between the ages of 10 and 25 years.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is no longer news that there is a nexus between this increased rate of drug abuse and addiction and an increase in many cases of violent and socially improper behaviors like cultism, crime, and mental disorder among Nigerian youths and students.

A drug is any substance or product other than food or water that affects how people feel, think, see and behave after being ingested. It is any substance that affects the physical, emotional, and mental functions of the human system. These substances can be used through chewing, smoking, drinking, inhaling, or injection.<sup>2</sup>

The terms drug abuse and substance abuse are often used interchangeably as they both refer to the same phenomenon. National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) defines drug abuse as "excessive and persistent self-administration of a drug without regard to the medically or culturally accepted patterns." Also, drug abuse has been described as the "use of illegal drugs, or the misuse of over-the-counter drugs for at least a year with negative consequences." Similarly, the University of Maryland Medical Center defines drug abuse as the constant use of illegal drugs or the misuse of over-the-counter medicines leading to negative consequences. Furthermore, Mosby's Medical, Nursing, and Allied Health Dictionary describe substance abuse as overuse of or

reliance on drugs leading to detrimental effects to an individual's health mentally or that infringes on the welfare of others.<sup>3</sup>

Since the dawn of history, there has always been a constant search for pleasure-inducing drugs. Humans have always searched for substances that will protect and sustain them by acting on the nervous system, thereby producing pleasurable sensations. Drugs are perceived as bringing feelings of inner peace, satisfaction, relaxing the muscles, and heightening the human senses.<sup>4</sup> The Nigerian context does not fall short of this assertion. There has always been evidence of drug abuse and addiction in Nigeria, and this can be traced back to pre-modern Nigeria when our forefathers made drugs from tree leaves. Some of these drugs were taken either through a pipe or rolled in leaves. They produced similar effects as modern-day psychotropic drugs, and they were often misused. These drugs were found and delivered in a variety of forms by different cultural groups. They were drugs that could lead to dependency and addiction.<sup>5</sup> However, over the decades, the types of drugs abused, the methods of administration, and adverse effects have metamorphosed into a devastating menace to society.

Mind-altering substances were first introduced into Nigeria after the Second World War. Soldiers of the West African Frontier Force had been introduced to the smoking of hemp while on duty in India. Hence, when they returned to Nigeria, they came with the Cannabis Sativa plant, also known as Indian hemp. Within a short period, it had spread quickly across the country in different cities where it was attributed to loose morals and a dangerous lifestyle.<sup>6</sup> As the tenacity of the threat imposed by the excessive use of drugs escalated, the issue began to attract attention from scientists, government bodies, religious institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

In 1965, for the first time, scientific attention was given to drugs-related issues at a symposium at Ibadan. The warnings about an impending menace of drug abuse made at this symposium were given serious attention by the federal government. For the first time since independence, the government began making moves towards reducing sales and the use of illegal drugs. Therefore, in 1966 the federal military government promulgated the Indian Hemp Decree, followed by the Amphetamine and Other Drugs (Control) Decree of 1968.<sup>7</sup>

The government's efforts towards bringing an end to this phenomenon through legislative means were foiled by events such as the Biafran war. The Civil War introduced a new age of soldiers to cannabis and other stimulants; hence the use continued to gain popularity. Furthermore, cannabis began to increasingly become socialized with the help of celebrity icons of Nigerian pop culture music such as Fela Anikulapo Kuti. By the 1970s, Nigerians and even the political class were no longer concerned about narcotics and its adverse effects. They began to see Nigeria's involvement as necessary for national development. This is because, within a short period, Nigeria started to grow cannabis locally in such commercial quantity that it was now being exported to other countries. The nation graduated from that to become a transit nation to export hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine. As such, by

the 1980s, Nigeria was gaining international notoriety as a drug trafficking center. It was, therefore, inevitable that the country moved from being a transit nation for hard drugs to a consumer nation. As laws and regulations stiffened in countries where Nigerians exported drugs, many of those drugs sipped into the local market, and citizens began to use and abuse harder drugs like heroin, cocaine, opium, etc.<sup>8</sup>

In an attempt to respond to the loopholes which had made previous legislations towards drugs issue faulty, the federal military government in 1989 promulgated Decree No. 48. This decree established the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). Within this new legal framework, the government decided to embark on Drug Demand Reduction Programs geared towards schools from primary to tertiary levels. The programs included awareness creation, education, and treatment of addicts, rehabilitation, and the aftercare of former addicts.<sup>9</sup>

The first Drug Addiction Research and Treatment Center in Nigeria was established on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1983 at Aro Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital in Abeokuta, Ogun state.<sup>10</sup> Within the first year of its operation, it was reported that students constituted 32% of the total number of drug addiction cases handled<sup>[11]</sup> while the most commonly abused substance was cannabis and alcohol.<sup>12</sup> The number of drug use, abuse, and addiction cases since then has grown exponentially.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) record on drug abuse in Nigeria depicts the Northwest as having 37.47 percent of drug victims. Southwest was rated second with 17.32 percent, and the south-east is ranked third with 13.5 percent, North-central is placed fourth with 11.74 percent, while the northeast zone has 8.45 percent of drug users in the country. Furthermore, in Nigeria, the estimated lifetime consumption of cannabis among the population is 10.8 percent, psychotropic substances such as benzodiazepines and amphetamine stimulants are consumed by about 10.6 percent of the population, and heroin is consumed by 1.6 percent, while cocaine consumption is placed at 1.4 percent in both rural and urban areas. 94.5 percent of drug abuse victims are male, while 5.8 percent are females, and the age of first used is placed between 10 to 29 years.<sup>13</sup>

Commonly abused drugs amongst students in Nigeria can be classified into seven categories based on their psychological effects. These categories consist of stimulants, narcotics, cannabis, depressants, hallucinogens, inhalants, and aphrodisiacs. Stimulants are used to increase the activities of the Central Nervous System. They increase heartbeat rates, blood pressure, and rate of brain function. Examples of stimulants are caffeine, cocaine, amphetamines, and nicotine.<sup>14</sup>

Narcotics are highly addictive drugs. They are used medically for relieving pain and inducing sleep. However, they can be abused to give euphoric feelings. They can be ingested by inhaling, smoking, or injecting. Examples of narcotics include heroin, opium, morphine, codeine, and tramadol. Cannabis is a drug prepared from Indian hemp. It has little therapeutic value and can produce euphoria, reduce inhibitions, increase appetite, and disoriented behavior.<sup>15</sup>

Depressants, also known as sedatives, are drugs that slow down the normal functioning of the Central Nervous System. Abusers of these drugs tend to develop tolerance, intense physical and psychological dependence. Examples of depressants include alcohol, barbiturates, tranquilizers, and rohypnol.

**TABLE 1.0** classification of drugs, examples and possible effects

	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Drugs</b>	<b>Possible effects</b>
1	Stimulants	Coffee, Caffeine Nicotine, Amphetamine	Increased alertness, excitation, euphoria, Increased pulse rate, and blood pressure, insomnia, etc.
2	Narcotics	Heroin, Opium, morphine, Tramadol, Codeine	Euphoria, drowsiness, respiratory depression, constricted pupil, nausea, etc.
3	Cannabis / relaxants	Marijuana	Relaxed inhibitions, increase appetite, euphoria etc.
4	Depressants	Alcohol, Barbiturate, Tranquilizer, Rohypnol	Disorientation, drunken behavior with or without odor of alcohol, sleepiness, decreased blood pressure.
5	Hallucinogens	Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD), Mescaline	Poor perception of time and distance, delusion
6	Inhalants	Vasolidator, anesthetic, gases	Intoxication, aggression, disorientation, excitation

**SOURCE:** Obiechi, G.O, and Isiguzo, B.C. "Curbing the Menace of Drug Use among Secondary School Students in Nigeria," *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2016): p56

The table above shows the classification of drugs consumed by Nigerian students and examples of drugs under each classification, and the possible effects of consuming these drugs. Some of these drugs are psychedelic in nature; however, most of them have curative uses. For instance, narcotics such as tramadol is a curative drug used as a painkiller; however, it can be abused to produce euphoric feelings. Medical marijuana also has curative properties; however, it is highly psychedelic. Drugs like opium, LSD, Morphine are purely psychedelic drugs. Codeine is a curative drug present in cough syrups. However, when taken in high consumption, it becomes categorized as a psychedelic drug. Therefore, the distinction between psychedelic drugs and curative drugs lies in the properties and the usage of these drugs.

Hallucinogens are one of the most powerful and oldest categories of drugs used by man. They are capable of causing hallucinations. Hallucinogens are subdivided into psychedelics, dissociative, and deliriant. An example of hallucinogen is Lysergic acid Diethylamide (LSD).<sup>16</sup>

Inhalants are chemical vapors capable of producing psychoactive effects when abused. They are volatile organic solvents like gasoline, kerosene gas, glue, correction fluid, etc. These products can also result in low blood pressure, dizziness, loss of hearing, lung and heart damage. Lastly, aphrodisiacs are drugs that arouse sexual to boost performance. They also have tendencies to cause dependency, as one can be addicted to them.<sup>17</sup>

The causes of drug abuse amongst Nigerian students are not explicable based on any single factor. In other words, there are myriads of factors that instigate students' misuse of substances. These factors include curiosity and desire to find out the effectiveness of a particular drug, peer group influence, environment, promotion and availability of these drugs, enjoyment, lack of parental supervision, socio-economic status of parents, self-medication of primary psychological disorders, pathological family backgrounds and ignorance of the dangers of illegal drug use. Drug abuse and addiction have far-reaching consequences that are extremely devastating and shameful. Some of the effects include mental disorders, dropout from school, social violence, cultism, internet frauds, gang formation, destruction and disruption of normal academic activities, armed robbery, the "419 syndrome", social miscreants (street urchins otherwise known as area boys), lawlessness among youths, lack of respect for elders, rape, and death.<sup>18</sup>

#### **Statement of the problem**

Despite the efforts of the administration of Redeemer's University to curb the drug abuse phenomenon, the problem seems to persist as every year there are always cases of students expelled for drug abuse. Even with the university's recovery of destiny program that aims at giving expelled students a second chance at scholarship by referring them to Christ Against Drug Abuse Ministries for a one-year compulsory rehabilitation program, many students seem to undergo the program just to avoid outright expulsion. A lot of students fall back to their old ways; hence the purpose of rehabilitation is defeated. It has also been observed that many materials tackle substance abuse and rehabilitation in Nigeria as a country and Nigerian universities. However, there seems to be scanty availability of resources that examine this phenomenon related to faith-based tertiary institutions such as Redeemer's University. There appears to be an assumption that drug abuse is not an issue in faith-based universities, whereas this is not the case.

#### **Substance abuse in Redeemer's University**

Between 2005 – 2011, the university's policy concerning most offenses such as immoral conduct, theft, burglary, battery, substance abuse, and so on was outright expulsion. In other words, any student caught abusing a controlled substance was expelled outrightly. As of the 2011/2012 session, over 145 students had been expelled for different offenses ranging from immorality, theft,

Substance abuse and the likes. Before 2012, the university had zero tolerance for substance abuse and no second chances or rehabilitation program. This was because the visitor to the university and the founding fathers of the university believed that with all the measures in place, such as Sunday services, bible studies, morning devotion, and every avenue geared towards building up students in character and learning, no one should still be involved in acts such as substance abuse and anyone who still consume and abuse these drugs does not deserve to be in the Redeemer's University.<sup>19</sup>

### **Supply of controlled substance in Redeemer's University**

One of the factors responsible for the easy supply and circulation of drugs in Redeemer's University and amongst students was the location. Between 2005 and 2014, the university was located on its temporary site at the Redemption Camp, Mowe in Ogun State. As of the 2010/11 academic session, research showed that there were about 16 entry points into the camp. These were the ones that were easily identified, excluding possible bush paths for people that might have criminal instincts. Hence, the camp was very porous, and that was a weakness. The multiple entry points made it easy for abusers of drugs to get these substances into the university easily. The camp was not ideal for students because it was open to people from different areas for different purposes. Some come for prayers, and others use the auditorium as a den or hideout for criminals who had committed crimes and were being chased. Hence they hide out in the camp. These ones easily supply drugs to unsuspecting students. It was also easy for students to leave campus using any of the entry points to buy drugs.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, the camp was almost always a working site; hence many artisans come in and leave at will. Students with drug abuse tendency use these artisans to get their supplies from outside the camp into the university environment. Some students who have had the habit before coming to Redeemer's University bring these drugs from home and even supply to and influence other students. There were also students from other universities who had taken drugs in their previous universities introducing these drugs to students and delivering them through their connections. In 2014, the university moved from the Redemption camp to its permanent site at Ede, Osun State. Since then, it has been recorded that there has been a decline in the supply of drugs to students because of the environment and the administration's previous experience. The administration had become aware of various means by which these drugs were being supplied; hence they could take measures to reduce the supply.<sup>21</sup>

At the Redemption Camp, students had been caught cooking it with their noodles or boiling it with their tea, smuggling it in without detection, and drug test was carried out based on suspicion. But at the permanent site, it was no longer tested based on suspicion; it became a routine to check students' luggage at the gate and conduct drug tests at the university health center before being admitted into the dormitories for the session or semester. This measure, coupled with the fact that there are minimal entry points into the university on the permanent site, made it seemingly difficult for students to bring drugs into the university upon resumption or go out at will to consume drugs or bring in drugs without detection. Furthermore, at the temporary site, there was no

university-wide drug policy, but on the permanent site, as one is entering into the campus, the substance control policy is boldly stated.<sup>22</sup>

However, despite the measures put in place, students are still constantly being caught in possession of or consuming controlled substances. This is because students who are addicted to drugs will always find a means of feeding their addiction. The permanent site is still a work site. Hence a lot of artisans are coming in. Most of the students caught with controlled substances have confessed to having been supplied by artisans such as cobblers brought in from Ede to fix students' shoes, tailors, masons, carpenters, delivery men, and taxi drivers. Ede is a community dominated by illiterates who are not savvy of the harm in substance abuse; hence, they see no reason not to consume and supply these drugs and facilitate their supply to students.<sup>23</sup>

#### **Commonly abused drugs amongst Redeemer's University students**

The most commonly found controlled substance amongst drug abusers in Redeemer's University is marijuana. Aside from marijuana, students have been caught consuming morphine, very few students were involved with the consumption of cocaine, and rohypnol was also detected. Another drug that students have been abusing in recent times is codeine. This drug is found in some cough syrups; therefore, it is easy to get without being suspected. When students found out that there is a heavy spotlight on marijuana, rohypnol, skunk, heroin, and cocaine, they moved to milder means of getting high such as codeine present in cough syrups. Another drug commonly abused is tramadol. Tramadol was not very common as a drug used amongst Redeemer's university students, but because of it being easily affordable and the limelight shed on cannabis, cocaine, and the likes, they began to move towards the consumption of tramadol as a cheaper and unsuspecting means.<sup>24</sup>

#### **Disciplinary process for drug related offenses**

Disciplinary measures in Redeemer's University follow some processes before a verdict is arrived at. Offenses related to possession or consumption of controlled substances also follow some investigation before a student is found guilty and expelled. The university health center is an essential point of reference as regards this. Students suspected of abusing or consuming controlled substances are referred to the university health center to confirm the suspicion. In some cases, random medical tests also reveal the presence of controlled substances in the bloodstream. The routine checks upon resumption further detect the presence of controlled substances. <sup>25</sup>Some signs inform suspicion of a student's involvement in drug consumption. These signs, often, are not hidden because the drugs consumed are behavior modifying and mind-altering drugs. Students are suspected when they are found unruly, impervious to correction, unkempt, disobedient, violent, their walking, movement, talking, and reading pattern is distorted, etc. These signs make the school authorities suspect that perhaps that student, having been corrected but still does not change, is acting under the influence of psychedelic substances. In other words, behavioral changes and traits are probable causes of suspicion of consumption of controlled substances amongst Redeemer's University students.

Furthermore, a sudden decline in academic performance and truancy are also indications. Avoidance of public gatherings, wearing shades even at night to hide the redness of the eyes, indicates that a student might be consuming controlled substances. In addition to the indicators mentioned above, theft or stealing has also been linked to substance abuse amongst Redeemer's University students. Most drug abusers live above their means because it is expensive to provide for their addiction continually; hence they steal other people's money and even properties to sell and get more money to buy these costly drugs and perfumes that hide the stench of the substances. So, many times when a student is being interrogated or caught stealing, the administration recommends a drug test. There have been cases where these students have tested positive for controlled substances.

Having been suspected, the student is then referred to the university clinic to be tested for some controlled substances. The result from the university clinic is then sent to the Vice-Chancellor, after which it is forwarded to the Directorate of student services and development. The report is then sent to the student disciplinary and investigation panel, which includes a lawyer. At the panel, the student is given a fair hearing, and once found guilty, a verdict of expulsion is arrived at. However, there have been cases where a student is tested, and the result is negative. This may be because that student has not consumed or is not consuming any controlled substance at that moment, or the student does not consume drugs at all. In that case, such a student is not found guilty. However, it is possible that the behavior-modifying and mind-altering drug the student consumes is not one of those detectable by the university health center test kits. For instance, alcohol may not be detectable by the test kit; hence there is another form of test that detects it, and alcohol is a drug whose consumption is equally punishable by expulsion.

**TABLE 2.** Total number of students expelled for drug-related offenses and other offenses from redeemer's university between 2006 – 2017

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS EXPELLED</b>	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS EXPELLED FOR DRUG-RELATED OFFENSES</b>	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS EXPELLED FOR OTHER OFFENSES</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF DRUG-RELATED EXPULSION</b>
2006	19	2	17	11.8%
2007	27	0	27	0%
2008	23	2	21	8.7%
2009	27	6	21	25%
2010	26	12	14	46%

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2011	25	0	25	0%
2012	40	7	33	17.5%
2013	43	10	23	23.3%
2014	43	22	21	51.2%
2015	37	20	17	54%
2016	47	33	14	70%
2017	41	30	11	73.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>58.8%</b>

**SOURCE:** Directorate of Students Services and Development (DSSD), Redeemer's University

The table above shows the number of students expelled from Redeemer's University for drug-related and other offenses. Other offenses range from immoral conduct, stealing, meal card theft, atm fraud, battery and assault, falsification of documents, to even a case of false kidnap claim. The table shows the increasing percentage of the total number of students being expelled for drug-related offenses. The first cases of substance abuse detection in Redeemer's university were in 2006, and only two students out of a total number of seventeen expelled were involved with controlled substances. However, the table depicts that no student was expelled for substance abuse consumption the following year, and the same goes for 2011. Asides from these two years, starting from 2009, the numbers kept increasing.

One can, therefore, infer from information accumulated throughout this research that the university administration first became aware of the substance abuse phenomenon in 2006. Once this has become a possibility and a reality, the university began to look out for this particular trait. Perhaps, more students have been involved in these substances aside from the two that were caught and expelled; therefore, due to increased scrutiny and measures, the number of students caught kept growing. This means the university management kept learning and devising new methods and measures to curb this menace and have an institution free of substance abuse. In 2014, substance abuse-related expulsion began to constitute more than half of the total number of students expelled. This is partly due to the aforementioned point about the university being able to monitor substance abuse trends, control supply, and detect abusers faster on the permanent site, compared to when it was on the temporary site. The university moved to its permanent site in Ede, Osun state, in 2014. By 2015, measures were already put in place to check controlled substances starting from the gate through inspection of boxes, the mandatory drug test carried out upon resumption, and the university's fewness of entry points. The sharp increase in the number of students expelled for substance abuse between 2015 and 2017 points to the increasing exposure of controlled substance users, abusers, and suppliers within the university, making it difficult for more students to hide their involvement. This is, therefore, an indication

that the university administration is becoming more abreast with the dynamics of substance abuse amongst students.

### **Effects of substance abuse**

One significant effect of substance abuse is the propensity for addiction. Once a student is introduced to controlled substances, there is a very high chance that the student gets addicted. It is with this addiction that the various harmful effects begin to surface. For instance, in 2011, a student of Redeemer's University was suspected and detected to have been a chronic drug addict, having been a consumer of controlled substances for about eight years. As such, that student was always isolating himself from public gatherings, lost control of his impulses, had to keep chewing gum, using dark shades, and being disconnected from lecturers and fellow students to hide his addiction. When discovered, he became depressed and suffered severe withdrawal symptoms, could not eat. To an extent, he became suicidal and wishing they let him go and die. This was the first case that heralded the Recovery of Destiny program at Redeemer's University.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, substance abuse affects students' academic performance as it distorts their flow and alters their mindset. They become so dependent that when they cannot get their "high," constant itching and body pains ensue. Drugs have different effects on different people. Some are mild addicts and can still curb the habit quickly, while others become chronic addicts. Being a drug abuser makes a student dissociate from peers and tends to always remain in a shell. In Redeemer's University, the humiliation of expulsion after being caught is also a sacrosanct negative effect. This expulsion before 2012 meant that the student's academic pursuit in Redeemer's University had been halted. Even with the Recovery of Destiny rehabilitation program, it still distorts academic flow as a whole year would have been spent on rehabilitation, making the student have to be in school longer than necessary. A fall out of this is the stigma and shame that comes with the student's re-admission into the university. Such a student becomes disconnected to an extent, and his peers would have graduated; hence re-integrating into the university becomes difficult. Academic performance and re-adjusting also become a challenge in some cases. There are many effects and impacts of substance abuse on students that cannot be overemphasized or overlooked. Substance abuse has been described as a destiny and life destroyer; hence it is advised that students do not even start.<sup>27</sup>

Substance abuse has been a phenomenon amongst students of Redeemer's University since its inception. The university administration became aware of this and have devised various measures such as constant inspections, drug tests, public lectures on the dangers of drug abuse, sensitization, developing a university-wide controlled substance policy, to mention a few, to reduce the rate at which students consume drugs, and to reduce the number of drug abusers on campus to avoid a situation whereby innocent and unsuspecting students are influenced. The university does not just expel students suspected of consumption of controlled substances, a series of investigative processes are followed, and the student is given a fair hearing before being found guilty and eventually expelled. Being a faith-based institution, there was no chance for any

student who had been expelled for one misconduct or the other to be reinstated into the university system. However, professor Debo Adeyewa who served as Vice-Chancellor of Redeemer's University between 2011 – 2018, alarmed at the number of students outrightly expelled without a second chance, saw the need to change the narrative and status quo. As such, he sought the permission of the Visioneer and visitor to the University, Pastor Adeboye, to give students who had been expelled a second chance by starting a rehabilitation program that students who have been expelled must go through before they can be reinstated. He believed that removing these students alone will not help them overcome their challenges; hence they should be helped to recover. This program was designated "Recovery of Destiny (ROD)," and it started in 2012.<sup>28</sup>

### **Rehabilitation of students in Redeemer's University and its challenges**

Rehabilitation of student offenders in Redeemer's University is an initiative that has been in place since the 2012/2013 academic year. This program was an avenue aimed at giving students who had been found guilty of one offense or the other and expelled a second chance at re-admission and re-integration into the university for the continuance and completion of their degree programs, so they do not lose outrightly. So far, the rehabilitation program has recorded several successes. However, some challenges must be interrogated as there have been cases of students' unwillingness to attend the program, parents' readiness, the challenge of stigmatization, and most endemic are the instances of students completing the program and reverting to the habits for which they had supposedly been rehabilitated for, hence re-expelled and this time, permanently. Therefore, it is crucial to trace the history of rehabilitation, the process of rehabilitation and re-integration of expelled students, the success rate, and the challenges of rehabilitation in Redeemer's University.

### **History of rehabilitation in Redeemer's University**

Redeemer's University was established with clear-cut disciplinary policies for offenses categorized as major and minor offenses. The standards were set, and zero tolerance was given to many major crimes under which drug-related offenses fall. The visitor to the university, pastor E.A Adeboye was specific concerning the rules, and he had established that students caught faltering these rules should be expelled without recourse. He believed with all the moral and spiritual training intertwined with the academic programs; such students do not deserve to be a member of the University. Hence, between 2006 – 2011/12 academic session, student offenders were outrightly expelled for offenses such as theft, battery, gross misconduct, possession and consumption of controlled substances, fraud, immoral conducts, etc. Once expelled, these students' academic program at Redeemer's University was halted permanently.<sup>29</sup>

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2011, professor Debo Adeyewa resumed the office of the Vice-Chancellor of Redeemer's University. As of 2011, the total number of students expelled for various offenses was alarmingly over 145. This staggering statistic prompted the vice chancellor's drive to take decisive steps towards giving students a second chance at education. He believed that being a faith-based university, Redeemer's University should be involved in positively rebuilding the destinies of defaulters, helping them curb their improper habits,

and giving them a chance at education. The then vice-chancellor also believed that expelling a student without a second chance does not help the student change, but that measures should be put in place to rehabilitate the students.<sup>30</sup>

Before he could fully implement a rehabilitation program for expelled students as a pre-condition for re-admission into the university, professor Adeyewa had to obtain the consent of the university's founding fathers and the visitor, pastor Adeboye. The latter reluctantly permitted him to go ahead. The permission was reluctant because it was never in the initial plan of the university that a rehabilitation program was put in place for defaulters, neither was it an option that a student who had been expelled be re-admitted, more so the university did not have official drug abuse and rehabilitation policy. However, professor Adeyewa was able to push for the realization of the initiative.<sup>31</sup>

In 2012, for the first time in the history of Redeemer's University, a rehabilitation program was implemented, and it was tagged the "Recovery of Destiny" program, known in short as ROD. This year marked a turning point in the history of expulsion at Redeemer's University. The university administration ran two types of rehabilitation programs: substance abuse rehabilitation and moral rehabilitation. For moral rehabilitation, the university established a partnership with the Redeem Christian College of Mission, Ede (RECCOM). For substance abuse rehabilitation, Redeemer's University partnered with Christ Against Drug Abuse Ministries (CADAM). Therefore, students expelled for moral decadence related offenses such as theft, immoral conducts, fraud, exam malpractice, battery, amongst a host of others were given the option of attending a mandatory rehabilitation program at RECCOM, after which they will be re-invited by the university and re-admitted to continue their program from where they left off since their expulsion. Those related controlled substances were also referred to CADAM as a pre-condition for re-admission and acceptance back into the university. CADAM is a rehabilitation center that specializes in drug-related rehabilitation using psychotherapeutic techniques and Christian faith exercises.<sup>32</sup>

The first case that further prompted the speedy implementation of the ROD program was that of a student who had been into drugs for about eight years before coming to Redeemer's University. He had become a chronic addict, such that after the administration discovered him, he began to suffer terrible withdrawal symptoms. He could no longer eat, began to lose weight, experience body pains, and got sick. He deteriorated to a state of despair and depression and was willing to be expelled, and he also was reported to have developed suicidal tendencies. Because of the severity of his case, the administration felt he should not just be expelled and left alone but should be helped to come off the habit. Hence, he was told about the Recovery of Destiny initiative, and he agreed to undergo the process. This particular student became the first beneficiary of the Recovery of Destiny drug abuse rehabilitation program at CADAM. He completed the process and was re-admitted and re-integrated back into the university to continue and complete his undergraduate program. Since then, many students have been through the program and benefited immensely.<sup>33</sup>

Initially, the Recovery of Destiny program was to run for six months. However, it was discovered that many students complete the mandated period, get re-

admitted, and still relapse to their old habits, leading to a final and permanent expulsion. The administration, therefore, decided that perhaps the six months did not provide ample time for the whole rehabilitation process. Hence, in the 2015/16 academic session, the period of the rehabilitation program was extended from 6 months to 1 year, and it has remained so to date.<sup>34</sup>

#### **Process of drug abuse rehabilitation in Redeemer's University**

Once a student has been found guilty of a drug-related offense, he is given an expulsion letter and told about the possibility of re-admission on the condition that such student is remorseful and accepts to undergo the Recovery of Destiny rehabilitation program. It should be noted that undergoing the drug abuse rehabilitation program at CADAM is completely voluntary and at no financial cost to the student, the school, and the parents. The rehabilitation center the university has partnered with, CADAM, is a non-profit based non-governmental organization. If the expelled student wishes to go for the program, he is then expected to report at CADAM, located in Lagos State, where he will be interviewed. They are expected to inform the institution that they are a student of Redeemer's University. Because there has been an agreement between the university and the rehabilitation center, the students are welcomed immediately. The interview determines whether or not the student in question is genuinely ready to go through the program.<sup>35</sup>

After being admitted to the rehabilitation program, the first two months are for counseling. The student is mandated to go to CADAM at least three times a week for a series of counseling. Once the two-month counseling period has elapsed, the student and all other program beneficiaries converge at the CADAM facility in Acme road, Ikeja Lagos. They are not allowed to come with their phones or any electronic gadget. From there, they are all taken to Redemption camp, KM 46, Lagos-Ibadan expressway. At the camp, they undergo one week of natural detoxification. During this period, they are housed in a hostel, given mattresses to lay on the floor, and they are carefully monitored as they begin to go through the first stage of cleansing their system of the drugs they had been addicted to. At this point, the beneficiaries exhibit all manners of withdrawal symptoms. Some tend to get very violent at this point; some even run away from the program, and others patiently pass the phase.<sup>36</sup>

Having concluded the detoxification week at the Redemption camp, beneficiaries are then taken to the CADAM facility in Epe, Lagos, where they fully undergo the program. The drug abuse rehabilitation program is divided into two phases. The first phase is called "treatment," while the second is called "rehabilitation." Each phase is for six months. During the first six months, the beneficiaries were isolated, restricted from going out, giving duties, and these duties were rotated. They were involved in cooking, cleaning, washing, farming, and many other activities. They rotated bed space, rotated duties, rotated workgroups. Their tolerance and temperament are monitored. They are subjected to a type of psychotherapeutic conditioning. They are taught the detailed and undiluted tenets of the holy bible, preached, attended devotions, Sunday services, and were taught discipline self-control. The activities first six months completely take place in a confined environment. They were not exposed to society and neither were they allowed to interact or have access to anywhere, anyone, or anything that could trigger their cravings for drugs.<sup>37</sup>

The last six months, which is the final phase known as rehabilitation, is quite relaxed than the first. At this point, students or beneficiaries are accorded a level of trust, and they can now go out more often, they can now gradually be allowed to relate with the society, gradually re-integrated, their level of discipline and self-control is tested, they are carefully and steadily exposed to the environment where they could readily see the drugs they had been rehabilitated for. Furthermore, in the last six months, beneficiaries were taught different entrepreneurial skills and vocations, including shoemaking, tailoring, carpentry, to mention but a few. They also learn responsibility, adaptability, and Christian ethics and morals.<sup>38</sup>

During the entire rehabilitation process, CADAM staff monitored the progress and behavior of beneficiaries, especially students from Redeemer's University. They write a progress report after the first six months and after the entire period. These reports are sent to the university. Having completed the mandatory 1-year rehabilitation program, considering the report sent to the school from CADAM concerning students in question, convinced that such students had been successfully rehabilitated and changed for the better, the university administration then invites the student back. He/she is given a re-admission letter, pays a certain amount in damages alongside the tuition fees for the semester and level he was before the expulsion, and continues with his/her undergraduate program.<sup>39</sup>

**TABLE 3.1:** Number of participants in recovery of destiny (substance abuse rehabilitation) program, number and percentage of drop out, successful rehabilitation and relapse between 6 months and 2 years

**Source:** Redeemer's University, "The Use of Psychotherapy in Rehabilitating Students with Conduct Disorders" Ede: Redeemer's University, 2016.<sup>40</sup>

The table above depicts the success rate of the recovery of destiny (substance abuse rehabilitation) program. In total, 40 students have participated in the drug rehabilitation program at CADAM. Out of the total number of participants, five have been reported to have dropped out, which is a meager 21.5% of the total number of students. The number of students that completed the recovery

Year	Total Rehabilitated
2011/2012	1
2012/2013	15
2013/2014	13
2014/2015	5
2015/2016	0
2016/2017	6
Total Number of Participants	40
Total Drop Out of Rehabilitation	5 (12.5%)
Successful Rehabilitation	35 (87.5%)
Relapse between 6mths-2yrs	9 (22.5%)

of destiny substance abuse rehabilitation program at CADAM between 2012 – 2017 is 35, meaning that the completion of the program has an 87.5% success rate. However, of the 35 students who complete the program, 9 of them

relapsed between 6 months and two years, accounting for about a 22% relapse rate.

#### **CHALLENGES OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE REHABILITATION IN REDEEMER'S UNIVERSITY**

The rehabilitation program does not yield a hundred percent turnout and success rate from the statistics provided earlier. In other words, not all those who had been expelled for controlled substance-related offenses accept to undergo the program. Out of those who experience it, a certain percentage dropped out of the program while some complete it and relapse within six months to 2 years. This points to the fact that certain challenges abound that have undermined the turnout and success rate of the program.

The willingness of the expelled students and their parents to opt-in for the rehabilitation program is perhaps the first challenge militating against maximum participation of all students expelled for substance abuse from Redeemer's University.<sup>41</sup> Out of a total of 122 students expelled for substance abuse-related offenses between 2012 and 2017, only 40 (32.7%) underwent the rehabilitation program. This invariably means that about 67% refuse to go for the Recovery of Destiny initiative. Perhaps, this is so because some fear the stigmatization that they perceive may come in the aftermath of rehabilitation. There have been cases of students who would rather change school instead of accepting to go for rehabilitation. Therefore, it seems difficult to convince students caught in the act and with the habit of substance abuse to go for rehabilitation.<sup>42</sup>

Another challenge of Redeemer's University's recovery of destiny (substance abuse) rehabilitation program is the lack of adequate awareness and sensitization about drug abuse, its effect, and the need for rehabilitation within the university. Despite the administration's efforts at curbing this menace within the school by taking steps to reduce the number of students abusing drugs and by introducing rehabilitation programs, students seem not to be fully aware of the effects of drug abuse. Also, those who are addicts or abusers already are not adequately sensitized to be convinced that rehabilitation is an option and that they should opt for it.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, there is a trend of inadequate check up on Redeemer's University students undergoing rehabilitation at CADAM by university administration representatives. The implication of this is that some of these students tend to get frustrated, tired of the program, and feel forgotten, seeing that they have no means of often calling people outside the program. At a point, there is a tendency for these students to start getting rebellious and breaking rules. The frustration and the feeling of abandonment can eventually lead to some running away from CADAM before completing their mandatory rehabilitation period.<sup>44</sup>

In addition to the aforementioned, the possibility of relapse after successful completion of the program is a valid challenge. From the statistics provided, between 2012 and 2017, a total number of 9 beneficiaries were discovered to have relapsed within six months to 2 years. The implication of this is that perhaps, there are more cases of relapse but were not discovered. Hence, it can be inferred that these ones relapse because they probably did not perceive the

Recovery of Destiny program as a rehabilitation program to correct their substance abuse but merely as a punishment and means of getting readmitted back into the school to complete their undergraduate programs. Some just endure the time with that mentality and do not attain actual rehabilitation, so they are re-admitted and re-expelled for the same habit if caught.<sup>45</sup>

### **Conclusion.**

The administration of Redeemer's University, having noticed the menace of substance abuse amongst students and the alarming number of students expelled each year, came up with an initiative that seeks to help students come out of this destructive habit, thereby recovering their destinies that had hitherto been on the verge of destruction by harmful drugs. The Recovery of Destiny (ROD) program has been in operation since 2012 and has recorded quite an impressive success rate. However, certain challenges militating against the rehabilitation program are an indication that there is still room for improvement.

### **Summary, Recommendation, and Conclusion**

#### *Summary*

From the foregoing, it is clear that substance abuse is a menace amongst Nigerian youths. It is not a new phenomenon but one whose origins can be traced as far back as the end of the second world war in 1945 when soldiers returning from the war front brought samples of Indian Hemp to Nigeria and began to grow it for the first time in the country's history. Over the years, the methods, threats, the number of cases, and types of drugs consumed have increased exponentially. This research work has established the historical background of substance abuse in Nigeria, amongst Nigerian undergraduates and especially in faith-based institutions such as Redeemer's University that has been used as a case study. In the course of the research, a plethora of literature was reviewed, and it was established that there is a lacuna which this work has attempted to fill.

Furthermore, this study, in its first chapter, introduced Redeemer's University, which is the case study, by interrogating the history of the faith-based tertiary institution, its core values, and principles, amongst other relevant areas worthy of mention. The subsequent chapters established that the history of substance abuse could be traced as far back to the very first academic session when the first set of students caught for substance abuse-related offenses were expelled. This research further examined the university's stance towards the issue of substance abuse, the initiatives put in place to curb it, disciplinary measures, and the recovery of destiny program initiated by professor Debo Adeyewa in 2012 as an initiative aimed at rehabilitating substance abusers and giving them a second chance at academic pursuit. This study has also been able to interrogate the process of this rehabilitation program, the success rate, and the challenges of the program.

#### *Conclusion*

Without further ado, it is glaring that abuse of and addiction to controlled substances has menaced and truncated millions of Nigerian youths' bright

future and destiny since the first seedlings of cannabis sativa were introduced to the country by soldiers returning in the aftermath of the Second World War till date. Drug abuse is an enemy with no regard for age, class, or social status as it is not limited to just youths and students, but there are younger and older people, rich and poor, involved. It can be inferred from this study that youths are the most hit and susceptible to this abuse, and especially Nigerian undergraduates.

Therefore, more attention must be accorded to substance abuse and rehabilitation in Nigeria. It is a phenomenon that just the government cannot fight, and all hands must be on deck. The history of substance abuse and rehabilitation amongst Nigerian undergraduates, focusing on faith-based institutions such as Redeemer's University, should not be discountenanced. The threat is real, and if nothing is done with immediate and urgent tenacity, in the nearest future, a large chunk of Nigerian youths will be under the influence of one mind-altering/behavior-altering substance or the other. This would paint a scenario of a lawless society where youths perpetrate egregious violent acts without conscience or remorse because they are under the influence of a potent drug. We cannot afford a society where youths will be walking the streets like zombies, having no control of their actions. There is no telling the extent to which dependence on, addiction to, and abuse of controlled substances can destroy Nigeria's sovereignty, peace, and security if this phenomenon is left unchecked.

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#### Notes

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