

The Causes and Consequences of Drug Abuse Among Commercial Motor Drivers: A Sociological Inquiry in Bauchi State of Nigeria

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DOI: [10.56201/rjhcs.v10.no2.2024.pg59.73](https://doi.org/10.56201/rjhcs.v10.no2.2024.pg59.73)

Abstract

Drug impaired a very serious health hazard on our roads today. This study looks at the knowledge, prevalence, types and pattern of drug abuse among commercial drivers. There is a fair knowledge of drug abuse among commercial drivers in Bauchi, However the prevalence of psychoactive substance use is unacceptably high among the commercial drivers. Majority of the drivers studied were Hausas by tribe, Muslims and with low education level. Cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out. A total of 210 respondents were selected at random from clusters (motor parks) of commercial drivers by employing structured questionnaire. A bivariate analysis was done using chi-square test to evaluate relationship between socio-demographic variables and substance use with statistical significance taken at $p < 0.05$. Key words Drug abuse (psychoactive substance use), commercial drivers, Bauchi metropolis. The mean age of the drivers is 33 is not equal to 9.385years. All of them were males, majority 74.8% were Hausas, 94.3% were Muslims, and more than half of them have no formal education. 92.2% knows about drug abuse. There is no significant relationship between substance and socio-demographic characteristic. Common reason for taking drugs include working for long hours, to keep awake and to cope with stress. Religion and side effect are the major deterrent of drug abuse. The important sources of acquisition of drugs are markets and hideouts. There is a high prevalence of drug abuse in spite of the knowledge of drug abuse among commercial drivers. This calls for massive campaign against drug abuse especially among commercial drivers, religious body, Traditional leaders have a vital role to play in this regard.

Key Words: *Drug abuse, Commercial motor drivers, Sociological inquiry*

INTRODUCTION

In recent year's attention have increasingly turned to the rising prevalence and consequences of substance abuse in the community and society. In general, a radical change appears to have taken place about three decades ago when drug abuse crept into the main stream of the society. The world view of drug abuse culture includes expectations and misconceptions of the effect

of drug. Drug abuse is the used of drug usually for non- medicinal purpose that cause physical, psychological, legal and social harm to the user or to others affected by the user's behaviour. Psychoactive substance (drug) is connoting those drugs that primarily act on the central nervous system, affecting mood, thinking, and behaviour. Psychoactive drugs can impair person's ability to function safely in the society. According to expert, the factors that contribute to the influence of drugs abuse or drug addiction problem among the Nigerian youth include, peer group influence, availability of psychoactive drugs, curiosity and experimentation. The need to enhance performance, economic pressure, emotional and psycho-social stress, such as anxiety, frustration is few in central thought. Others include get-rich quick syndrome and the influence of advertisement. Commercial motor drivers use drugs to contract fatigue and also add more stamina to work for a long hour.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (NODC) shows that "the age between 10 - 29 years pars are the most vulnerable group in drug abuse in Nigeria, with an increase in cocaine, heroin and cannabis found among commercial drivers, commercial sex workers, self-confessed users, unemployed, motor parks touts popularly called "Yan Tasha" and even law enforcement agents. A number of commercial drivers reported daily intake of one form of 'booster' or the other for the required stamina for long hours of operations and also to manage fatigue."

The impact of drug abuse especially among the youth is glaring, a morally decadent and wasted generation. The consequences of drug abuse are many and varied. The high cost paid by the society due to substance use cut across social, economic, physical and psychological aspects. In some countries (Nigeria inclusive), the foremost problems of drugs abuse seem to be fatal road baffle accidents, occupational injuries and long-lasting disabilities resulting from non-fatal accidents, that lay even a heavier burden on the community. The health consequences of drug abuse include drug- related psychotic disorders and mental health problem such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, suicidal tendencies, depression and anger.

One very peculiar feature about psychoactive drugs is that all of them are that their abuse has physical and social effects which sometimes more often lead to death or permanent disability. Globally, drug impaired is known to be a major threat to the public. Every day, about 3000 lives are being lost to road traffic accidents worldwide, 30 are drug related (WHO Report, 2009). There has been a radical acceleration in the trend of psychoactive substance use in recent time, with an alarming high prevalence of abuse of hard drug like heroin and cocaine.

There is unacceptably high prevalence of psychoactive substance use among drivers in Nigeria. As mentioned in the report of United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) "the age between 10-29 years are the most vulnerable group in drug abuse in Nigeria, with an increase in cocaine, heroin and cannabis found among commercial drivers, commercial sex workers, motor park tout and even law enforcement agents." The present study is an attempt to determine the knowledge, prevalence, consequences, types and the pattern of drug abuse among commercial motor drivers in Bauchi local government of Bauchi State.

CLASSIFICATION OF PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCE

The word psycho active 'literally means working (Active) on the mind or behaviour and other process'. Psychoactive drugs are identified to act on the central nervous system. I DELLA (1970) and IN Rimfat (1999) observe that drugs are highly potent on the mind of the abuser and are liable to influencing his mood and behaviour. These are drugs that can affect the way a person thinks, feels, or acts.

Psychoactive substance (drugs) can be classified as follows:

- a. NARCOTICS: These are drugs which make you sleepy and stop feeling pain, example of such drugs are heroine, codeine and Tramol.
- b. General central nervous system depressants are drugs which causes sleepiness, impaired judgment, problem with balance and coordination.
- c. General central nervous system, these drugs cause feeling of increase energy and alertness, decrease appetite and sleeplessness example of such drugs are tobacco, cocaine and marijuana.
- d. Miscellaneous inhalant: These are substances that also cause sleeplessness example of such drugs are: petrol, glue, paints etc.

PREVALENCE OF DRUG ABUSE

The prevalence of drug abuse among commercial drivers in Nigeria is very high, and constitutes a very serious threat to the public (Aniebue, and Okonkwo, 2008). As stated by Demehin (1984), “drug and alcohol abuse is a major occupation hazard among Nigerian professional drivers, which contribute to making Nigerian roads particularly murderous.” According to Aniebu, and Okonkwo (2008), “the high prevalence of drug abuse among taxi drivers is nearly 86 per cent”. Mura et al. (2003) mentioned that “the prevalence of drug was high in drivers who were of young age, single and low literacy level, it was found that 50 per cent of the long-distance drivers, studied non-had ever attended health talk on drug abuse in Ilorin of Nigeria. It was noted in the same study that about 50 per cent of the drivers were aware that it was harmful to take hard drugs. About 98 per cent of the driver who used drugs have been involved in road traffic accident at one point or the other. The drugs commonly used by drivers in south (Lagos) include alcohol 49 per cent, followed by tobacco 23 per cent and to lesser once (Aniebu and Okonkwo, 2008). In Australia, the incidence of alcohol and drugs among drivers indicates that alcohol at 0.05g/100ml is present in 29 per cent of all drivers. The highest prevalence was in car drivers with 30.3% and lowest in truck drivers. Almost 10 per cent of all the drivers use alcohol and drugs (Oster *et al*, 1990). In America about 33 per cent of automobile drivers involve in crash were found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or both at the time of crash (Ogden and Moskomitz, 2004). Aniebu, and Okonkwo (2008) reported that (USA) and it was found that 54 per cent of the drivers tested positive for illicit drugs or alcohol in Chicago and similarly high prevalence of alcohol use among commercial drivers in Canada. In Ghana, a study carried out on 43 bus and mini bus drivers in the capital city, Accra, it was noted that majority of them expressed an understanding of the risk associated with drunk driving (Asiamah *et al*, 2002).

AETIOLOGY OF PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCE USE

The reasons for drug use are complex are the incidence can be linked to a precipitating or maintaining factors. In study carried out among the commercial motor vehicle drivers in the south-western Nigeria, it was found out that most drivers resort to use of one form of “booster” or the other in order to get the required stamina for long hours of operations (Aworemi *et al*, 2009). Over 90 per cent of the commercial drivers have reported taking painkillers such as Panadol extra, Trarnadol on regular basis. There are many other reasons to use psychoactive substances. Tony Akhimien, the President, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria said, “People now decide that for them to get out of this stress they must take certain drugs, psychoactive substances.” Will and Tony (2008) mentioned that “other reasons include peer group influence, availability of psychoactive drugs, curiosity and experimentation, emotional and psycho-social stresses such as anxiety, insomnia, economic depression, poverty, ignorance, get rid of quick syndrome and the influence of advertisement.” The present study is an attempt to ascertain the

knowledge, prevalence, types, patterns and factors that influence psychoactive substance use among commercial motor drivers.

METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the nature and consequences of drug abuse among commercial motor drivers in Bauchi State of Nigeria, the sample size of the study has been fixed by using krejcie and Morgan, 1970 table for determining size of known population of 460, a total of 210 is selected as a sample size of the study. Similarly simple random sampling technique is used in selecting the sample size of the study. The commercial drivers were grouped into clusters all together in Bauchi metropolis viz. Yankari Motor Park, Muda Lawal Motor Park, Wunti Motor Park, Jos road Motor Park, Kofar Gombe Motor Park and Central Market Motor Park. Three (3) out of these 6 clusters are selected at random using simple random sampling through balloting. A predesigned questionnaire has been administered in the selected motor parks in Bauchi Local Government of Bauchi State.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the use of research instruments are hereby presented in tables and charts in five sections as socio-demographic data; occupational history; knowledge of drug abuse; drugs or substances use and circumstances of use; and the patterns of drug abuse, in line with the objectives of the study.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of respondents

Table.1: Distribution of the Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

| Background Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Age in years (N=210) | | |
| 15-29 | 87 | 41.4 |
| 30-44 | 93 | 44.3 |
| 45-59 | 26 | 12.4 |
| 60 and above | 4 | 1.9 |
| Sex (N=210) | | |
| Male | 210 | 100 |
| Ethnic Group (N=210) | | |
| Hausa | 157 | 74.8 |
| Fulani | 36 | 17.1 |
| Gerawa | 13 | 6.2 |
| Igbo, | 1 | 0.48 |
| Yoruba | 1 | 0.48 |
| Idoma | 1 | 0.48 |
| Kanuri | 1 | 0.48 |
| Religion (N=210) | | |
| Islam | 198 | 94.3 |
| Christianity | 12 | 5.7 |
| Level of Education (N=210) | | |
| Qur'anic | 88 | 41.9 |
| Primary | 44 | 21.0 |
| Secondary | 45 | 21.4 |
| Tertiary | 7 | 3.3 |
| Illiterates | 26 | 12.4 |

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|-------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
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| 15-29 | 87 | 41.4 |
| 30-44 | 93 | 44.3 |
| 45-59 | 26 | 12.4 |
| 60 and above | 4 | 1.9 |
| Marital status (N=210) | | |
| Single | 56 | 26.7 |
| Married | 154 | 73.3 |

A majority (44 per cent) of the respondents who are commercial drivers are in the age group of 30-44 years. Mean age is 33.16 years and standard deviation is 9.385. All the respondents are males. 94 per cent of the respondents are Muslims and the remaining 6 per cent are Christians. About 46 per cent of the respondents have completed primary, secondary and tertiary education. 42 per cent reported the Qur’anic schooling and the remaining 12 per cent of the respondents are Illiterates. With regard to marital status of the respondents, majority (73 per cent) of the respondents are married and the remaining 27 per cent are unmarried.

Figure.1 shows that majority (71 per cent) of the drivers drive long distance followed by town drivers by 20 per cent and the remaining 9 per cent reported that they drive both long and town services.

Nature of driving by respondents

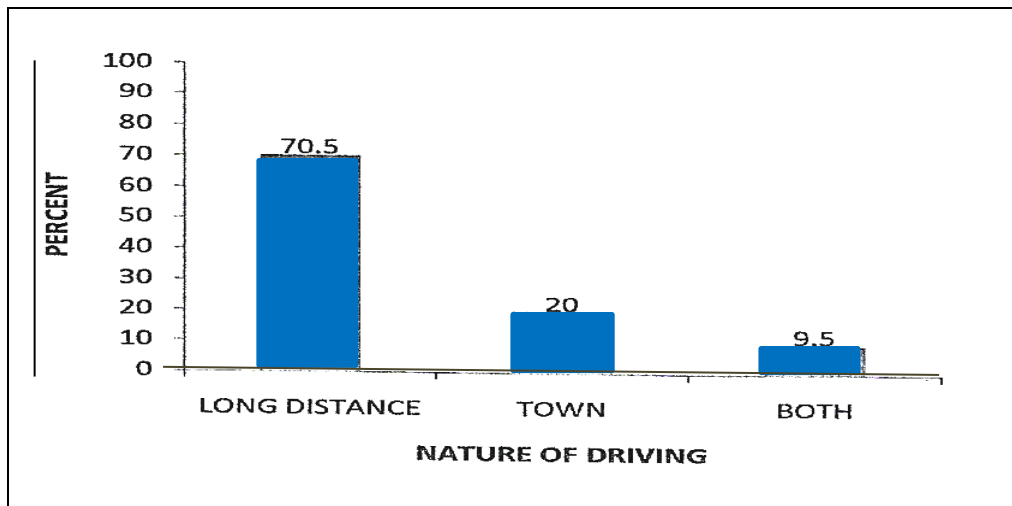


Figure 1: Nature of driving by respondents

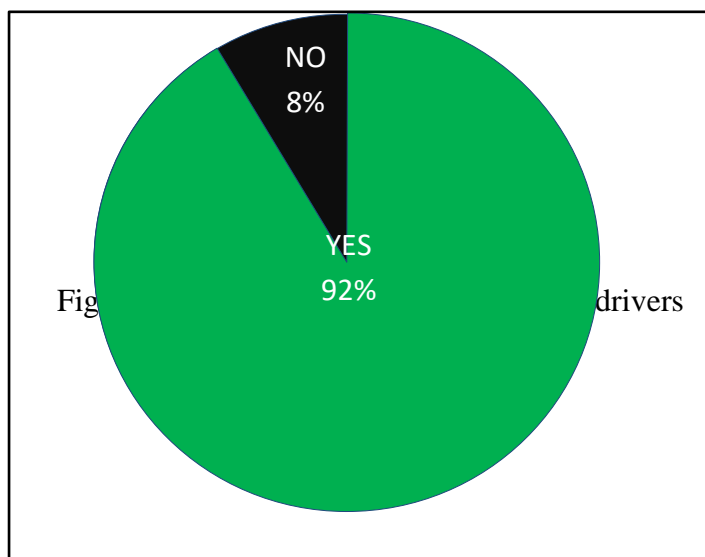
Table.2: Distribution of involvement, vehicle and driver’s licenses possession of the respondent (N=210)

| Involved in accident | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 116 | 55.2 |
| No | 94 | 44.8 |
| Having own vehicle | | |
| Yes | 93 | 44.2 |
| No | 117 | 55.8 |
| Holding valid driving license | | |
| Yes | 165 | 78.6 |
| No | 45 | 21.4 |

Majority of the respondents (55 per cent) reported that they were involved in accident at once or the other and the remaining 45 per cent reported that they did not meet with an accident. Majority (56 per cent) of the respondents are not having their own vehicles for transportation and only 44 per cent of respondents reported that they were having their own vehicles and the remaining 56 per cent reported that they were hired as drivers by their truck owners. About 79 per cent of respondents reported that they had driving license and they remaining 21 per cent of respondents reported driving vehicles without valid driving license.

AWARENESS ABOUT DRUG ABUSE

Figure. 2 indicates that the majority (92 per cent) of the respondents are aware of the meaning of drug abuse and the remaining 8 per cent reported that they were not aware of the meaning of drug abuse.



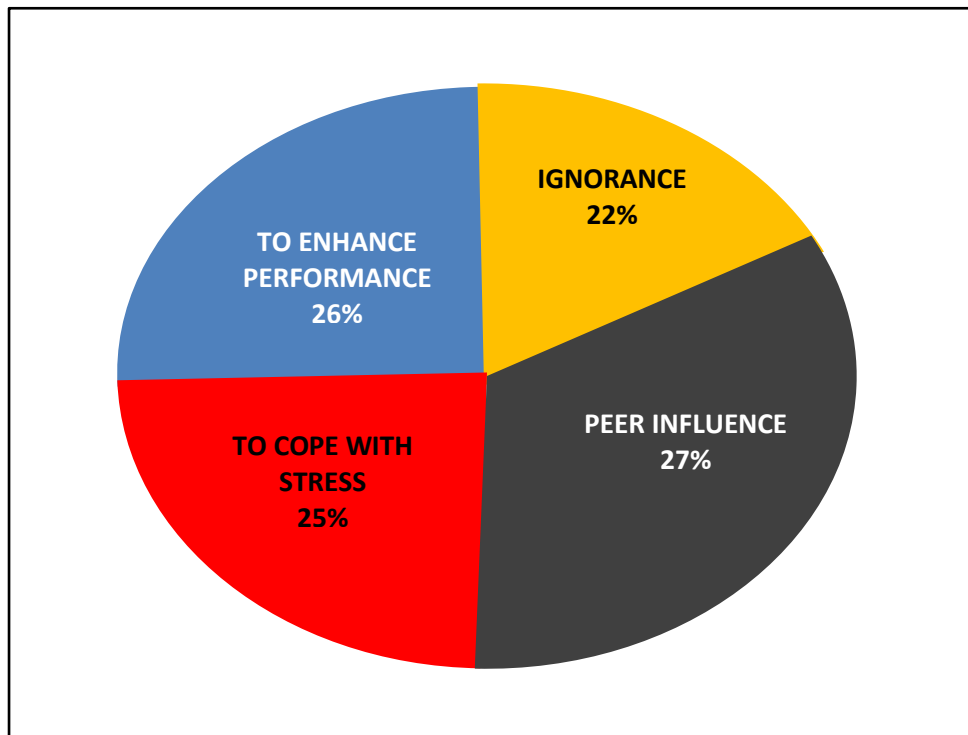


Figure 3: Factors that Influence Drug Abuse

Figure. 3 shows that 27 per cent of the respondents mentioned peer influence was the reason for drug abuse, 26 per cent mentioned the reason for drug abuse was to enhance performance, 25 per cent mentioned the reason for drug abuse was to cope with stress and the remaining 22 per cent of the respondents reported the reason for drug abuse was due to ignorance. Figure. 4 indicates that majority (94 per cent) of the respondents are aware of the side effects of drug abuse while 6 per cent are not aware of drug abuse.

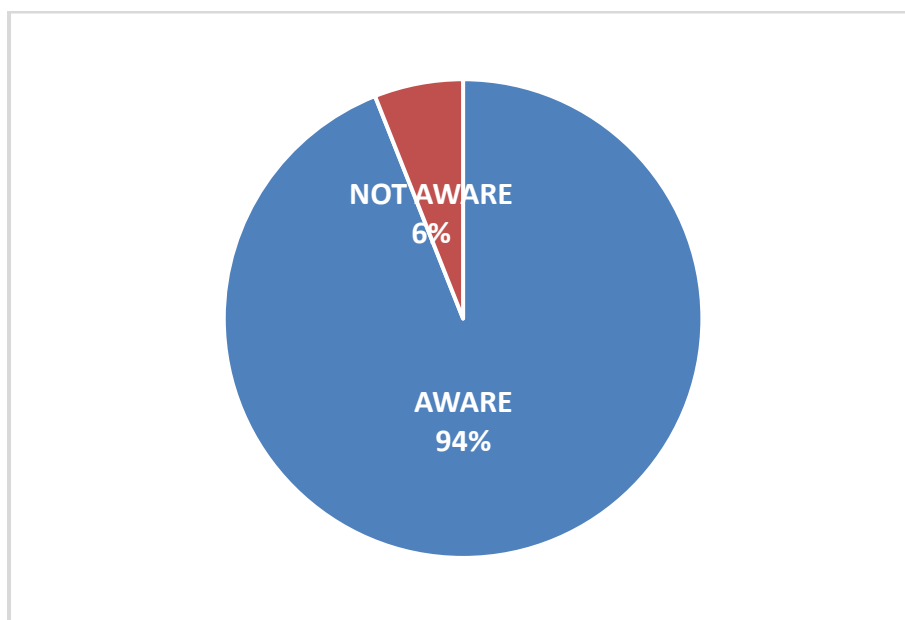


Figure 4: Awareness about side effects of drug abuse

With regard to use of drugs or substances and its circumstance, Figure.5 shows that 42 per cent of the respondents have ever used drugs (substances) during driving and the remaining 58 per cent reported that they never used drugs while driving the vehicles.

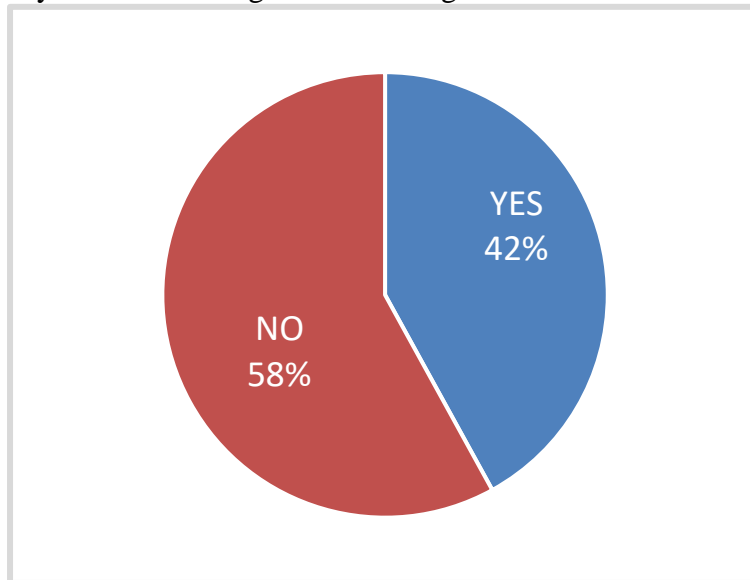


Figure 5: Showing those that ever-abused drugs

Table. 3: Relationship of socio-demographic characteristics and substance use

| Socio-Demographic Characteristics | Ever Used or Sniffed Substances/Drugs | | Total | X ² | df | P |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----|-------|----------------|----|-------|
| | Yes | No | | | | |
| Age Group | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | 41 | 43 | 84 | 8.615 | 3 | 0.431 |
| 30-44 | 36 | 55 | 91 | | | |
| 45-59 | 8 | 17 | 25 | | | |
| 60 and above | 6 | 4 | 10 | | | |
| Total | 91 | 119 | 210 | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Nature of Driving | | | | | | |
| Long distance | 52 | 87 | 139 | 10.000 | 2 | 0.500 |
| Town service | 26 | 23 | 49 | | | |
| Both | 12 | 10 | 22 | | | |
| Total | 90 | 120 | 210 | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| Level of Education | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|-----|-----|--------|---|-------|
| None | 14 | 15 | 29 | 7.348 | 4 | 0.367 |
| Qur'anic | 30 | 55 | 85 | | | |
| Primary | 17 | 22 | 39 | | | |
| Secondary | 26 | 20 | 46 | | | |
| Tertiary | 5 | 6 | 11 | | | |
| Total | 92 | 118 | 210 | | | |
| Marital Status | | | | | | |
| Single | 30 | 34 | 64 | 11.506 | 1 | 0.575 |
| Married | 59 | 87 | 146 | | | |
| Total | 89 | 121 | 210 | | | |

Table.3 indicates that at a level of significance <0.05 , there is no statistical significant relationship between age group, nature of driving, level of education, marital status and substance abuse.

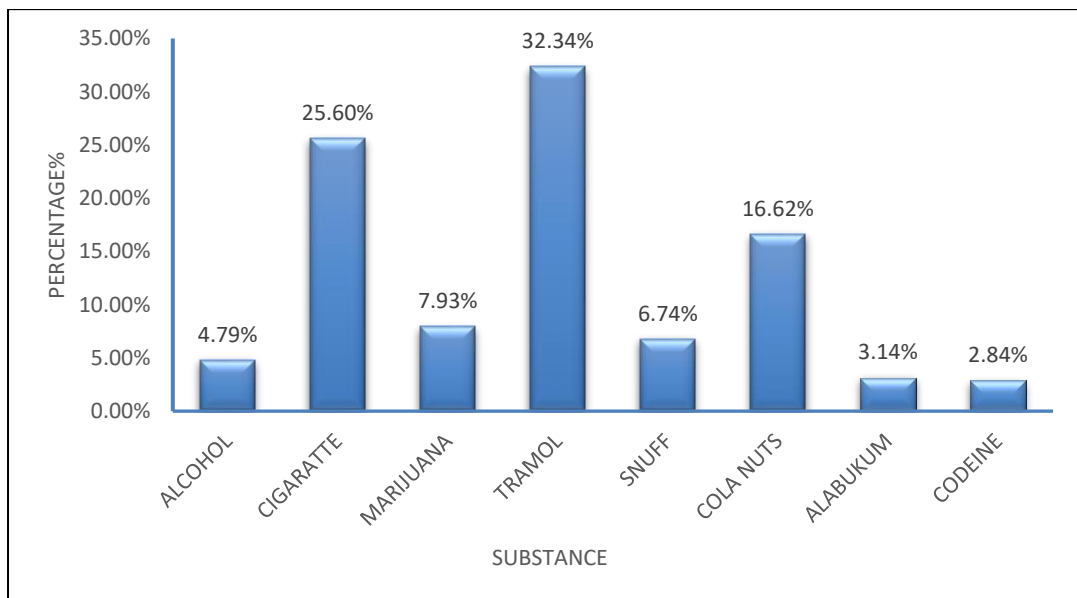


Figure 6: Substances that are commonly abused

Figure. 6 shows substance that are commonly abused the Tramol is the highest (32 per cent) with Cigarette (26 per cent) followed by Cola nut (17 per cent) while Marijuana (8 per cent), Snuff (7 per cent), Alcohol (5 per cent) and the least are Alabakum and Codeine which has 3 per cent respectively.

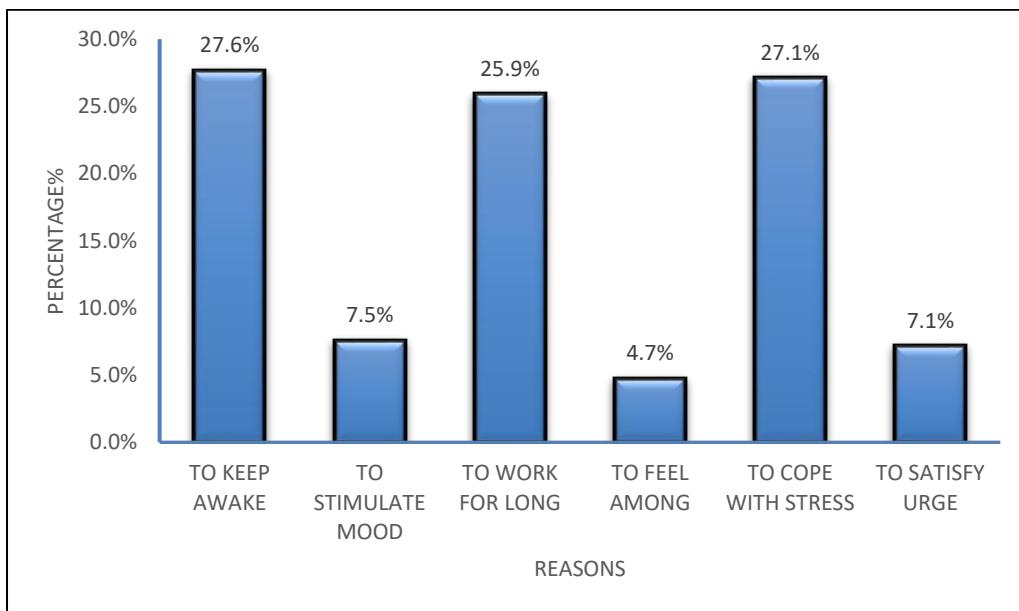


Figure 7: Response on the reason for use of drugs or substances

The most common reasons for using drugs by drivers is to keep awake (28 per cent), to cope with stress (27 per cent), to work for long hours (26 per cent) while the least 5 per cent is reported to feel among.

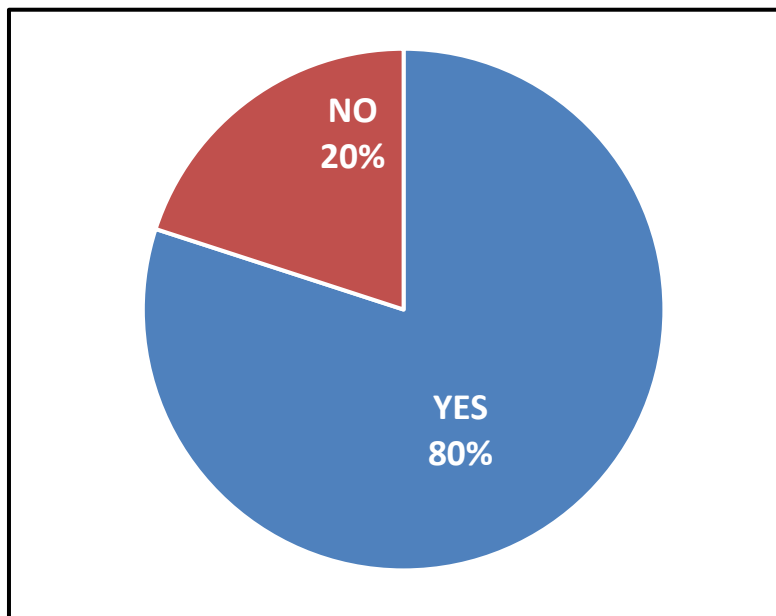


Figure 8: Respondents currently using mentioned substances

Figure.8 shows that 80 per cent of the respondents are currently using the substances and the remaining 20 per cent reported not using any substances.

Table .4: Frequency of Drug Use by respondents (N=210)

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Daily Once | 36 | 17.1 |
| Weekly Once | 12 | 5.7 |
| Monthly Once | 9 | 4.3 |
| Several times a day | 118 | 56.2 |
| Several times a week | 11 | 5.2 |
| Occasionally | 24 | 11.4 |
| Total | 210 | 100 |

Table.4 reveals that majority (56 per cent) of the respondents are using substances several times in a day. 17 per cent reported once in a day, 11 per cent reported occasionally, 6 per cent reported once in a week, 5 per cent reported several times in a week and 4 per cent of the respondents reported only once in a month.

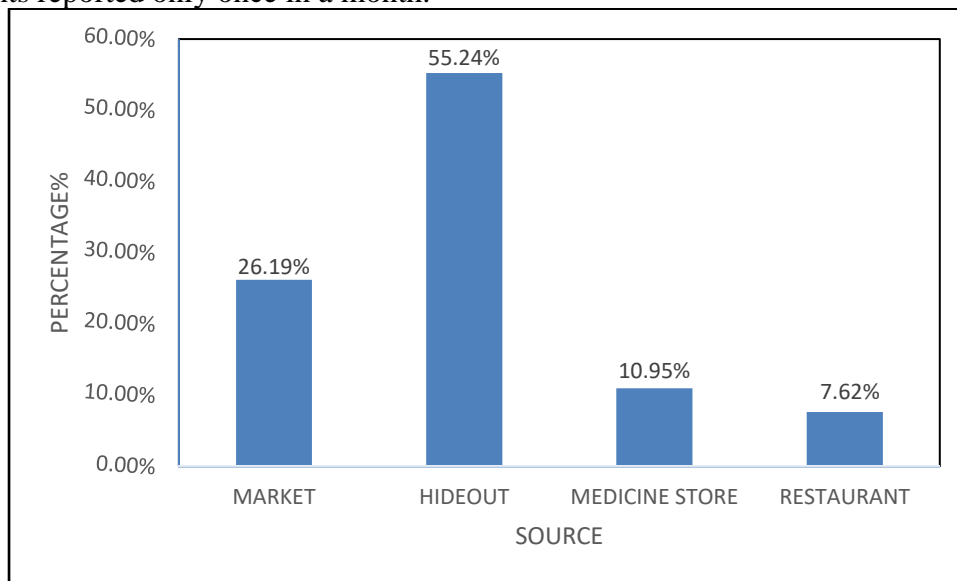


Figure 9: Source of Drugs

Figure.9 shows the major source of drugs or substance is hideout (55 per cent), 25 per cent of the respondents reported market as a source of drugs whereas only 11 per cent reported Medicine Store and 8 per cent reported restaurant.

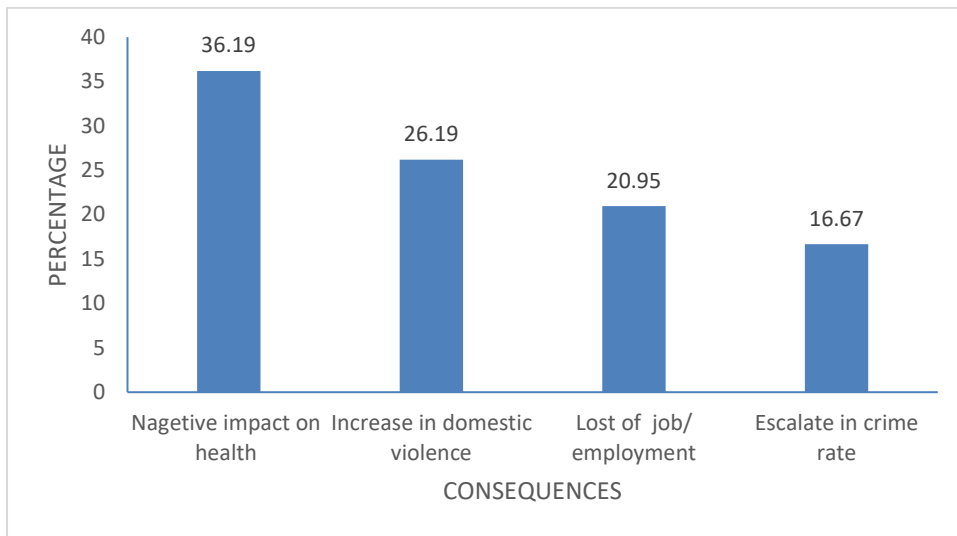


Figure.10 Adverse effects of drug abuse

Figure.10 indicates that the adverse effects of drug abuse reported by the respondents. A majority (36 per cent) of the respondents reported that drug abuse would affect their health badly, 26 per cent reported that it would lead to domestic violence, 21 per cent reported loss of jobs or employment and the remaining 17 per cent reported increase in crime rate due to drug abuse.

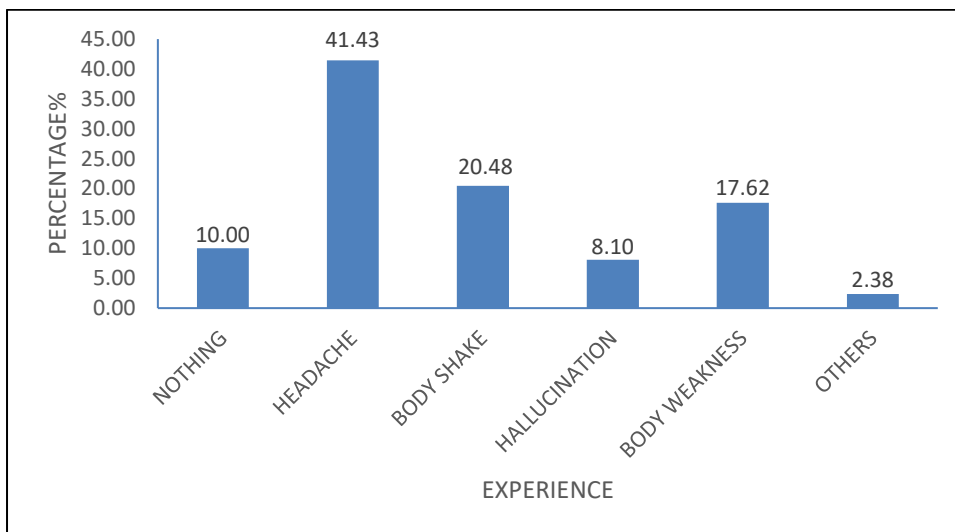


Figure 11: Experience of attempting to stop drugs

With regard to experience after stopping usage of drugs, Figure 11 shows that 41 per cent of the respondents reported headache, nearly 21 per cent reported body shivering, 18 per cent reported weakness in body, 11 per cent reported hallucination and etc. and the remaining 10 per cent reported normal.

Table.5: Willingness to quit drugs usage by respondents (N=210)

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 163 | 77.6 |
| No | 47 | 22.4 |

| | | |
|-------|-----|-----|
| TOTAL | 210 | 100 |
|-------|-----|-----|

Table. 5 shows the willingness to quit the habit of taking drugs by the respondents. Majority (78 per cent) of the respondents are willing to give up the habit of drug abuse and the remaining 22 per cent reported that they would continue it.

Table.6 Reasons to quit drugs by respondents (N=210)

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Financial burden | 53 | 25.2 |
| Social problems | 25 | 11.9 |
| Health disorders | 116 | 55.2 |
| Others | 16 | 7.6 |
| TOTAL | 210 | 100 |

With regard to reasons to give up the drug abuse, majority (55 per cent) of the respondents reported health disorders, 25 per cent reported financial burden, 12 per cent reported social problems such as personal identity and social disorder and the remaining 8 per cent reported other reasons such as disturbance at working place and family.

CONCLUSION

Despite the considerably high knowledge of drug abuse, there is a relatively high prevalence of drug abuse among commercial drivers, and the common reasons for psychoactive substance abuse are social and psychological stress. Majority of the drug users are young, single and with low literacy level. One most outstanding reason for not using substance among drivers is religious conviction. The most common source of acquisition of the substance is the markets, hide outs, patent medicine stores and restaurants. It is recommended that the campaigns on drug abuse should be embarked upon by the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) to educate drivers on the adverse effects of drug abuse. This Union should organize periodic seminars for the drivers on the dangers of drugs impaired driving. The union should stipulate the minimum age of a person for registration with its office. The union can also devise a means of improving the educational level of its members through adult literacy program. The religious bodies should play a vital role to fight against the drug abuse by enlightening their followers on the adverse effects of drug abuse. The government should intensify campaign programs against drug abuse in the society. The government should also strengthen the drug policy by strict restriction of sales of “controlled” drugs and impose severe sanction on drug abuse through the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). The government should enact a regulation on maximum 12 hours of driving per day. The community should be sensitized by the concerned government agencies about the adverse effects of drug abuse through Information, Education and Communication (IEC). The commercial drivers should be examined through breath analyzer on the roads by the personnel of NDLEA to prevent drug addiction activities in the society.

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