

RESEARCH ARTICLE

GLOBALISATION AND DECRIMINALISATION OF CANNABIS IN NIGERIA: LESSONS FROM THE WEST

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Contemporary global realities in the West have demonstrated the inestimable value of marijuana for recreational and medicinal purposes in addition to huge economic benefits. Consequently, a lot of European countries and the United States have accommodated this reality by methodically decriminalising or legalising the consumption of marijuana but rather regulated and institutionalised its production and distribution. The positive outcomes from the aforesaid arrangement cannot be over emphasised. Within the context of the above, Nigeria noted for one of the finest brands of marijuana must key into this vast economic and psycho-

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Ngboawaji Daniel Nte, et.al.

medical opportunities by modifying her laws and policies to harness these potentials as in the Western world. It is on this premise that this study affirms the economic benefits of marijuana or cannabis sativa (often known in our local slogan as “India hemp, igbo, we-we, ganja, weed, etc”). It is the view of this work that if Marijuana is methodically converted and cooperatively organised along other cash crops as export commodities, massive foreign exchange will be earned as part of the government’s drive for a diversified economy. The study relied extensively on qualitative research design as its methodological component. Secondary sources of data were used in collection of relevant data or materials for the study, gleaned from extant literatures in the study area. In order to find the equilibrium point between decriminalisation of the management of marijuana and its political economic implications in Nigeria, while offering strategic solutions or policy recommendations.

Keywords: Globalisation, Marijuana, Cannabis Sativa, Decriminalisation, Legalisation, Economic benefits, Management, Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

Despite the criticism ascribed to the export of Western capitalism from the West to the rest of the world by scholars from the South, and the antagonistic positions of these scholars against the promotion of globalisation with the conviction that the perpetual dependence on the developed economies of the West by the developing economies of the Third World Countries (TWCs) is alleged to be the reason for the unequal relations between the two blocs. Nevertheless, the tremendous changes associated with globalisation in terms of its substantial growths in socio-economic, technical and scientific developments cannot be underestimated. However, the growing economic interdependence of countries worldwide through the increasing volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services, free international capital flows, and a rapid and widespread diffusion of technology have gained increasing momentum in recent years.¹

Also of significant is the fact that since the introduction and the intensification of global relations, it is neither a singular nor a linear process neither is it the final end or point of social change, but a multidimensional phenomenon to a variety of social, economic and technical changes across the world including the TWCs. Since virtually

¹ Onyekpe, J. G. N. (2001). *Globalization and Liberalization of the World Economy*, Akoka-Bariga, Lagos: Paniaf Press.

all the states of the world, including Nigeria state are now cooperating in issues relating to crime control by exchanging fugitive offender or wanted criminals which is made possible through a formal agreement or treaty convention², there is therefore the need for the federal government of Nigeria to emulate the states of Western World to methodically amend certain areas of its criminal justice system to accommodate laws that can promote and legalise the use of marijuana (*cannabis sativa*) for commercial purpose in the hands of a few industries following the trend in some states of the world such the United States, etc.

Medical-marijuana advocates have had to argue, although, that uncertainty remains that marijuana legalisation in the country may result to increased cultivation, consumption and easily accessible to teenagers, but the level at which it has been converted for economic and medicinal purposes in some European countries and the United States shows that its economic benefit if legalised by the government of the federal republic of Nigeria cannot be underestimated. Apart from its medicinal purposes its legalisation may also increases foreign direct investment (FDI) and reduces unemployment rate among the teeming youth in the country, hence institutionalising its cultivation and usage will not be out place. On the contrary, some critics may argue that the consequence of legalisation of marijuana in Nigeria may be unpredictable considering the rate at which it is illegally cultivated and sold in what the authority regarded as the *black market* to both adults and teenagers who fancy its consumption. Considering the liberal and medical-marijuana advocates' inestimable supports for legalisation of marijuana, as well as its economic and medicinal advantages, it becomes extremely tentative to emulate the Western World in methodically legalising the production of marijuana.

It is therefore important to note that higher amount and concentration of psychoactive (mood-altering chemical) substance known as cannabinoids, terpenoids or flavonoids found to be useful in medicines (drugs) and cosmetic productions, marijuana became commercially viable in some European countries and the United States. This singular characteristic nature of *Cannabis sativa* (*C. sativa*) or marijuana makes it to be regarded in global scientific literature as "*herbal cannabis*" or "*hashish*" which is extracted from cannabinoid-rich trichomes also known as "*cannabis resin*", although the extent of this productive substance depends of the species or the sex (male or female) of the plant. The higher its quality, the better its usefulness for pharmaceutical and clinical advantages.³

² Oluka, N. L., Ativie, C. A. & Okuguni, O. M. (2019). The New World Order, Human Rights and Extradition Laws in Africa: Impacts and Prospects. *Journal o Law, Policy and Globalization*, Vol. 82, 2019, pp. 103-114. Retrieved from, www.iiste.org.

³ Jonathan, P. C., Beau, L. & Mark, (2016). *Marijuana Legalization: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press.

Kindra and Scot have argued that marijuana, indisputably, has attracted a lot of controversy all over the world.⁴ It is also identified as the most widely used illegal drug not in the United States (USA) alone, but also in other parts of the world including Nigeria in recent years. Subsequently, it was argued that the intensification of global realities in all ramifications, particularly the reduction of the world into a *global village*, complicated the global fight against the trafficking of all forms of narcotic substances makes it difficult for some governments to completely embrace methodical legalisation of these substances, especially marijuana production.

There is therefore no doubt that this reality would possibly create more problems to the global security system and is likely to increase national and transnational crimes and the trafficking of narcotic or highly intoxicating substances, including marijuana thereby leaving the youth vulnerable elements to traffickers of these substances. Findings however revealed that majority of the youth taking to crime are under the influence of highly intoxicating narcotic substances, including marijuana, hence the critics' contemplation, in any form or manner, the legalisation of the management of marijuana and its uses for commercial and medicinal purposes. Based on these theoretical standpoints, the researchers are compared to critically examine the positions of both schools of thought in order to either or not to support in any form the legalisation of the management of marijuana for economic and medicinal purposes by the government of the federal republic of Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the possibility of decriminalisation of marijuana management in Nigeria considering the paradigm shift in its usage and increased economic benefits to some nations in the global world. While the specific objectives of the study are:

- (1) To determine the benefits of decriminalisation of marijuana management in Nigeria,
- (2) Examine the implication of decriminalising marijuana management in the country, and
- (3) Proffer strategic means by which decriminalisation of marijuana management and its implications can be in equilibrium in the country.

Research Questions

- (1) What are the benefits of decriminalising or legalising the management of marijuana in Nigeria?

⁴ Kindra, S. & Scot, T. (2016). Marijuana Street Names and Nicknames. Rehabs, An American Addiction Center, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, Houston. Retrieved from: <https://luxury.rehabs.com/marijuana-rehab/street-names-and-nicknames>

- (2) What are the implications of decriminalising or legalising marijuana management in the country?
- (3) What are the strategies needed to balance decriminalisation and the implications of marijuana management in the country?

Method of the Study

The study adopted qualitative research design, which means data used in the study were derived from secondary sources. Secondary source of data collection refers to materials that are not originally from the researchers but from already existing literature. In other words, data used in the study were taken from textbooks, journal publications, official document, internet materials, etc.

II. MARIJUANA OR CANNABIS SATIVA: HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

Contemporary literature of the origin of the plant “*Marijuana*” or “*Cannabis sativa* (*C. sativa*)” traced its origin back to Neolithic Age which existed between 800 – 400 BC, particularly in Taiwan. This account provided just a hint to its long history because marijuana has distinct historical accounts in different locations, nations, regions and continents. Nevertheless, its biological or scientific connotation “*Cannabis sativa*” simply refers to as “*C. sativa*” remain the same in academic circle. The name *Cannabis sativa* implies that the plant belongs to the family *Genus Cannabis* which is from the family of plants known as “*Cannabaceae* or *Hemp family*”, the order *Urticales*, the class *Magnoliopsida* (the dicotyledons), and the division “*Magnoliophyta* (the flowering plants). In some cases, it is also known as *Cannabis sativa* L. in which the capital “L” attached to it is said to have been coined from the name “*Linnaeus*”, the person presumed to had given it the name *Cannabis sativa*. Although there is disagreement among experts as to the number of species in the genus *Cannabis*, some authorities recognised two other species in addition to *C. sativa*, these species include: *Cannabis indica* (*C. indica*), and *Cannabis ruderalis* (*C. ruderalis*). On a general note, the plant irrespective of its specie occurs as “*Dioecious*” i.e. as a male or female plant.⁵

According to David, some taxonomists have argued that: *C. indica* and *C. ruderalis* are only sub-species of *C. sativa*, rather than species of their own. It is presume that *C. sativa* specie originated from Eastern part of Asia continent, although, some experts belief its original is trace to Africa and some parts of America. Whether its origin is trace to Asia, Africa or America, marijuana is found virtually in all parts of the

⁵ David, E. N. (2017). *Marijuana, Contemporary World Issues Science, Technology, and Medicine* (2nd ed.): Saanta Barara, California. Denver, Colorado, p. 4.

world in recent times. It has different ancient names and slogans in different languages and in different countries. For example, in Chinese society it is known as “*ma*”; and in the United States it is known as “*marijuana*”. In ancient Greek it is known as *askánnabis*; Arabic- *kinnab* or *Quinnab*; English- *hemp*; Swahili- *bhandi*; Spanish- *Càñamo*; Italian- *Canapé*, and in French- *beuch*. In Turkish language it known as –“*esrar* or *kenevir*”; Mauritius- *gandia*; Mexican Spanish- *grifa*; German- *hanf*; Danish- *hemp*; Swedish- *hampa*; Dutch- *hennep*; Rwanda- *injaga*; Czech- *konopi*; Polish- *konopie*; Russian- *konopla*; Portuguese- *pando*; Korean- *sam-gwa*; and Japanese-it is known as “*taima*”.⁶

Amongst other chronological accounts particularly during the era before the Christian Era (BCE), it was discovered that marijuana or cannabis plant from which it comes has been beneficial to human thousands of years ago, more than it was estimated to have been in recent times. From the production of fibbers from hemp to manufacturing of oil from the plant’s seeds as well as for recreational drug produced from dried leaves, seeds and stems, cannabis has been useful to human. As far back as 6000 and 4000 BCE the plants’ seed was used in China and Turkmenistan for food and production of textiles respectively. In 2737 BCE cannabis was also used for medicinal purposes by a Chinese emperor, Shen Nung, who was reputed the conversion of cannabis for the treatment of “*beri-beri, gout, constipation, female weakness, malaria*” and a host of other medical conditions. Some ancient Egyptian healers as far back as 2000 BCE were also reputed for the use of marijuana for the treatment of “*sore eyes*”. Apart from the production of paper credited to the era (200 BCE), during the Han dynasty in China the plant was also widely used for manufacturing of “*canvas soils*” (a Latin word for cannabis and a Greek word *kannabis*).

As far back as 1000 BCE and up to this moment the female cannabis plant leaves and flowers was used for a drink known as “*Bhang*” during Hindus religious ceremonies. Till date it is use for the production of a popular mild intoxicant effects drink. In 500 BCE the hemp was cultivated and used in Stuttgart Germany for *fibber*, and was said to had

⁶ Torkelson, A. R. (1996). *The Cross Name Index to Medical Plant*, Vol. IV: *Plants in India medicine*, CRC Press, p. 1674, ISBN 9780849326356, OCLC 34038712. Retrieved from: <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/TIME>; Green, J. (2011 April 29) “List of Marijuana Slang Terms”. *The Weed Blog*. Retrieved from: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/list_of_names_for_cannabis; Marin, C. & Chon, T. (2013). *Cheech & Chong’s Almost Legal Book for Stoners*, Running Press, ISBN 9780762449873. Retrieved from: <https://luxury.rehabs.com/marijuana-rehab/street-names-and-nicknames>; Linder, C. (2015 April 19) “Pot Patois: A Comprehensive Etymology of marijuana”, *The Pitt News*. Retrieved from: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/list_of_names_for_cannabis; Steinnetz, K. (2017 April 20) “420 Day: Why there are so many different names for Weed. *TIME News*, New York. Retrieved from: <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/TIME>

spread to other parts of Europe from this moment and shortly after for manufacturing of *textile materials*. In 100CE, precisely second century, a Chinese scholar and government official, Ts'ai Lun used a mixture of *rags, fish nets, bark of trees and hemp* to manufacture *paper*. In 1700BCE archaeological evidence revealed that smoked marijuana was used as an aid during childbirth in Judea and throughout the Middle East.⁷

III. AFRICAN MOVE TOWARDS DECRIMINALISING CANNABIS

Apart from the tiny African country of Lesotho where the use of cannabis has been legalised, cannabis sativa is illegal in all the other African countries. However, in the last few years, a couple of African countries are in the vanguard of decriminalising the use and management of Cannabis also known as marijuana. Some of these countries are:

1) *South Africa*

The Republic of South Africa has made significant progress in the process of legalizing the use and management of Cannabis Sativa. It is estimated that this move could create an industry capable of generating a whooping annual income of close to \$2billion by conservative estimates. It is expected that this move could be implemented by 2023. As at September, 2018 the African Cannabis Report had confirmed that the Supreme Court in South Africa had given a legal backing for the use of Cannabis for recreational purposes. This pronouncement is a major step in the decriminalisation process as it provides adequate legal recognition of the legal use of Cannabis in South Africa. Consequently the government of South Africa is putting everything in place to organise the cannabis industry into a major economic venture capable of job creation and income generation for rural dwellers with abundant arable land and huge agrarian labour.⁸

2) *Morocco*

Morocco, a country in North Africa with a predominantly Muslim population tolerates the personal use of cannabis but generally illegal under the Moroccan laws. Within the informal sector, it is estimated that the cannabis industry employs about 800,000 people.⁹ The move to legalize cannabis in Morocco has been ongoing since 2014 from the opposition politicians in parliament. The move was however defeated but

⁷ David, E. N. (2017). *Marijuana, Contemporary World Issues Science, Technology, and Medicine* (2nd ed.): Saanta Barara, California. Denver, Colorado, p. 323.

⁸ Please see City Press News (2019). <http://city.press.news24.com/business/new-dawn-for-weed-in-sa-20190823>.

⁹ See Business Live (2019). <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/2019-03-23-africas-cannabis-industry-could-bourgeon-into-a-7-billion-affair/>

Ngboawaji Daniel Nte, et.al.

with the increasing relevance of cannabis to the informal sector's economic development in Morocco, there is renewed optimism that the move to legalise marijuana will be rejuvenated. Experts put the cannabis industry in Morocco at about \$900million by 2023.

3) Kenya

The East African largest economy Kenya made concerted efforts to legalise cannabis a few years ago. Specifically, towards the end of 2018 a draft bill proposing the regulation of marijuana was introduced in parliament. This generated a lot of fireworks around the push for the legalisation of marijuana usage in Kenya. A strong rallying movement has been formed in Kenya aimed at pushing the commercialisation and institutionalisation of medical application of cannabis in Kenya. These pro cannabis movements have articulated favourable rallies and mobilisations to justify the de-criminalisation of cannabis based on solid advantages over the disadvantages of the use of marijuana in the country.¹⁰

4) Ghana

In the West African country of Ghana, the consumption of cannabis is quite high even though the herb is prohibited legally in the country. In the background, marijuana consumption is widespread and highly tolerated. There is however a renewed consciousness about the need to legalise cannabis in the country. The copious support of the former Head of the Ugandan Narcotics Control Board has remained a major boost to the campaign to legitimize the consumption and management of marijuana in Ghana. The move is not however without opposition from mental health experts and opposition politicians in parliament.¹¹

IV. BENEFITS OF DECRIMINALISING THE MANAGEMENT OF MARIJUANA IN NIGERIA

Although, marijuana or cannabis up to date remains an illicit substance alongside other narcotic substances in Nigeria, and is under the regulation and control of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), a Federal government agency established under Degree Number 48 of 1989 with the constitutional responsibility of eliminating

¹⁰ See EnactAfrica (2018). <https://enactafrica.org/research/trend-reports/will.Kenya-lead-the-region-in-decriminalising-cannabis>

¹¹ Myjoyonline (2018). <https://myjoyonline/opinion/2018-september-25th-/lets-stop-the-pretence-and-position-ghana-to-take-the-advantage-of-the-emerging-cannabis-market.php>

the growing, processing, manufacturing, selling, exporting, and trafficking of hard drug, yet the country is identified as one of the major source as well as a circulating point of the substance in West Africa sub region. Nigeria is also ranked the eight highest consumers of the substance in the world.¹²

The question now is, could it be possible for the push or quest for legalising marijuana management, either for medicinal or recreational purposes, to receive official government endorsement, as well as international, continental and regional acceptance, since it is still under strict regulation by the world governments? Considering the position of medical-marijuana advocates in Nigeria and the rest of the world, it is obvious that the advantages derived from marijuana products, especially those extracted for medical purposes ranges from conventional cannabis flowers to synthetic cannabinoids produced from laboratories (Jonathan, et al., 2016: 79) makes it very difficult for national governments to resist the temptation not to decriminalise the management of marijuana.

Amoye (2020) while critically analysing the effects of marijuana in Nigeria argued that “despite the illegality and vilification of “*marijuana, weed, skunk or igbo*” as it is popularly referred to still found itself into nook and corner of the country, and warm the hearts of Nigerians. He went further to complement this standpoint by re-emphasising a 2018 report by the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) which revealed the extent to which marijuana is consumed in Nigeria, an estimated consumption rate of 10.8% of the population, which is roughly translated to 10.6 million Nigerians. He argued that the high effect and notorious status of the plant on its consumers contributed to its total ban in many countries, including Nigeria. Irrespective of its benefits, especially for health and medicinal purpose, the plant and its component substances such as Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), and Cannabidiol (CBD), etc., has been ignored and termed dangerous plant in its entirety.¹³

It is therefore worthy to note that while marijuana was singled out for decades as being dangerous to health; *alcohol and tobacco* with almost similar effect have been legalised. The fact remains that all are known causes of some chronic diseases, such as cancer, etc. Nevertheless, the economic benefits of marijuana if legalise in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. Chukwuma (2017) argued that the substance *cannabis* could induce mental disorders but on the contrary it could also be beneficial especially in the treatments of chronic pains as well as in

¹² See Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy. (2007), National Drug Policy 2007 – 2012 (PDF). Willington: Ministry of Health, ISBN 978-0-0478-3o751-1. Retrieved at: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_in_Nigeria

¹³ Amoye, T. (2020). Marijuana Legalization in Nigeria: Much ado about nothing. Vanguard News, Nigeria, April 11, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/04/marijuana-legalization-in-nigeria-much-ado-about-nothing/>

the treatment of cancer with the help of the *cannabis oil*. Complementing this standpoint, he re-emphasised US National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine report on her experiment on the drug health benefits and risks of *cannabis* and its *derived products*. Interestingly the organisation's conclusion that cannabis could be beneficial to mankind than it has been estimated by analysts, experts and scholars all over the world, although it might also increase the risk of mental health problems, cannot be neglected.¹⁴

Health Europa (2019) in its analysis of the health benefits of cannabis identified twenty health benefits of the substance that everyone should know. Considering the fact that cannabis can be found in various forms and in virtually everywhere in the world, its health benefits are also numerous to be mention. In short its benefits are ever growing, it argued. The organization noted that the beneficial properties that the *cannabis and hemp* plants imparts are due to the predominantly derivatives, *phytocannabinoids* (a group of naturally occurring biologically active chemical compounds), and the two most abundant- cannabidiol (CBD) and delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Since cannabis contains CBD, a chemical which has been found to impacts the brain, making it function better and THC which is found to relieving pains, therefore its medicinal benefits cannot be neglected because of the estimated health effects of its uses. However, the organisation pointed out the following health benefits of cannabis to include: relief of chronic pain; improves lung capacity; help lose weight; regulate and prevent diabetes; fight cancer; regulate seizures; mend bones; treatment for glaucoma; helps provide relief to individuals with multiple sclerosis; deal with pains link to Arthritis; reduces side effects linked to hepatitis C and increase the effectiveness of treatment; treats inflammatory bowel diseases; help with tremors associated with Parkinson's disease; and conclude that it is much safer than alcoholism, etc.¹⁵ Nigerians can equally enjoy the benefits of cannabis extractions for medicinal purpose if the management is methodically legalise and advantages exploited by the government of the federation.

¹⁴ Chukwuma, M. (2017). Risks, Benefits of Cannabis use, The Guardian Nigeria Newspapers (24 January). Retrieved from: <https://m.guardian.ng/features/risks-benefits-of-cannabis-use-by-studies/amp/>

¹⁵ Health Europa (2019). 20 Health Benefits of Cannabis that everyone should know, Medical Cannabis Network, (22 July), Retrieved from: <https://www.heaitheuropa.eu/health-benefits-of-cannabis/92499/>

V. IMPLICATIONS OF DECRIMINALISING OR LEGALISING MARIJUANA MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

Indisputably, lack of a proper enlightenment or campaign of *marijuana* or *cannabis* related health effect has led to uncertainty about the dangers or harms it can infest on the people, if any. A critical observation of the trend in rise of cannabis legislation across the world, especially in Europe and the United States shows that national governments have been overclouded by the economic gains and medicinal benefits of the substance, therefore, not minding much about the risks associated with its consumption by the youth who the more vulnerable. Chukwuma (2017) while quoting Marie McCormick of the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Committee, and a Professor of Material and Child Health, Department of Social and Behavioural Science at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, and a Professor of Paediatrics at Harvard Medical School in Cambridge reiterated the fact that the increased legalisation of cannabis and its derivatives made the substance more accepted and accessible to the public which consequently increased its use and raised important health concerns, not only in the United State but also in Europe.¹⁶

The World Health Organization (WHO) (2020) has however analyses acute effects of cannabis use to include: impairs cognitive development (i.e. capabilities of learning), including associative processes; free recall of previously learned items is often impaired when cannabis is used both during learning and recall periods; it is said to impairs psychomotor performance such as motor coordination, divided attention, and operative tasks of several types; human performance on complex machinery can also be impaired for as long as 24 hours after smoking, etc. In other words, if legalise in Nigeria its effect remains the same.

When it comes to medicinal benefit of *cannabis* it is one of the best use drugs for treating chronic pains. Research has shown that patients with chronic pains treated with drugs containing cannabis or its derivative “*cannabinoids*” responded faster than expected than untreated patients. From the scientific view, it is clear that the use of cannabis can have negative implications, especially in mental health cases. There are also substantial evidences that cannabis use is likely to increase the risk of schizophrenia and other psychoses, and the more it is used the more risk it becomes. Its daily use is also likely to exacerbate bipolar disorder symptoms in patients with the condition.

¹⁶ Chukwuma, M. (2017). *Loc.Cit.*

It also established that smoking of tobacco can increase the risk of lung, head, and neck cancers. Like tobacco smoking studies have further revealed the risk of smoking marijuana and equate same to the effects of tobacco smoking, although there are insufficient evidences that marijuana use has a link to lung cancer, head and neck cancers, as well as subtype of testicular cancer such as seminoma testicular cancer- a slow-growing form of the disease. Furthermore, there is no evidence linking marijuana use and risk in pregnancy and offspring cancer risk.¹⁷ This does not mean that marijuana smoking or consumption in any form is beneficial to human. Its side effects are as much as its benefits, if not more, hence the fear of the repercussions of its eventual legalisation in Nigeria.

According to the U. S. Drug Enforcement Administration (2003)¹⁸ report on Health, Education, Safety, Experts Join White House Drug Czar purposely to educate parents about the risks of youth marijuana use cited in David (2017: 135), marijuana has over 468 distinct chemicals and about 40% more cancer-causing agent and four times the tar of tobacco cigarettes. The question now is that if marijuana is made more available, either through government legislation what would be the consequence? There is therefore the possibility that users of marijuana will compromise their lungs and incur higher rates of cancer and emphysema on the one hand, and on the other hand any expected tax or taxes to be collected from marijuana cigarettes sales or in any form, will definitely equates the social costs of the health and safety consequences it will provide.¹⁹ Following these standpoints, what is the need legalising marijuana management in Nigeria since the country like any other country of the world is not immune from the huge negative effects of the use of marijuana and increased dependence its legalisation is going to offer the nation. In Canada for instance, the legal implementation of criminal charges fall into the trap of societal manipulation by making suspects managed by care givers.²⁰ As one article noted, “abuse of the program structure is systemic; enforcement is never simple; and there are

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ See U. S. Drug Enforcement Administration. (2003). “Health Education, Safety Experts Join White House Drug Czar to Educate Parents about Risks of Youth of Marijuana Use. Retrieved from: <http://cannabisnews.com/news/15/thread/5683.shtml> World Health Organization (WHO) (2020). Management of substance abuse. Retrieved from: https://www.who.int/substance_abuse/facts/cannabis/en/

¹⁹ See U. S. Drug Enforcement Administration. (2010). “Speaking Out against Drug Legalization”. Retrieved from: http://www.dea.gov/pr/multimedia-library/publications/speaking_out.pdf.

²⁰ Blake, D., & Finlaw, J. (2014). Marijuana legalization in Colorado: learned lessons. *Harv. L. & Pol’y Rev.*, 8, 359.

numerous actors willing to take blatant advantage of the ‘gray market’ for personal benefit, despite the risk to society”.²¹

Colorado State in the United States provides a useful benchmark for the legalisation of marijuana as a major source of funds for economic development. The policy so far has created a veritable arrangement designed for objective regulation and management of commercial marijuana to ensure optimum decorum against illegal marijuana. In some other states like Washington and Oregon, permissive licensing is operational with a somewhat limited scope as compared to the State of Colorado. In all of the aforesaid examples, what can easily be deduced is the solemn reality that modern states have moved from the unproductive blanket punitive measures against marijuana consumption to a sensible utilitarian approach in line with global realities. This is where Nigeria should key in and be fast about it too.

VI. CONCLUSION

It is a well known fact that a lot of Latin American countries including Bolivia where Cocaine originated have institutionalised the cooperative production of Coca plant that produces cocaine and significantly decriminalised its production. Using a community based production paradigm, this project has remained a source of income within a coordinated regulatory framework. The hitherto dreaded coca plant that made Columbia’s Pablo Escobar a notorious drug nightmare to the Americas and indeed the United States has now become a legitimate means of livelihood. What can therefore be deduced from the foregoing is that the so-called criminally-induced herbs if properly managed can turn around the political economy of communities, regions and provinces and indeed nation states. This reality is what is propelling the western countries to adjust their penal codes with regards to marijuana and such related herbs.

In Nigeria, current efforts by the governor of Ondo state requesting the overhauling the narcotics laws and jurisprudence to allow the state de-criminalise the commercial cultivation of marijuana and turn same to a major source revenue generation was vehemently opposed. The opposition stems generally from crass ignorance of the dynamics of global paradigm shift in the management of narcotic herbs. In the same vein, sheer politicization of virtually every issue in the country could be a major factor in a country where all forms of drug law enforcement on marijuana have failed. The stark reality is that Nigeria cannot be left behind in this new global reality and the inevitable need of the diversification of the petrolic/mono economy in the country. It is needful for appropriate legislative frameworks to be institutionalised in line with

²¹ *Ibid.*

Ngboawaji Daniel Nte, et.al.

global standards and international conventions on the management of narcotic herbs.

Living in delusory denial of the imperatives of decriminalising marijuana and turning same to a source of income for national development is at its best a national shame. With one of the finest species of marijuana on planet earth and the fact that policing marijuana in Nigeria has remained largely farcical, common sense demands a change of strategy and in this case, the paper has proven that it is a win-win situation for the country.

Finally, the work has made a modest analysis of the global paradigm push towards the de-criminalisation of marijuana usage and administration especially from the western perspective. Developing nations including Nigeria really has a very limited option not to join this global band wagon to reap from a significantly win-win situation. Evidentially, it has been established that policing marijuana has remained an uphill task over the years as back channels for marijuana trafficking remains unconquerable. As a nation, the time to queue into this huge global market is now to reap the inherent abundant benefits there from.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

While the study has help to clarify the benefits and risks of using marijuana or cannabis and its derivatives for economic, recreational and medicinal purposes, policymakers are expected to adopt the following recommendation to ensure a balance between the risk posed by the use of cannabis and the benefits with which its legalisation would offer to the country.

1. One major benefit of marijuana or cannabis legislation is that it can create legitimate job opportunities to the masses considering the increasing population and high employment rates in Nigeria. A situation where firms can legally obtain licenses to cultivate the plant (*C. sativa*) in commercial quantity and export to countries on demand, though with strict government regulation, is likely to create jobs opportunities and increases foreign direct investment (FDI). Foreign investors are likely to be attracted to invest in the country because of the legislation couple with tax liberalisation. In other words, we recommend methodical legalisation of management of marijuana and a liberal tax regime (i.e. affordable taxes to be paid by investors. This no doubt will attract both foreign and local investors in production of cannabis for commercial purposes.
2. Further research should be encouraged in order to explore other benefits of cannabis production that may not be known to the government of the federation. This likely to erase the fear that its legalisation could be detrimental to human health. In other word,

the government should as matter of urgency understudy the legislation of marijuana in the developed countries, such as the United States, etc. where its methodical legalisation is already in place, and adopt some in Nigeria.

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Ngboawaji Daniel Nte, et.al.

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Ngboawaji Daniel Nte, et.al.

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