

Records of Some Socio-Economic and Health Challenges Elicited by 'Ozu' Consumption in Ika Land, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

Ika is one of the minor ethnic groups in Delta State, Nigeria. It has a total land mass of about 1150 km² and an approximate population of 259,850 (1991 census).

The relationship between the Ika culture and 'Ozu' consumption is well known. 'Ozu' is an alcoholic liquor produced from palm juice. It is generally loved and enjoyed by the Ika people. The long association with and permissive behavior to 'Ozu' ingestion may not be without problems. This preliminary research therefore attempts to highlight some of the social, economic and health problems elicited by 'Ozu' consumption in Ika land.

METHODOLOGY

Collection of Data

The interviewer's administered questionnaire method [1] was used to obtain information on the socio-economic power and health status of 'Ozu' consumers. A total of 1,002 men and 900 women respondents comprising both 'Ozu' drinkers and those who did not drink the liquor, were randomly selected from different parts of the Ika community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the study are shown in Table 1 which gives the summary of the information acquired regarding the social,

economic and health challenges associated with the consumption of 'Ozu' in Ika communities.

In time past, the virtues of alcoholic beverages have been extolled. Indeed, the social use of wines, beers and other spirits has long been associated with conviviality and gracious living. When consumed in average amounts, certain alcoholic beverages confer health benefits. Moderate consumption of alcohol has been reported to be protective against coronary heart disease [2], and this has been attributed to the ability of alcohol to increase the level of high density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol which removes cholesterol from the arterial wall and transports it back to the liver for metabolism [3]. Notwithstanding, alcohol is known to be a pharmacological agent whose abuse could cause serious personal and social problems [4]. The data obtained from this study show that the level of intoxication positively correlates with the degree of crime especially among the heavy drinkers of 'Ozu', and that the heavy consumption of 'Ozu' appears to affect the economic power, health status and marital harmony of that category of 'Ozu' drinkers (Table 1). It can be observed from this study that males between the ages of 20 and 40 years, who form a large part of the active labour force, are most likely to abuse 'Ozu'. This preliminary study reveals sizeable problems and challenges induced by 'Ozu' consumption in Ika communities. Therefore, further investigations are required to quantify these problems and provide sufficient data needed to stimulate awareness and possibly intervention policies.

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Table 1. The Questionnaire obtained information on the social, economic and health challenges induced by ‘ozu’ consumption in Ika Province of Delta State, Nigeria

	‘OZU’ DRINKING POPULATION (71%)						NON-DRINKING POPULATION (29%)	
	MALE (63%)			FEMALE (37%)			MALE (38%)	FEMALE (62%)
	L (10%)	M (38%)	H (52%)	L (61%)	M (32%)	H (7%)		
Marital Status								
Single	7	5	11	3	5	13	3	-
Married	78	77	38	81	76	42	84	88
Widowed/widowed	8	12	15	7	11	16	9	9
Divorced	7	6	36	9	8	29	4	3
Education								
None	33	30	64	26	27	53	28	25
Primary	51	56	29	48	51	42	41	57
Secondary	11	12	5	17	19	5	30	18
Tertiary	5	2	2	9	3	-	4	-
Income (N)/month								
0-9,999	7	6	44	22	19	38	5	18
10,000-49,999	66	57	45	39	47	49	56	59
≥50,000	27	37	11	39	34	13	39	23
Age (yrs)								
20-39	56	48	42	49	52	49	55	53
40-59	37	51	46	41	44	42	34	37
≥60	7	1	12	10	4	9	11	10
Intoxication								
None	2	-	-	7	-	-	100	100
Low	83	18	-	89	31	22	-	-
Moderate	15	77	10	4	62	36	-	-
High	-	5	68	-	7	42	-	-
Very high	-	-	22	-	-	-	-	-
Crime Rate								
None	4	2	-	67	59	26	92	98
Low	87	65	26	33	38	31	8	2
Moderate	9	23	48	-	3	34	-	-
High	-	10	18	-	-	9	-	-
Very high	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-
Health status								
Very poor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poor	-	-	16	5	7	11	-	-
Fair	51	57	49	38	59	56	37	41
Good	44	41	35	57	34	33	53	56
Very good	5	2	-	-	-	-	10	3

Values are expressed as the average of 1902 respondents in %.

L - Light drinkers (consume 1-2 glasses of ‘ozu’/day), M-moderate drinkers (consume 3-4 glasses of ‘ozu’ /day), H – Heavy drinkers (consume >4 glasses of ‘ozu’ /day).

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