

The Extent and Panacea for Drug Abuse and Indiscipline in Kenyan Schools

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Abstract: Drug abuse is indeed a menace in Kenyan schools requiring concerted efforts to overcome. This paper explores the extent of the menace, precipitating factors, effects on health and discipline of students and possible remedies to the problem. The study underscores the urgent need to address the problem so as to salvage the lives of victims and minimize incidences of abuse.

Key words: Addressing drug abuse, drug abuse, prevention measures, risk factors, secondary schools, students

INTRODUCTION

Kenya along with other developed countries of Africa has lately been experiencing a rapid increase in production, distribution, and consumption of multiple drugs of dependence. It has not been spared the pestilence of drugs and it is abundantly clear that it is a transit point for hard drugs from Columbia heading to European capitals (Mwaura, 2003). According to a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC-WHO, 2005; World Drug Report, 2005), some 200 Million people or 5% of the total world's population aged between 15 and 64 years have used drugs. The report further says that no nation has been immune to the devastating effects of drug abuse. The office of the National Agency for the campaign against Drug Abuse (NACADA, 2004b) commissioned the first ever national baseline survey on the abuse of alcohol and other drugs in Kenya in 2001. The study targeted Kenyan Youth aged between 10-24 years. The report which was released in 2002 revealed that substances abuse, both illicit and licit was forming a culture amongst Kenyan Youth. Another country wide survey conducted by NACADA (2004a, 2002) among students and school leavers found that hard drugs like heroin, cocaine and mandrax were widely used in Kenyan Schools. Yet another study by the Great Lakes University Kisumu in 2009 also found out that 58% of the secondary schools students in Kisumu District had consumed alcohol at some point in their lives (The Daily Nation, 2009).

Amayo (1993) also noted that trafficking of hard drugs into developing countries had not spared Kenya and that drug consumption and dependence among secondary and college students had led to unrest, destruction of life and property. In Lugari District it was confirmed from the school records that in the last five years over 20 students were either suspended or expelled from Lumakanda Secondary School for abusing drugs. On the other hand over 12 students from Mautuma Secondary School were

suspended for having taken drugs in the same year (Chesile, 1996). Drug abuse among the youth especially in secondary schools has endangered their lives and this has caused a lot of concern as the vice indeed has been identified as a major cause of problems experienced in secondary schools in Kenya (Gikonyo, 2005). The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (World Drug Report, 2000), ranked Kenya among the four African nations notorious for either consumption or manufacture of narcotics in the world. It is against this background that this article attempts to explore the extent, precipitators of the menace, effects and possible solutions to drug abuse.

The extent of drug abuse in Kenyan school: According to the (Pudo, 1998) the influence of drug use by students has hampered education and management in Kenyan secondary schools.

According to a report by NACADA (2004b), in Kenya recent statistics indicate that one in every three high school students take alcohol. Another 8.3% smoke cigarettes while almost one in every ten (9.1%) chew Miraa. About 3% smoke bhang and also take hard drugs like heroin, cocaine, mandrax and tranquilizers (The Daily Nation, 2004).

In a speech delivered during the official closing of the African Convention of Principals (ACP) in Kenya on 27th August 2004, the Minister for Education, Hon. George Saitoti, noted that some cities in Africa had been identified as either destinations or conduits for hard drugs. Drug peddlers and barons were known to target the youth as a lucrative market for their unethical businesses. He further noted that one of the root causes of some indiscipline cases in institutions could be traced to drug and substance abuse. For this reason the war against drugs and substance abuse was one that Kenya could not afford to lose because failure to address this problem would lead to the destruction of our youth and thus the future of our