Drug Abuse in Schools: Examining the factors that lead the students of both Kamuiru and Njega secondary schools to engage in the vice

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Abstract
The article sets out to unveil the challenge of drugs in Njega and Kamuiru secondary schools of Kenya. With drug challenge becoming the single major threat to the entire education system in tropical Africa, the sampling of the two schools will help in opening up the matter for decisive action by the relevant stakeholders. Methodologically, the article begins by theorizing the issues regarding drug menace as it wonders: Why do teens engage in this vice? What are the practical effects of drug abuse? And more importantly, what can we do to arrest the challenge? Even though the article has not given the final solution on how it can comprehensively be tackled, it has however opened up possibilities that can lead to the final onslaught. The materials in this article are gathered via oral interviews, some selected readings, participant observation especially through visiting the specific sites, and through critical analysis.

Key words: Drug causing factors, Students arrests, Drug supplies, Why abuse drugs

Introduction
The purpose of this article is to investigate the factors that make students of both Kamuiru and Njega secondary schools, in Kenya, abuse drugs that have impacted negatively on educational standards and the entire quality of life. This review is in line with the study on Drug Abuse in Anglican Sponsed Schools, will be done systematically under the following sections:

- Why people abuse drugs,
- The effect of abusing drug on behaviour,
- Impact of drug use on Social Economic life,
- Does church have a role to play in curbing the drugs? How does drug abuse lead to the decline of education in Anglican sponsored schools?
- What is the role of the church in addressing the problem of drug abuse?

As it will be noted, drug abuse has contributed in the deterioration of education standards, especially for K.C.S.E (Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education) Examination. The danger is that, even in the so-called religious sponsored schools, the Anglican church in particular, the situation is as bad as in other non-religious sponsored schools. Why has silence become the norm in a continent that claims to be the most religious and God-worshipping? Has the society failed to understand itself and thereby rendering itself impotent in these shores?

**Why People Abuse Drug**

A drug is defined as any substance which affects the central nervous system by either stimulating or depressing it. The legal substances are; alcohol, tobacco, tea and coffee etc., and may not have adverse effects on the health of the consumer if taken in reasonable quantities. There are also illegal drugs which include cocaine, *mandrax*, heroine, bhang; *kuber* and *miraa* are harmful to human health even when taken in small quantities. There are others new organic solvents of inhaling of volatile compounds that depress the nervous system (include paint thinners, colour removers, breaching agents, glue, gasoline, petroleum products, lighter cleaning fluids and aerosols. It is true that, evidence has confirmed rising incidences of drug abuse among the students worldwide (MOE, 2018).

A study has also shown high cases of unrest in schools, colleges and general resentment, restlessness among the youth consisting of 65% men and 32% of women Kenyans smoke cigarettes
and 45% are below 20 years of age. Interestingly, UNDP (2018), Statistics confirms 60% of students use one drug or another. Naomi Were (2003) in his book, *Discipline, Guidance & Counselling in Schools*, categorizes drug abusers into three main groups; namely:

(a) Occasional users of drugs; by the students uses drugs and depressants such as, *Miraa* when they are studying at night. *Miraa* meant to keep them awake all the night. Roche’s-enables them to sleep when they like.

(b) Thrill seekers-uses drugs for experience and excitement, Drugs taken in groups during weekends and parties.

(c) Drug addicts-this group consist with strong psychological and physical dependence on drugs. This group of abusers starts as occasional users, but gradually progress until they became addicted (Were, 2003).

The article has also noted other reasons which compel people to result to drugs: namely Psychological nature –

- a desire to feel better fast,
- dismiss fear and evade boredom; and
- endeavor to increase self-esteem and
- desire to face life without inhibitions.
- Eagerness to widen consciousness and be a new person.
- A desire to find stimuli and fill the inner void.

It is also a means of relieving tension and soothing anxiety and depression out of sheer curiosity. Reasons of drug abuse on the social cultural factors; (a) Rebellion against the family traditional values (b) Lack of education and therefore no information. In addition, people can result to drugs psychological in particular, but not exclusively in order to relieve physical pains and discomfort (Were, 2003).

It is true that, Age of onset on drug use tends to begin in mid-to-late adolescence, though it is greater among individuals who experience early puberty (Were, 2003). Peer pressure group –every person deals with every layers of society starting with their core family and then the extending to school work –their circles of friends and the community-While these various components provide
a positive influence, most of the time, they can also add to risk you and the person you care about face for potential addiction. Associating with the drug or being rejected by peers, can create problem behaviours and influence attitudes and norms related to drug and substance use (Were, 2003). Early and persistence problem behaviour, risk-taking, and sensation-seeking aggressiveness or antisocial behaviour persisting into early adolescence predicts later adolescence aggressiveness on drug abuse (Hawkins et al., 1995).

In short, the study has noted that the adolescents who have poor parental monitoring as the significantly more likely to use a variety of substances (Shillington et al., 2005). The abuse of drug has also been prompted by low perception of harm towards drug use as a risk factor for use (Gerra et al., 2004). It is true that, according to investigation the individuals with attitudes or values favourable to drugs are more likely to initiate substance use (Hawkins et al.1995). The youth access and availability of illegal drugs at very low prices and found in every corner of our locality leads to increase use (Hawkins et al., 1995). Drugs infiltrate our country and then reach the youth in the institutions of higher learning, by road through our porous borders and through the sea ports and airports. It is documented, that cocaine and other drug substance abused worth over billions have been impounded while on transit through the country, to the market. Although this consignment may be on transit for destinations in Europe and America, it should be noted that some of these drugs substance may end up in the hands of our youth especially students in the institutions of higher learning.

**The effect of drug abuse on behaviour**

Casual taking of drugs tends to be progressive conditions that slowly exert more and more power and control over the individual, both psychological and physical. They have to take first drug to arouse themselves (their ego strength) before they perform any task whatsoever. The mindset of a person who abuses drug is that of a person who want to make fun, but pressure-seeking behaviour can often develop into chemical dependency. Once addiction takes hold, continued use of drugs is necessary to feeling as if you can function normally. Drugs affect specific organs the smoke and tar from tobacco damage the lungs; opium derivatives heroin, morphine, methadone-affect the brain considerably. The article has unveiled how the drugs wake up latent mental disorders and provoke them beyond the normal trends in ones’ lifetimes. In view of this, there are as many as 60
psychiatric and clinical disorders that are associated with drug taking (Gerra et al., 2004). Additionally, there are associated risk factors in using drugs via parents, a phenomenon which can lead to HIV and AIDS transmission. An example is in the case of Spain where two-thirds of the HIV (AIDS Virus) infection is transmitted through drugs.

The article has noted the dangers of drug abuse to the youth in learning institutions that are known and scientifically documented. Drugs encourage laziness which result to low productivity, absenteeism and inability to work effectively, lower the academic performance of the students. Drug abuse leads to drop outs from schools (Gerra et al., 2004). This abuse leads to violence, riots, and general indiscipline of students which makes them to lose control of their lives, thus lacking both goals and direction (Dishion and Skaggs, 2000). Life expectancy reduced through psychological, mental and physical deterioration (NACADA) Survey 2004. Drug abusers die young. Drug abuse contributes to immoral habits among the youth students such as stealing, prostitution, rapes and homo-sexuality. Bhang, which is commonly abused results into: excitement, increased appetite, disorientated behaviour, poor memory, poor judgement of time and distance as these interfere with proper functioning of the brain (NACADA, 2016).

**Impact of Drug Use on Social Economic Life**

Natural justice states that poverty is not natural but it is human made. For the erstwhile Kenyan chief justice Mutunga, the custodian of law of the Republic of Kenya, the Kenyan Economy is that of bandit economy – an economy that is being perpetuated by mighty and powerful cartels. He likened these cartels as Al Compone’s mob that wreaked havoc in U.S.A in 1920S (Mutunga, 2016).

Mutunga further equated him as riding a tiger hoping the monster will not devour him. Kenyans have experienced various mega scandals since independence that are normally perpetuated ironically by their elected leaders to the detriment of the country’s development. And this complicates the quest for poverty eradication that continues to bite the citizens. It should be noted that Kenyans have witnessed endemic, massive looting, and plundering of public resources in great magnitude such as Goldenberg scandal of 1992 – a phenomenon where there was ‘compensation’ for the gold which never was in the first place; and where billions of money were lost. The events
never ceased to unfold with the revelation of another endemic corruption by the name Anglo-leasing scandals by the same leadership entrusted to protect and defend the constitution of the Kenyan republic.

Even before the dust of the Anglo-leasing scandal settled down, another shocking revelation on National Youth Service (NYS) scandal in 2015 emerged. All these scandals have tainted our image as a country in the way akin to the way hard substances do. The above scandal prompted the respected industrialist, Manu Chandaria, to challenge Kenyans to reverse divisions and save the country from Social and Economic crises (Chandaria, 2016). Further, the erstwhile Archbishop Eliud Wabukala of the Anglican Church proposed the need for a referendum in order to rid the country from greedy politicians (Wabukala, 2016). Former Anticorruption Tzar in the administration of Kibaki and grand coalition government warned of a threat corruption posed to the nation.

Again, the former Governance and Ethics Permanent Secretary in the Kenya Government (2003-2005), John Githongo, told the *New York Times* “we don’t have a government. We have a scandal” (Githongo, 2016). In a nutshell, due to grand corruptions that have penetrated to almost every sector of governance in the country, this has brought misery and desperation amongst the unemployed youth who resort to drug abuse in order to subdue stress and in the process some get trapped into addiction. The study has unearthed the professional but unemployed youth do turn to drugs to escape from the reality of hardships. They consider death as the most appropriate than grinding in poverty. As noted earlier in this study, illegal drugs have emanated from laxity shown by the legal custodian of law and order enforcers who revert to accepting bribes by closing eyes to the illegal drug peddle ring. It is true that, those that become hooked to the habit do little or not at all nation building but turn to sell family properties in order to buy drugs and other substances. It should be noted that, drug addiction leads to wastage of working hours to rebuild oneself and the nation and thus, poverty for addicts due to low productivity of goods and services.

**Common Drugs of Abuse**

In the area surrounding Njega and Kamuiru Secondary Schools of Kenya, the researcher noted the subtle nature of accessing common drugs that are eventually abused by oblivious learners. Among
the common drugs that are hurting our students in school were identified in the course of research, even though Canabis Sativa (Bhangi) appeared more common. In the 21st century however, Kagumo Town, which is near Kamuiru Secondary School has most of these drugs, though peddled in great secrecy:

1. **Canabis Plant**: It is spread throughout the country due to its easy availability and low prices. The cultivation of the herbal cannabis was not a problem of much concern to the society in the early 80s. Its socio-economic effects were not felt then. It was a source of income to the neighbors of Mt. Kenya and Aberdares forests, Kisii, Isebania, Taveta among other places. Lately, large quantities originate from Uganda and Tanzania (The law on drugs in these countries is weak).

2. **Heroin** is a semi-synthetic derivative of morphine. It is a Psycho depressant. Morphine and codeine belong to this group and have a High degree of analgesic activity. Its main sources are Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq or Turkey transiting through East Africa to USA or Europe. A small percentage however is locally consumed in Kenya.

3. **Cocaine and Crack**: Crack is derived from cocaine. Cocaine (Powder) is dissolved in a solution of ammonia or sodium bicarbonate (Baking soda) and water. The solution is boiled until a solid substance separates from the boiling mixture. The solid substance (Crack Cocaine) is allowed to dry and then broken or cut into rocks. Abusers heat the crack and smoke it. These drugs emerged a few years ago as date rape drugs, because of concern about their abuse, to aid in sexual assault. Cocaine and crack are stimulants hence speed up the activities.

### 4.3 Result Findings in a Diagram

The three diagrams below represent some critical information that was gathered in the course of the research. Interviews were asked several questions. Among the three key questions are:

1. Have You Ever Used Drugs Other Than For Medical Purposes?
2. What Causes Drug indulgencies?
3. What is the Source of Drugs among Students in Secondary Schools?

A research that we conducted with about 360 respondents posed this question:

**Figure 1: Have You Ever Used Drugs Other Than For Medical Purposes?**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in Years</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14-16</td>
<td>15 (25%)</td>
<td>23 (75%)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>77 (29%)</td>
<td>90 (71%)</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>11 (58%)</td>
<td>4 (42%)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: What Causes Drug indulgencies?
(Sampling 360 Interviewed People)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSES</th>
<th>FIGURES AND PERCENTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Curiosity</td>
<td>105 (19.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Need for acceptance by friends</td>
<td>92 (17.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Ignorance on dangers of drug abuse</td>
<td>71 (16.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Easy availability of drugs</td>
<td>34 (11.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Low cost of drugs</td>
<td>105 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3: What is the Source of Drugs among Students in Secondary Schools? (Sampling 360 interviewees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Drugs Sneaked into schools</th>
<th>Figures and percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Slums (low socioeconomic areas) around the school</td>
<td>92 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Kiosks/Shops</td>
<td>71 (20.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Touts</td>
<td>44 (12.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Watchmen</td>
<td>31 (8.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Shoe Menders (cobblers),</td>
<td>24 (6.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Cooks</td>
<td>20 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total interviewed, 180 respondents

Drug Abuse in Njega Secondary School
In a case study for mid-1983, Cannabis Sativa was discovered to have been infiltrated at Njega mixed secondary school, sponsored by Anglican Church of Kenya, in a large quantity. This had far reaching implications upon the students and the institution in general. According to my findings, it all started with a small amount of drug being sneaked into the school compound by the peddlers. After the drug substance was abused for some time, students turned to the neighbouring village of Kiamuthambi, where the local illicit brews, together with drug dealers had huge consignments. The drug substance was abused seriously without prior knowledge of the entire administration. In view of this, students took the ignorance of the school administration and eventually became great abusers of hard substances. According to a research that I conducted, some misguided boys, in mid-1983, put cannabis sativa into a drum that contained boiled water for students. In turn, the boiled water was meant for students use as they drank hot cocoa or
chocolate, or even for preparing a cup of tea. To this end, anybody who prepared cocoa or chocolate, or even a cup of tea on that material day used hot water that was contaminated with drug substances without prior knowledge or caution whatsoever, hence every student was put under a drug.

After the evening preps, almost everybody had been affected by the drug; hence there was a clear effect. In turn, this precipitated the mother of all rampages in the institution that had never reported any sort of disturbance and/or destruction – or strikes for that matter. Sadly, most of the female students were raped and others were seriously injured with severe damages in their bodies just as the institution suffered damages in its physical structures. The police were called in and a number of male students were arrested for raping and attempting murder. Seven students were arraigned in the court at Kerugoya law court; charges were preferred against them and were eventually charged with rape and conspiracy to murder their colleagues, the female students. After a protracted legal tussle, the seven students were sentenced and jailed for three years each under probation. The investigation was conducted to ascertain the cause of the disturbances that visited the school. Interestingly, it was established that there existed a drug cartel in Njenga Secondary School which had gone unnoticed. It was smuggling drugs at will or as if there was no law, no government, no school administration and so on. As this was happening, weren’t the neighbors of the school who are Anglican Christians not seeing these activities and moved on to save the school that is sponsored by the Anglican Church?

In a nutshell, drug substance abuse has penetrated into higher institutions of learning with far-reaching consequences. Unless checked, it will be out of control. The regrettable event that took place on 16 June 1983 got the attention and coverage of the Kenya newspapers such as the *Daily Nation* and *Taifa Leo*, and embarrassed the school all the more. It affected the morale of learning for more than two years, as some parents withdrew their children and took them to the other “better” schools. Easy and cheap availability of drugs and other substance abuse in our locality has always made it easier for students to access it. Surprisingly, a person with mere 20 Kenya shilling can get a piece of it, though of course, an addict would want a bigger piece. Surprisingly, there are students who grow this drug in their parents’ farms, particularly along the fence so as to avoid detection.
From my research as a critical observer, I noted that local illicit brews such as Chang’aa, Mnazi, Muratina, Nguuru (the famous morasses) and power alcohol are available at very low prices and are found in every corner of our locality. Some students are drug traffickers, peddlers and seemingly profit from this booming business and always looking for people to recruit, as they are fervent to do so.

Drug Abuse in Kamuiru Secondary School
The school is located next to Kamuiru village in Kirunda sub-location, Mutira location, Kirinyaga central district in Kirinyaga County. It is a county Boys’ boarding school which began as a mixed secondary school in 1964 under the efforts of the Anglican Church and the local community until 1978 when girls were phased out and the school has remained fully for boys. The student number had remained stable until 1997 when the population dropped from 500 to 300 students due to drug-related unrest and disturbances. It has got various challenges due to its proximity to Kagumo market or Kagumo Town which is a walking distance from the school; and where drugs are readily available. For example, on 14th July 1998, during the tenure of the erstwhile Principal, Mr. Mwalim (name withheld), there was massive growing of Bhang and Cannabis Sativa on the flower gardens of the school compound, and especially around the various dormitories.

It appears that this growing of Bhangi or Canabis Sativa was accepted across the student fraternity as even the active members of the Christian Union were not keen to report to the authorities; hence it grew like other flowers in the compound without any one raising the red herring. It was indeed grown in all areas of the school farm that were unused though in a concealed way in order to trick the school administration and some students who would have resisted the move. There were also local illicit drugs dens around the school vicinity. As a matter of fact, the institution borders the famous Kamuiru village, which was used as a people’s reserve by the colonial government, especially during the Mau-Mau war of Kenya’s independence (1952-60). Therefore, due to all these indicators, there was serious alcohol and drug substance abuse in the institution. The students abused drugs and became addicts, thus the first attempt to burn down the school was made.
From my anonymous interviewees, I gathered that the attempt to burn the school first failed after the fire inferno was quickly put off by a combined force of the school security personnel and the subordinate staff which resided in the school compound. Administration responded with tough massive suspensions of the student ring leaders and suspicious characters. This was after the discovery that Cannabis sativa (Bhangi) was being growth within the school compound and some students were great peddlers. Of interest to note is that some drug addicts were expelled but some remain undetected – and they continued with their criminal activities undetected, collaborating with outsiders to supply drugs in the school.

On 14th July 1998, a second successful attempt was made by the rioting students who set a blaze the entire administration block. The well-built government funded administration block that also hosted some classes was reduced to ashes. The criminal action had far-reaching consequences: -

1. The study established that a High School with complete boarding facility was reduced to a mere day school in 2002, with a number of 104 students which reduced the student’s population to 60 students in the third term.
2. The face of a government High School was changed and important document burned down to ashes.
3. The massive retrenchment was effected because the school could not sustain a large work force.
4. The change of guard was effected and another school head took over as the school principal from the incumbent Mr. Mwalim.
5. Side effects are felt to this day. For after boarding facilities were reopened for form one students with very strict rules to ensure discipline is maintained, in 2007, a fourth stream was introduced by the ministry without funding for extra classes. This has created pressure on the existing facilities, classes, dormitories, sanitary and staffing to this date.

Drugs Beyond Kamuiru and Njega Schools

The study also establishes that there are also some other social disturbances that are brought forth by the drug abuse in other institutions of higher learning; especially the Catholic Sponsored Schools. This has been brought about by the peer pressure group. The teenage youth have an urge to belong, to be loved and liked by those who are close to them. If the peer group is hooked on
alcohol and drug substance abuse, the pressure from such groups dictates that the teenage youth also emulate such behaviour in order to meet the group expectations or approval.

The youth in our schools who feel insecure find comfort and approval by conforming to the standard of a peer group. It is also a reprisal case, which is a case study found in mid-1984, in Kerugoya Boys High School sponsored by Catholic church, during the district football match between Kerugoya and Kamuiru Boys’ Schools. The match between those two giant institutions, largely degenerated into serious violence, and fatal fight ensued that costed life of a student from Kerugoya Boys High School. There were a lot of damages on people’s property, such as vehicles, window panes and many people were hurt in the ensuing commotion; for Kerugoya town was turned into a battle field. In this incident, thorough investigation was conducted by the concerned agency and the findings attributed the whole episode to drug abuse as the cause of the disturbances and its resultant killing of one of the students plus the injuries incurred. This is further strengthened by the evidence of illicit drugs from Kaitheri village which is about 300 metres from Kerugoya Boys High School. The influence of the students, who had come from within the school proximity, had contributed a lot in drug substance abuse and peddling.

Like Kamuiru Boys, the school administration discovered the growing of Cannabis Sativa (Bhangi) around the dormitories, flower beds, and other unused land. There were well built barns in the septic and rockers thrown into the septic containing concealed drug substance sneaked into the school compound. The fight between these two protagonists was as a result of massive drug substance abuse that had penetrated in the institution without prior-knowledge of the administration. As noted above, there are negative effects which resulted from this fatal fight between these two institutions. Some of these effects can be felt later as some parents consulted African witchdoctors to bewitch the killers of their son, or those who broke the bones of their children who survived. As a result, some of the men who were bewitched can be seen at Kagumo Town loitering as mad people; while another one remained in his falling house at Kiamai village, Mutira, 30 years later (1984-2016), never married, does no substantial work, confused always, only has to be fed by his siblings and so on. While it’s difficult to tell whether that is the actual reason, the belief among the locals and others who knew how the confrontations between Kerugoya Boys and Kamuiru Boys were conducted believes that this is the de facto situation.
Conclusion
The article has helped us to spot out clearly the causes of substance abuse in the general sense thereby helping us in our conceptual clarifications as we showcased Kamuiru and Njega schools. In other words, what causes drug addiction? How does the effect of substance abuse manifest itself in the life of an individual? The article has also compared the drug cartels with the major scandals facing the post-independence Kenya such as the Goldenberg scandal of 1992 where millions of dollars were lost and the Anglo-leasing scandal of 2004 which upset the Kenyan nation. In short, the article has helped us to understand the magnitude of the challenge under discussion and exploration with particular reference to Kamuiru and Njega Secondary Schools of Kirinyaga County of Kenya. With the suppliers of drugs to the oblivious teens being unveiled in this groundbreaking research, the social institutions such as religious bodies, the county government, the central government, and the education sector now have a starting point in arresting the drug related challenges around the academic institutions beyond and within Njega and Kamuiru areas.
References:


