

**INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF DRUG ADDICTION ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY, A CASE STUDY OF KATABI
SUBCOUNTRY**

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the impact of drug addiction on socio economic development of youths in Uganda. According to the Ministry of Health (MoH, Report, 2018), about 70% of the youths' social behavior and financial status in Uganda has deteriorated greatly and it's believed that due to drug addiction caused by increased number of slum areas, unemployment, influence from others, lack of proper information, among others. The most commonly used and abused substances are; cigarettes, cocaine and alcohol and these have caused a great influence to the youths' social way of behaving in society through committing various crimes such as robbery, murder and rape and this has greatly affected their financial abilities since they spend most of their time in prison rather than working to earn a living.

Drug addiction is perceived to the excessive, maladaptive, or addictive use of drugs for non -medicinal purposes. It is a state of emotional and sometimes physical effects characterized by a compulsion to take drugs on a constant basis in order to experience its mental effects. Drug addiction involves use of excessive, maladaptive/addictive use of drugs, chemicals or alcoholic products for non-medical purposes. The study based on the following recommendations to the government and to the ministry of health; The government should stop drug trafficking and penalize drug traffickers so as to limit the level of drugs entering the country. In addition, anybody caught in farming, distribution and selling of illegal drugs should be dealt with without mercy. Furthermore, the researcher recommends that the government should construct

rehabilitation centers so that the youths helped in terms of counseling especially to those who are already addicted to drugs. The Ministry of Health the Ministry of Health also ought to join the fight of drug abuse in the municipality so that the youths can be redeemed from the vice. This can be done through sensitization campaigns by facilitation of social workers and other development practitioners.

Key words: *drug addiction, socio-economic development, youth and community*

Background of the Study

Drug addiction is perceived to the excessive, maladaptive, or addictive use of drugs for non -medicinal purposes. It is a state of emotional and sometimes physical effects characterized by a compulsion to take drugs on a constant basis in order to experience its mental effects. Drug addiction gave rise to dependence both physical and psychological and the dependence leads to mental, emotional, biological or physical, social and economic instability. Those effects of drug abuse on an individual therefore formed the basis for those cumulative effects on the society (Mercy et al., 2023). There is no single age group of people more affected by alcohol and drugs than youths. In some ways it feels like it is an issue everywhere (Conger, 2015). Drug addiction involves use of excessive, maladaptive/addictive use of drugs, chemicals or alcoholic products for non-medical purposes. Currently, a survey by (Global School based student Health Survey, 2016) conducted among youths ages 13-28years indicates that at least the percentage of substance use has increased from 12.8% to 33.5% and in that group at least 12% had one drink containing alcohol on one or more days during the past 30 days (Godfrey et al., 2023). Ironically though drug abuse is known by the police but the laws are so lenient that when they got arrested, the sentences are very small, hence killing the efforts to control drug abuse. This also leaves the police wondering whether the community knows the effect that those drugs have on the socio-economic development of youths and the community in general (Godfrey et al., 2023).

Statement of the Problem

According to the Ministry of Health (MoH, Report , 2018), about 70% of the youths' social

behavior and financial status in Uganda has deteriorated greatly and its believed that due to drug addiction caused by increased number of slum areas, unemployment, influence from others, lack of proper information, among others . The most commonly used and abused substances are; cigarettes, cocaine and alcohol and these have caused a great influence to the youths' social way of behaving in society through committing various crimes such as robbery, murder and rape and this has greatly affected their financial abilities since they spend most of their time in prison rather than working to earn a living (Oliver et al., 2023). Community leaders in Katabi sub country are worried about the out-of control incidences of drug abuse in their areas. Despite the attempts made by the NGOs and government bodies like the Police and the Ministry of Health at large to reduce drug trafficking and abuse in the country, its instead increasing at a faster rate and remained a humanity threat not only to people's lives but also their socio-economic wellbeing. Thus, this study aims at exploring the extent to which drug addiction has affected the socio-economic development of youths in Katabi sub county, Wakiso district.

Objectives of the Study

- 1. To determine the extent of drug addiction amongst the youth of Katabi sub county.*
- 2. To identify the causes of drug addiction amongst the youths of Katabi sub county.*
- 3. To assess the impact of drug addiction on the socio-economic development of youths in Katabi sub country.*

Research Questions

- 1. What was the extent of drug addiction amongst the youth of Katabi Sub County?*
- 2. What are the causes of drug addiction amongst the youths of Katabi Sub County?*

3. What was the impact of drug addiction on the socio-economic development of youths in Katabi Sub County?

Methodology

Research Design

The study was descriptive and analytical in nature. It would utilize qualitative methods of data collection. The qualitative methods would be emphasized because it revealed real and practical experiences necessary in providing a more profound understanding and analysis of all related aspects. It aimed at covering the relationship between drug addiction and the socio-economic development of youths in Katabi Sub County, Wakiso district. The research would be conducted at a single time in point through focus group discussions using the qualitative method.

Study population.

The study would cover both men and women especially the youths and the elders. The elders would be interviewed to know their perception about the drugs abused by the youths and comment on how the drug has affected the youths socially and economically. The women of the married abusing drugs would also be interviewed to get their experiences and how they cope with their husband's drug behavior and domestic violence.

Sample size.

Since the study population would be quite big, part of it would be examined so as to obtain enough information in terms of how different people perceive the situation and the size is as follows: ten people already using drugs would be interviewed, fourteen key informants, sixteen community members, ten men using drugs and ten women who abuse also or are wives of the men taking drugs

bringing a total of 60 respondents. This sample size would be selected because, Sutton and David (2004), state that a sample size should not be less than 30. Beyond basic description it would be difficult for the researcher to undertake more complex statistical analysis, as most of these analyses require a minimum sample of 30.

Sampling technique.

In the Sub County, there are several villages; the study would use purposive sampling because the respondents especially the key informants are considered to have a lot of knowledge. The key informants would be purposively selected because they are resourceful and knowledgeable about the study topic and give the researcher a broader view of the topic of study as well as an expert point of view of the research topic. The key informants would be the area police stations and the elderly who are very resourceful in giving in- depth information about the relationship between drug addiction and the socio-economic development of youths.

Data processing analysis

In analyzing data, the data was sorted as per its allocated codes and entered into a statistical package known as Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) to generate both descriptive and inferential statistics that created the mean, mode and median; the variance, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages(Nelson et al., 2022). These were arranged in tables and later explained by the researcher on what they meant as per the set objectives and their implications in the study (Oso &Onen, 2008).

RESULTS***The extent of youth involvement in drug abuse in Katabi sub county.******Table 1: The extent of youth involvement in drug abuse in Katabi sub county.***

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
<i>Very high extent</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>high extent</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>low extent</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>very low extent</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: Primary data, 2022

Table 1 above showed the extent of youths' involvement in drug abuse in Katabi Sub County and the findings reveal that; 33% (20) of the respondents noted that the level of the youths' involvement in drug abuse was very high in Katabi Sub County. The respondents noted that many youths are involved in drug consumptions like alcohol, marijuana and other illicit drugs. On the other hand, majority 37% (22) of the respondents noted that drug consumption among the youths of Katabi sub county was high and not very high as said by the 33% (20) of the people. Only 17% (10) of the respondents said that level of drug consumption among the youths is low and the other 13% (8) of the respondents said that the level of drug consumption among the youths in the municipality was very low. Given the figures of the findings, majority of the 37% (22) of the respondents noted the drug consumption level among the youths was high.

Impact of drug abuse on the socio-economic wellbeing of youths in Katabi Sub County

Table 2: Impact of drug abuse on socio-economic development of youths in Katabi Sub-county

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Health problems Crime increase School dropout	8	13
Easy spread of diseases	17	28
Family breakdown	22	37
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data, 2022

Findings in Table 2 show that 13% of the respondents noted that youths are facing health problems associated to consumption of drugs. Respondents said that the commonest addictive drugs included tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and cocaine. All of these substances have several important characteristics in common as they change the function of the human brain and have an impact on behaviour.

These findings are in line with those of Dave (2004) when he conducted research on drug abuse, its effects and prices, found that 2-4% of all cancer cases were related to alcohol and more especially, Upper digestive tract cancers were the most common, hitting the throat, mouth, larynx, and pharynx.

Similarly, 12% of the respondents noted that family breakdown is yet another effect of drug abuse among the youths of Katabi Sub County. The respondents noted that drug abuse is currently linked to many harmful consequences for the individual like family problems such as child abuse, broken homes, marital problems/ divorce.

Possible measures to the problems of drug abuse in Katabi Sub County.

Table 3: Solutions to the problems of drug abuse in Katabi sub county

Response	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Neighborhood watch	20	33
Counseling	9	15
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data, 2022

Results in table 3 indicated that 33% of the respondents said that drug abuse can be prevented through neighborhood watch as a form of community policing whereby keeping a close eye on neighbors so that selling and consumptions of drugs can be easily identified and tackled with immediate effect. This can be achieved with support from the local authorities. It will help to scare away youths from abusing drugs as they will no longer have hideouts as everyone will be keeping an eye against each other.

Another 22% of the respondents said that, community sensitization can be helpful to tackle the problem of drug abuse. They said that this is another mechanism to reduce consumption of drugs like marijuana, cocaine and fuel sniffing in the sub county. The study findings established that if people are sensitized on drug abuse and its associated effects, and also sensitize them on how to be creative, they will eventually get involved in productive ventures which do not require a lot of capital like brick laying and farming, hence they will start earning from these projects and eventually lead to socio-economic growth.

In the same way, 30% of the respondents said that implementation of strict laws on production of drugs can help to reduce crimes. Results emphasized that counselling sessions could be conducted to the youths addicted to drug abuse. 15% of the respondents said this and suggested that can be a good strategy for

tackling drug abuse can be through counselling starting from schools where majority of the youths usually adopt so such behaviours.

Conclusions

Drug addiction was a major cause for concern and has a negative effect on society at large. Though youths constituted a large segment of drug abusers, adults also are involved. The level of consumption or abuse of drugs was discovered to be growing at a high rate in Katabi Sub County. This has resulted into an increase in the spread of diseases, health illnesses like cancer which was not even heard of many decades back. There is also an increase in family breakdown due to abuse of drugs and all these are implications of socio-economic challenges youths are continuing to face.

Recommendations

The government should stop drug trafficking and penalize drug traffickers so as to limit the level of drugs entering the country. In addition, anybody caught in farming, distribution and selling of illegal drugs should be dealt with without mercy.

Furthermore, the researcher recommends that the government should construct rehabilitation centers so that the youths helped in terms of counseling especially to those who are already addicted to drugs.

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