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Assessing the Causative Agents of Drunkenness among Youth of Nsasa Vilange in Kyela District, Mbeya Region in Tanzania

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Abstract

Excessive drinking of alcohol is harmful human beings worldwide. It is more harmful to youth and children than any other groups because these groups are the expected workforce of the community. The Paper assesses the possible factors that promote excessive drinking among youth at Nsasa village located in Kyela District Mbeya region in Tanzania. Using qualitative approach and documentary analysis method, this paper argues that unless a deliberate intervention is done by the church and community to counteract the drunkenness habit among youth at Nsasa village, the health of energetic youth will continue deteriorating. The paper identifies and critically discusses the role of the church and society towards the various factors exacerbating drunkenness. In this case, the paper contributes towards communities' struggles against the effects of alcoholism to the most important group of youth in society.

Keywords: Alcoholism; Drunkenness; Youth; Nsasa Village

1. Introduction

Excessive drinking of alcohol is harmful human beings worldwide. It is more harmful to youth and children than any other groups because these groups are the expected workforce of the community. The Paper assesses the possible factors that promote excessive drinking among youth at Nsasa village located in Kyela District Mbeya region in Tanzania. Using qualitative approach and documentary analysis method, this paper argues that unless a deliberate intervention is done by the church and community to counteract the drunkenness habit among youth at Nsasa village, the health of energetic youth will continue deteriorating. The paper identifies and critically discusses the role of the church and society towards the various factors exacerbating drunkenness. In this case, the paper contributes towards communities' struggles against the effects of alcoholism to the most important group of youth in society.

2. Context of Nsasa Village

Nsasa village is located in the Southern Tanzania Mbeya Region, Kyela District in Ngonga Ward. The majority of people in Kyela are Nyakyusa by tribe. Its geographical position is in border line with the Republic of Malawi. The main activities done at Nsasa village are mainly Agriculture. Rice, Cocoa and Palm oil are the main cash crops, even though are some small activities like livestock keeping, fishing and mixed business. The transaction between these two sides (Malawi and Tanzania) is hot in this place due to the existing border. Therefore, it is very important that the Department of Health be

conducting frequent seminars about a voluntary testing and counseling program due to the fact that mobile sex transmission is rampant in this place.

3. Thematic Analysis of the Causative Agents of Alcohol Drinking

Having introduced the Paper and the context of Nsasa village, the themes about issues that exacerbate alcohol drinking are now discussed.

3.1 Effects of Alcohol on Young, both Short and Long-Term

The first one is the effects of alcohol drinking on the welfare of the youth. The youth are the ones who become more affected due to the fact that their bodies are more sensitive than elderly people. The youth focus on leisure time more than the aftermath of drinking alcohol. Bonomo (2015: p.14) says,

The effect of alcohol on a young person's brain differs from the effects on an adult brain. Young people's brains appear to be more sensitive of damage from alcohol but less sensitive to some of the side-effects of alcohol. For example, young people appear less sensitive to the sedative effects and to the effects of alcohol on balance and motor coordination. Human studies of the effects of alcohol are limited by ethical considerations, but animal experiments have demonstrated that adolescents can stay

awake and mobile at higher blood alcohol levels than adults.

Furthermore, Babor *et al.* (2003: pp. 19–26) explain,

In more merely statistical and objective terms, alcohol misuse is a modern social problem of enormous cost-effective significance which exacts a high toll of human suffering as a result of the social, emotional and medical harms to which it gives rise. Alcohol-related disease and death are high in most parts of the world, and in many developing nations alcohol consumption and its associated harms are on the increase. It means that the individual and the community are all together put at great danger due to alcohol's strong addiction which reveals itself in risk taking behavior.

In their point of view, Mathibe *et al.* (2022: p.9) add,

Alcohol is a powerful agent of suppressing good behaviors and, in combination with immature decision-making processes and/or reckless or sensation seeking personality characteristics, often manifests in risk-taking behaviour that puts the individual and the community at great risk. There are four broad categories of risk-taking behaviour that are consistently documented to be associated with excessive alcohol consumption in young people: (1) high-level intoxication that results in loss of consciousness and risk of death (sometimes known as “coma drinking”); (2) accidents (e.g. road trauma), machinery), (3) violence (e.g. assaults, injuries); and (4) risky sexual behaviour, including unprotected sexual intercourse resulting in sexually transmitted infections or unplanned pregnancies, and sexual intercourse that young people later regret.

Emphatically, El-Gabri (2017: p. 4) reminds,

Alcohol is a leading risk factor for injury. Road traffic injuries are a leading killer, but perceptions of drinking and drink driving in Tanzania are unclear. This research aims to define how perceptions of drinking influence risky driving behavior at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center in Moshi, Tanzania. This mixed methods study incorporated the Alcohol Adapted Perceived Discrimination-Devaluation scale (PDD) and the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) among 96 injury patients regardless of their alcohol use prior to injury.

Kerr (1968: p.5) says,

Even small amounts of alcohol may affect the whole nervous system; larger amounts taken over a period of time can cause permanent brain damage. The cerebrum and the cerebellum will show the effects of alcohol before the brain stem, or the medulla, where vital centers such as those controlling the heartbeat, and breathing, are situated. As the concentration of alcohol in the blood stream rises it may reach a level sufficiently high to paralyze the breathing center and cause death.

The words of the above scholars mean that alcohol is a driving force for most tragedies to human life, especially the youths. I agree with what El-Gabri reminded, “Alcohol is a leading risk factor for injury. Road traffic injuries are a leading killer, but perceptions of drinking and drink driving in Tanzania are unclear” due to the fact that if someone has not taken alcohol he/she has more control over his/her behavior than when one is drunk. For example, reckless driving, unnecessary accidents, fights, insults, sexual misconducts etc. could be avoided if alcohol is not taken excessively. However I oppose what Kerri says “Even small amounts of alcohol may affect the

whole nervous system” for the reason that if that was the case, there could be a lot of accidents all over. In my opinion, people differ, not everyone who takes a small amount of alcohol loses control or misbehaves, For example, we see many people in our societies who drink some small alcohol and still behave normally, no accidents no fights and no misbehavior of any kind have been witnessed or reported due to not controlling how much they drink. This means that alcohol becomes dangerous if someone takes it excessively. He/she loses control and misbehaves in one way or another. Therefore, alcohol is not to be entertained due to its negative impacts.

In Nsasa village, alcohol drinking is the more cherished entertainment that people prefer than anything. This means that most of the money received from the hard labour of cultivating rice, fishing and palm oil is spent on alcohol while less on food. As a result, alcohol drinking has extracted different kinds of afflictions such as poor health due to living care-free lives which lead to contracting different types of infections like HIV, Tuberculosis, Liver dysfunction, Kwarshakor (mostly to children and youth) due to insufficient balanced diet, theft, family disputes, child mistreatment, discontinuation from education, unwanted pregnancies, child marriages, and parents' irresponsibility. All of the listed calamities have led to poverty and deterioration in life among children and youth at the village in various spheres.

3.2 Availability of Alcohol

The second theme highlights the ways in which alcohol is accessed. The availability of alcohol openings (i.e., taverns and bottle stores) is nearly in every place, and especially around schools. This makes it easy access to alcohol for everyone without enforcing age restrictions, which supports adolescents alcohol use even though the National Liquor Act in Tanzania prohibits alcohol sales to individual Children younger than 18. Hence, there is a need to prioritize limiting adolescent alcohol access and the Tanzanian National Liquor Act to continue enforcing against the use of alcohol to prohibited age groups.

According to Annel *et al.* (2018, p.1), the evidence found identify that the behavior of alcohol consumption may be influenced by the zone where the young reside, whether rural or urban; so it is likely that in rural zones cultural traditions are more rooted and the consumption of alcohol is present in various events, such as traditional field fairs parties or other religious celebrations which can be a permissive social influence towards the consumption of alcohol by young people. Alcohol consumption demands the attention of health systems due to its physical, psychological, and social alterations.

Mogotsi (2014, p.2) further states, “The price of alcohol is another key factor influencing levels of consumption and subsequent levels of alcohol-related harm. Young people, in particular, are a population group who are price-sensitive. This means that population-based policies to influence price are also effective at targeting groups at risk such as young people.” On their side, Lebhang & Renay (2018, p.184) note:

Most societies, including those in the Region, traditionally have strict norms and values that prohibit or severely restrict the use of alcohol by young people. However, these norms and standards, together with those that regulate behaviour, are gradually fading. Thus, drinking is occurring more frequently, and beginning at younger ages (10).

On the basis of the above scholars, it means that the price of alcohol entices the youth to drink alcohol more frequently because of being

cheaper and accessible. Therefore, strict measures should be taken to people who send and sell alcohol to the youth; this measure could reduce easy youth's access to alcohol. Both modern and traditional alcohol.

3.2.1 Modern Alcohol

At Nsasa village, Modern alcohol is being brought up from the neighboring country of Malawi. In fact Modern alcohol brought from Malawi is much preferable by the youth due to its cheaper price. Not only that, in a normal conversation with one of the seller of this type of alcohol, Anyimike stated that alcohol from Malawi is more powerful and gives faster reactions (intoxication) than the ones manufactured in our country, which seems to be very destructive to most of the youth, but for him all what is important is money; whether people are destroyed or not, that it is not his business. As Kyela Region has a very young population, it is therefore reasonable to focus on this part of the population.

Modjadj *et al.* (2022, p.3) supports this statement saying,

Due to the fact that nowadays, modern alcohol is being sold in places which were not allowed to be sold some years back in the Country, places which denied easy access to the youth to find it, The outcome of this situation has brought some destructive habits among the youth like street conflict, household conflict, risky sexual behaviors, violence, suicide, and robbery.

Moreover, Lanyan, *et al* (2018, p.15) emphasizes:

"It is easy to creep alcohol onto school premises as there is no monitoring or checking of students as they enter the school premises. Alcohol sellers in urban and rural areas make little effort to discourage underage purchase of alcohol. Youth spoke about purchasing alcohol during break time since it was sold at the same shop where they bought their lunch".

The statements made by the above scholars' mean that alcohol business licenses are being provided without following government regulations pertaining to alcohol making it to be sold and drunk by anyone, anywhere, anytime and even near school premises. Therefore, the Government should control the sales of alcohol through license, packaging, cost, and limit the age of clients and regulating opening hours for the selling points. This control will ensure that the selling is done away from school premises, small moveable packages are avoided, prices are not affordable to students, consumers below the age of majority are not accessible to alcohol and selling places are only open during the night.

3.2.2 Traditional Alcohol

The large amount of traditional alcohol is being produced in homes, which makes it easier for children to become used to it through the way parents involve them in this type of business. Some parents brew beer within their homes to support families; that is a good motive, how they forget having small children in the home who always taste the stuff without their consent or with permission. This was vivid in the informal conversation with one of the villagers who said that "Most parents teach their children how to make this type of beer as a means of earning their living when they grow up." Therefore, parents should stop teaching their children how to make alcohol while are still young because this tendency macreates a room for them to start testing alcohol earlier and take schooling as a wastage of time, and better do alcohol business and in the end there will be no development society.

According to the National Institute of Health (2010, p.3),

Local residents report that traditional brew is typically drunk as a cheaper alternative to commercial but it varies across other African countries including Tanzania, Uganda, and Nigeria, where brew is made from bananas, bamboo, coconut, millet, rice, sorghum, and maize "cited in. (cf. Mosha, *et al.* 1996; Ojiji, *et al.* 1993; Shayo, *et al.* 1998)".

Moreover, Osaki, *et al.* (2018, p.5), explains,

Research findings in Moshi, Tanzania about Alcohol consumption and drinking characteristics among the youth. Osaki, discussed three main social environments where initiation of alcohol use largely took place; the home, at social or special occasions, and in stressful situations or environments. **In the homes:** The majority of young people described the home as being the place where they were first introduced to alcohol. The availability of alcoholic beverages in the home, in areas known and accessible to the children, was considered an important trigger in the initiation of alcohol use among young people.

Through normal conversation, Osaki quotes one participant from Mwanza saying:

There are parents who always store alcohol in their homes to be used during lunch or dinner times as some sort of enjoying meals or anytime they feel like taking, forgetting that in the wrong run, they are teaching their children to start tasting alcohol at an early stage through reusing the containers of alcohol after their parents are through with dinner and have left the dining table.

However, Castens, *et. al.* (2012: p. 3), further explain,

Traditional alcohol is both cheap [for example, TZS 400 or US\$0.27 per liter] and high in alcohol, making it attractive to consumers. According to citizens, one of the most significant factors contributing to increasing alcohol abuse in Moshi is the affordability of local brews. Stress, peer pressure from fellow students, and parents who set a bad example for their children are also feeding the rise in alcohol consumption.

What the above scholars have explained is certainly true; the availability of alcohol in unauthorized places and also its low price has brought more harm to the youth and the society in general especially in Nsasa village, which is a vivid example. In Nsasa village, the main types of alcohol sold in this place are a traditional alcohol by the name of "Kimpumu" made out of mixing fermented maize and sorghum and some add some tablets such as ampicillin so as to bring quick reaction to drinkers. Moreover, some beers are brought in from the neighboring country of Malawi. According to a normal conversation with one seller of that beer from Malawi, it was deemed that the local beer brought from Malawi was stronger than the one made here in our country. This type of beer is usually drunk by all levels of people (men, women, and the youth the assertion of this seller indicate that traditional beer is another contributor to youths' destruction in rural areas. After some time, the children grow with a drinking alcohol attitude. This attitude is risky since it leads to ignorance because children leave school while are still young just roaming here and there to do some piece works in order to get small money to buy alcohol thinking that they are more intelligent than those still at school; and, unfortunately, they enter into theft, child marriages, laziness, poverty, and sexually transmitted diseases (even HIV/AIDS) at a tender age just to meet their need for alcohol.

In order to understand well how this kind of business is welcomed in Nsasa village, one can note that in every house where Modern and

traditional alcohols are sold, they have made temporary shelters (beer halls or local pubs) in order to attract customers. In such pubs, there is not only beer, but also are some burnt meat and all sorts of foods sold during that particular period from morning to evening.

Due to alcoholism, one will find that most young men and women are single. If one asks them why, they say that they were once married and their marriages did not work; so they do not see the importance of marriage and feel better to be left alone so that they may be free from that bondage of marriage. However, in the long run they find themselves in all sorts of misfortunes like diseases (sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS, loss of energy to do some beneficial activities, kwashiorkor, lack of education (especially to children) and even premature death due to engaging themselves in unprotected sexual intercourse.

Consequently, it could be wise if these types of local pubs were banned by the government and the business to be done at an authorized place so as to avoid easy access of alcohol to children and the youth in general. According to what have been discussed above, I am of the opinion that strict measures should be taken by the government to make sure that the National Liquor Act is followed. In addition, all alcohol sellers and drinkers using prohibited premises to do that business face strict actions against them such as going to jail for some time or being asked to pay a large amount of cash in order to teach them how to abide by the National law. In doing that, alcohol drinking among the youth can be minimized if not demolished and increasing societal development.

3.3 Parental Experience of Initiation of Alcohol Drinking

The third pertains to parental role towards the youth. Imitation from parents means that whenever the parents are doing some things before their children, whether good or bad, children have in mind that whatever the parents are doing has no harm to them, because if it had a negative side, their parents could have told them. As a result, children start doing what their parents are doing.

Several scholars have given out their voices regarding this issue. According to Osaki *et al.* (2018, p.5), “The majority of young people described the home as being the place where they were first introduced to alcohol. The availability of alcoholic beverages in the home, in places known and accessible to the children, was considered an important trigger in the initiation of alcohol use among young people.”

Osaki further quotes one of his research participants saying:

Sometimes you find that parents have alcohol in the house, lots of alcohol. For example you may find that the refrigerator is full of alcohol. A lot of times, you find that a child can take [alcohol] and start trying [to drink]. They start by trying and then slowly get used to it. (Female, Secondary School student, Mwanza) (p.5)

Moreover, Kazuko & Sugimoto (2021, p.1) assert: “Parental experience of initiation of alcohol drinking has been identified as one of the early causes of alcohol drinking in preadolescents in many countries, including Tanzania.” On the one hand, Hareesh (2012, p. 40), has these words to add:

Alcohol use in family is of concern to both researchers and policy makers. There may be someone in the family, who may be in a position to influence others for drinking, such as father, siblings, other relatives etc. Alcoholism is also known as a family disease. Alcoholics may have young, teenage, or grown-up children; they have wives or husbands; they have brothers or sisters; they have parents or other relatives. Each member of the family may be

affected by alcohol differently. Also in (p.43) he says, the child from families where mother consumes alcohol is reported to consume liquor at a very early age) as compared to the other group. It is surprising to note that people from families where, mother is alcoholic tend to start liquor consumption even at the age of 16 years.”

On the other hand, Kroutil, *et al.* (2012: p.3) emphasize:

Initiating substance use during childhood or adolescence is linked to substantial long-term health risks. Early (aged 12 to 14) to late (aged 15 to 17) adolescence is generally regarded as a critical risk period for the initiation of alcohol use, with multiple studies showing associations between age at first alcohol use and the occurrence of alcohol abuse or dependence.

On his perspective, Nassè (2019: p.5) states,

Drinking alcohol is spending the family wealth or revenue; talking about the family side Street conflict, household conflict, and this can be a source of problem between the wife and her husband because everybody knows that the family counts on the head of the family for food and for vital needs. So, if one part of the family revenue goes into alcohol that may not help the family in term of people vital needs. This may be a source of conflicts with the man’s wife and that conflict may involve the children because the man will beat his wife every time and if this continues on when the children are present it can lead to children becoming street children because the place where they call home has no peace, and instead they look for peace somewhere else.

The statements above mean that parents are the ones who create rooms for their children to start drinking alcohol at a very young age due to the fact that they teach them how to make it or send them to buy it from pubs, even drinking it before them.

The above statements are true and I also agree to Nasser’s statement which says “drinking alcohol is spending the family income” due to the fact that in some families instead of using the income they earn for family affairs, one finds that a husband or wife or parents spends it on alcohol and as a result, causes some misunderstanding even fights between the husband and wife and even between parents and children. If this situation is not attended may lead to poverty and child abuses. Children are the ones to suffer most. In addition, but parents will be creating an alcoholic generation to come, which is very bad. Hence, parents are advised to avoid engaging their children in alcohol business in any way. They should teach them the badness of drinking alcohol.

As far as Nsasa village is concerned, if a man, woman or a youth does not take alcohol, he or she is considered to be an old fashioned person. That is why one finds that most people attending church are those who drink alcohol. To some parents who consume alcohol excessively, their homes are scattered, and children become victims of the circumstance as parents spend most of their time drinking alcohol in local pubs till late hours while children are left all alone at homes. Children find that the best way for them to have their rights like food or any attention is to go in search for their parents in those beer halls or local pubs. When parents sees them, they just first of all give the children just some few of the staff they are taking in order to appease them so that they forget what they have been going throughout the day. Now, when it comes to the mother’s responsibility to look for something for the children to eat before going to bed, they have nothing to provide them. As this habit goes for some time and children continue growing, and getting used to it, they will always be going to those pubs where their parent are at

least having some more to drink. In the end, children become heavy alcohol drinkers and in danger of having kwashiorkor due to poor nutrition. I, therefore, urge parents to live by example for not breaking norms and values of the society by not being found among the youth drinking alcohol excessively and at the same time being good advisers of the youth leading to success in the then war against alcohol drinking among youth at the village. Different from that initiative, it will be too difficult to change the youth's perception towards alcohol.

3.4. Peer-Pressure Groups

The fourth theme is the influence of peer-groups. Messervey & Kusumakar (2000, p.16), "Defined peer pressure as a subjective feeling of being pushed, urged, or dared by others to do something only because of expectations from others. The key point of [this definition] is that people do things because they have detected the obvious pressure from others." These two scholars focused on the explicit aspect of peer pressure and achieve the perception of peer pressure as one of the basic sources of youth alcohol drinking. Moreover, Kaur (2020, p.12) adds that,

"Peer group is a social group of people of same age, status, education and interests or Peer pressure, are, children with the same age and tend to imitate whatever their fellow friends actions doing, whether bad habit or good one. Especially when the youth reaches puberty stage, they seem to know everything more than their parents".

Gottfredson and Hirsch (1990, p.6) defines "peer-pressures"

As being heavily influenced by the wishes and expectations of their friends". Most of times, these pressures were against subjects' own inclinations or parents' discipline and directed toward delinquency or even criminal behaviors (p.158). Peer group is an important part of an individual's life this has been identified as a significant factor in youth development, and impacts students' attitude and drinking behaviors.

The above-provided definitions of peer-group mean that children are weak in their perception and thinking. That is why they just embrace whatever pleases their peers, also pleases them too, whether bad or good. Peers don't think about tomorrow but today. Therefore, parental guidance is very much needed. No matter how busy we are as parents, we have to make sure that you spent some time with your children as they grow up. Both parents should play part for the betterment of our children.

According to Vorst (2011, p. 4),

The major reasons for drinking is socializing, making friends and acting cool (...). After they leave their home, spend less time at home, and break away from their parents' immediate supervision, they are more likely to engage themselves in drinking. Hence, ending up alcoholics. If proper care is not done by the parents or most of them get lost, just because most of them will try to imitate what their fellows of the same ages do. Young women who consumed alcohol were equally mentioned to influence their male partners to start drinking alcohol if they discovered that they did not previously consume alcohol.

Vorst further quotes a male participant of his research who reported to have been influenced by a woman:

"Yes, I have a friend who drinks; he started drinking because of women. He met a woman, at that time he was not a drinker. That woman used to ask him why he did not drink alcohol while she drank and he said he would start.

The woman persuaded him to start drinking and he did. Then he also started having a lot of women [at once]. . . (Male, Secondary School, Kilimanjaro"

Moreover, Lu, *et al.* (1997, p.7), observed,

Most people are introduced to alcohol at a young age, and those who go to university generally began drinking with friends at that time. The main reasons they gave for drinking were socializing, making friends, and acting cool. "In citation of" Leng (2009). Wu *et al.* (2009), point out that while the main drinking occasions are annual festivals, birthday parties, and other social situations, these studies suggested that drinkers more frequently give social reasons for drinking than physical gratification reasons for drinking. Hidden in the character of social drinking is the influence of peer pressure on alcohol use.

I support the views of the above writers due to the fact that young people increasingly feel the need to drink to fit in their peers and consider alcohol the liquid courage that will make them easily interact socially, and also thinking that they will be called cowards and be left behind socially, if they do not yield to their peers' characters. Therefore, parents or guardians have to know and understand the friends which their children associate with most of the time; this will help to avoid any misbehavior they see in their children before it is too late.

At Nsasa village, peer-pressure groups are found well-known, and most of them use alcohol. They just gather in groups playing cards while drinking alcohol and start fighting with no apparent reasons; sometimes even killings could occur. Some of the effects brought by peer-groups at Nsasa due to excess alcoholism among the youth is lucky of enough strength to some youth to engage themselves doing works like cultivating rice, planting vegetables, animals keeping, pet businesses; and instead, most of those doing such activities are mostly women and a few men. Hence, the church and the society at large have to fight this habit through educating the youth what it means to be a responsible man or woman in society.

Owing to this situation, theft has become a common issue in Nsasa village. Every day, one hears people complaining about being stolen of their chicken, cows, goats, pigs, and sometimes their plants being uprooted from their gardens at night. To identify the ones who does that is quite rare because even if one spotlights someone and reports him/her to the village authorities, the relatives of that culprit will start accusing the one spotlighting that he/she is just making false accusation, that their relative or friend could not do such a thing. So the only thing to do is accepting some compensations if the person accepts the charge; and if the one spotlighting is not careful, even if that thief has been taken to police station or arrested, there will be a chance of bribery and the culprit will be set free. If not, then the thief will go to jail but the one who reported the issue will not live in peace in that village. Here in Ngonga village, such kind of life is quite normal. Hence, it is a high time for the church and society at large to invest more efforts to finding means to arrest this present threatening situation through different ways such as continuous education, counseling, and creating different opportunities of work just to keep them busy most of the time and creating recreational jobs like carpentry, sewing, animal keeping and some petty business for different groups according to their talents for the safety and health of the youth in this village.

This means that, there is a need for elderly people, especially parents or guardians to monitor the ways of their youth in a friendly manner so that they can know what type of friends/group their youth are associating with, what habits that friend or group has, what places they mostly go and for what reasons in order to give them some

advice before is too late though the youth of nowadays do not want to be asked or monitored because of thinking are grownups and know what is best for them, something which is hardly true. I, therefore, urge parents/guardians not to give up because doing that will lead to unexpected consequences.

3.5 Youth Exposure to Alcohol Advertising

The fifth theme concerns the exposure of the youth to sources of alcohol. Alcohol advertising has been another contributor to youth alcohol problem due to the fact that the targeted on those posters are the youth. They try all means to make the youth believe that alcohol is good, but do not explain its consequences after drinking. As a result, they leave all the burden to families, society and the government as well. The figure below indicates how alcohol advertising is done using vehicles at Nsasa village. Just by looking at the image of this alcohol, one feels like trying it!



Source: Photo taken one of the youth at the village

According to Letsela *et al.*, (2018, p.9),

When reflecting on specific alcohol adverts from the media and within their local communities, it emerged strongly that youth perceive them as enticing and appealing, making them want to try the advertised beverages. This figure above shows a photograph taken by a young person in the rural site. Other elements of the adverts that attracted youth were bright colors, bold fonts, popular music, creative and enticing slogans and appealing images, scenery or settings such as the beach and ice to refresh. So, you want to go for it and taste this thing and once you taste, you will end up being drunk and you want to do that forever. So, advertisements are the ones that bring us to alcohol or lead youth to alcohol (Male, mixed gender group, rural site).

On its side the World Health Organization (2002, p. 5) states,

Despite regulations to protect youth from alcohol advertising children and teenagers below drinking age are regularly exposed to high levels of alcohol advertising (Winter *et al.*, 2008). Studies suggest that youth are exposed to similar, if not higher levels of alcohol advertisements than young adults (a target demographic for advertisers) (Winter *et al.*, 2008; O'Hara *et al.*, 2003). For example, one of every six magazine advertisements and one of every fourteen television advertisements for alcohol, target underage drinkers (Austin & Hust, 2005). In 2002, underage youth were exposed to 65% more cooler advertisements, 45% more beer advertisements, and 12% more spirits advertisements than adults 21 years and over (Jenigan *et al.* 2004).

Moreover, Giesbrecht (2016, p.1) emphasizes,

Alcohol marketing is persistent in today's society and consists of complicated and included tactic aimed at creating positive beliefs about alcohol products and perceptions about its effects. Alcohol advertisements are no longer delivered only through traditional media like television and radio, print media, billboards and point-of-sale displays.

I strongly agree to what the above scholars have discussed for the reason that this issue of alcohol advertising plays a big role in spoiling the youth. Even in Ngonga village, the market place near Nsasa, there comes some big motor vehicle with big loud speakers full of young men and women taken as "sheep going for slaughter" dancing and others pretending to drink the alcohol in bottles while the vehicle is moving just to draw the attentions of people that something new is coming while are just promoters of those alcohol drinks. These people who do such kind of business entice the youth (some of them are school children) to go and promote alcohol on a certain token which leads to avoiding classes just to go and do the business. In turn, even if some were not partakers of alcohol, they just find themselves becoming used to it at a small age. I therefore advice the society and the government to call for alcohol advertisements ban; if any one goes contrary to the authority, strictly measures should be applied in order to teach others a lesson because here, the victims are the youth, which is the generation of tomorrow.

3.6 Stressful Environments

The sixth theme regards the stressful environment in which the youth find themselves. Many people, especially the youths, have the idea that alcohol is a common and quicker relief for stress. Stress can be experienced in failing exams, long illness, unemployment, and family dispute, left by a lover, court cases, losing a relative or failing to meet some expectations. They believe that alcohol will help them cope with the situation; and yet the more they keep on drinking alcohol, the more stressful they become stressful.

WHO report (2021, p. 3) reports:

In many African countries alcohol is used as copying mechanism to relieve and unwind. It is often the only entertainment available because the alternative social activities such as sports equipment and facilities are inaccessible. Jernign, (2001), discovered from a personal interview with a K.C.M.C medical student that in Moshi brightly lit bars on almost every corner (when electricity is available), look like the most inviting way, convenient way to escape from the pressure of everyday life.

According to McClloth (2000, p.7),

There is much evidence to show that many people drink to help deal with anxiety and depressive thoughts. It reveals that alcohol can be a favorite coping mechanism. When the results of a recent survey were extrapolated to the general population, researchers found that up to 12 million adults in the UK drink to help them relax or overcome feelings of depression. Most people who drink alcohol believe that alcohol helps them to deal with nervousness and depressive feelings. It reveals that alcohol can be a preferred coping method.

Moreover, Avery *et al.* (2020, p.1) asserts that,

The novel corona virus (COVID-19) has impacted the lives of people worldwide since being declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Social restrictions aimed at flattening the curve may be associated with an increase in stress and anxiety, which may increase the use of alcohol

as a coping mechanism. After a thorough research, we found an association between both stress and anxiety and increased alcohol use, where twins with higher levels of stress and anxiety were more likely to report an increase in alcohol consumption. Hence, mental health specialists have to intervene in this situation in order to curb these problems which affect the youth more than elderly people due to life challenges they face like unemployment, divorce and long illness.

In addition to the above assertion, McCloth (2000, p.7), says,

The problem with drinking to relieve depression is similar to the problems described about anxiety. Regular drinking changes the chemistry of the brain and, of particular relevance here, depletes the levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin. This is a brain chemical implicated in depression. This leads to the cyclical process of drinking to relieve depression, becoming more depressed as levels of serotonin become more depleted, thus needing more alcohol to medicate the depression. Increased alcohol consumption can also affect social relationships and work life, which in turn can contribute to depression.

The above statements mean that alcohol has been taken as a coping mechanism to most youth facing challenges in life, even though it is not a more appropriate means. I concur with the facts explained above for the reason that even in Nsasa village one finds people of various age groups usually opting to drink as a way to escape from stressful situations. Most stressful situations at Nsasa among youth are caused by life challenges such as unemployment, poverty, family disputes, broken marriages, the death of parents or loved ones, and lack of sports facilities and vocational educations to keep them busy. Hence, there is a need of providing mental health education to the community at Nsasa and the Tanzanian society at large in order to change the negative perceptions to the youth that alcohol relieves stress and provides an escape to the real world challenges. This is vital in order to reduce the number of those being victimized by alcohol and at least find means for the youth to get out of this destructive situation.

3.7 Social Events and Occasions

The seventh theme considers the social events which the youth participate frequently. Customarily, people drank alcohol for religious reasons and were believed that spirits of the deceased entered the fermented brews and on drinking the person who became drunk was in touch with the gods and the drink frees him or her from the inner self. Up to now people pour little alcohol on the ground to satisfy their late relatives before they start drinking as a way of remembering their great grand fathers who used to drink alcohol. Hence, this tradition is being inherited from one generation to the other, and if proper care is not taken the youth will be victims of alcohol; and in the end, the whole society will be undeveloped. Elders have to help in this issue through prohibiting the youth to serve alcohol during the ceremonies.

According to Mumo (2014, p.1),

“In African culture, alcohol was also used for different purposes. In southwestern Nigeria, alcohol was tapped from palm. It was used in refreshing guests and performing the important rituals in society (ancestor worship and dowry ceremonies). The descendants used to break beer jars and blew beer over the graves of their ancestors. In Tanzania, the Haya people used to make banana beer which was offered to ancestors in return for family health and fertility. In Kenya, the Teso made beer from sugarcane and

used it to reinforce the family unity by drinking together. A family sat together in a communal vessel, each with a specifically defined place and drank beer from a shared straw in a predetermined order (...). This fostered unity.”

Ogutu (1980, p.12) explains that, “In African traditional societies, alcohol was drunk during ceremonies such as festivals, repaying good deeds, and organized beer parties where its manufacture and quality was controlled. Over time the consumption of unconventional alcoholic beverages has increased in many countries.” Knee & Neibors (2002, p. 11) also asserts, “Alcohol drinking among the youth usually occurs on social occasions. Some traditions encourage moderate drinking to show hospitality and strengthen relationships. Hence, I would advise elderly people to deal with all things pertaining to alcohol instead of using the youth to serve alcohol which enables them to taste it before maturity age”. The statement above also applies to Nsasa village. In this village, alcohol is part and parcel of the social celebrations such as birthdays, religious celebrations such as Christmas, New Years’ Day, Graduations, holidays like Saba saba, payment of dowry and also during traditional festival dances known as (Mang’oma), preferably done every year after harvesting time; alcohol consumption is a typical activity. This is also another way of celebrating and refreshing themselves after their hard labour and sells of their rice products. It is done by one group hosting another within the district, or from the neighboring country of Malawi. Hence, before doing some invitations, the group makes some preparations like food, soft drinks, and alcohol must be served to both visitors and hosts.

The sign which shows that the event was successful is the presence of alcohol in that place. For example, even if it is a Christian funeral, members of the family make sure that they hide some alcohol at the neighbor’s house or some places not far from where the event takes place so that some members of the society drinking alcohol could go there and drink then come back to accompany their colleagues at the funeral as if nothing had happened.

I agree with the above-cited scholars that in traditional African society festivals or parties were well organized by elderly people who were also responsible for the buying and drinking of alcohol for a special reason under the control of the manufacturer and children were not allowed to enter alcohol premises authorized for that type of business. The problem is that today alcohol is sold anywhere and bought by any one, whether youth or not; all what is wanted there is money. Moreover, during those traditional events the youth are the ones to serve the elders with alcohol, as a way of teaching them traditions. Well, the aim is not bad; but on the other way round, it makes the youths find an easy way to start testing alcohol while still young, thus creating future alcoholics if proper care is not taken.

From the above reasons, I would advise the Nsasa village authorities to make sure that there are strict rules concerning alcohol consumption at social events so as to shield young people from alcoholism. Such measures can include young men and women not being used as servers of alcohol during the events, but instead the adults should do such activity.

3.8 Influencers

The eighth theme is about people who convince the youth to participate in drinking alcohol (influencers). Influencers are people who convince others to follow what they are doing whether good or bad. For example, young women who drink alcohol persuade young men to start drinking alcohol, so that it becomes easy for them to start love relationships which lead to unprotected sexual intercourse. Unprotected sexual intercourse makes most young

people vulnerable to sex-related illnesses such as AIDS, Syphilis and gonorrhoea; moreover, they can get unwanted pregnancies. On the one hand, cementing on this point, Zegreb (2015, p. 3) explains, For a long time it is believed that alcohol increases sexual desire in women. This attitude can be found in many countries. It is believed that alcohol drives women to indecent behaviour. Such notions are still present. However women themselves, influenced by the accepted stereotype, nourish positive attitudes towards alcohol as sexual stimulator. Social stereotype of female alcohol addict is linked to promiscuity, therefore it affects the crime involvement, particularly rape, and in such circumstances the perpetrators are considered less culpable.

Moreover, Addington (1984, p.15) narrates,

The amount of drinking done by women has risen rapidly in recent years. Cocktail parties are taking the place of afternoon coffee parties, and liquor is more and more often served at bridge clubs. Some drink because they have a great deal of leisure time and are bored. Some drink because it has become the thing to do in their circle of society. Whatever the reason, addiction starts with social drinking’.

On the other hand, Kinney, (2000, p.5) argues in the same line when he writes,

Younger women represent a growing percentage of drinkers, including those with alcohol problems and those with alcohol dependence. She found that, although there was a greater number of an abstainer among older women in the general population, the proportion of younger women drinkers in the population was beginning to equal that of men. She attributed the changes in women’s use of alcohol to the changes in the society.”

The above statements by Zegreb, Addington, and Kinney mean that nowadays young women are the ones who seduce young men to take alcohol. If the man accepts, then a love relationship will start which leads to unprepared marriage and also child bearing without any preparations; this means that child rearing job will be upon their parents. A vivid example is of Victoria [name used by her consent], a resident of Nsasa village, who explained that a lot of young women drink alcohol more than young men for the reason that it is part of associating with different people. If one does not attend their drinking alcohol, they call him/her an “unsocial person.

Young house wives leave their homes and children to go and drink alcohol and come back during the night to find children already asleep leading to many marriage breaking down. Therefore, more seminars through dramas, or some exciting movies concerning marriage should be conducted regularly, and also elderly men and women who have good exemplary marriages should be involved so as to teach young men and women how to be ready to bear the responsibility of good parenthood before and after marriage so as to build a strong society because a strong society or nation is built on strong and health marriages.

In relation to what have been discussed above, I find the danger for youths even though the law allows youths starting 18 years to drink alcohol, which is not good health wise. I therefore advise parents at Nsasa village and the society in general, not to allow their youths to visit alcohol locations and even having drinking habits since they may easily get addicted and fall prey to its effects and it could also lead them to homosexual type of life. I further advise the church to engage itself in educating its members and the society at large about the badness of alcohol to human kind. Moreover, the church should

also try to start some rehabilitation homes so as to help those already affected. In doing that, the future manpower of the church and the society will be rescued from this disaster.

4. The Church’s Response to Youth Alcohol Addiction

After discussing the cases of alcohol drinking among youth at Nsasa village in the ave themes, the following paragraphs show the church’s possible response towards the situation. The Church is made up of broken people. Addiction is a growing problem in our community and cannot be ignored within the walls of our churches. The other ways of bringing the solution to this calamity is to make churches to be a safe place for the growing number of families suffering from alcoholism and addiction. The church needs to offer help to this type of group as it does to widows and the needy.

McDowell (1972, p. 30) states,

Widely adopted and proven is that spirituality helps to overcome personal obstacles during the struggle with various addictions. When it comes to alcohol, personal spirituality is greatly needed to the community of believers to help and support. This is particularly true in countries where there is no network of Alcoholics Anonymous groups or they are very poorly developed. So, the local church could be of big help as a substitute for this kind of organizations.

In addition, Chukwu (2014, p.119) terms this as,

One of the issues which undermines evangelization in Africa. For him, abuse of alcohol can result to backsliding and disintegration of the Christian institutions. He proposes that we cannot minister to Christians if we also suffer from the same problem. In the Catholic Church, the religious who are expected to preach this gospel against alcoholism are also affected by this decease.

Chikwu further urges that the church has “the moral authority to assist members of the society to embrace the right attitude and to fight alcohol abuse among parents and young people.” However, according to Mwangi and Twala (2022, p.22), the church has essential role in amending public debate on alcohol and other drugs by shifting the focus from punishment to prevention and treatment. This is an entrenchment in the christian belief in the possibilities for modification of behaviour in the life of each individual and eventually in communities.

Furthermore Brian (2019, p.7) puts it,

One of the largest studies on drug and alcohol abuse among the youth aged 12–17 analyzed data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (Ford and Hill 2012); the study found that higher degrees of religiosity reported, including religious attendance, involvement, and reliance on religious beliefs in decision making, were associated with several benefits, such as limited depression and negative attitudes toward substance abuse. After controlling for depression, religiosity was still found to be associated with less cigarette smoking, heavy drinking, and prescription and illicit drug abuse. Adolescents who frequently attend religious services, who are involved in faith-based activities, and who place a high value on spirituality demonstrate greater flexibility when facing the stressors that can lead to the formative use of drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism.

As Linsky (1965, p. 48), notes,

Church groups most strongly opposed to social drinking are also least accepting and supportive of the alcoholic

person.” The change must begin in the minds of nonalcoholic if they want to help those with drinking problems. “Many times the pathology of the nonalcoholic prevents this action from taking place, as well as seriously complicating the illness of the alcoholic.” Instead of giving suggestions to pastor for his work with alcohol abusers, this pragmatic task will focus on transformational leadership of pastor in local congregation.

The above scholars, McDowell, Chukwu, Mwangi & Twala, Brian and Linsky mean that religion can be a way of relief to people who are struggling with alcohol when helped with love, tolerance and care by their fellow believers. I agree with the pastor from an Assemblies of God church who said that “interdenominational activities could help the youths” for the fact that, interdenominational activities encourage youths from different places, with different perspectives, believers or non-believers to participate and there could be easier to even invite different people to conduct seminars including the badness of alcohol to their lives. However, I do not agree with Chukwu who said that “we cannot minister to Christians if we also suffer to the same problem” because, a vivid example are doctors; most of the doctors who are good in counseling patients or good specialists of some certain diseases may be suffering from the same disease or sickness that patients have but such disease cannot stop the doctors from helping patients because helping patients is their responsibility as doctors until they die. The same applies to church ministers. Therefore, the church has to be in the forefront to fight this alcohol battle through its teachings, creating a conducive environment for all people to come for help without any discrimination through building more homes for the youth with problems of alcohol drinking. A good example is a “Sober house” by Pastor Hananja in Dar es Salaam. As Jesus said in the Book of St. Matthew 3:18, “come to me all who are heavily laden and I will give you rest”. The church require being a place for those heavily laden with the effects of alcohol for them to rest.

Moreover, in a normal conversation with a pastor from Assemblies of God Church at Nsasa village, he said that the Church has to start some interdenominational youth group activities like bricklaying, poultry keeping, agriculture, cattle rearing and mat making to name a few, and after working, youths be given recreation facilities in order to keep them fit health wise. Apart from that, the establishment of some free counseling ministry with well-versed experts in youth counseling from different organizations to help the church. Hence, the project will be of beneficial for the whole in society.

The above pastor means that his church has been trying its level best to educate members about the consequences of alcohol drinking physically, psychologically and spiritually through church teachings, youth groups, open air meetings and sometimes using political gatherings to educate the whole society of Nsasa village. Therefore, it is my advice that other churches and political social leaders at Nsasa village to join hands to find means of diminishing habits of alcoholism among the youth, if not ending it in order to lessen its effect to the welfare of the youth.

5. Conclusion

This paper acknowledges that the causes of Alcoholism on young people at Nsasa village are availability of modern alcohol, traditional alcohol, parental experience of initiation of alcohol dinking, peer pressure groups, youth exposure to alcohol advertising, stress environment, social/events or occasions and women influencers. At Nsasa village, and more likely in other places of the country, these are the easy access to alcoholism among the youth leading to

worsening their lives. Hence, more efforts and plans are needed by the church and the society as a whole to curb this situation.

On the basis of the discussions above, this paper suggests that strict measures should be taken to all alcohol sellers and drinkers who use prohibited premises to do that business and to adults who encourage young people to drink. Such measures may include going to jail for some time or being asked to pay a large amount of cash so for them to know how to obey Government orders. Not only that, parents and the society in general should also be more practical in observing, educating, and possibly interfering in their youths’ steps and knowing whom they associate with in order to address any bad habits before becoming too late. Moreover, it is very important that the whole society takes necessary measures to ensure that the availability of traditional beer does not affect the youth; and that, there is a control of how alcohol is consumed in various social events by avoiding young men and women being servers of alcohol and instead of adults doing it to shield young people from easy engagement in alcoholism. Hence, elders should help the youth by monitoring their behavior among the society as far as alcohol use during traditional ceremonies is concerned.

The church, as part and parcel of the community, should be at the forefront in eliminating influences of alcohol consumption through interdenominational doctrinal teachings and inviting specialized mental health educators to the community at Nsasa and the Tanzanian society at large, in order to change the negative perceptions which the youth have that “alcohol relieves stress”, and “provide an escape to the real world challenges.” Hence, this is vital in order to reduce the number of those who are being victimized by alcohol and its destructive effects.

Last, but not the least, parents, the church and the society as whole should teach children good morals and behavior so as to generate good and energetic leaders of tomorrow. In doing that, it is my conviction that the society and the Government in general will have future God fearing, strong and energetic youths to whom our land will depend on.

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