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The Influence of Marungi Abuse on the Educational Opportunities of Children: A Case Study of Kijomoro, Oluvu and Oluffe Sub-Counties in Maracha District

Marungi is a highly addictive drug that obstructs the chance that an individual gets to join school and attain educational development. The purpose of this research was to investigate the influence of Marungi on the educational opportunities of children. Specific research questions included: How Marungi influences the educational opportunities of the children; do children from homes where Marungi is cultivated exploit educational opportunities? How do the schools cope with the influence of Marungi in relation to enrolment, retention? The research design was case study that involved both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. Purposive, stratified and random techniques were used for sampling. Questionnaire, interviews, observations were used to collect data. The findings of the study indicated that: Marungi was a drawback to educational opportunities of the children of the three case study region sub-counties named above in Maracha district. To Marungi cultivators, it was an income generating activity which is next to tobacco in terms of profitability. The investigation indicated that Marungi negatively affected access to and progress in educational opportunities in both direct and indirect ways. The direct effect is such that, large numbers of children involved themselves in chewing Marungi; they lose interest in school but value the company of Marungi users' peer groups more than education. Its consumption affects reasoning ability. Marungi users exhibit euphoria and (hadders) behaviours, do not concentrate on studies, and dropped out of school. Marungi cultivators used the school going age children as cheap labourers for its harvest, marketing and maintenance, leading to poor performance; or they gradually joined the culture of its consumption, dropped out or became undisciplined and got suspended or dismissed from the schools. Indirectly, Marungi affected the health of the users which had subsequent negative influences on studies and it also affects the behaviour of the user which is also incompatible with academic activities and performance. The victims cannot favourably compete in academics with other non-Marungi users. The conclusions reached were that: Marungi negatively influences educational opportunities of the people of Maracha District. Cultivation, picking and selling of this plant all lead to lose of time for lesson attendance. Exploration of the educational opportunities of the children in the three sub-counties was impeded. Sneaking to chew Marungi obstructs the users' from concentrating on studies. It impairs the reasoning ability, header and euphoric behaviours coupled with obstinacy in vulgar language and high tendencies of fighting (indiscipline cases) led to suspensions, or dismissal of the pupils and students and academic failures in the schools. The schools' discipline records reflect indiscipline cases of students/pupils that are linked to influence of Marungi. Its effect on the health of the users made the victims lose educational chances. There is, therefore, need of a culture that promotes development in all spheres and this is possible through education. The researcher put forward some recommendations to improve educational development through: access to educational opportunities and progress in studies. Need for Sensitisation, counselling rehabilitation and involvement of all stakeholders. Enacting laws against consumption of Marungi or setting bylaws by the Local Government. Economic productive projects should be introduced in the rural areas in order to raise the incomes of the people, change their attitude to educational values, award scholarships, encourage introduction of vocational institutes in rural areas in order to accommodate school drop outs. The researcher recommended further research on the impact of Marungi on social behaviour, family and health of the users.

Keywords: Marungi Abuse, Educational Opportunities, Children, in Maracha District