

Influence of Illicit Brews on Security in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County Kenya

Abdul Galgallo Diba, Panuel Mwaeke, and Samuel Auya

ABSTRACT

Illicit brew consumption is a social challenge in most parts of the world today. Although illicit brew consumption results in psychological, social, physical and health problems, available studies have mostly linked the consumption of illicit brew to criminality in western countries with little evidence from the developing countries especially Kenya. The study sought to investigate the influence of illicit brews on security in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County Kenya, an area that has experienced an exponential rise of crime cases. The study had three objectives; to establish public perceptions on the influence of illicit brews on crimes causation, establish the influence of illicit brews use on public violence, and to determine the factors that impinge security management measures against illicit brews on security and safety in Kampi ya Moto in Rongai Sub-County. The study utilized a mixed methods research design. The census and purposive sampling techniques were used to draw a sample of 99 community policing committee members and 15 key informants for interviews respectively. The data collection methods were questionnaire and key informant interviews. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to analyse quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to generate data analysis tools. The study established that illicit brew consumption is associated with stealing household wares, property, phones and other items to obtain money to buy the liquor. The study also revealed that the common type of public violence caused by illicit brew consumption is fights in the public due to mental impairment as a result of illicit brew consumption. Lastly, the study established that general lethargy and corruption are the main factors impinge security management measures against illicit brews in the study area. The study concludes that illicit brew consumption is associated with crime since it is behind the stealing incidents. The study also concludes that illicit brew consumption in the study area is associated with fights in the public space due to mental judgement impairment to the extent that they fail to understand themselves and are involved in activities that amount to public violence. Lastly, the study concludes that general lethargy and corruption are the factors that impinge security Management measures against illicit brews. The study recommends economic empowerment programs by the government and other stakeholders in development to minimise poverty that drives some households to engage in making and selling illicit brew. The government should come up with strict regulations for law enforcement officers involved in corruption and support of illicit brew making and sale to help reduce the cases of illicit brew in the study area.

Keywords: Illicit Brews, Interpersonal Public Violence, Security Management, Violence.

Published Online: July 25, 2023

ISSN: 2736-5522

DOI: 10.24018/ejsocial.2023.3.4.480

A. G. Diba*

Student, Department of Peace Security,
Social Sciences, Egerton University,
Kenya

(e-mail: galgalloDiba@gmail.com)

P. Mwaeke

Lecturer, Department of Peace Security,
Social Sciences, Egerton University,
Kenya

(e-mail: pmmwaeke@gmail.com)

S. Auya

Lecturer, Department of Peace Security,
Social Sciences, Egerton University,
Kenya

(e-mail: sauyakinaro@gmail.com)

**Corresponding Author*

I. INTRODUCTION

Illicit brew consumption is a problem facing many parts of the world today (Auya & Chweya, 2014). According to Akala et al (2016), globally illicit brew accounts for a larger portion of all distilled brews and are characterized by evasion of tax and are unregulated by the government. Illicit brew consumption has existed overtime with variant motives. In Africa for example, history shows the existence of alcohol, its negative impacts and attempts to control it. Documentations based on local oral history and archeology as explained by Freeman and Perry (2006) and Birech *et al.* (2013) have suggested that alcohol consumption is part of African culture, rituals, tradition, and customs since time immemorial, though, in these societies, abuse of alcohol was firmly controlled through strictly put-up social structures that defined who to take alcohol, when and why.

In Kenya, statistics show that illicit brew brewing is on increase. According to the 2019 report, a total of 1,002,157 litres of illicit brew were netted by multiagency agency teams compared to 194,341.6 litres netted in 2018. This was an increase of 18,344.6 litres or 10.4%. In total, 13,061 persons, including consumers, brewers, distributors and retailers, were arrested as compared to 22,218 persons in 2019, an increase of 8,349 or 39% (NACADA, 2019). In response to the skyrocketing cases on illicit brew consumption, the Kenyan government has come up with policies to curb the vice. According to Njong'e (2017), the government came up with the alcoholic drinks amendment bill popularly known as the Mututho law that required bars be opened from 5 pm to 11 pm a policy that worked at the beginning but due to reluctance of security officers, the law has slowly faded and people are now taking alcohol from morning to evening (Njong'e, 2017).

Although illicit brew consumption results in psychological, physical and health problems such as liver cirrhosis, alcohol psychosis and infant mortality among other consequences, studies have linked the consumption of illicit brew to criminality especially in western countries. According to Gathara (2015), in the UK, statistics revealed that alcohol is a major factor in more than 60% of homicides, 75% of stabbings, 50% of domestic violence and 70% of beatings. Among the offenders, a third had alcohol dependence challenges, half had misused alcohol and the remainder were alcohol dependent. The Government of Kenya (2016) revealed that 40% of violent crimes in America are alcohol-related. According to victim reports in 2010 by NCADD 15% of robbery cases, 27% of aggravated assaults, 37% of rape and sexual assaults and 25% of simple assaults were committed while the perpetrators were under the influence of alcohol.

Furthermore, Mercille (2017) also reported that in Ireland, most people who drink do not commit offences or get involved in anti-social behaviours, consumption of large volumes of alcohol is a risk factor for violence and anti-social behaviours. In addition, Groves (2019) established that 59% of the convicts in Victoria Prisoners in Australia had consumed alcohol before committing the offences they had been charged with. Studies show that alcohol consumption is associated with criminality.

Studies on illicit brew have been undertaken in Kenya. Muregi, (2017) studied illicit brews in Kenya; in the perspective of legal and institutional frameworks. Weveti, (2018) looked at the implications of Consumption of Unrecorded Alcohol on Sustainable Lifestyles amongst Households in "Shauri Yako" Embu County. On his part, Kamau (2017) assessed the influence of security governance on the quality of law enforcement in Kenya. This paper explores the influence of illicit brews on security in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County Kenya with a specific focus on Public Perceptions on the Influence of Illicit Brews Use on Crimes Causation, Influence of Illicit Brews on Public Violence and factors that impinge Security Management Measures against Illicit Brews in Kampi ya Moto in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a mixed methods research design. In this design, a researcher combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). The choice of this design was informed by the need to get an in-depth account of the relationship between illicit brew consumption and security in the study area.

The study was carried out in Kampi ya Moto division, Rongai sub-county, Nakuru County, Kenya between May and August 2022. The choice of the study area was informed by the rising cases of insecurity and highest number of illicit brew cases reported in the year 2020 (Kenya Police Service Annual Report, 2019; Nakuru County Police petty crime register, 2020).

The study population entailed the 99 community policing committee members from the 3 Wards of Kampi ya Moto Division, distributed as follows in each ward; Boror (28), Maji Tamu (30) and Kampi ya Moto (41). The study deemed community policing committee members as the most knowledgeable segment of the population on issues of illicit brew and security in the study area.

The study utilized a census sample design because the target population is small and manageable. In addition, purposive sampling was used to select 15 key informants for interview to cross-check the information provided by respondents. The key informants included village elders (7), chiefs (3), Assistant County Commissioner (1), National Intelligence coordinator (1), Officer Commanding Station (1) County Police Commander (1) and the County Director of Criminal Investigation (1). Questionnaires and interview methods were used to collect data. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to analyse quantitative and qualitative data respectively.

On ethical consideration, the study sought consent from the respondents before it was executed. Respondents were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality and that information they will give will solely be used for research purposes.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Demographic Information of Respondents

On demographic information of respondents, the majority of respondents in the study were male (71%) indicating that gender plays a bigger role in security issues in the ward under the community policing committee. However, females constituted 29% of respondents. On the marital status of respondents, the majority of respondents (70%) were married signalling the importance of marriage institutions in African communities. However, the respondents had diverse marital statuses indicating that the selection of community policing members does not depend on marriage but other factors hence the inclusion of single, separated, and divorced in the community policing committees in Kampi ya Moto ward. However, 3% of respondents were single, 7% were divorced, 18 % widowed and 2 % of respondents were separated.

The respondents were of varied ages. However, the majority of respondents (29%) were in the age bracket of 50 and 59 years. The data implies that members of community policing committees in the ward constitute senior citizens because of their long-lived experience on matters of security in communities or because the younger population is in towns and cities working or some are still pursuing higher education. With a relatively older population in community policing committees, it is evident that security issues are probably handled properly based on their vast experience with security issues. Although the majority of respondents were aged between 50 and 59, 9% of respondents were aged between 20 and 29, 15% were aged between 30 and 39, 24% were aged between 40 and 49 years, and 23% were aged above 60 years

Lastly on the education level of respondents, the study established that the majority of respondents (41%) had primary education as their highest education level. The data implies that most community policing members in the study area have primary and secondary education. However, 7% had no formal education, 41% had primary education, 11% had a college education and 2% had university education as their highest education level.

B. Public Perceptions on the Influence of Illicit Brews Use on Crimes Causation

This was the first objective of the study. The study began by asking respondents the rate of illicit brew consumption in the study area. The study established that the majority of respondents (81%) argued that the rate of illicit brew consumption is high. This was confirmed during a key informant interview that illicit brew consumption in the study area is a social problem. The study revealed that the rate of illicit brew consumption is high to the extent that it has destroyed the lives of both the old and young in the study area. Thus, illicit brew consumption in the study area is now perceived as a social problem that requires concerted efforts to address it.

The study also established that chang'aa (48%) is the common type of illicit brew consumed in the study area. The finding was confirmed during key informant interviews where chang'aa featured as among the top illicit brews consumed in the study area. The study argued that the brew can be transported for a long distance because it is not bulky and can stay for a long without going bad hence it is common in the study area. However, ogororo (2% response), Kaikai (1% response), busaa (38% response) and muratina (8% response) emerged as other types of illicit brews in the study area.

On Public Perceptions on the Influence of Illicit Brews on Crimes Causation in Kampi ya Moto in Rongai Sub-County, the study revealed that illicit brew consumption has both acute and chronic effects (41%) in the context of crime causation. Respondents perceive that Individuals drinking illicit brews here commit many crimes. They commit the crime either when under influence of the illicit brew or in the process or attempt to access the brew. That Crime is committed when individuals are under the influence of alcohol or in their attempts to get funds to buy illicit brew by engaging in criminal activities. The finding is in line with Lipsey *et al.* (2014) who argues that persons who chronically use (or abuse) alcohol are more likely to engage in crimes irrespective of alcohol consumption immediately prior to a particular instance of crime.

In addition, respondents were asked the ways in which illicit brew consumption has influenced security in this Area. The study established that illicit brew consumption in the study area is behind the stealing incidences in the study area. This was confirmed during key informant interviews that most people involved in illicit brew consumption have made stealing of household wares, property, phones and other items their career to obtain money to buy the liquor. The study reported that illicit brew consumers require constant flow of income to sustain illicit brew drinking. They can use all means including stealing items from houses, farm produce and livestock, and muggings to obtain funds to help them access illicit brew.

C. Influence of Illicit Brews on Public Violence in Kampi ya Moto in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County Kenya

This was the second objective of this study. From the study findings, the majority of respondents (94%) argued that illicit brew consumption in the study area is associated with public violence. Once persons have consumed the illicit brew, their mental judgement becomes impaired to the extent that they fail to understand themselves and are involved in activities that amount to public violence.

The common type of public violence caused by illicit brew consumption according to this study fights in the public. That people are entrenched into drinking of the illicit brew and this has mostly resulted in fights within this area. People drink and start fighting publicly. The fights that are generated by illicit brew consumption are associated with public fights and this may lead to injuries, loss of public respect and death in some situations. The study also revealed that illicit brew consumption has contributed to robbery cases (24% response) in the study area. The robbery was associated with the need for money to buy illicit brew. The study established that most criminals terrorising residents in Kampi ya Moto come from illicit brew drinking dens. The persons or criminals spend most of their time in those dens and because they have no money to engage in the drinking, they resort to robbery like phone snatching, forceful taking of money or property from people or even stealing property from home to sell to fund drinking. This finding tends to support findings by Roman and Reid (2012) that alcohol causes many people to commit harmful acts to themselves and others; it can also cause people to be violent towards others, especially significant others as in the case of domestic violence.

Attempted rape (17% response) also emerged as a form of public violence caused by illicit brew consumption. The study established that when people are under influence of illicit brew, they attempt to engage in rape with a fellow opposite sex reveller or with anyone they come across. The study established that mostly rape attempts is by men revellers.

The study inquired from respondents on the period at which public violence occurs in the context of illicit brew consumption. The study established that public violence occurs regardless whether the perpetrators are drunk or not (50% response). This finding was confirmed in almost all key informant interviews held where they argued that public violence is not specific to the drunk or undrunk individual but occurs across the board provided a person is a member of illicit brew consumption club. According to this study, there is no specific situation when public violence occurs in the context of illicit brew consumption in this ward. Drunk people can cause public violence in terms of fights, attempted rape etc because their mental judgement has been impaired by consuming the illicit brew. On the other hand, some sober members of illicit brew groups can engage in violence for example robbery to finance his/her drinking. Violence crosses the board whether someone is drunk or not.

On the efforts by the community policing committee members to address the challenge of public violence, the study established that there is no single strategy that has been put in place in Kampi ya Moto Ward to address the problem of public violence stemming from illicit brew consumption in the area. However, arresting and handing over the preparators of public violence (36%) emerged as the common strategy used by the respondents to address the challenge of public violence resulting from illicit brew consumption.

D. Factors that Impinge Security Management Measures against Illicit Brews in Kampi ya Moto in Rongai Sub-County

This was the last objective of this study. The study established that general lethargy and corruption are the factors that impinge security Management measures against illicit brews in the study area. The finding was confirmed during key informant interviews where it emerged that the law enforcement officers are deeply engaged in corruption that has contributed to high levels of illicit brew trade and consumption. Corruption by law enforcement officers has sustained the problem of illicit brew making, trade and consumption in the study area. Since the traders and makers of the illicit brews get protection from law enforcers, they have no excuse of upscaling their business. This has a negative connotation in the fight against illicit brews in the study area. This finding lends support to findings by Akala *et al.* (2016) who found that alcohol brewers and consumers may join hands against law enforcement officers, sometimes killing or injuring them.

The study also established that the value the community attach to illicit brew has impinged security management measures against illicit brew business (17% response). Traditionally, illicit brew, especially busaa, had important social meanings to communities. It was used in gracing cultural ceremonies and events like circumcision, naming of children among other significant festivities in communities. The cultural and social values attached to illicit brew have sustained the availability and use of illicit brew by locals in the study area. The cultural festivities and social events in the study area are graced by the illicit brew. The brews are part and parcel of the cultural and social life of people hence it is difficult for the government illicit brew control policies to succeed. The finding supports Kipchumba (2017) who argues that the presence of cultural values on unrecorded alcohol, multiple stakeholders in controlling the brews and national constitution protecting people's cultural heritage further derailed control efforts by the National Government Administrative officers.

From the study findings, poverty (15% response) is another factor that contributes to illicit brew trade in the study area. Need for livelihood has compelled some poor households to venture in illicit brew trade to get funds to help them meet their basic needs with food, education for children, clothing featuring as the needs that has sustained illicit brew trade in the study area.

Poor households have been compelled to engage in the illicit brew trade to obtain funds to educate their children, buy them food and other necessities. This means that the government has achieved little success in the fight against illicit brew because households are not economically empowered.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Illicit brew consumption has had an influence on security. Illicit brew consumption is behind the stealing incidents because most people involved in illicit brew consumption have made stealing of household wares, property, phones and other items their career to obtain money to buy the liquor. The revellers use all means including stealing items from houses, farm produce and livestock, and muggings to obtain funds to help them access illicit brew. Illicit brew consumption has been associated with fights in the public space. This is because consumption of illicit brew leads to mental judgement becoming impaired to the extent that they fail to understand themselves and are involved in activities that amount to public violence especially fights in the public space that result in injuries, loss of public respect and death in some situations. In government authorities' efforts to crack down on illicit brew, general lethargy and corruption are the factors that impinge security. Management measures against illicit brews. Corruption by the law enforcement officers has sustained the problem of illicit brew making, trade and consumption. Since the traders and makers of the illicit brews get protection from law enforcers, they have no excuse of upscaling their business. Unless general lethargy and corruption are not addressed, rooting illicit brew from Kampi ya Moto will be a tall order.

The study recommends economic empowerment programmes by the government and other stakeholders in development to minimise poverty that drive some households to engage in making and selling illicit brew. The government should come up with strict regulations for law enforcement officers involved in corruption and support of illicit brew making and sale to help reduce the cases of illicit brew in the study area. The government should empower the community policing to tackle illicit brew making and sale since the members of community policing are always in the community hence, they understand the dynamics of making and sale of the illicit brew.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GoK: Government of Kenya

NACADA: National Agency for the Campaign Against Drug Abuse

NCADD: National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study acknowledges Kampi ya Moto Division and Rongai Sub-County administration for support during the entire research period. We also thank the study participants for their time and information.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declared that there was no conflict of interest in this paper.

REFERENCES

- Akala, M, B. R., Chamwada, H. K. & Owigar, B. (2016). An analysis of Alcoholic Drinks Control Act, 2010 in reconciling Changaa distillation with climate change in Vihiga County, Kenya. *International Journal of innovative research and Development*, 5(3).
- Birech, J., Kariuki, K., Misaro, J., & Kabiru, J., (2013). Alcohol abuse and the family: A case study of the Nandi community of Kenya. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(15), 137-144. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869\(03\)00236-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(03)00236-8).
- Chweya, M & Auya, S. (2014). Socio-Economic effects of alcoholism on families in Mukuru Slum, Nairobi County, *International Journal of Innovation and Scientific Research*, 9, 35-39.
- Freeman, M., & Parry, C. (2006). *Alcohol use literature review. Prepared for Soul City*. Available at: <https://www.soulcity.org.za/projects/soul-city-series/soul-city-series-8/literature-review/alcohol-use-literature-review/@download/file/Alcohol%20Use%20Literature%20Review.pdf>.
- Gathara, P. (2015). *Why booze crackdown is really about power*. Nairobi. The Star. Available at: <https://www.the-star.co.ke/opinion/columnists/2015-08-17-why-booze-crackdown-is-really-about-power/>.
- Gitari, A. T., Aloys, O., Chaka, B. and Godrick, B. (2021). Health impacts of a traditional illicit brew (Kaanga) consumed in Meru County, Kenya. *European Journal of Environment and Public Health*, 5(1), em0065. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejeph/9146>.
- Government of Kenya. (2016). National Council on Alcohol and Drug Authority. Nairobi: Government Press
- Kamau, C. N. (2017). Influence of security governance on the quality of law enforcement in Kenya. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology: (Unpublished doctoral Thesis).
- Kenya National Police Service (2019). *The National Police Service annual report*. Nairobi: Kenya National Police
- Kenya National Police (2020). Nakuru County Police petty crime register. Nakuru. Kenya National Police Service.

- Kipchumba, H. E. (2017). Illicit brews in Kenya: A Case of Chang'aa. *International Journal of Law, Humanities & Social Science*, 1(2), 51-57.
- Lipsey, M. W., Wilson, D. B., Cohen, M. A., & Derzon, J. H. (1997). Is there a causal relationship between alcohol use and violence? A synthesis of evidence. In M. Galanter (Ed.), *Alcohol and Violence: Epidemiology, Neurobiology, Psychology, Family Issues* (pp.245-282). New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Mercille, J. (2017). Media coverage of alcohol issues: A critical political economy framework; A case study from Ireland. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14(6), 650.
- Muregi, E. J. W. (2017). Combating illicit brews in Kenya: an analysis of the legal and institutional framework. Strathmore University: (Unpublished Bachelor of Laws Degree Thesis).
- National Council on Alcohol and Drug Authority. (2019). Summary report of morbidity and mortality caused by alcohol consumption in various parts of the country as at 11th May 2014. Nairobi: NACADA.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leech, N. L. (2007). Validity and qualitative research: An oxymoron? Quality & Quantity: *International Journal of Methodology*, 41(2), 233-249. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-006-9000-3>.
- Roman, C., & Reid, S.E. (2012). Assessing the relationship between alcohol outlets and domestic violence: Routine activities and the neighborhood environment. *Violence and Victims*, 27(5), 811-82.
- Weveti, M. E. (2018). Implications of consumption of unrecorded alcohol on sustainable lifestyles amongst households in "Shauri Yako" Embu County. Kenyatta University: (Unpublished doctoral) Thesis.