

INFLUENCE OF PREVALENCE OF KHAT FARMING ON FAMILY
STABILITY IN SIAKAGO DIVISION, MBEERE NORTH DISTRICT,
EMBU COUNTY

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MCP/000315/3122/19666

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A
MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY, OF
MOUNT KENYAUNIVERSITY

MARCH 2015

ABSTRACT

Khat provides employment to a lot of people. These include farmers, harvesters, packers, loaders, wholesale and retail traders, and transporters. However, Evidence relating to links between khat and loss of relationships has been generated through various studies. Khat business has attracted a lot of world attention since many countries of the world view it as a drug and have outlawed its selling in their countries. However, its growth has continued to expand in Siakago Division Mbeere North District and has attracted many people as a commercial enterprise. Scholars have outlined its effects on individuals and families as well. This study sought to establish the impact of the psychological effects of khat farming on family stability in Siakago division. The study covered khat farmers in Siakago division. The objectives of this study was to establish the influence of khat chewing, contribution of khat income, involvement in khat farming and selling activities and influence of use of school going children in khat farming on family stability in Siakago division. The literature reviewed has shown that khat farming has both social and economic implication on the family set up. While some studies have been carried out to assess the influence of chewing khat on individuals and the effect of khat farming on school going children, none had been carried out to establish the influence of the psychological effects of khat farming in Siakago division, hence the need for this study. The study used descriptive survey research design which generated both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data was then analyzed using descriptive statistical methods guided by themes emanating from the research objectives. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 6) was used to analyze the quantitative data and the results were expressed in measures of central tendencies such as mean and mode as well as percentages. The findings were then presented in frequency distribution tables, charts, graphs and logical explanations. The study findings established that khat chewing was done in social groups hence keeping chewers away from their families. The findings also confirmed that some farmers used khat income to improve their homes while others were wasteful. The study further established that khat farming and selling activities kept mother and fathers away from home living children on their own for a long time. Children dropped out of school to work in khat business. Recommendations were made based on the findings of the study. The findings are important to the ministry of Health in identifying the effects of khat usage on the family. The research findings provides vital information that will guide decision making of agencies partnering in drug and substance abuse. The findings of the study will also add body of knowledge on khat usage in Kenya as well as contribute to scholarly information in the area of counseling psychology.