

IMPACT of Alcoholic Drinks Control Policies on the Consumption of Illicit Alcohol in Angorom Word, Busia - Kenya

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Abstract

Illicit alcohol is a major public health threat globally because it's not regulated and therefore sold illegally. Evidence shows that 60% of all alcohol consumed in sub-Saharan Africa is illicit. In Kenya, it is estimated that 36% of all alcohol consumed by adults is illicit. In 2010, the Government of Kenya enacted the Alcoholic Drinks Control Act in order to operationalize the alcohol control policy in the country. One of the aims of the policy was to eradicate or minimize the production, sale, and consumption of illicit alcohol. However, since the enactment of the policy, no study has been done in Busia County to determine the impact of the policy on the production and consumption of illicit alcohol in Busia County. This lack of information to inform planning and resource allocation has affected the ability of policymakers at the County level to effectively plan appropriate and effective interventions to address the complex challenge of illicit alcohol. This study has collected, analyzed, and interpreted information that will assist a cross-section of stakeholders involved in the prevention and control of illicit alcohol in the country and beyond.

The study has determined the types of alcoholic drinks consumed in the study area; assessed the prevalence of illicit alcohol and assessed the perception of the impact of alcoholic drinks policies on the production and consumption of illicit alcohol in Ang'orom ward. A cross-sectional study design was adopted for this study. A systematic sample of 103 heads of households and 12 key informants were involved in the study. Data collection techniques used included interviews, document analysis, and key informant interviews. The SPSS social Science program was used in the analysis of quantitative data while thematic analysis was used in the analysis of qualitative data.

The study results show that the main illicit alcohol consumed in the study areas was Chang'aa, this was, however, transported and sold in all the cities and major towns in the country. The study found that the alcohol control policies have had little or no impact in eradicating or minimizing the consumption of illicit alcohol in the study area whose prevalence stands at 50% against the national average of 36% and Sub-Saharan Africa's average of 60%. The study concluded that 1) production and consumption of illicit alcohol is a serious problem in the study area with harmful patterns of alcohol consumption that threaten public health; 2) the existing illicit alcohol control policies seem to be ineffective because they are inconsistent with complex developmental, cultural, economic, political and administrative factors that fuel the production, sale, and sustainability of the illicit alcohol business in the country. The study recommends comprehensive research to determine the cost-effectiveness of current government policy on illicit alcohol and make recommendations on the rationale, feasible, cost-effective, and sustainable strategies to address the challenges posed by illicit alcohol in Kenya.

1. Introduction

Alcohol is a major public health threat globally. Alcohol consumption is exacerbated by a complex marketing strategy used by multinational alcohol companies seeking to increase their incomes, especially in the African markets [1]. Globally, consumption of alcohol is thought to be a causal factor in sixty types of diseases and injuries, and, a contributory factor in two hundred other diseases as well as being associated with violence, suicide, child

abuse, sickness, and absence from work [2]. Alcohol consumption is responsible for 4% of global disability-adjusted life years [3]. Worldwide, alcoholic beverages are categorized into recorded and unrecorded. Recorded alcohol is one that is regulated, controlled, and legally sold, while unrecorded alcohol is unregulated, produced by unlicensed industries or home brewed, smuggled across borders, consumed in unregistered jurisdictions, and hence illicit [4].

Excessive alcohol use mostly impacts the physical, social, and Psychological conditions of those economically disadvantaged sections of the population in both developing and developed countries [5]. In Sub-Saharan Africa, evidence shows that alcohol consumption is increasing in many countries with unrecorded alcohol accounting for 60% of all alcohol consumed by adults [6]. According to the World Health Organization, the main determinants of alcohol harm are the volume consumed and the pattern of consumption [7].

In Kenya, traditional brews include Muratina among the Kikuyu, Mnazi among the Mijikenda, and Buzaa among the inhabitants of western Kenya, the Luyia, Luo, and Iteso among others, have been used for varying traditional rites such as appeasing angry ancestors, during dowry payments; celebrating weddings and birth and naming of children [8]. The (Nubian Gin or Chang'aa) while not associated with any traditional rites, is the only traditional spirit manufactured and consumed across the entire country. An estimated 36% of alcohol consumed by adults in Kenya is illicit brew [9]. The control of alcohol consumption among local Africans in Kenya was first effected using the 1890 Act of Brussels which banned the export of Spirits to East Africa. This Act was used by the colonialists to enact alcohol regulations in Kenya to prohibit Africans from buying spirits and bottled beers [10]. The colonialists believed that Africans would refuse to provide labor if they were allowed to consume alcohol. The situation did not change after the attainment of independence in 1963, the African elite who took over power, emulated their former colonial masters. They drank the bottled beer but punished the poor for taking the Nubian gin (Chang'aa) and other local brews by enacting the Chang'aa Prohibition Act (CAP 70) of 15th August 1980.¹¹ Among the prohibitions were that "No person shall manufacture, sale, supply, consume or be in possession of chang'aa", and, "No person shall, without lawful excuse, the burden of proof whereof shall be on him, be in possession of any kind of implement, apparatus or utensil designed or adapted for the distillation of chang'aa [11].

In 2010, the Kenya Government enacted the Alcoholic Drinks Control Act, Number 4 of 2010, and repealed the Chang'aa Prohibition Act of 1980 [12]. The Alcoholic Drinks Control Act provides a comprehensive framework for the control of the manufacture, sale, consumption, distribution, and promotion of alcoholic drinks in Kenya. The Act aims to protect the health of individuals in light of the dangers of excessive consumption of alcoholic drinks; protect consumers of alcoholic drinks from misleading or deceptive inducements and inform them of the risks of excessive consumption of alcoholic drinks; protect the health of persons under the age of eighteen years by preventing their access to alcoholic drinks; inform and educate the public on the harmful health, economic and social consequences of the consumption of alcoholic drinks; adopt and implement effective measures to eliminate illicit trade in alcohol including smuggling, illicit manufacturing, and counterfeiting; to promote and provide for treatment and rehabilitation programs for those addicted or dependent on alcoholic drinks; and, to promote research and dissemination of information on the effects of

alcoholic drinks consumption, in particular, the health risks that may arise therefrom [12]. The new Act however still made it illegal to produce or consume traditional liquor. Despite the introduction of cheaper beers by the East African Breweries to cater to the poor, the higher alcoholic content of traditional brews and illicit alcohol continues to attract the poor segments of Kenyan society [8]. In its fourteenth edition of the biannual report to Parliament on the status of illicit alcohol and drug, abuse in Kenya [13]. NACADA showed that 1,724,440 liters of illicit alcohol were seized nationally. The highest seizures were in Kisii, Nyamira, Kericho, Siaya, and Narok counties. Data on illicit alcohol seizures for the County of Busia were not reflected in this report. In terms of types of illicit alcohol seized, 1,278,205 liters were kangara, a raw product in the production of the illicit spirit, and, 91,798 liters were the illicit alcohol spirit itself (Chang'aa). Three hundred thirty-six thousand, two hundred sixty-one (336,261) liters of other types of traditional brews were also seized across the country with the counties of Narok, Kericho, Meru, Elgeyo Markwet, and Kisii taking the top five positions in the quantity of seized traditional brews.

The consumption of illicit alcohol and brews in Western Kenya has reached worrying levels [14]. NACADA reported that Bungoma County was leading in the sale and consumption of illicit alcohol (400,159 liters), Kakamega was second (207,209 liters), Busia was third (29,579 liters) and Vihiga fourth with 12,000 liters) of the illicit alcohol impounded during a previous crackdown. This is despite efforts to implement the diverse strategies outlined in the policy documents including compliance with alcohol policies, laws, regulations, and standards [13].

2. Problem Statement

Despite the availability of data on illicit alcohol at the national level, there is little or no local data on the prevalence of illicit alcohol in Busia. Similarly, despite the implementation of the alcoholic control policies since 2010, no study has assessed the impact of these policies on the production, sale, and consumption of illicit alcohol in Busia County.

3. Justification

The lack of such vital information on the prevalence of illicit alcoholic drinks together with the lack of information on the impact of the alcoholic control policies on the production, sale, and consumption of illicit alcohol and traditional brews affects the ability of the policymakers, especially at the county level in planning and allocating requisite financial resources towards the implementation of effective strategies to minimize or eliminate illicit alcohol in the county.

Aware of the negative impact of the lack of timely and relevant data in planning effective and appropriate interventions to prevent and control the excessive consumption of illicit alcohol as well as its consequences, it is important and indeed critical that an assessment of the prevalence of illicit alcohol in Busia County be conducted to inform policymakers, programme implementers, researchers, development partners, and the general public about

the status of illicit alcohol and the effects of the current alcoholic drinks policies in the county of Busia. These stakeholders will each use the information for their specific needs and cumulatively, assist in the improvement of the health of the people of Busia County.

4. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to enable key stakeholders in the county to design and execute more effective plans and strategies for the prevention and control of illicit alcohol

5. Objectives

- Determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the residents of Angorom Ward
- Identify the types of alcoholic drinks produced, smuggled from neighboring countries, sold, and consumed within Angorom Ward in Busia County.
- Assess the prevalence of illicit alcoholic drinks in Angorom ward.
- Assess the perception of the impact of the alcoholic drinks control policies on the production and consumption of illicit alcohol in Angorom ward.

6. Research Questions

- What are the social, economic, and demographic profiles of the population in Angorom ward?
- What are the types, patterns, and origins of alcoholic drinks consumed in Angorom ward?
- What percentage of the study population consumed illicit alcohol in Angorom ward?
- What is the perception of the impact of the alcoholic drinks policies on illicit alcohol consumption in the area?

7. Methodology

7.1 Research Design and Methodology

The research design and Methodology draws from a recent study by the authors¹⁵ conducted in the same ward. The community survey involved the same study population and sample and therefore the sociodemographic characteristics are similar. Responses on alcohol consumption were collected during that study but were not analyzed and reported. This information was adopted, analyzed, and has been included in this study.

8. Study Design

A cross-sectional descriptive and analytical study design that enables the collection of data from different respondents at a single point in time has been chosen for this study.

9. Study Site

The study was conducted in the Angorom ward of Teso South Sub-County in Busia County.

10. Study Population

The study covered approximately 10,337 residents of the Angorom ward and the national and county government administrative offi-

cers who serve the community.

11. Sample Size

A systematic sample of 103 households was chosen from lists of households in each of the three community units in the Angorom ward. Twelve (12) key informants drawn from the community (CHVs) and National Government Administrative officers charged with prevention and control of illicit alcohol in Angorom Ward were included in the study.

12. Eligibility and Exclusion Criteria

All residents of the Angorom ward willing to participate in the study were eligible, while non-residents of the ward were ineligible. National Government administrative officers working in Angorom ward were included while those working outside Angorom ward were excluded from this study.

13. Data Management

13.1 Data Collection

Document analysis, interview guides, and key informant interview guides will be used to collect data.

13.2 Data Analysis and Presentation

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the basic features of the data. Simple summaries of the sample and the measures of study variables were presented in tables and graphs. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis and emerging themes distilled and presented in text format.

13.3 Ethical Considerations

This study proposal was presented to the Alupe University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee (ISERC) for review and approval. A research license was obtained from NACOSTI and clearance to conduct the study was granted by the Department of Health and Sanitation, County Government of Busia.

13.4 Management of the Research Process

The Principal Investigator took the overall responsibility for the smooth implementation of the research project. He was assisted by the field research assistants.

Officials of the national government administrative officers and the Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) played a key role in organizing and creating an enabling and conducive environment for the study.

14. Study Limitation

The main limitation of the study was very limited seed funding from the University, as a result, both the scope and breadth of the study were considerably restricted. The second limitation was difficulties in accessing complete records and data on illicit alcohol.

15. Study Findings

A. Community Survey

The community survey sought to assess the sociodemographic

profile, coverage of essential services including reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health; infectious diseases; non-communicable diseases; service capacity and access. Findings on each of these broad categories are presented in the paragraphs that follow.

15.1 Sociodemographic Characterizes of Study Population

Findings of the sociodemographic characteristics of the study population are as follows;

Age: Most of the respondents were above fifty-one years (25.2%). Table 1 below shows the age structure of the study population.

Age range		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-25	4	3.9	3.9	3.9
	26-30	12	11.7	11.7	15.5
	31-35	13	12.6	12.6	28.2
	36-40	14	13.6	13.6	41.7
	41-45	18	17.5	17.5	59.2
	46-50	16	15.5	15.5	74.8
	51 +	26	25.2	25.2	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 1: Age Structure of the Study Respondents

• **Sex:** Seventy-nine point six (79.6%) of the population were female while only twenty-point four percent (20.4%) were males.

• **Marital Status**

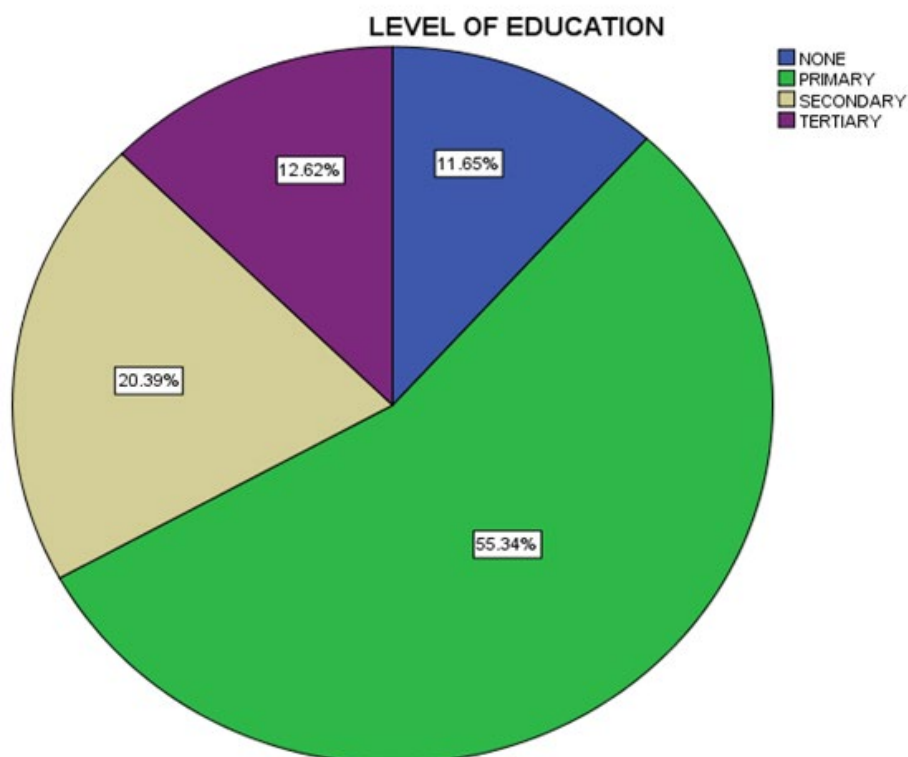
The majority of the study respondents were married (75.7%), twelve point six (12.6%) were widowed and three-point nine (3.9%) were single. Six point eight (6.8) of the respondents were separated. The table below summarizes the marital status of the study population.

Marital Status		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SINGLE	4	3.9	3.9	3.9
	MARRIED	78	75.7	75.7	79.6
	DIVORCED	1	1.0	1.0	80.6
	SEPARATED	7	6.8	6.8	87.4
	WIDOWED	13	12.6	12.6	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

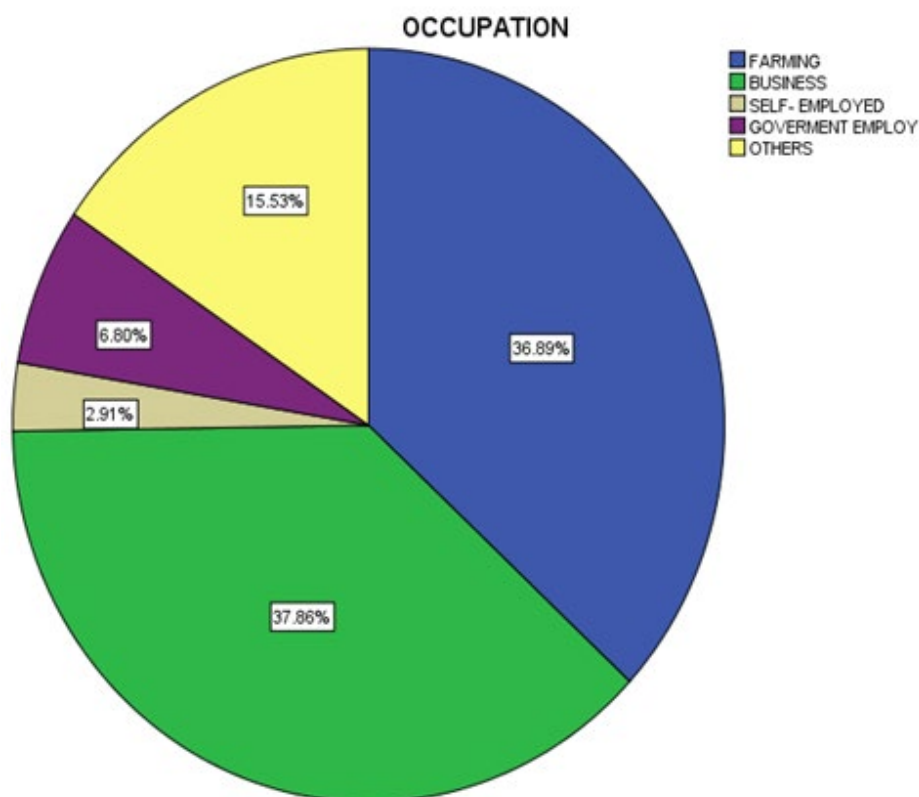
Table 2: Marital Status of Study Population

• **Level of Education**

In terms of education, most respondents (55.3%) had a primary level of education; twenty point four (20.4) had a secondary level of education and twelve point six (12.6%) of the study population had attained tertiary level of education. The study found that eleven point seven (11.7%) of the study population had no formal education. The pie chart below summarizes the education levels of the respondents.



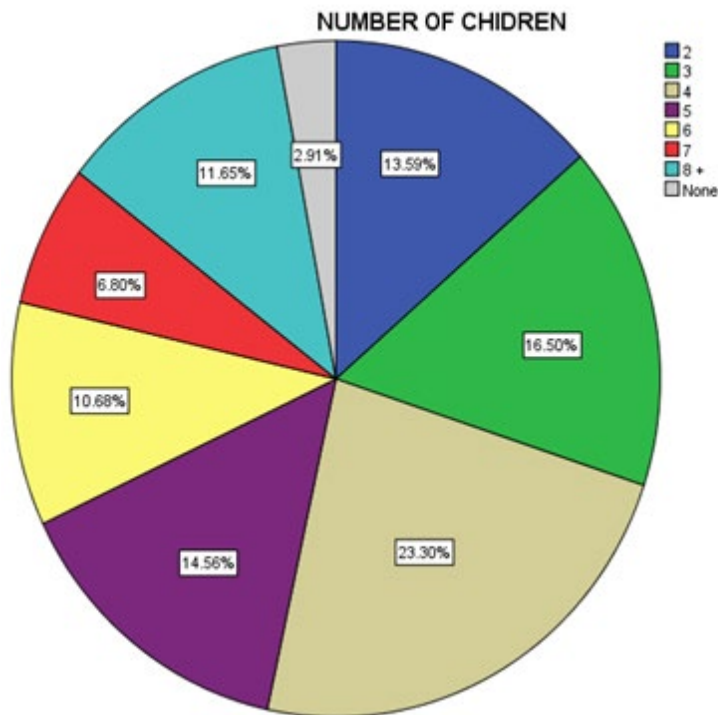
Occupation: In relation to the occupation of the study respondents, thirty-seven point nine (37.9%) were involved in small and microbusiness enterprises; thirty-six point nine (36.9%) involved in peasant farming; six point seven (6.7%) were government employees while two point nine (2.9%) were self-employed. This is presented in the pie chart below.



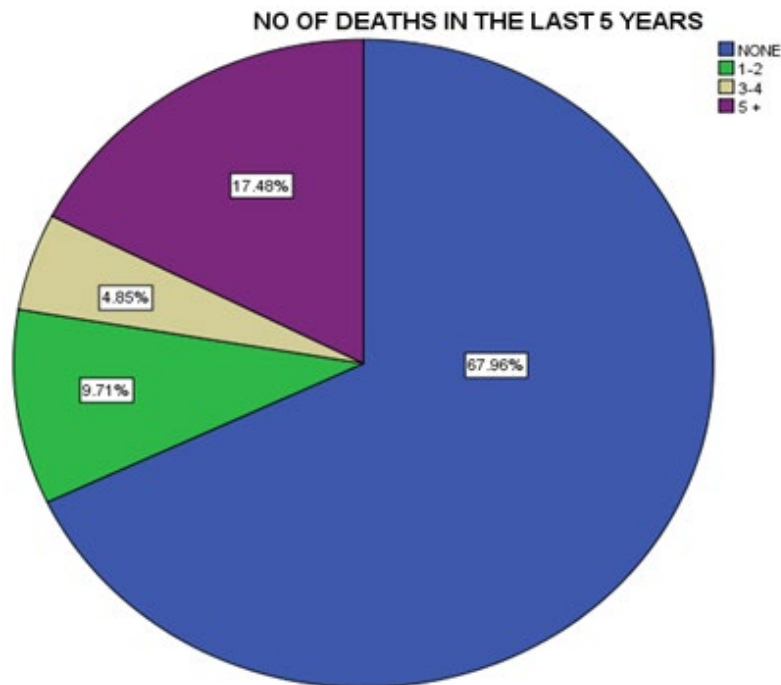
Religion: Regarding religion, study found that most of the respondents were predominantly Christian (97.1%) while 2.9% of the study population were Muslims.

16. Children Per Household

In terms of children per household, the range was between 2-8, with majority of households (23.3%) having four (4) children followed with those with three children at 16.5%. The mean number of children for the study population was five children.



Deaths in the family: The number of deaths in the households over the past five years preceding the study was investigated. It was found that in the majority of households (68%) no death had occurred. However, among the households who reported deaths, majority of the deaths (17.48%) said they had lost five or more members of the household in the past five years. This summarized in the pie-chart below.



Migration: In relation to migration patterns, it appears the majority of the respondents (61.9%) immigrated into the study area in the past fifteen (15) years. However, 35.9% of the population is indigenous, having been borne in the area. The main reasons given for the immigration include purchase of land, marriage and staying in rental accommodation.

17. Alcohol Consumption in Angorom Ward – Busia County

Respondents were asked if they or a member of their household drinks alcohol. 50.5% said none, while 49.5% responded in the affirmative. When those who reported a member of their household to be drinking alcohol were asked the type of alcohol consumed, they responded as shown below:

Type of Alcohol Consumed		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	N/A	50	48.5	48.5	48.5
	LOCAL SPIRIT CHANG'AA	26	25.2	25.2	73.8
	BOTTLED BEERS	9	8.7	8.7	82.5
	SPIRITS FROM UGANDA	7	6.8	6.8	89.3
	LOCAL BREW BUSAA	7	6.8	6.8	96.1
	SPIRITS FROM KENYA	4	3.9	3.9	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Types of Alcohol Consumed By Respondents In Angorom Ward

It seems from the above table that most residents who drink alcohol in Angorom ward, consume Chang'aa (local illicit spirit) followed by bottled beers. It is however worth noting that consumption of third generation alcohol from Uganda was reported in the study areas. Respondents were asked if there were any alcohol consumption related problems in their households and community. When asked if the habits of those who consumed alcohol had caused any problem in the household, family or community, 73.8% said no while 25.2% said yes.

The respondents were then asked to name specific problems they had experienced associated with alcohol consumption. They responded as shown in the table below:

Problems associated with alcohol consumption		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	N/A	76	73.8	73.8	73.8
	GENDER BASED VIOLENCE	14	13.6	13.6	87.4
	LOSS OF INCOME	6	5.8	5.8	93.2
	CHILD NEGLECT	4	3.9	3.9	97.1
	FAMILY BREAK-UP	3	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Problems Associated With Alcohol Consumption

It seems from the above table that alcohol consumption is a main cause and perpetrator of gender based violence, loss of household income, child neglect and family break-up within Ang'orom ward. b. key informants

18. Socio-Demographic Information

The Key informants were drawn from within Ang'orom ward and included Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, Public Health Officers, and Community health volunteers. The socio- demographic information of the key informants is presented in table 5 below.

S/N	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Education Level	Occupation	Religion	Village	Community Unity
1	52	F	Married	Secondary	CHV/Farmer	Christian	Fort Jesus	Agolot
2.	45	F	Married	Primary	CHV/Farmer	Christian	Amoni	Agolot
3.	48	F	Married	Secondary	CHV/Farmer	Christian	Amerikwai A	Amerikwai
4.	36	F	Married	Primary	CHV/Farmer	Christian	Aget	Amerikwai
5.	58	M	Married	Tertiary	Civil servant	Christian	Alupe A	Alupe
6.	60	F	Married	Secondary	CHV/Farmer	Christian	Amagoro B	Alupe
7.	36	F	Married	Secondary	CHV/Farmer	Christian	Ang'orom B	Alupe
8.	48	M	Married	Secondary	CHV/Farmer	Christian	Alupe A	Alupe
9.	60	F	Married	Secondary	CHV/Farmer	Christian	Ang'orom A	Alupe
10.	44	M	Married	Secondary	CHV/Farmer	Christian	Ang'orom A	Alupe
11	33	F	Married	Graduate	Civil servant	Christian	Ang'orom	Alupe
12.	49	M	Married	Tertiary	Civil servant	Christian	Alupe B	Alupe

Table 5: sociodemographic characteristics of key informants

From the table above, it is observed that:

- i. The mean age of the key informants was 48 years, with the youngest being a female civil servant aged 33 years while the oldest was a female community health volunteer aged 60 years.
- ii. Majority of the key informants (67%) were female, most of whom (58%) were community health volunteers. Only 25% of the key informants were civil servants.
- iii. All the key informants (100%) were Christians with majority Catholics, followed by the Anglicans and few Pentecostals.

19. Perception of Illicit Alcohol and Its Effects in the Community

The key informants without exception stated that alcohol consumption is a major problem in the community. Among the problems associated with alcohol consumption in the community are:

- Food insecurity – most men consume excessive alcohol from 6.00 am to 10.00 pm; they do not till the land resulting in Low productivity of food.
- Declining education standards – most school-going youth drop out of school due to the failure of the parents to pay fees.
- Youth Delinquency – the majority of the youth are victims of alcohol, they are the consumers and smugglers of alcohol from the neighboring country. They are involved in theft, robberies, and other criminal activities.
- Landlessness – Rogue youth force their parents to sell to enable them to purchase motorcycles for the “Boda–Boda” business which ultimately turns out to be a liability threatening the livelihoods of the affected families.
- Insecurity - increasing levels of crime especially theft of livestock (cows, goats, chickens, pigs)
- Conflicts, neglect of children, indiscipline, and family break-ups due to irresponsible parents
- Increases in teenage pregnancies due to indiscriminate sex by

young girls from households selling illicit alcohol

- Increasing poverty, community under-development
- Lack of trust and spirit of cooperation in the community.

20. Types, Sources, Markets, and Drinking Patterns of Illicit Alcohol

The key informants reported that Chang’aa is the main illicit alcohol consumed in the area. The other illicit alcohol consumed includes various spirits from the neighboring country such as Uganda waragi; Coffee and Empire. The traditional brews consumed include Mlija (from sorghum) and Busaa (from maize). The key informants reported that the main sources of the illicit alcohol are the “No Man’s Land”, a stretch of land between the borders of Kenya and Uganda, and Sophia town in Uganda. They explained that the illicit spirits (Uganda waragi, Coffee, and Empire brands) are smuggled into Kenya from factories based in Buteba and Jinja in Uganda. The traditional brews (Mlija and Busaa) are produced and consumed locally within the community. The key informants stated that the illicit alcohol enterprise has a huge market controlled by wealthy business owners in Kampala, Nairobi, Kisumu, and Eldoret in collaboration with senior government officials who provide protection for the businesses. They reported that two of these business owners “Baby-Ugandan” was gunned down by Ugandan security in 2021 and the other “Onyango-Kenyan” was killed by Kenyan security in Kisian-Kisumu in 2022.

The markets for illicit alcohol are largely in Kenya, starting with the local markets in Ang’orom ward. There are several “clubs” as reported by the Community Health volunteers or “individual homes” with Pseudo names as reported by the civil servants. Table 6 below provides a list of notorious “clubs” or “individual homes” by community unit where illicit alcohol is sold 24 hours daily.

COMMUNITY UNIT	CLUB/ INDIVIDUAL HOME
AMERIKWAI	1. Road kwa Ben
	2. Kwa Mama Rosa
	3. Kwa Okide
	4. Kwa Nadunga
	5. Kwa Chief
ALUPE	6. Kwa Alfunzi Alias Bungoma
	7. Kwa Amoiti Alias Cambodia
	8. Kwa Oluoch
	9. Kwa Mercy Alias Mulago
ALUPE	10. Kwa Terry Alias Kwang'ombe
	11. Kwa Mourine
	12. Kwa Amoding Alias Kwa Makelele
AGOLOTO	13. Kwa Rose Inyadu
	14. Kwa Rose Ataro
	15. Kwa Assembly
	16. Kwa Oteba Alias Mlimani

Table 6: Illicit alcohol Clubs in Ang'orom Ward by Community Unit.

The pattern of consumption of illicit alcohol is 24 hours. The consumers drink as much as they can afford and at any time during the day and night. This is not a regulated enterprise.

The second lot of markets are outside Busia County and involves smuggling of the illicit alcohol from the Nomans land, Sophia town, and some factories in Uganda to Kenyan towns and cities including Mombasa, Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kisumu, and others. The business owners have fleets of vehicles, mainly Toyota Wish and Probox brands together with Motorcycles that transport the illicit alcohol to destinations in Kenya.

21. Underlying Factors Perpetuating and Sustaining the Production and Consumption of Illicit Alcohol

The key informants provided some key factors responsible for the production and sale of alcohol in Ang'orom ward. These include:

- High levels of poverty in the area, illicit alcohol seen as the main source of income
- Availability and low prices of the illicit alcohol
- Chang'aa seen as a source of wealth
- Lack of employment opportunities for the youth despite having completed school.
- Culture and traditions – the traditional brews (Mlija and Busaa) are linked to several traditional and cultural ceremonies among the community
- Corruption – perpetuated by senior government officers in the police and administration working in cahoots with the main business owners. One key informant wondered “how possible is it that a vehicle loaded with illicit alcohol can reach Nairobi from Busia without the Border Police Patrol and the police on roadblocks not impounding it?”

- Protection fees (Ksh.500-1000) also known as “RETURNS” collected by some rogue police usually mid-month and end of the month to ensure producers and sellers of the illicit alcohol are forewarned of any planned raids to arrest them.

22. Actions Taken to Prevent and Control the Production and Consumption of Illicit Alcohol

A majority (10 out of 12) of the key informants said there were no prevention initiatives being implemented in the area to prevent the consumption of illicit alcohol. However, 2 out of 10 key informants said there were such preventive measures. They said they had sensitized the youth to form groups in order to access funds from the government to engage in chicken rearing, brick making, and building rental houses in order to earn some income. All the key informants reported that the most common actions taken by the administrators in collaboration with the police is organizing impro to raids where those found producing or selling illicit alcohol are arrested and taken to court. When asked about government policy on illicit alcohol, all the respondents were aware of the fact that illicit alcohol is banned in Kenya.

23. Impact of the Alcoholic Drinks Policy on the Production, Sale, and Consumption of Illicit Alcohol

The majority of the key informants (7 out of 12) felt that the trends in the consumption of illicit alcohol especially among the youth was increasing. They cited the following as evidence of the increase. Illicit alcohol drinking clubs are increasing, each village has at least 3 or more; precious lives are being lost, an informant said “Last week we lost a medical doctor to illicit alcohol in Sophia area”; complicit attitudes of enforcement officers, one was heard

saying “This Chang’aa has made me what I am, I went to school, and it has contributed to this car I am driving”;

A minority of the key informants credited the alcoholic Drinks control policy of the Kenya government with a reduction in the consumption of illicit alcohol among the adult population. They provided the following arguments as evidence of the reduction. That most men and women who used to produce and sell illicit alcohol have abandoned the business and are engaged in alternative businesses as well as being staunch churchgoers; table banking as an alternative to chang’aa production has taken root in the community; successful children from the community have advised their parents to quit the illicit alcohol business; and due to the harsh economic environment, most of the illicit alcohol clubs have been closed.

24. Main Challenges Faced by Administrators in the Prevention and Control of the Production, Sale and Consumption of Illicit Alcohol

This thematic area was discussed only with key informants who were directly involved in the enforcement activities relating to illicit alcohol. The key informants mentioned the following as the main challenges affecting them:

- i. Life in Danger – once the producers and business owners get to know that they have reported the matter to higher authorities and the police, they can be killed.
- ii. Threat of losing the Job – noting that their superiors are involved in the illicit alcohol with business tycoons, the threat of losing the job is real.
- iii. Isolation and Stigma – administrators face isolation and stigma, the community sees you as the bad guy, inhibiting their business and economic growth, so they keep away from you.
- iv. Corruption “protection fees” leading to leakage of planned raids
- v. Violence and abuse from the producers and consumers of illicit alcohol.

25. Discussion and Conclusions

25.1 Types and Patterns of Drinking Illicit Alcoholic Drinks

Both the community survey and the key informant interviews established that the main illicit alcohol consumed in the Angorom ward is Chang’aa which is produced in the No-man’s land, Sophia town, and also smuggled from the neighboring country. The prevalence of Chang’aa consumption in the study area stands at 50% compared to the national prevalence of 36% for illicit alcohol¹⁶. This finding compares favorably with that of Acuda et al,⁶ that found the consumption of unrecorded alcohol (illicit alcohol) in sub-Saharan Africa to be 60%.

In terms of the patterns of drinking Chang’aa, it was surprising to find 16 notorious illicit alcohol-drinking clubs which were open 24 hours in Ang’orom ward. Noting that this is not a regulated enterprise, this pattern of consumption of illicit alcohol is a threat to public health. The World Health Organization has stated that patterns of consumption of alcohol such as observed in this study is a determinant of harm to the individuals involved⁷. While both the community survey and key informant interviews articulated

the social problems associated with excessive consumption of illicit alcohol, none mentioned the medical consequences of illicit alcohol consumption.

25.2 Interventions to Prevent and Control the Production of Chang’aa

Among the key factors driving the production and sustaining the consumption of illicit alcohol as articulated by the community and key informants are the strong link between the local culture and traditions with the traditional brews; this finding is consistent with the findings of Ambler¹⁰. The other factors mentioned include poverty, unemployment, and corruption by law enforcement officials.

To address these factors, educational, preventive, and developmental approaches are required to enhance the community’s understanding of their situation and weighing of alternative courses of action to illicit alcohol for their development. This study found little or no preventive and developmental approaches as part of the strategies to address the illicit alcohol problem in Ang’orom ward. Instead, the main intervention taken by the administrators in collaboration with the police was raids to arrest the producers and consumers of the illicit alcohol. Regrettably, this is a missed opportunity to harness the multidisciplinary and Intersectoral collaboration strategies to comprehensively address the illicit alcohol challenge.

26. Perceptions of the Impact of the National Alcoholic Drinks Policies

Results of this study show that the government policy of prohibiting illicit alcohol, i.e. eradicating the production, sale, and consumption of illicit alcohol was not having the desired impact. Several reasons were advanced in support of this position by the key informants. On the other hand, a minority of the respondents, mainly civil servants, argued that the Government policies on illicit alcohol have created a positive impact, they too advanced their reasons.

However, what was common and shared among the two groups was that consumption of illicit alcohol among the youth was on the increase, they also agreed on the increasing crime rates including theft, high levels of unemployment among the youth, low agricultural productivity, poverty and decreasing education standards in the community. The critical question which must be answered is “Does the existing government policy to prohibit illicit alcohol address these fundamental developmental factors that seem to be the root causes of the production, sale, and consumption of Illicit alcohol?”

It is the view of the authors that a more developmental-oriented approach that can address the complex economic, cultural, political, and administrative factors that sustain illicit alcohol is preferable to the current enforcement-inclined approaches that enhance the production, smuggling, sale, and consumption of illicit alcohol through corruption.

27. Conclusion

The study concludes that the production and consumption of illicit alcohol is a serious problem in the Ang'orom ward. Its negative impact is most pronounced among the unemployed youth in the area who are involved in excessive drinking of chang'aa, theft, and smuggling of illicit alcohol.

Secondly, the study concludes that the patterns of alcohol consumption in the study area according to WHO is "harmful". This fact does not seem to be known by the community.

Thirdly, the study concludes that the current alcoholic control policies seem to be ineffective in addressing the challenges posed by illicit alcohol among residents in the Ang'orom ward.

Finally, the study concludes that the current strategies employed by national administrative officers and enforcement officers are inconsistent with the root causes of the production, sale, and consumption of illicit alcohol.

28. Recommendations

- The Kenyan and Ugandan Governments to address the challenge caused by "no Man's land" as the main source of Chang'aa, an illicit alcohol that has the greatest impact on the lives of many young people including professionals and university students in Kenya.
- The Eastern African Community to develop a common legal framework to address the gap that exists in the control of illicit alcohol business within and between countries.
- The Busia County Government to establish an Intersectoral, interdisciplinary alcohol prevention department to facilitate the education of the public and especially the youth in and out of school.
- The national government to address the systemic corruption and other vices within the police services to control smuggling and transportation of illicit alcohol into the Kenyan.
- Comprehensive research should be conducted to determine the rationale, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness of the current government policy on illicit alcohol.

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