

Sauti ya Siti

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Alcohol Affects Families



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TAMWA



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EDITORIAL

Tanzania needs an Alcohol Policy now

In both urban and rural areas there is considerable amount of brewing and drinking done by different cadres, irrespective of their age and gender.

It is estimated that over 90 per cent of consumed alcohol is either home made or from the informal sector.

On mainland Tanzania for example, alcohol is sold in bars, hotels, restaurants, and supermarkets with no restrictions at all.

The exception is Zanzibar, where, away from the large resorts, small Muslim-owned restaurants generally do not offer liquor.

Drinking habits force different stakeholders to urge the government to draft, discuss and implement a comprehensive alcohol policy that shall curb rising health, social and economic related problems due to alcohol use.

In response to this situation, the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) has embarked on a project aimed at combating excessive alcohol use that contributes to Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

TAMWA met with stakeholders, local leaders of community groups in the project implementation areas of Saranga, Makumbusho and Wazo Hill Wards of Kinondoni district, Dar es Salaam region and set strategies to ensure that policies and laws support the efforts to combat alcoholism that contributes to GBV.

TAMWA embarked on the project after receiving cases of violence through its Crisis Resolving Centre (CRC), whereby for the period of six months, a total of 54 cases abandonment of women and children were received in early 2015.

Our society should fight adverse consequences of alcohol such as violence against women and children, draining household finances and workplace loss of productivity.

Additionally, alcohol-related problems like physical and mental health problems as well as the link between alcohol and HIV/ AIDS, road traffic fatalities and other health and societal problems should be addressed.

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By Beatrice Bandawe

A NNA Joseph (not her real name) has decided to leave her husband due to the abuse she was subjected to, and she now relies on selling vegetable, to get an income for food, and to educate her two children studying in secondary school.

A mother of four children from her husband she married 17 years ago decided to go away due to harassment and beatings she was subjected to from her husband, especially at night when he returned home.

The man even dared to bring to the family house another woman.

“One day I was deeply asleep, and when my husband came home drunk he commanded me to go out, to give way for him and that woman to sleep on our matrimonial bed. It did hurt me so much,” says Anna who is 40 years old.

She says that her husband who works as a mason, gets a lot of money but he spends a lot of it in drinking and women.

Anna who resides at Kimara suburb testifies that reality during a research initiated by the Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA) in three wards of Kinondoni district, Dar es Salaam region, on Gender Based Violence (GBV) that is mainly caused by orchestrated by men who drink too much alcohol.

In the wards of Saranga, Makumbusho and Wazo Hill where the alcohol – related GBV study was undertaken, Anna’s case is among many others that women are subjected to after their husbands take excessive alcohol.

Saranga Ward Executive Officer (WEO), John Njunde says such incidents have never been reported to his office.

‘My Alcoholic husband made me leave my house’



A woman recounts how her husband injured her after a severe beating.

What is important is to report such issues to the Social Welfare offices, he says.

“If I speak on their behalf I might end up distorting the facts and statistics. Such incidents in society do happen

but I cannot say much because I am not sure about the extent of the problem. I may say there are few incidents but facts may be different” he says.

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Tanzania needs Alcohol Policy now

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Studies show that alcohol fuels poverty and reinforces gender inequalities, and thus there is a need to introduce programmes which make sure that women do not continue to be victims of abuse after their husbands get drunk.

We think prevention and reduction of alcohol-related harm is a key part

of national development efforts, and therefore to look at all factors that contribute such as alcohol companies which use persuasive, massive and aggressive marketing strategies to reach their customers.

We hope these companies shall not sabotage efforts aimed at coming up with national alcohol policy, and Members of Parliament will support the push for alcohol policy.

We and the government shall urgently formulate and implement a comprehensive alcohol policy, to curb rising health, social and economic related problems caused by excessive consumption of alcohol as a matter of urgency. ■

'My Alcoholic husband made me leave my house'

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Commenting on the situation, the Saranga Ward Social Welfare Officer, Tabu Mshokela says that there are such incidents although it is not easy to get figures from relevant authorities in a given area.

"They are just normal and they usually emanate from some men who go for a luxurious life, leaving behind their wives and children in great misery. Such cases have been filed in my office for mediation while others end up at the local government, that is why it is difficult to get correct statistics," she says.

The officer concedes that she has come across difficult cases that she failed to get solution hence decided to refer the same to Social Welfare headquarters.

She says that generally, there has not been an incident that caused bodily injury in her area of jurisdiction. Should such incidents occur they are supposed to be forwarded to the Gender Desk for further legal action. Still in Saranga ward, King'ongo Street Chairperson, Demetrius Mapesi, says there are many GBV incidents in his area and that married couples go to the extent of breaking each others' legs.

He attributes the incidents to some men who take too much alcohol, marijuana smoking, as well as engaging in extramarital relationships.

"There are some women who complain about their husbands that they over drink, sometimes they do not spend nights at their respective homes instead they go to their concubines," she says.

He says that a couple separated recently due to occasional beatings resulting from alcoholism and other harassments in marriage life.

"There are many cases that are filed here in the office; the ones we feel we can dispose of we do so by bringing together the couple, but if are beyond our scope we forward them to State organs," he says.

He reveals that such incidents could even occur 10 times a month, a situation that reflects that GBV acts caused by alcoholism are many, including wife beatings and wives' abandonment.

He says that in the past years, a case was filed at his office where a man had broken his wife's leg at a family fight. The case was forwarded to the State organs, but he cannot remember how the matter ended up.

Commenting on the GBV in his area, Saranga Street Chairman, Mr Godwin Muro, says what he sees are normal challenges that bring about conflict and that they stem from two major factors. He points out the factors as women getting married when still young which causes conflicts because the wives do not experience any of marriage life.

"For me I take this as a normal challenge in marriage because they come to the office and get mediated. There are times that it is men who come to complain about their wives," he reveals.

"The second factor is poor economic condition that causes quarrel in marriage life. If the man's economic situation is not good and the woman forces that she should be bought expensive items, so at the end of the day misunderstandings arise, woman claiming that the man does not provide what is needed at home while the truth is not that" he adds.

In areas like Tegeta, the Chairperson, Ahaba Lwiva says since last year they have received only one case related to GBV. The case was about a man harassing his wife due to alcohol. His office successfully mediated the couple and now the marriage is going on well. ▶▶ pg 7





Night Clubs Vs the Youth

By Nelly Mtema



A local musician entertains at a night club

NIGHT CLUBS have proved to be venues where students from Institutes of higher learning, and at times from secondary schools learn to consume alcohol.

Experts have cautioned that as these students mingle with adults they also get exposed to sexual acts at a tender age.

This is due to the freedom that most institutions of higher learning enjoy, giving students an opportunity to hang out.

For those who are not wise enough, they find themselves cutting their dreams shot as they fail to serve two masters at the same time studying and walk around.

This usually happens when the girls come into contact with partners who believe that getting a woman drunk is an easy way to increase their chances of having sex.

The Head of Mental Health and Substantive abuse Unit at the Ministry of Health, Dr Norman Sabuni explains that when a person gets more intoxicated, alcohol's physiological effects result in a decreased ability to process information and make

judgments, impaired motor control, slurred speech, deterioration of reaction time, and ultimately loss of consciousness.

Often this is the case among young women who drank in high school and increase their alcohol consumption when they reach college and live away from home for the first time.

Harmful use of alcohol is a growing problem in Tanzania and one that requires quick attention, warns experts.

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According to a survey conducted by Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) in the night clubs in Dar es Salaam on the effects of alcohol as far as gender based violence is concerned, it was clear that most of these night clubs are not registered.

The General Secretary of the Mental Health Association of Tanzania (MEHATA) Dr Kissah Mwambene warns that young people face risk because of their vulnerability and brain development that takes place during adolescent years.

The vulnerability of females to alcohol related harm is another major public health concern because alcohol use among women can have severe health and social consequences for newborns.

Dr Mwambene says excessive drinking also accelerates the rates of other problems such as HIV

infections, homicides, traffic injuries and fatalities.

"Alcohol leads to poor coping ability among the younger generation, many youths cannot cope with life challenges as a result of harmful drinking," she warns.

"Longer term health problems associated with risky alcohol use include liver damage, heart damage, and increased risk of some cancers" notes Dr Mwambene.

Legal and Human Rights Centre, Executive Director, Dr Hellen Kijo Bisimba said it was unfortunate that there are no controls of who goes to night clubs as a result, youth become the key customers.

She said some of them are located in residential areas where it is easier

for the students to get access to especially if they do not have close monitoring of their activities.

George Anderson, a University student says "You are studying and since they are two conflicting sound of the music and your notes and concentration, so you decide to go and dance as well since the studying environment is not conducive"

Noise does not only affect students but also women and children who face the ordeal of having night clubs in residential areas due to noise, alcohol and the dress code in such places.

Parents in areas where night clubs are being housed claim that they are having bad times in the morning especially when taking their children to board school buses when they see some youth who come out from night clubs on their way home.

Irene Calistus, a resident of Kimara Stop Over explained the ordeal she faces most of the time when she takes her eight-year-old child to board a school bus where they pass a night club.

The child always asks 'Mum, why are those people coming from that house dressed that way, and, they look drunk, is it because they do not sleep'? says Ms Irene.

"At such times you feel the impact of living near the night clubs, like the one in our area it is not official, no sound proof and it has affected most teenagers in our area, as they have started drinking alcohol at early stage, leave aside moral matters" She says.

General Secretary of Mental Health Association of Tanzania (MEHATA) Dr Kissah Mwambene said women and children are the most affected groups from the alcohol abuse and advised for swift intervention measures to address the problem. ■

'My Alcoholic husband made me leave my house'

However, at Mabwepande Street, Mabwepande Ward, in 2015 there were 11 GBV cases reported while this year three have been filed.

Although Mabwepande Street Chairman, Abdallah Kunja says there were some gender based violence cases, he could not categorize if they were caused by alcohol because he could not remember.

At Bunju 'B' Street, since last year they have received seven cases, four of them have been disposed of and the couples are now living together peacefully and happily, while for the rest, mediation is still going on. That is according to the street chairman, Athuman Njama.

Looking at the comments given by the chairmen, the main factor causing gender based violence is alcohol, envy that is brought about by love affairs and lack of trust in marriage. However, it is their assertion that the cases are on the decrease as many couples are more aware of adverse effects of GBV in marriage.

Three GBV cases caused by alcoholism have occurred at Makumbusho Ward in July this year, says Mediation Officer at Ward Social Welfare Desk Ms. Hellen Mtui. The cases were filed by women whose husbands forced them to leave their homes. There were also women who were abandoned, and they were left with children to look after.

Hellen says that in most cases, the conflicts are fuelled up by excessive drinking, when men go out with concubines and stop or reduce providing basic needs to the wives and families, such as food and education costs. In such cases women fail to make both ends meet so they report the matters to the police. In other incidents when women are forced out of their homes, they leave children who don't have care, and eventually end up in the streets.

"There are two cases that we failed to solve and the couple decided to separate; we forwarded the cases to the courts of law. ■



'Bars are sources of moral decay'

By Jacks Meena

WEAK management of urban planning in the city of Dar es Salaam has caused arbitrary construction of human settlements, housing and poor infrastructure.

The 2015 Census shows that have revealed that Dar es Salaam region has a population of more than 6 million

people, and the city authorities do not have the capacity to provide social services to this population.

The Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) did a research and found that due to lack of authority to manage urban planning, there have been serious violations of land use and buildings, especially in Kinondoni and Ubungu areas. ▶▶ pg 9



Beer companies usually run promotions in Bars. The question is - Do they know how alcohol harms the society?

For instance, Kinondoni District has more than 2,400 drinking joints. Sinza area alone has a total of 740 bars located near people's homes.

The presence of these bars in people's homes has brought about negative impacts to local residents, including moral decay among the youth who get attracted to drinking habits.

"We have bars everywhere in our area and this is not desirable because we are affected by loud music and shouting caused by people who are drunk. Also the presence of bars in our areas triggers evil incidents such as robbery, prostitution, use of drugs, excessive alcohol, especially among secondary school students "Says Jasmin Said (29), a resident of Mji Mpya in Saranga area, Kinondoni district.

Goodluck Mmari, the owner of Meeda Bar in Sinza Mori area says numerous bars and other drinking joints affect sales every day, because customers have choices to select areas where to quench their thirst.

Mmari admits that there are a good number of prostitutes who frequent his bar every evening, especially on weekends, and customers are free to pick a woman of their choice because there is no law that prohibits them from doing so.

He says that the number of women who sell their bodies has been increasing fast, and this could be caused by economic hardships facing women in the city.

Young men living near Meeda bar admit that there have witnessed a number of women being harassed, and people around see that as a normal thing. They say drunkard men touch women body parts as they want, and they do that forcefully.

"You might have seen a recorded video that was posted in the social media recently, showing a woman who was being sexually harassed by a young man who seemed to enjoy his photo taken in that shameful act. I think that particular girl will have been really disappointed , because

'Bars are sources of moral decay'

that clip was being posted to many people, and possibly her family friends and relatives might have also seen it" Says Kondo Mtumwa (28) who is a bodaboda driver.

Boniface Mwaranda (38) resides at Saranga ward in Mbezi says that guest houses and bars should not be built where families live because they might be causes of temptations, and eventually lure their children into bad behaviour.

"This is not good because even our wives can be tempted to bad behavior. I think the relevant authorities should make sure that our families are safe" says Mwaranda.

Mwaranda says that on weekends things are worse because prostitutes know that men who are paid per week have some money, and sex is done anywhere at night. This does not seem to bother people.

"You can find an adult person trading abusive languages with young girls of equal to age his daughters, while children playing around stop and listen to what is happening around them. It is such circumstances which influence children into bad behavior" he says.

Kibamba counselor, who is also the chairperson of other counselors in Kibamba constituency Mr. Ernest Mgawe (39) says that erecting bars in people's residential areas has negative effects, especially bringing up children who may end up drinking alcohol at early stage.

"A young girl may be called at a bar by a person she knows. She

might accept a soft drink today, and tomorrow accept a hard drink, and that becomes her behavior. The relationship won't end up in drinking, but in sexual relationships" He says.

Apart from fuelling sexual behaviour, Mgawe says that in general, playing loud music creates inconveniences to people living in that place. School children are the most affected because they cannot concentrate while doing private studies at home.

"In such an environment, students who want to excel in their studies cannot do so because there is a lot commotion and people keep on shouting especially once they are drunk" says Mgawe.

Cell leader Mr. Isakwisa Isaya (67), who resides at Saranga-Temboni says bars and guest houses in his area have played a big part in ruining lives of young men and women because people of different backgrounds get attracted to that place.

In his area where there are five bars and one guest house, people have started seeing bad behaviors which were not in that area before. For instance, young boys and girls are at times seen drinking with people older than them.

"Such things attract people from different walks of life and in such an environment there are also thieves. Some women have been sexually assaulted by men who eventually vacated the area and could not be traced" says Isaya.

Kinondoni Municipal Mayor Mr. Boniface Jacob, admits that there are a lot of bars in people's residences.

"As you might know, there were some weaknesses in administering such matters. Soon we shall embark on plans that shall make residences of this place live in peace and harmony" Mr Jacob says.

He continues to say that his municipal has plans to implement Regional Commissioner Paul Makonda's directive which is aimed at setting apart some areas which shall only be selling alcohol. ■



Taxation: Need for bars to comply



President John Pombe Magufuli wants all companies and individuals to pay their due taxes.

By Chabby Barasa

AS bars continue to mushroom in Dar es Salaam neighborhoods almost on a daily basis, doubts have emerged from some quarters on whether the government is getting its fair share from all of these joints in the form of tax.

“Mushrooming of bars and pubs, most of them a stone’s throw away from each other means this is a lucrative business,” commented retired public servant, Mr. Ben Malangalila who however expressed his doubts if all of them pay the required tax.

He challenged the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) to embark on a special drive to nab owners of bars who do not remit taxes to the government, hence crippling its ability to provide social services to its people.

“How can we expect our government to construct new roads as well as build schools and hospitals if some of us including bar owners do not pay tax?” Asked Mr. Malangalila.

His comments are echoed by a senior journalist, Anthony Tambwe, who notes that some of the pubs operate in the most informal and discreet manner that authorities are unaware their operations.

“There are some pubs in Dar es Salaam neighborhoods that bear no name yet they pull huge crowds of drinkers on a daily basis, guaranteeing

their proprietors enormous returns, part of which ought to go to the state coffers to improve social services,” he remarks.

For Maimuna Semzigi, her main worry is not only on whether the pubs and bars pay tax but also their locations, noting that some of them operate too close to schools, dispensaries and houses of worship.

“We certainly can do without most of these bars in our neighbourhoods, even if they pay tax or operate legally,” says Ms Semzigi, a Sinza Madukani resident in Dar es Salaam.

According to her, it used to be Sinza that boasted numerous pubs in proximity to one another, but now other neighborhoods like Tabata and Kinondoni have joined the trend.

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Challenges facing barmaids in Dar es Salaam

By Anthony Tambwe

DRINKING, making merry and generally having a good time is the order of the day in most drinking joints, but in the same places, there are those who suffer in silence.

For beer lovers, getting a beer at the right temperature is what is needed to soothe a parched throat, and once you finish you just have to raise your hand to order another cold one.

Rising to the command, in most cases, are women we call 'baa medi', or in the right words they are referred to as bar maids, who will promptly

whisk away the empty bottle and replace it with a new one.

What most of us are unaware of is the fact that most of these women, some of them as young as 14 years face regular sexual harassment from none other but their customers.

"Facing sexual harassment in our line of work is the order of the day, because most of the customers after drinking try to treat us like sex toys, and the worst part is that they don't expect you to refuse their advances," said Amina, a bar maid in Tegeta.

She says that for most part working in a bar is as challenging as any other career, but the difference is that sexual harassment is rampant in their

cases compared to other line of work as compared to other employment.

This, she says, is because at the bar they sell alcohol, which tends to impinge the thinking capacity of a person.

Asked why they do not report such cases to the management of the establishment, she says that most of the girls come from rural areas to look for work, and they are scared of losing their jobs.

It is unfortunate that bar owners do not see this as a problem, and it is surprising that some of them even encourage customers to make sexual advancement towards bar maids.

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Local brew made of sugarcane affects a lot of people in rural areas.



Taxation: Need for bars to comply



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The mushrooming of bars in the country is noted in a recent report that Tanzania is the most profitable major African beer market based on the operating performance of Tanzania Breweries Limited, which commands an estimated 75 percent of the local market share in the country.

"Tanzania remains amongst the most profitable regional markets over the 2019 forecast period," states the Report released this year by London-headquartered BMI Research last year"says.

The Report confirmed that beer sales and taxes will continue to be a vital part of the country's economy, supported by the recent released data indicating that the alcoholic beverage industry contributed over 4tri/- as revenue to the government coffers in the last 10 years.

However, amid tax compliance doubts expressed by a section of city residents, a manager at Rose Garden who identified himself by only his first name as Juma, notes that as much as he was not in a position to comment about other pubs, at least his joint was complying with Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) as far as paying tax is concerned.

"As you can see we use the Electronic Fiscal Device to bill our customers," he observed, adding that Rose Garden is proud to be paying its dues to the government promptly, hence supporting the country's economy.

A visit to the London Pub at Mabibo External in Dar es Salaam also witnessed the use of EFDs in billing customers, for both drinks and food services.

"The use of EFDs, apart from guaranteeing that the government gets its tax promptly, also ensures that I'm able to monitor sales as they happen," commented the Pub's proprietor, who preferred to remain anonymous.

Commenting on bars' tax compliance, TRA's Director of Education and Taxpayer Services, Mr Richard Kayombo says the Authority has laid down strategies to ensure all such facilities pay taxes.

Mr Kayombo added that the fact that some of them use EFDs means they are complying and the government is getting its dues.

He observed that those currently using EFDs have gross sales amounting to 14 million shillings and above per year while joints whose turnover is less than the said amount continue with the old system.

"At TRA we are always on the lookout for all those who fail to comply and we never hesitate to take appropriate action against them," he said.

He added that TRA is working on a system whereby its officials will be earmarked a specific geographical area to manage, to ensure every entity has an EFD or Tax Identification Number.

TRA has since vowed to enhance efforts directed at reducing tax evasion and plugging loop holes for tax avoidance, to create new sources of revenue, it will ensure the use of EFDs in order to increase revenue collection.

Bars and restaurants have been included in the implementation of the second phase of EFD, which began three years ago, aimed at expanding

the number of traders who use the system to issue receipts or tax invoice in all their transaction.

As per TRA announcement recently, the system is ongoing and the Authority shall gradually be registering traders, including bars based on their business performance.

To enforce compliance of bars and other business entities, TRA has outlined punishments for misuse of EFDs, which include a penalty of five percent of the value of the manually receipted or not receipted amount in the case of first time offender.

A second time offender on the other hand, is liable to a penalty of 10 percent of the value of the manually receipted or un receipted amount. For the third time offender, penalty for failure to acquire or use fiscal device or issue fiscal receipt/invoice is fine of not less than 3m/- or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or both.

Tempering with EFD machines meanwhile, attracts a fine of not less than 1,000,000 or imprisonment not exceeding three months or both while any person who fails to demand and retain fiscal receipt or fiscal invoice is liable to a fine of twice the amount of the tax evaded. Any other offence warrants a fine of one million shillings or imprisonment not exceeding 3 months or bot.

Mr Kayombo said the use of EFDs in bars and drinking joints is in line with the government's resolve to ensure effective use of electronic systems and devices in revenue collection. "Indeed, this is one of the areas the Fifth Phase Government is focusing in its quest to increase and strengthen domestic revenue collection," he said. ▶▶ pg 13

Taxation: Need for bars to comply

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Moving budget estimates for the fiscal year 2016/17 in June this year, the Minister for Finance and Planning, Dr Phillip Mpango said effective use of such devices is meant to increase efficiency and minimize revenue losses.

The Minister has further proposed to make various administrative measures under the TRA in order to improve revenue collections and widen tax base. The proposed specific measures include; effectively keeping and up-dating taxpayer register and maintaining accurate taxpayers' records and information.

Others are; to ensure that all active VAT registered taxpayers such as bars are provided with EFDs and are effectively using them in business transactions; to enhance audits of taxpayer's business records and develop a comprehensive compliance programme to ensure the attainment of the revenue target collection; to establish EFD Units in Dar es Salaam Tax Regions and all new taxpayer's service centers in order to improve compliance rate and hence improve VAT collection.

"The government intends to raise over 29 trillion shillings to finance recurrent and development expenditures. In view of this, the budget for 2016/17 is expected to increase by shillings 7.04 trillion equivalent to 31.1 percent compared to the budget for 2015/16 of shillings 22.49tr/-," said the minister.

The 2016/17 budget aims at improving the basic infrastructure for the provision of water, power and transportation for industrial development, as well as raising production of agricultural produce which are used as industrial raw materials.

In order to achieve this, analysts are of the view that the main emphasis has to be on improving domestic revenue collection (such as from bars

and pubs) and other major sources, and allocating resources to key areas that attract industrial investment. ■

Challenges facing barmaids in Dar es Salaam

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"Employers who do not take steps to prevent sexual harassment can face major costs in decreased productivity, low morale, increased absenteeism and health care costs, and potential legal expenses," says Nelson Samson, a lawyer in Tegeta.

He says that the law requires every employer to strive to eliminate sexual harassment/ discrimination in any employment policy, saying that the law has gone to the extent of wanting the employer to register a provision at a work place.

He says that while the person who sexually harasses someone else is liable for their behavior, employers can also be held liable for acts of sexual harassment by their clients.

She says that the problem with most bars is that they do not offer contracts to these girls, which is why when they face cases of sexual harassment they fail to report because they might end up losing their jobs.

"Human rights protection is essential to vulnerable groups where their fundamental rights are violated. For various reasons, there are groups in society which have been traditionally victims of violations of their fundamental human rights. People who belong to these groups require special protection for effective and equal enjoyment of their rights," she says.

Going through most bars in Dar es Salaam, one does not have to be a rocket scientist to realize that cases of sexual harassment are rampant, and unless clear policies are put in

place, this despicable behavior will continue.

Jane Mushi, a barmaid at Tegeta says that because of some behavior of some of the bar maids, most patrons believe that they are after men and will go with anyone as long as he has money, but is quick to refute these claims.

She says that given an option, these girls could live decent lives like any other employee of any sector, but their business environment makes it difficult.

She is quick to point out that this sort of behavior is limited to local bars where the patrons are regular guys who eke out a living the hard way, claiming that there are some upper class bars and lounges where sexual harassment, or any form of harassment for that matter, is not tolerated.

Daima Komboh, a human rights activist says that there are laws that govern the rights of employees, but they are violated in bars simply because they are not reported.

She says that unlike other offices where sexual harassment is treated like an offence, in most bars it is tolerated because of the nature of business.

"Most of these girls endure the treatment because they believe that they do not have an option. But what they don't know is that they can lodge their complaints and the matter will be resolved legally," she says. » pg 15



We should fast-track adoption of alcohol policy

By Abdallah Msuya

HARMFUL use of alcohol is a growing problem in Tanzania, and one that requires quick attention, warns experts.

The 2014 Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health by World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that about 34 per cent of Tanzanians who drink indulge in binge drinking.

The WHO report says 40.6 per cent of Tanzanian men aged 15 above engage in heavy episodic drinking, which is among those who consumed at least 60 grams or more of pure alcohol on at least on one occasion in 30 days.

The prevalence of heavy episodic drinking among women aged 15 years plus is also at staggering 23.3 per cent, while the younger generation is also influenced into harmful use of alcohol.

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Most accidents have been associated to excessive drinking



More worrying, many Tanzanians consume the unregulated type of alcohol classified as others as per the WHO report on Health and Alcohol. A whopping 87 per cent of the alcohol consumed in Tanzania is unregulated, home brewed and illegally sold outside normal government control, reveals the report.

The WHO further indicates in the report that 18.4 litres of pure alcohol are consumed per capital by drinkers annually in Tanzania.

The Head of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in the Ministry for Health, Community, Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, Dr Norman Sabuni, quoting WHO report, says 7.4 per cent of women are drinkers while 23.3 per cent of them are men.

We should fast-track adoption of alcohol policy

A 2013 survey conducted by Ministry of Health and Social Welfare clarifies the percentages by estimating that 3.6 million Tanzanian men and 1.7 million women drink excessively.

The state-sanctioned survey shows at least 30 per cent of young Tanzanians under the age of 15 drink alcohol and/or use narcotics. The survey also shows high consumption among educated Tanzanians, with 80 per cent drinking alcohol while 63 per cent of people who live near bars, pubs and other alcohol outlets also end up drinking alcohol.

This sort of extreme drinking and the increasing love for liquor among

youth and women is sending alarm to health experts, NGOs and lawmakers.

According to Dr Kissah Mwambene, General Secretary of Mental Health Association of Tanzania (MEHATA), health and social related problems caused by excessive consumption of liquors are on the rise and pose a serious danger to the country and paralyses .

Dr Mwambene says while there are massive economic and health repercussions that Tanzania incurs from alcohol abuse, women and children are the most affected groups, and she calls for swift mitigative measures to address the problem.

Challenges facing barmaids in Dar es Salaam

She says that given that barmaids attend to all kinds of characters, some customers misbehave by insulting them.

All along, a barmaid is expected to remain calm and not lose her

temper, since doing so may lead to the termination of her job.

In order to survive, the barmaids have to acquire diplomatic tactics.

For example, at Wapiwapi Bar one customer unzipped the barmaids skirt and at the same time telling her:

“What do you have after all, you are just a JABA” meaning that she is like a Japanese company which sells second-hand vehicles which are well-known for not lasting long.

To use her own words she said: “Yes I have to wear a short beneath my skirt because when customers are drunk they are no longer human beings. I have to defend myself by wearing this pair of shorts”. ■

“Alcohol drinking increases the rate of violence in the community, and especially in male dominated societies. It raises the level of violence against women and children leading to many other social and psychological repercussions,” she warns.

Dr Mwambene says excessive drinking also accelerates the rates of other problems such as HIV infections, homicides, traffic injuries and fatalities.

Dr Mwambene discloses that according to a recent report, there are more suicide largely associated with alcoholism and that is ranked 8th in Africa.

She warns that young people are at particular risk when bingeing because of their vulnerability and because brain development that takes place during adolescent years can be negatively affected.

The vulnerability of females to alcohol related harm is another major public health concern because alcohol use among women can have severe health and social consequences for newborns. » pg 16



We should fast-track adoption of alcohol policy



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According to Dr Mwambene, women who drink during pregnancy may increase the risks of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) and other preventable health conditions in their newborns.

“At the moment there is an increase of autism due to alcohol abuse among pregnant women as well as an increase of cases of college students suffering from mental health due excessive alcohol use” she says.

“Alcoholism leads to poor coping ability among the younger generation, many youths cannot cope with life challenges as a result of alcohol abuse” she warns.

Longer term health problems associated risky alcohol use include liver damage, heart damage, and increased risk of some cancers, notes Dr Mwambene.

The Global Strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol defines ‘harmful use’ as drinking that causes detrimental health and social consequences for the drinker, the people around the drinker and the society at large as well as patterns of drinking that are associated with increased risk of adverse health outcome.

Another health expert, Dr Shaibu Mashombo says the harmful use is determined by the volume consumed, the pattern of drinking

“At the moment there is an increase of autism due to alcohol abuse among pregnant women as well as an increase of cases of college students suffering from mental health due excessive alcohol use” she says.

and the quality of alcohol, adding that a large number of people were unaware that their level of alcohol consumption is causing damage to their health.

Dr Mashombo says drinking any level

of alcohol regularly carries a health risk for everyone and calls for men and women to limit their intake to no more than 5 and 2 units a week respectively to keep the risk of illness like cancer and liver disease low.

Dr Mwambene says formulation and implementation of a strong alcohol policy will play a crucial role in reducing the damages caused by harmful use of liquors.

According to WHO report, Tanzania is among countries that are yet to formulate and implement national alcohol policy. The country also lacks interventions and proper enforcement of existing laws and regulations in the alcohol field, reveals the WHO report.

“We need to ensure a national alcohol policy is in place and implemented. We must also have a national action plan and government support for community action” she says.

Dr Mwambene calls for the review of outdated alcohol legislations and by-laws, saying there should be legally binding regulations on alcohol advertising, product placement, sponsorship, as well as legally required health warning labels on alcohol advertisement and containers.

The call for a national alcohol policy is echoed by members of parliament too. Legislators, who participated in the capacity-building seminar on the harm of Alcohol Socially, Economically and in Health organized by the Tanzania Women Association (TAMWA) June 24, this year who agreed that the country needs an alcohol policy to curb rising health and social related problems caused by excessive consumption of alcohol.

Songea Urban legislator, Mr Leonidas Gama (CCM) warns alcoholism is largely affecting the nation’s workforce, and insists on the need for new alcohol policy, while calling for reinforcement of existing laws relating to alcohol. ■

Drinking fuels road accidents

By Ashery Mkama

ACCORDING to the Chief Traffic Police Commander Mohammed Mpinga, a total of 1,580 people died in road accidents between January and June 2016. During the same period, 4,459 injuries were reported from 5,152 accidents that occurred nationally.

Mr. Mpinga says that during the same period, a total of 1,279 men and 301 women, respectively lost their lives.

Among those injured in road accidents, 1,257 were men and 3,402 were women, calling for concerted efforts among stakeholders to address the situation.

Mbeya Region is reported to have recorded the highest number of women killed in road accidents, where 49 lost their lives while Ilala Municipality registered the highest number of women injured at 1,257.

During the same period, there were 1,356 road accidents caused by motorcycles, commonly known as bodabodas.

It is such a situation that makes the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) hero for initiating the road safety campaign, which is aimed at boosting government efforts to reduce road accidents.

Road traffic accidents are one of the major health problems worldwide. It is estimated that 30,000 people are seriously injured in the world's roads everyday with the majority of the casualties coming from low and middle income countries.

The recent accident that involved two City Boy Company buses which collided head-on along Maweni-Kintinku road in Manyoni District, Singida region and resulted to the death of 30 people and dozens others wounded.

This has prompted the State to come up with strict rules and regulations in attempt to contain the problem.

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Police conducts a check up to find out whether the bus driver is drunk

Drinking fuels road accidents

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The Minister for Works, Prof Makame Mbarawa has directed the Surface and Marine Transport Regulatory Authority (SUMATRA) to come up with tougher regulations that will help curb road accidents.

"It's obvious that the existing regulations are not tough enough to send a serious message to reckless drivers and bus owners. It is high time we came up with something more serious to deal with the level of alcohol consumption" the minister says.

According Mr Mpinga, the punishment given to drivers who consume alcohol is not sufficient, because they are detained at a local police station for few days before they are taken to court where they don't stay long, because the fine is only 30,000/- which many drivers can afford to pay.

"Usually if a driver causes an accident while drunk we don't fine him. We are only supposed to take him to court. Penalties given to such drivers do not help to reduce the number of drivers who drink alcohol while driving. The 30,000/- fine is little and should be increased quickly" he says.

Road Safety Act CAP 168 (R.E.2002) Sec 44 says that a driver who pleads guilty can be fined up to 50,000/- or imprisonment for not less than 2 years.

DCP Mpinga says the sentence can be extended because the fine is minimal but although the law allows for imprisonment, no driver has been jailed for driving offences.

"My advice is that all drivers should adhere to what they studied at driving schools, and they should not attempt to drink alcohol before driving a motor vehicle, unless drivers want to violate this law. We keep on insisting that if we get a driver who is drunk, the law should take its course and punish him or her accordingly." He says.

He adds that if someone has taken some alcohol, there is no need for him or her to drive a car. Such a person should hire a taxi to bring him home safely instead of putting life at risk.

From January to June, 2015 accidents caused by alcohol were 34 and in the same period from January to June 2016 the accidents caused by alcohol was 48 equal to 41 percent.

Tanzania has ratified an international conventions, and has helped draft a five-year national strategic plan for the implementation of security related to road issues. The strategy called BLOOMBERG INITIATIVE GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY PROGRAMME (BIGRS 2015-2019) deals with at national and international levels and is supposed to be a governing law that involves various stakeholders managed by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Muhimbili Orthopaedic Institute (MOI) is experiencing a volume of patients that is difficult to manage. And this is chiefly due to the huge number of patients with road traffic injuries (RTIs) that end up in the emergency room of the hospital.

According to Dr Respicious Boniface who is a Consultant working with Anaesthesia Unit at the Muhimbili Orthopaedic Institute(MOI), a total of 2,520 road traffic injury patients were recorded) between January and July this year, an average of 12 patients daily.

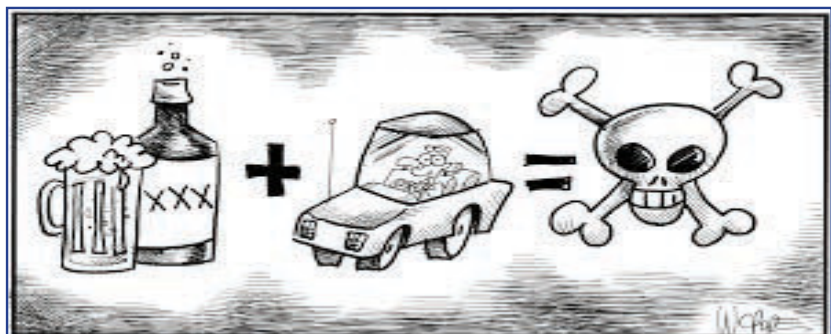
The problem seems to be on the increase compared last year were there was an average of 9 patients per day.

The majority of the victims (70.2 per cent) belonged to the productive age group (18 to 45 years) with a male to female ratio of 3:1. Motorcycles were responsible for the majority of road traffic crashes, followed by motor-vehicles.

Dr Boniface says that drivers (38.3%) accounted for the majority of victims, followed by passengers (35.4%). Of the 2,520 patients seen, 57.4% were admitted, 40.4% treated and sent home and 2.2% died at the accident scene.

Additionally, victims who include drivers are often admitted having high alcohol levels.

However, the hospitals do not have mechanism for measuring blood alcohol content in our hospitals and breath analyzers are under-used by the Tanzanian Police, and this could be a source of under reporting of alcohol related accidents. ■





Alcohol shatters youth dreams

A young man gets drunk after consuming a lot of liquor, famously known as viroba.

By Deus Ngowi

It is rare to find Almasi at home and if he is there, it is difficult to converse with him because you might find him either asleep or drunk.

He spends most of his time in bars, looking for whatever kind of liquor so as to quench his thirst. Almasi (not his real name) goes for whatever brand available, be it traditional or the modern ones. He does not mind whether the drink is legalized or not.

On the streets of Tuangoma ward, Mbagala Division in Temeke Municipality, Almasi always seeks Samaritans who can see him off with a drink and is ready to spend yime with them as long as he gets his drink at the end of the day.

Looking at Almasi, one could think he is an aged fellow due to his deteriorated stature, colour of his hair, fragility and the way he talks.

I was thus shocked when his aunt, Chiku (not her real name) told me that he was only 23 years old, attributing her nephew's condition to excessive consumption of alcohol.

She said when he finished his primary school education in 2008 he became a street hawker before he started to work at Mbagala Market, primarily carrying luggage of business persons from one place to another in the morning for opening and later in the afternoon at the close of business.

Chiku says as time passed by, Almasi started to drink alcohol, increasing the quantity as time finally unfolded and later he failed to carry on his activities and was only able to go to work for a few days of the week.

"We are now used to his situation but for years after he finished primary school he was a busy boy, looking for money through business and later working at Mbagala Market. Now he is just like that. The shocking thing is that he drinks everyday; you cannot tell where he gets the money, but I guess is from friends.

He is now addicted to alcohol and I do not know if he can get out of this condition," says Chiku who lives with her nephew.

Goroka Street Acting Chairperson, Mrisa Mtuwa says the situation has made Almasi reliant on other people while he should now be either in school or working somewhere.

"This is a result of alcohol abuse; he cannot work, his health is affected because he cannot even make informed choice properly. Bad still we are losing a workforce and I do not see him getting married at any time of his life, unless he gets a cure to redress his medical situation," says Mr. Mtuwa.

What does Almasi, the single who is not expected to marry have to say about his situation? I do not have any problem so long as I get my drink and 'nyama choma'. "What is wrong? There is no problem...I am alright...just give me kiroba (alcohol packed in sachet) is enough," that was an answer to questions from this reporter. ➤ pg 20

Dr Kondo Chilonga is a the Head of General Surgery at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC) cautions the public, especially the youth against excessive consumption of alcohol. He cites some reasons for people taking alcohol as possibly lack of employment and commitment.

He notes that the problem might be huge to the youth as unemployment rate is high and some of them would like white collar jobs instead of seeking to employ themselves as individuals or forming co-operative groups. He says some have frustrations, and want to be at same level cope with others hence ending up drinking too much.

Dr Chilonga says effects of alcohol to humans depend on brands, ingredients and manufacturing methods as well as percentage of alcohol. He says excessive drinking brings toxic substances to the body that has to be taken out. That means organs such as liver and kidney would be overworked. As a result one can get liver cirrhosis and renal failure, thereafter hepatitis and ultimately death.

"Such failures could be seen when a patient's abdomen swells and people might think one is healthy but the truth is that it is a sickness as other parts of the body are weak and pancreas may be damaged due to the complications and lead to diabetic condition as insulin would not be produced as required," says Dr Chilonga.

The physician advises that taking alcohol without or before a meal could lead to malnutrition as well as stomach ulcers that may develop to cancer.

Alcoholism can also bring about nervous system disorder that diminishes thinking and analytical capacities.

"At this stage we can say that the person is addicted and this is a serious situation because one cannot go without alcohol; they become dependent" he unveils.

Alcohol shatters youth dreams



He says it affects the victim cannot write well nor hold objects firmly. It affects how one's body reacts to certain situations and in many cases dulls their judgment and motor skills. Signs of a temporary change in reaction time could be noticed while speaking, driving or working.

On social effect, excessive drinking of alcohol for the youth might prove difficult to have family because they would not have enough strength to have sexual intercourse. As a result one cannot get children or raise new family.

Dr Chilonga says there are also hazardous effects on the part of

girls. One of the effects is that if an alcoholic girl is pregnant there is a possibility of miscarriage. If they proceed to deliver the baby might be of low birth weight, not healthy enough with low mental capacity and IQ as well.

Professor Honest Ngowi from Mzumbe University points out that youth who abuse alcohol cannot participate fully, if at all, in economic activities of the country.

"It becomes a lost labour force that could have otherwise contributed to production of goods and services thereby contributing in the country's economic growth and associated benefits such as tax and none tax revenues," he says.

He goes for health implications as well, saying too much alcohol consumption is bad for health and raises the country/nation's health wage bill.

"If they have to be treated, the national income that could have been used to finance other better expenditure posts both in the recurrent and development budget becomes a waste," he says

He notes that alcoholism among youth breeds violence and many other negative impacts that affect the economy negatively from the individual, household, community to the country level. ■



Youth are lured into drinking habits

By Anastazia Anyimike

In some African cultures, alcohol is said to have significance in life, especially in marriage, funeral ceremonies, even when people gather to solve problems in the communities.

Many people have been involved in drinking habits without being aware, and that is of the most dangerous habits in the world today.

According to a 2015 research conducted by the government with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO), various steps should be taken to help the youth against alcohol abuse.

The study, which looked at diseases of which alcohol consumption was one of the causes, showed that 29 percent of the population consumes alcohol, with men 38.3 percent and 20.9 percent women. Women who do not drink constituted 51 percent and men 43.1 percent.

The study also showed drinkers were 11 percent, with men at 13.6 percent

and women at 8.2 percent.

Dr. Fredrick Mashila, a physiologist at Muhimbili National Hospital, says people should be careful and should not imitate drinking habits because the human body has a certain capacity of absorbing alcohol. Other people can drink a lot, while others can't afford drinking alcohol at all.

"There are bodies which have limited capacity, and that is why one can drink one beer and gets completely drunk which others can drink a lot and still remain sober" he says.

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Youth smile as they get ready to drink beer

He adds that people whose bodies cannot withstand alcohol have a higher risk of getting hurt because their bodies fail to absorb alcohol and usually that affect that person.

Dr Mashila says that statistics show that a large number of people from 15 years onwards drink alcohol approximately 6.3 liters to 6.7 liters per day.

“Alcohol contributes a lot to deaths and liver diseases, cancer, diabetes, and mental illnesses. World Health Organization statistics show that five percent of all world deaths are attributed to alcohol. This means that over more than three million people are killed by alcohol every day” he says.

Nutritionists say that generally it is advisable to avoid alcohol but should one desire to do so, then women should not take more than one measurement of the alcohol while men should not exceed two.

However, Dr. Mashila says experience and studies show that there is a level of alcohol that one can take and remain healthy, giving an example of red wine which, if not excessively has beneficial properties for the human body.

Generally it is advisable to avoid alcohol consumption, but should one choose, nutritionists say that a woman may take one liter of beer while a man can take two liters per day.

The Head of mental health and drug abuse in the Ministry of Health, Social Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, Dr. Norman Sabuni says drinking habits may increase the risk of diseases to a human body.

It is thus better to take the required level for daily consumption than to take more which brings health risks.

Dr. Sabuni says the notion that liquor cures coughs or remove body fats is distorted. People should not believe such concepts which are contrary to principles of good health.

Youth are lured into drinking habits



“But, as one drinks more, the brain gets affected. It doesn’t matter what mood you are in, when high levels of alcohol are involved, instead of pleasurable effects increasing, it is possible that a negative emotional response will take over” He said.

According to him, alcohol can be linked to aggression, as one may become angry, aggressive, anxious or depressed.

He adds that while a glass of wine after a hard day might help you relax, in the long run it can contribute to feelings of depression and anxiety and make stress harder to deal with.

This is because regular, heavy drinking interferes with neurotransmitters in our brains that are needed for good mental health.

“When we drink, we narrow our perception of a situation and don’t always respond to all the cues around us. If we are prone to anxiety and notice something that could be interpreted as threatening in the environment, we may miss the other less threatening or neutral information” he said.

For example, he explains, we might focus on our partner talking to

someone we are jealous of, rather than notice all the other people they have been chatting to that evening.

He believes that when we drink, we narrow our perception of a situation and don’t always respond to all the cues around us.

“If we are prone to anxiety and notice something that could be interpreted as threatening in the environment, and that can in the future affect us” he says. ■



Alcohol: Source of family conflicts

By Editha Majura

AT a bench located opposite Social Welfare office in Kinondoni District in Dar es Salaam are seated three women, waiting for their turn to go in, after people who are being attended in the office are through.

Alisia Melikioli (not her real name), aged 40 years old has three children; a boy and two girls, could be heard explaining to her counterparts what has made her call at the office; she needs a letter that would assure good Samaritans who had provided her

with shelter for several days since she moved from her home, running away from beatings she got from her husband.

She says that since she was married by the man, under Catholic nuptials, she became a person to be beaten even in the presence of her children, and now she says she has had enough; she cannot persevere any more.

She brings out a heap of hospital cards and shows the colleagues saying; "All these cards are from different hospitals where I was getting treatment after I was beaten by this man when he was drunkard."

She recounts how she was injured to the point that she had to, along with

the children, leave the residence with the man who has now started to threaten the good Samaritans who provide her a safe haven.

She was late in making the decision as she says that her left leg was broken in one of beating incidents.

She says that although she is saddened to be living like a refugee in her own country, what hurts her most is the fact that the children live without their father.

The Kinondoni District Social Welfare Officer, Judith Kimario says alcohol brings about family conflicts, abandonment of children and divorce.

"From January to October last year we received complains where 12 women were accused of engaged in alcohol and prostitution, especially during evening hours when their husbands have gone to work and have since been infected with sexually transmitted diseases and Aids," says Kimario.

Kimario says alcohol leads to a parent or both abandon the family by failing to fulfill parental obligations, even if they do not move from their homes.

She gives examples of cases registered at the office between January and December last year to be 720, out of which 213 were centered on couples engaged in alcoholism to the extent that cause conflicts in their marriages.

Out of 150 cases, couples in 63 of them were mediated by the office while the rest were forwarded to other authorities, including Marriage Arbitration Council.

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Alcohol influences men to fight their wives

Alcohol: Source of family conflicts



mother or both parents and that one of the sources of loss of lives is excessive consumption of alcohol.

She says there are five children who have been left orphans after their father succumbed to death due to consumption of hard liquor, that resulted in renal failure and kidney damage due alcohol abuse that went on as both parent were not taking proper diet.

Ms Kimaro says in 10 wards of Kinondoni Municipality there are 6,533 orphans who are officially registered but there are others whose number is yet to be established.

She says 2,000 of the children lost their parents through accidents and different diseases including Aids and that alcoholism plays some parts in the problem as well.

Locations in Kinondoni Municipality that have the highest number of street children are mentioned are Selander Bridge, Jangwani, Morocco and St Peter's.

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Kimaro says once children and their mothers are thought to have committed offences and father notices (while intoxicated) he subjects them to heavy beatings as opposed to what he would do when he is sober.

She talks of a child that was injured after her father beat her with an electrical wire after he learnt that she did not do her homework that she was given by her teacher.

She says that women and children are the most affected by sexual abuse done by men, some of whom at the time are drunk.

There are women who are forced to anal sex. In five months last year, eight such cases were filed at the office; mediation was successful in six of them while the others were forwarded to courts of law.

Kimaro says there was a father who whenever he returned home drunk

demanded to have sex with his seven-year-old daughter.

"This dad used to hang the child upside down and after several minutes he would force her to have sex with him," says the social welfare officer.

She adds that from June to October last year the office received five sexual abuse cases against children and that they managed to reconcile the individuals in two cases while three went to be filed in court.

Kimaro says the Social Welfare Office has received complaints in cases that involve a husband or a wife going to bars and returning home at midnight very drunk.

"For example from August to September last year we had five such cases". Families with these type of parents lack joy and peace," she says.

She says in the Tanzanian communities here is a huge increase of children who have lost their father,

From January to October last year the office presided over cases involving 220 children who arrived in different parts of the municipality from Dodoma and Singida regions as well as from Pangani district in Tanga region.

The increase of street children is attributed partly to parents being alcoholic and failure to undertake their parental duties.

Due to the adverse effects of excessive alcohol consumption, the Kinondoni District Social Welfare Office advises that an awareness campaign about the consequences of alcohol should be carried out to the entire community.

The awareness should be given at different levels; from the individual, family and to different groups of people so that they understand the reality of the matter and its consequences to families and the nation. ■



Linkages between alcohol abuse and GBV

Dominant masculine gender norms and behaviours largely revolve around notions of aggression and risk-taking, and are pursued through male involvement in activities such as violence, high-risk sexual activity and the use of alcohol.

Heavy alcohol consumption is often associated with masculinity and male camaraderie, where men are encouraged – even expected to drink excessively in order to satisfy male gendered expectations.

When men partake in typically masculine behaviours such as heavy drinking, this can often lead to violence against their partners and families disproportionately impacting on women and girls.

Research shows that intimate-partner violence is five times higher in relationships where one or both partners abuses alcohol.

Alcohol abuse among men, as well as intimate-partner violence, is often a manifestation of an underlying need for power and control related to gender-based distortions and insecurities.

Therefore, it is important to challenge dominant gender norms when developing interventions to address alcohol addiction.

A study done recently has revealed that in most parts of Africa, male informants identified alcohol as a symbol of masculinity, while female informants reported that men who did not drink alcohol were more “valuable”.

This dichotomy between male and female attitudes towards hegemonic masculinity reinforces the argument that masculinities are not static, and can be transformed to have less

harmful effects on the health and wellbeing of both men and women.

The “liquid courage” that alcohol provides men with can be closely linked to the phenomenon of gang culture that exists across many parts of Africa.

Socio-economic factors such as unemployment, overcrowded living situations and domestic violence lead many youths to create new “homes” and “families” on the streets and with gangs.

Conforming to dominant notions of masculinity are crucial parts of gangsterism.

Gang members are admired for their fighting prowess, success with women, and criminal daring, which often includes rape.

Drinking alcohol is used as a coping mechanism to enable and reward participation in these acts.

For many gangs, new members are expected to go through an initiation or rite of passage that is designed to test the newcomer’s toughness and

masculinity.

Often these initiations, of which alcohol is an integral part, can involve perpetrating violence and rape against women and girls.

The links between alcohol, gangsterism and HIV are beginning to be examined and addressed in research and interventions, but the impact of gangsterism on gender-based violence – particularly on men and boys – is rarely acknowledged.

The intersection of sexuality in alcohol and GBV interventions should not be ignored, as the association of heavy drinking with heterosexual masculinities means that the high level of alcohol and substance abuse in communities has been significantly ignored.

Childhood experiences with (predominately male perpetrated) sexual and physical abuse leads to greater reliance on alcohol and the perpetration of gender-based violence in adult life – both of which are often framed as expressions of men’s required behaviour. ■

Too much alcohol can affect your health

