

Causes of Deviant Behaviour in Teenagers

A Case Study of Eldoret Children's Remand Home

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Abstract: The aim of the study was to investigate the Causes of Deviant Behaviour in Teenagers. The respondents of the study were inmates at the Remand Home and the staff at Eldoret Children Remand Home The Sample Size used was 60 teenagers. The study used Sample Survey Design. Data collection methods used was Interview Schedules and Questionnaires. Observation Method was also used to verify the information collected.

The study established that Peer influence and Poor Parenting largely contributed to deviance among teenagers. The Environment in which Children are nurtured also contributes to deviance. The study revealed that Children nurtured in Urban Slums are affected most compared to their rural counterparts. Teenagers prefer being idle to working and this makes them more vulnerable to deviance.

Keywords: Deviant behaviour, Teenage, Remand home, Challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

Behaviour is seen as deviant when people are alarmed, angered, outraged or threatened by violation of what they consider right and proper. But according to Richard Gelles and Ann Levine in their book Introduction to Sociology, it is what people view as right or wrong, good or desirable and is highly variable.

Rubington and Weinberg (1995), defines Deviance as a violation of social rules. It is behaviour that breaches a society's or group's widely held values and norms. It is the undesirable behaviour as Mushanga (1998) puts it, in his book, Crime and Deviance.

Generally, deviance is a violation of social rules which occurs when someone breaches a society's or group's widely held values and norms. It is regarded as the anti-social behaviour. Deviance is used as an Umbrella term to include such behaviour as crime and delinquency. These forms of behaviour may include abuse of drugs, homosexuality, Lesbianism, Sodomy, alcoholism and incest among others. In this study, deviance therefore is the violation of cultural norms or the violation of legal standards by the young. It encompasses a wide range of other acts of non-conformity, from variations in hair style to murder.

1.1 Background of the Study

In Kenya a great percentage of the population consists of the youth below 35 years of age. Majority of them face a bleak future and disillusionment mainly due to escapism in alcohol and drug addiction, thus exposing them to many health hazards such as promiscuity, delinquency, violence and HIV/AIDS among others.

Teenage problems, if not handled properly and at the right time are likely to influence them to develop deviant traits. It is evident that teenage problems either stem from maturational changes within the growing adolescents or from environmental factors that influence them.

This study takes the view that both environmental factors and maturational changes are responsible for the problems facing teenagers today. The perception of teenagers themselves and the societal expectations are yet another source of teenage problems.

In their attempts to achieve personal autonomy, self-Identity, self esteem, social belonging and recognition, teenagers find themselves in a dilemma between pursuing their own aspirations and society's values and norms.

Deviance among teenagers in Kenya is a common phenomenon. It is widespread and literally affects entirely everybody in the society.

Most parents are desperately up-set about their teens with deviant behaviour and this has adversely affected them. This is evident from the increased number of parents seeking counselling services for their deviant teenagers, in a bid to correct the vice which appears to haunt Kenyans thereby depriving them both Psychological and Social balance.

A lot has been reported by both the press and print media that deviance characteristics are spread all over the country. On 25th March 2003, about 65 Kyanguli Boys from Machakos County perished in circumstances that were deviance oriented (Daily Nation Newspaper of 26th March 2003). This was followed shortly by Bombolulu Girls incident in Mombasa County and the trend still continues to date.

The above incidences are both alarming and shocking and have been attributed to the influence of Drugs and Peer Group influence among the teenagers concerned. The persistence of this problem has compelled the researcher to undertake this study in order to identify possible causes and give recommendations on strategies to be employed to alleviate the problem.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Children are expected to obey their parents, adhere to society's values and norms and generally Elderly Citizens in the society comfort and respect. Contrary to this, everything in the society seems wrong. Teenagers no longer observe society's values and norms. They have emulated the western country's lifestyles including the mode of dress, behaviour and social conduct in general. They have deviated from the normal lifestyle, approved and intended to govern the social conduct of human beings in our society.

Deviant behaviour among teenagers is a phenomenon that has taken root in our contemporary society both in developed and developing countries.

The effects of Social Change such as transition of families from extended to nuclear Family has limited Socialization with other Significant Members of the society, hence erosion of Values and Norms or Reduced Internalization of these values and norms, which is a necessary ingredient for desirable pattern of behaviour.

In Kenya deviant behaviour has taken root and can be witnessed in the rampant schools unrest countrywide leading to massive destruction of property and loss of lives emanating from organized gang attacks such as Al-Shabaab on innocent individuals. There is also an increased number of school dropout in children who have deserted their homes and resorted to street life in a bid to search for freedom to practice their deviant acts.

This trend can be attributed to the rapid changes that the society is undergoing such as increased population growth, Rural-Urban Influx that has led to economic constraints on the few resources available and also the recent devaluation of the Kenya Shilling against the US Dollar, which has adversely affected the economy.

Rapid changes in development of major towns in the country such as Nakuru, Eldoret, Thika among others have increased the rural –Urban influx. The development of industries in these towns has attracted people from rural areas who move to towns in search of job opportunities in these industries. These discoveries in technological and economic fields have affected the Traditional Social Systems. Both parents have opted for economic investments at the expense of the children, hence their primary obligation of socializing their children has been foregone.

Consequently, the low educated people, who move to urban areas to seek employment opportunities, cannot acquire well-paying jobs due to their level of Education. They opt for casual jobs and end up living in formal settlement areas (slums) in towns where rent is affordable to them. These areas are not favourable for child upbringing since they are congested

with poor sanitation, and may be a breeding haven for alcoholics, drug peddlers and people with other social vices such as prostitution. Chances of adopting deviant behaviour, for children nurtured in such an environment are therefore very high since children will interact with others and learn through associating with their peers.

Children from poor family background have a greater risk of adopting deviant behaviour since they are not provided with basic needs compared with their counterparts from well-to do families. In as much as children from an economically stable family are supplied with basic needs, they divert these to other areas of interest such as drug and substance abuse, against the intention of parents.

The origin of deviance is as old as history itself but it can be viewed with concern as long as it manifests among us. It is a problem affecting parents and the entire society. Thus if the child is not properly guided at an early stage, it will adopt maladaptive behaviour and the damage caused will later affect the society as a whole.

The government has established Borstal institutions in a bid to correct or fill up this inadequacies created by parents. These rehabilitation centres are meant to care for these children and ensure they are reformed before handing them back to the society. A mal-adjusted child with deviant behaviour traits is a threat to the society, because he/she is likely to adapt a criminal attitude and thus interfere with the moral standards of the society.

For this reason, the researchers have attempted to highlight some factors that may influence deviant behaviour and recommendations in combating the problem. The study was carried out at Eldoret Children's Remand Home and focused on four variables that the researcher greatly attributes to have a bearing on the research topic.

Objectives of the Study

General objective

1. To investigate the causes of deviant behaviour in teenagers.

Specific objectives

1. To establish the Demographic variables of teenagers with deviant behaviour.
2. To determine the causes of deviant behaviour in teenagers.
3. To determine the experiences and effects of deviant behaviour among teenagers.

Research Questions

1. What are the demographic variables of teenagers with deviant behaviour?
2. What are the causes of deviant behaviour in teenagers?
3. What are the experiences and effects of deviant behaviour among teenagers?

Significance of the study

The findings will be beneficial to Policy Makers who are expected to adopt governance Structures / Policies that will deter teenagers' actions which harm the society's' image. This will form a basis for choosing and implementing policies that will enable the law enforcers to make the society more habitable as an avenue for further and faster growth and development.

The study is intended to establish possible Causes of Deviance and Provide Suitable Suggestions to address the problem. The study therefore will provide information which will be of great use to Parents with Deviant Children, Guardians, Teenagers, Government Agencies, Schools and the General Public.

The scope of the study

This study targeted deviant teenagers at the Eldoret Childrens Remand Home.

Limitations of the study

The case study design is seemingly too broad to allow all relevant variables to be considered in the study. However the researcher strictly focused on the objectives of the study.

Where questionnaires were used as a method of data collection, they suffered the problem of inability to probe an issue deeply. However the tool was designed to ensure all relevant data was captured.

III. METHODOLOGY**3.1 Research design**

In this study, the researcher used a simple survey design. A questionnaire schedule was prepared which enabled the researcher to source information from the secondary respondents whereas interview schedules were administered to source information from primary respondents.

3.2 Sampling procedure

The study was purposively conducted at Eldoret children's Remand Home owing to the fact that it admits children committed to Remand Homes by the courts.

In addition, the researcher was able to source respondents conveniently since the respondents were drawn from one place and therefore minimized costs and time. Further, the children in the institution were drawn from all parts of Kenya, thus the study gave a cross-section of representativeness from different areas of the country.

Information on the age distribution was found in the children's department data-base. Authority was sought from the manager of the Home to provide access to other information such as the children's Reports, and admission Registers. The admission Registers were used to identify the eligible respondents for the study.

There were cases of care and protection in the Home. The study did not capture this category as they have no deviance history and therefore they were eliminated from the study sample.

Eligible respondents were randomly selected until the required sample of 60 individuals was attained to form a basis for this study.

3.3 Target population

The study targeted teens at Eldoret Children's Remand Home. The teens had varied deviant behaviours; eg. violence cases, criminal offences such as rape / stealing, prostitution and those with a record of drug and substance abuse.

3.4 Sample size

There was a total of 236 cases available in the home, of which 56 were on protection and care. The researcher could not interview respondents from this category, hence they were eliminated. A sample frame of 180 remained. The researcher considered to take 1/3 of the total sample frame as a representative fraction for the study. Therefore out of 180 cases, 60 were sampled for the study. To get the sample from the total sample frame, systematic and simple random sampling methods were used.

3.5 Sampling techniques and procedures

To collect primary data, the Researcher used structured interview schedules as an instrument of data collection. The questions were formulated before hand by the researcher containing both open and closed ended questions. The researcher, on a face to face interview, administered the questionnaire.

The one to one interview allowed the researcher to observe the reactions of the respondents and hence probe further to establish the feelings and attitudes of the respondents towards issues questioned and thereafter used them to supplement the findings.

Secondary data was analysed from the teenagers’ Personal files kept by the children’s officer. The files contained information such as the home background, Education level, parents marital status /occupation, family’s economic status, as well as offences committed by the teenagers.

This information was used to verify the information given by the respondents. This being an important source of information, the researcher used it alongside the information from respondents to record data.

3.6 Administration of data collection instruments

Firstly, authority was sought from the management to allow this study to be conducted. Questionnaires were self-administered .Anonymity and Privacy encouraged more Candid and Honest responses,

Data collected was Coded, Edited, and Analysed using Computer-Based Software. In addition, Descriptive statistics were applied, that is, Procedures, that assist in Organising, Summarising, and Interpreting the Sample data at hand.

3.7 Site description

The study was conducted at Eldoret Children’s Remand Home, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. It is located approximately 5 Km. to the East of Eldoret Town Centre Accordingly to Uasin Gishu District Development plan 2002-2008, an estimated 90% of the land in the county is arable. Out of which about 2000Km² is classified as high potential and about 1000 Km² as medium potential.

According to the 1999 population Census, the approximate population of the county was 622,705 and is projected to increase to 864,250 by the year 2015.

Eldoret children’s Remand Home is one of the 11 statutory institutions that play the role of a home for safe custody of delinquent children, those in need of Protection and Care, and also those who are referred by the courts of law for Safe Custody. The Home serves 9 administrative Districts of North Rift Valley.

The Home was established in 1964 under the Children’s and Young Persons Act, Laws of Kenya, as a juvenile Remand Home but has since been elavated to a Remand Home.

Children received in this Home are committed through the Courts of Law. Those under Protection and Care are also committed here. Such children include the Orphaned and Vulnerable

3.8 Sample size

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IV. FINDINGS

The researcher sought to determine the biodata of the respondents.

Table 4.1 shows the age distribution of the respondents.

Table 4.1: Age of respondents in years n=60

Category	Frequency	percentage
13 -15	10	16.67%
16 -17	45	75%
18 19	5	8.33%
Total	60	100%

Table 4.1 shows that respondents between 16 -17 years were the most affected by deviance since they make up the majority – (75%).According to the findings,10(16.67%) respondents were involved in truancy,20(33.33%) respondents were involved in child prostitution whereas 30(50%) were involved in abuse of drugs.

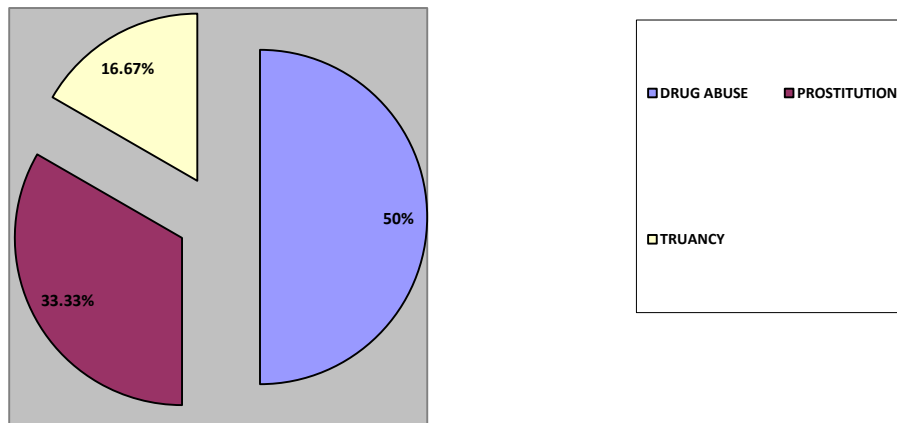


Figure 4.1: Deviant behaviours by teenager n=60

The findings from figure 4.1 reveal that, 10 (16.67%) of the respondents were involved in truancy, 20 (33.33%) of the respondents were involved in child prostitution, whereas 30 (50%) of the respondents were involved in abuse of drugs.

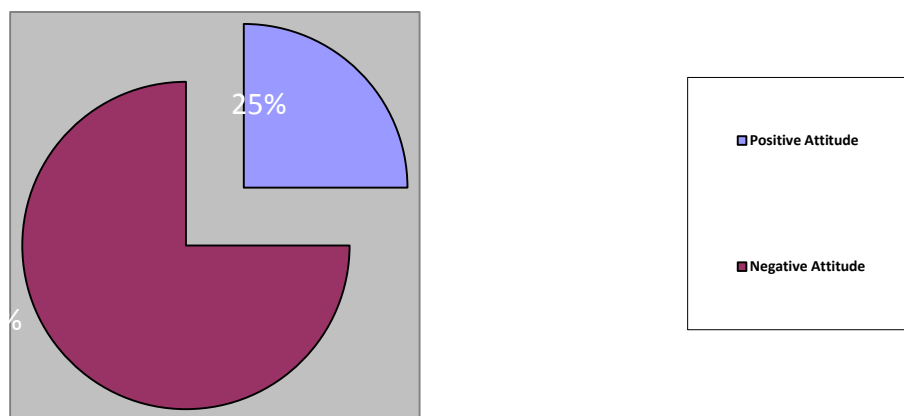


Figure 4.2: Teens' attitude towards parents /guardians.

The study revealed that 45 (75%) respondents had a negative attitude towards their parents /guardians. 15 (25%) respondents had a positive attitude towards their parents. The study further sought to establish how frequently the teenagers spent nights at home. This was to determine whether the teens had attachment /commitment to the family members and if they were able to get guidance from their parents. The findings are plotted in figure 4.5

Table 4.2: Influence into deviant behaviour by different factors.n=60

category	Frequency	percentage
peer group	22	36.7%
lack of school needs	10	16.7%
punishment in school	3	5%
lack of guidance	7	11.6%
no good reason	18	30%
total	60	100%

Table 4.2 shows that (22) 36.7% of the respondents were influenced by peers, (10) 16.7% were due to lack of school requirements, (7) 11.6% were due to lack of proper guidance at home, (3) 5% were due to punishment at school and (18) 30% of the respondents had no good reason.

Table 4.3: Teens environmental background n=60

locality	Frequency	percentage
urban	33	55%
rural	27	45%
total	60	100%

The findings revealed that (33) 55% of the respondents were from the urban setting whereas (27) 45% were from the rural setting.

Table 4.4: Family setting n=60

Category	Frequency	percentage
single parent	40	66.7%
both parents	7	11.6%
guardian headed	13	21.7%
Total	60	100%

It is therefore evident that those respondents from single headed families were prone to deviant behaviour since they make up the majority.

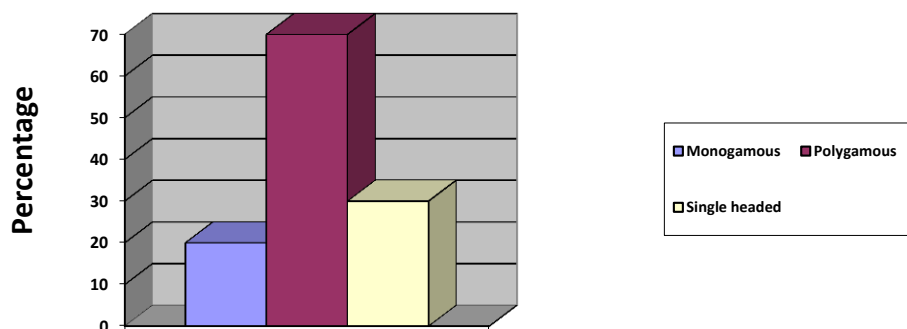


Figure 4.3: Relationship between family type and deviance

According to the findings, from figure 4.3, 20% of the respondents were from monogamous families, 70% of the respondents were from polygamous families and 30% were from single headed families.

Table 4.5: Parents' level of income per month n=60

Category	Frequency	Percentage
up to kshs 9,999	40	67.7%
10,000 -30999/=	10	16.65%
above 31,000/=	10	16.65%
total	60	100%

The study established that children whose parents had low levels of income, that is, below 10,000/= per month were prone to deviance. This is because 40 (66.7%) of the respondents' parents had an income of below 10,000/=, 10 (16.65%) had an income of between KShs 10,000- 30999/=, and 10 (16.65%) respondents' parents / guardians had an income level of above 31,000/= per month.

The researcher further sought to find out if the family size had an effect on deviance. Item 10a and b addressed this issue. Table 4.7 shows the findings.

Table 4.7: Family size n=60

category	Frequency	percentage
below 3	6	10%
3 – 6	12	20%
above 6	42	70%
Total	60	100%

Table 4.8: Respondents' area of residence n=60

category	Frequency	percentage
rural setting	12	25%
urban setting	48	75%
total	60	100%

The findings reveal that majority of the respondents, 48 (75%) were brought up in a town setting whereas 12 (25%) were brought up in a rural setting.

Table 4.9: Parents' / guardians' occupation n=60

category	Frequency	percentage
casual labourer	40	66.67%
self employed	11	18.33%
formally employed	9	15%
total	60	100%

The study established that, 40 (66.67%) of the respondents' parents / guardians were casual labourers, 11 (18.33%) were self employed and 9 (15%) were formally employed.

This shows that parents with unreliable sources of income (casual labourers) could not provide adequately for their children and hence they sought alternative means of survival by indulging in deviant activities such as stealing and child labour

V. DISCUSSION

The rate of deviance as manifested in delinquency has steadily increased among teenagers today. The findings of this study shows that the respondents between 16-17 years (75%) were the most affected. These findings are in line with Melgosa(2002),who said that there is no stage in life complex like the teenage years. It is a transition period where all human beings have doubts, hesitation, uncertainty and worries which appear often. He also stated that teenagers are faced with a variety of social, physical and economical/Psychological challenges emanating from the normal pressure of growing up and vigorous academic expectations.

The findings revealed that 33 (55%) of the respondents were from the urban setting whereas 27 (45%) were from the rural setting. From the findings, it can be deduced that the difference between the two extremes is 10%.This can be associated with the rapid social change that has greatly contributed to the rural/urban influx and therefore exerts pressure on the available resources through other new innovations thereby making the Socio-cultural aspect of life for teenagers more complex. This has greatly affected the young/current generation.

According to the findings, 40 (66.7%) respondents were from single headed families, 7 (11.6%) respondents had both parents and 13 (21.7%) of the respondents were under guardianship.

It is therefore evident that those respondents from single headed families were prone to deviance since they make up the majority. This could be associated with the 'Permissive Nature' of single parents where they view free self-expression as a virtue. Permissive Parents tend to avoid confrontation and discipline and therefore make a few demands for responsibility and order. The child's wishes and desires come first in their homes(Nancy Van Pett 2002) in her book (Pulling Together with your Teens).The parents may be busy attending to other family issues and this divided attention , denies the teens attention/guidance from their parents. According to the findings, from figure 4.7, 20% of the respondents were from monogamous families, 70% of the respondents were from polygamous families and 30% were from single headed families.

The study established that those from polygamous families were more prone to deviance; that is 70%. This is because children in this type of family, received divided attention from their parents especially the father who the society views as the Authority figure and therefore in charge of discipline in the family. In the absence of discipline, children resort to deviant behaviour. The researchers were further interested in finding out the relationship between parent's level of income and deviance of the children (teens).

The study established that children whose parents had low levels of income, that is, below 10,000/= per month were prone to deviance. This is because 40 (66.7%) of the respondents' parents had an income of below 10,000/= , 10 (16.65%) had an income of between KShs 10,000- 30999/=, and 10 (16.65%) respondents' parents / guardians had an income level of above 31,000/= per month. The findings in table 4.8 concur with Onyango (1993), who asserted that majority of the delinquent Children in Kenya came from the Peasant Farmer Families and Families with low income. This is because parents' level of income may not be enough to sustain the family economically. The researcher further sought to find out if the family size had an effect on deviance.

On the same note, Chazen and Jackson (1981) in their study quoted by Docking (1990) established that children from families who lived in dilapidated and overcrowded houses and those from well to do families and also those whose parents were low income earners, exhibited more behaviour disorders. The scholars' findings revealed that the environment under which a child is brought up determines the behaviour of the child. These findings concur with Holmes (1989), who asserted that, the surrounding of an individual affects his perception and behaviour. According to the findings, 10 (16.67%) respondents were involved in truancy,20 (33.33%) respondents were involved in child prostitution whereas 30(50%) were involved in abuse of drugs. These were the deviant behaviours which had led to the commitment at the childrens remand home. These findings were further confirmed by the manager's report that teenagers in 16-17 years category were almost involved in varied deviant acts in the home ranging from bullying the young ones to practicing homosexuality in their dormitory.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study has established that one of the major determinants of deviant behaviour among teenagers is peer influence. The study also established that the following factors play a role in influencing deviant behaviour in teenagers: poor parenting, parents' occupation / level of income and the environment, hence increasing the population of teenagers that drift into deviance. The inevitable conclusion is that if the Regulatory Authority in Kenya is to be seen as an effective Partner in combating deviance, then, it must adopt a more Supportive, Educational and Progressive Approach. It must be seen, not as a Forceful Rehabilitator of deviants in the Society, but as an agent of Change, by encouraging more defiant teenagers to choose rehabilitative Programmes out of their own initiative by providing incentives to those already undertaking these programmes. This will deter deviance and enhance Behaviour Modification.

Besides, it will act as a subsidy and influence deviant teenagers to comply /conform to these programmes, reform and be reinstated back to the society healed, more productive and responsible. It will in turn empower the teens to unleash their potential, and acquire a spirit of self drive for the development self and others in the entire society.

From the study findings, it has been established that Criminal Associations may be formed during social interactions in the process of communication through the influence of peers in a bid to meet economic demands and thereby earn a living.

Poor parenting, parents' occupation / level of income and the environment were found to be the main focus of teenagers' deviant behaviours. This is true, given the fact that the modern economy revolves around satisfying both physiological and psychological needs before moving to the next level as determined by Psychologist Abraham Maslow in his hierarchy pyramid of wants / needs, as a result of competitive environments under which many teenagers operate. This study has established that indeed deviance is widespread, and is a social vice affecting everyone in the society.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Going by the fact that teenagers are energetic / hyper –active by nature, it is evident that a vibrant and healthy relationship is the only way to go for a sustainable, caring, loving and unconditionally interactive forums to be attained for sustainable economic growth. As such, for continued and sustainable relationships to occur, the study recommends periodical review of government reforms to incorporate youth / parents in decision making forums and make them own the directives drawn for monitoring, evaluation, and sustainability of initiated projects.

The researchers further recommends that Expert Technical Advisory Services be established to Promote / Support better working Mechanisms in Education and Youth Development through recreational programmes such as Sports Tournaments, Athletics, and Symposiums / Science Congress Forums. This will Encourage / Promote Facilitation, Public Participation, Support and Involvement in the delivery of quality Educational Teen Programmes and Teen Development Services.

Alongside this, the researchers recommend the establishment of Standardized Education and Youth Development Infrastructure that incorporates recreational facilities and further ensure that teenagers are incorporated in these recreational programmes / decision making forums so as to divert their energies to development oriented activities.

In addition, these programmes should be youth friendly, be periodically reviewed to ensure Sustainable and Increased Teen Participation. This will compel the teens to take up responsibility, own these programmes, become more assertive and hence develop positive attitudes which is a necessary ingredient for desirable change and development to occur and cut across communities in any society.

The regulatory arm in Kenya tends to be that of the National Fault –Finding, heavy handed type. It is based on the presumption that teenagers are basically dishonest, defiant and therefore untrustworthy and must be Policed and brought back in check in order to conform.

The study further recommends that a Policy Framework be established for working with other development Partners for the benefit of the teenagers. This will enhance a high degree of compliance with the Policy Makers.

The study in addition recommends that, recovery units be established in all Public Hospitals to facilitate quick recovery of the affected teenagers through Psycho-Social Therapy Sessions. This should incorporate counselling to help empower parents/ guardians and significant others with coping skills to enable them heal, and sustain both their social / psychological balance through Psycho- therapy Sessions.

There is need to conduct more comprehensive research on deviant behaviour more so in relation to substance abuse / child prostitution and an educational policy framework.

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