

Drug Abuse and its Influence on Psychological Well-being of Students in Public Secondary Schools in Zanzibar

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Abstract. Drug abuse among adolescents in African schools has become a growing public health and educational crisis, with significant implications for individual well-being, academic performance, and societal development. Adolescents, undergoing rapid emotional and psychological changes, are especially vulnerable to experimenting with substances such as cannabis, heroin, cocaine, synthetic drugs, alcohol, and inhalants. Recent data from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania highlight an alarming rise in substance use among secondary school students, particularly in urban areas where factors like unemployment, peer pressure, weak parental oversight, and porous borders increase access to drugs. For example, a 2024 NACADA report revealed that over 30% of students in Nairobi and Mombasa had used narcotics, while similar trends were observed in Tanzania and Uganda. This pattern extends beyond East Africa, with countries like South Africa and Nigeria also reporting increased abuse of substances such as cannabis, methamphetamine, tramadol, and codeine among school-aged youth.

Keywords: Drug Abuse, Influence, Psychological Well-being, Public, Secondary Schools, Zanzibar

1. INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse amongst the global youth population has become a serious problem affecting everyone. Addiction leads many people, young people prominent amongst them, into a downward spiral of hopelessness that in some cases ends fatal. They range from glue-sniffing street children and teenage ecstasy users, to hard-core heroin and cocaine addicts (NACADA, 2015). Drug abuse is responsible for lost wages, destruction of property in schools, soaring health care costs and broken families. It is a problem, which affects us all as parents, children, teachers, government officials, taxpayers and workers.

According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction currently, the use of drugs has been a major challenge facing the world (EMCDDA, 2022). It is a serious problem facing adolescents in secondary schools all over the world. According to the World Drug Report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that an estimated 39.5 million people worldwide were suffering from drug use disorders in 2021, but only 1 in 5 people with drug use disorders received drug treatment (UNODC, 2023).

In the World Drug Report (WDR, 2019), it was estimated that about 5.5% of the world population within the ages of 15 and 64 used drugs during the past year, an increase of about 30% over what obtained between 2009 to 2017 within the same population.

Over the last decade the extent of use has not only grown but there has been a diversification of the substances available on the drug markets. In 2017, an estimated 271 million people worldwide aged 15–64 had used drugs at least once in the previous year (UNODC 2018). This corresponds to 5.5 per cent of the global population aged 15–64, representing one in

every 18 people (WDR, 2019). In the same year, 188 million people reported past-year use of cannabis; 53 million people used opioids in the past year, 29 million used amphetamines and prescription opioids, 21 million used ecstasy and 18 million (UNODC, 2018).

Drug abuse among students has increased and has now become a source of public concern, specifically among parents, guardians and teachers. Children who engage in drug abuse result in the increase of school dropouts, unwanted pregnancies and death, which is a threat to national health and welfare. It is therefore evident that drug abuse may affect one's learning as well as cognition and personality. Such effects add greatly to the burden of managing learners and learning (Smith, 2018).

Despite the overwhelming intervention strategies by the Government, religious organizations, non-state actors and many other keen stakeholders to curb the problem of drug and substance abuse especially among the youth, the number of school going youth being sucked into drug abuse seems to be escalating day by day.

Due to the rapid development, drug use has become a common phenomenon among students in schools and even affects their performance in the classroom. Despite worldwide concern and education about the dangers of drug abuse, most students have limited knowledge of how dangerous the habit is (Abikoye *et al*, 2023). Many students who dropped out of school and others decided to engage in crime, endangering the lives of people, the young generation no longer has role models, as most of the young adults are unemployed and under the influence of this drug (Godfrey *et al*, 2023). Despite government concerns and increased anti-vice campaigns among high school students, there is a parallel acceleration in the number of students using illegal drugs. Even though students are expected to be aware of the effects of drug abuse and commit to their studies, the habit still exists if they are not aware of its consequences beforehand.

According to Boyd (2017), the problem of drug abuse seems to be a growing concern globally as well as in our contextual setting among youth in Zanzibar. Researchers have shown that consumption of drugs among the Zanzibar youth do not only affect their physical, mental, academically and social wellbeing, furthermore, drug abuse exposes them to health risks among other myriad problems.

In connection to that, according to Zanzibar Youth Council (ZYC) strategic plan (2017-2022). Zanzibar is increasingly vulnerable to the problem especially given its location on a major drug-trafficking route between South Africa, Asia, Middle East and Europe. This has made it quite easy for drugs such as heroin to filter into the country and thus, mainly affects youth generation. Zanzibar Substance Abuse Strategic Plan 2007-2011 shows that Zanzibar is estimated to have about 9000-10,000 drug users, in which 85 per cent of these people are youth aged 18- 35 years. In addition, the strategy shows 75 percent of drugs are injectable. As these young people are the most productive members of society, substance abuse frequently results in inability to provide adequate opportunities and services to young people, including employment.

According to the national newspaper (Daily news) of February 10/2024 reported that Zanzibar Drugs Control and Enforcement Authority (ZDCEA) drug abuse and trafficking is still a problem in the Islands. Furthermore, the authority made the statement following an operation that enabled seizing of various types of drugs estimated to weigh 125 kilograms including heroin, methamphetamine, cannabis and hashish. Updating journalists about the war against drugs in Zanzibar, the Zanzibar Drugs Control and Enforcement Authority (ZDCEA) the (CG) Buruhani Zuberi Nassoro said the above data follows the operation conducted in January this year in various areas of the Unguja West districts. "During the operation last month, 19 suspects were arrested, while seven cars, two boats, two satellite phones, one GPS, one laptop, one iPad were seized, and eight houses linked in the drug business and various documents were identified. Giving further details on the situation of drugs in Zanzibar, Burhani said in (2023), the authority in collaboration with various security and defense agencies conducted various operations and succeeded to seize drugs weighing 1.35 tons. He added that drugs involved 526 suspects, including 495 men and 31 women, of which five were foreign nationals and 521 were Tanzanians. The seized drugs included 1.4 kilograms of cocaine; 8.69 kilograms of heroin; 1338.56 kilograms of cannabis; and 8.55 kilograms of marijuana.

Drug Use Prevalence

According to the UNODC (2018), report in Nigeria, one in seven persons aged 15-64 years had used a drug (other than tobacco and alcohol) in the past year. The past year prevalence of any drug use is estimated at 14.4 per cent (range 14.0 per cent - 14.8 per cent), corresponding to 14.3 million people aged 15-64 years who had used a psychoactive substance in the past year for non-medical purposes. Among every 4 drug users in Nigeria 1 is a woman. More men (annual prevalence of

21.8 per cent or 10.8 million men) than women (annual prevalence of 7.0 per cent or 3.4 million women) reported past-year drug use in Nigeria.

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health to (2021) reveals that among the 133.1 million current alcohol users aged 12 or older in 2021, 60.0 million people (or 45.1 percent) were binge drinkers. Among binge drinkers, 16.3 million people were heavy drinkers. In 2021, 46.3 million people aged 12 or older (or 16.5 percent) had a substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year, including 29.5 million who had an alcohol use disorder, 24.0 million who had a drug use disorder, and 7.3 million people who had both an alcohol use disorder and a drug use disorder.

Commonly Used Psychoactive Substances by Secondary School Students.

According to Ochieng, (2022) the world, still many illicit drugs are commonly used and are widely spread. Each country has their own reaction to substance abuse, some embracing the use of specific substances while others shunning them outright (Duresso & Mathew, 2016).

According to WHO (2020), 275 million people abused substances worldwide in 2020 and most of them were youths aged between the ages of 15-26 amounting 5.5% of the global population. The report indicates that in Afghanistan, the most commonly used drugs are Heroin and opium. Albania is known for massive use of sedatives and tranquilizers where many children are at high risks (WHO, 2022). WHO (2020) revealed that the opioid epidemic, referring to the opioids crisis including increases in opioid misuse and related overdose, is becoming a major problem in the U.S, Canada and Bangladesh. It was also revealed that methamphetamine is commonly used drugs in China, South Korea and Japan. According to Jones (2015), 2.8% of the population aged between 12 and 25 years old were considered substance dependents in Europe, each country having its own commonly abused drug. In Africa, the most used psychoactive substance among students.

In Africa is cannabis with an estimate of 34 million users. The sub-Saharan Africa region faces an increased number of substance users including students in secondary schools (WHO, 2019). The WHO report of 2019 identifies alcohol as the most consumed substance in Southern Africa and it has become the leading risk factor for health related problems including cancers and psychiatric disorders in Africa. Establishment of big multinational alcoholic beverage industries where the rich invest billions of dollars has increased the number of alcohol users in Ethiopia. Most commonly used substances in Ethiopia include alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and khat (Berecha, 2015). In Tanzania, Khat, Heroin, Cigarette and cannabis alcohol have been the most used psychoactive substances and Youth have been identified to be the most vulnerable group and highly affected than any age category (Dotto, 2016). Khat for example, is commonly used by long distance lorry drivers and some students who want to read for longer periods to keep them awake (NACADAS, 2012). The study conducted by Dotto (2016) suggests that most youths and especially students in secondary schools in Arusha Municipality access the psychoactive substances because they are cheaply available closer to their living environment.

Factors Influencing the Use of Psychoactive Substances

The motive behind student's engagement in the abuse of psychoactive substances is important for development of effective prevention policies and programs (Divsalar, 2022). A variety of studies investigated reasons behind substance use among students in the world. Neeraja (2021), for instance, revealed that individuals decided to consume substances either consciously or unconsciously because of the belief that consequences of using the substances outweigh those of not using. Joel (2018) added that enhancement to positive mood, desire to obtain social rewards and coping with negative emotions drive students into the use of psychoactive substances in the USA. A survey conducted by Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020) among secondary schools in Wales revealed that students engaged in the use of psychoactive substances because they wanted to ease problems such as stress, anxiety and depression. Joel (2018) revealed that ease availability of painkillers, sleeping pills and tranquilizers motivated students to practice psychoactive substances in Jamaica.

Behavioural characteristics of students who use psychoactive substances

Youths of school going age are likely to develop risk behaviours like community and school violence, risky sexual behaviours and teen pregnancy as a result of psychoactive substance use. A study by Ford (2015) shows that drug users provided signs, which they did not have before including sleeping habits, mental health problems and shame. Other users isolated themselves by spending much of the time in their rooms, locking the doors and shutting down when asked questions. Jang (2019) investigated the impact of psychoactive drug abuse on student's learning and established that students who

used substances experienced a number of problems such as mental disorders, health problems and the juvenile justice system in Colombia. Hiram (2018), said that people who used drugs did not acknowledge that they have problems despite showing some behavioral characteristics such as persistent itching in specific areas of the body, frequent sniffing and slurred speech.

Rooms lived by people who use substances in Cape Town were seen to be occupied by items like cut- up straws, soiled cotton swabs, lighters, bongs and injection pipes (WHO, 2017). Salwan and Katz (2014), revealed that drug users in the surveyed areas in Dar- es - Salaam failed to manage their emotional inputs and most of the time the drug users were seen to have extreme upset, irritation and anger in situations they previously handled their moods well. Therefore, there is a relationship between psychoactive substance use and behavioral changes.

Perceptions of Students on Psychoactive Substance Use

According to (Chan et al, 2016), while some students perceive psychoactive substances as bad some do not perceive that. In their study, they found out that some students in urban areas knew what substance abuse was and could identify some common drugs such as cannabis, marijuana and ecstasy pills. In contrast, several students from the rural schools only a small number of students could identify a few types of drugs but most of them knew that smoking was an offence in schools. They also had limited knowledge of the misconduct behaviours of substance abuse occurring in their schools. From such findings, it is obvious that students in the urban area have better exposure to substance abuse prevention than students in the rural area.

(Masibo et al, 2013), indicated that most secondary school students at Dodoma Municipality understood psychoactive substances and were able to correctly define various terminologies and mentioned different types of psychoactive substances found in their areas. Some of them had a history of psychoactive substance use. The students perceived that psychoactive substances can negatively affect students academically. Thus, students in this study had adequate knowledge on the different types of psychoactive substances and perceived the effects of the use of the substances on their psychosocial lives.

Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura proposed the theory in 1977. Social learning theories focus on the interaction between the individual and the environment in shaping patterns of substance use. (Bandura, 1977) agrees with the behaviorist learning theories of classical conditioning and operant conditioning posited by Ivan Pavlov 1849-1936 and Edward Thorndike 1874-1949 respectively. However, Bandura adds two important ideas, which are mediating processes that occur between stimuli & responses. Behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning (McLeod, 2016). Children observe the people around them behaving in various ways. This was illustrated during the famous Bobo doll experiment (Bandura, 1961).

Individuals that are observed are called models. In society, children are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents within the family, characters on children's TV, friends within their peer group and teachers at school. These models provide examples of behavior to observe and imitate (McLeod, 2016). Bejerot (2019) asserts that the reason for the continuation of the initial smoking is usually that the individual wishes to imitate older friends and adults so as to appear more grown up and selfconfident than he or she really is. Similarly, the study of Sh (2017) found that the reasons for students to use drugs were imitating friends. After the initial trial, the actual effects (both social and nonsocial) of the particular substance influences lead to the probability that the substance would be used again. Children pay attention to some of these people (models) and encode their behavior. Later they may imitate the behavior they have observed. According to Mganwa (2020), individuals (children) tend to learn easily, whether positive or negative, through imitation of what they observe and experience from the society.

In addition, Bandura (1977) believes that humans are active information processors and think about the relationship between their behavior and its consequences. Observational learning could not occur unless cognitive processes were at work. These mental factors mediate in the learning process to determine whether a new response is acquired (McLeod, 2016). Therefore, individuals do not automatically observe the behavior of a model and imitate it. There is some thought prior to imitation and this consideration is called mediational processes. This occurs between observing the behavior that is called stimulus and imitating it or not which is called response (Bandura, 1977).

The implication of this theory is that learners often learn through observing other people. Clear distinction between behaviours and their consequences can effectively result in an increase in desired behaviour from the learner and decreases

in the undesirable behaviour McLeod (2016). In the school, involving the learners in discussion on the rewards for and consequences of desired and the undesirable behaviours can be used to facilitate the learning process.

For a behavior to be imitated, it has to grab attention. Attention is therefore extremely important in whether a behavior influences others to imitate it. The study by Mahosoa (2020) revealed that intellectual impairment in those under the influence of cannabis impairs memory and concentration. This means that concentrations and attention in learning are obscured with drug abuse. It also interferes with a range of intellectual tasks in a manner that impairs classroom learning among student users (Rice, 2022). Adolescents with good to excellent academic records who become heavy cannabis users begin to have difficulty in paying attention or remembering what they read or hear in class (McLeod, 2016).

Studies show that children who have parents who are extensive drug abusers are vulnerable to developing substance abuse and related problems themselves (Carson Rowe, 2016). Teenagers who drink alcohol are firstly exposed to parents who themselves drink and their peers who act as models for heavy consumption. The problem of substance abuse usually starts with smoking cigarettes at the toilets during school breaks. These adolescents would then proceed to use other drugs such as alcohol, cannabis and hard drugs (Peliwe, 2017). The experiences and lessons that adolescents learn from important figures in society have a significant impact on them (Routledge, 2017).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, a combination of random sampling and purposive sampling techniques was employed to select participants from four public secondary schools. Random sampling was used primarily to select student participants, ensuring that every student within the target population had an equal chance of being included, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the sample.

Purposive sampling was applied to select teachers and parents based on specific criteria relevant to the objectives of the study. This approach allowed the researcher to intentionally select individuals who were most likely to provide rich, relevant, and diverse insights into the research topic. The use of both sampling techniques ensured a balanced representation of all participant groups while maintaining the relevance and depth of the data collected.

In this study, both questionnaires and interviews were utilized as primary data collection methods to obtain comprehensive information from the targeted participants. Data were collected from a total of 150 participants across four public secondary schools.

Questionnaires were administered to all 120 student participants as well as the 15 teachers, allowing for the collection of standardized and quantifiable data on the research topic. In addition to completing questionnaires, the 15 teachers also participated in semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into their experiences, perceptions, and professional perspectives, thereby enriching the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaires.

Furthermore, the 15 parents involved in the study were also engaged through questionnaires, which were designed to capture their views relevant to the study objectives. The combined use of questionnaires and interviews ensured both breadth and depth in the data collected, enhancing the reliability and validity of the study findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Both descriptive statistics and content analysis methods used to analyze data. The nature of the data collection in a mixed methods approach requires a combination of qualitative and quantitative data analysis tools. Content data analysis for verbal responses evaluated and coded for identification of themes and patterns. Descriptive statistics was also used for quantitative data that was collected using self-administered questionnaires. SPSS computer assisted quantitative data analysis, software employed to aid in the analysis. The data was then visually presented using tables. Orodho (2015) explains that SPSS is a comprehensive, integrated collection of computer programmes for managing, analyzing and displaying data. The study was guided by the following research questions.

- i. What are the commonly abused drugs by students in public secondary schools in urban district?
- ii. What causes drug abuse among students of public secondary schools in Urban district?
- iii. What are the psychological effects of drug abuse among students secondary schools?

TABLE: 1 Represent results of research question 1

Drug	Frequency	Percentage %
Alcohol (beer)	36	30.0
Tobacco	36	30.0
Opium	6	5.0
Heroin	6	5.0
Bangi	12	10.0
Glue	4	3.0
Gasoline	2	2.0
Cocaine	6	5.0
Miraa (Khat)	6	5.0
Kuber	6	5.0
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

The Table1, above indicates that alcohol and tobacco 30.0% are likely to rank higher in frequency due to their accessibility. Marijuana (bangi) 10.0% is often seen as a gateway drug which leads the user on to more addictive or dangerous drugs, its use may indicate a need for stricter monitoring and counseling services.

However, in the face to face interview, one of the respondents replied that *Domestic violence and family Instability which exposure to conflict, neglect, or substance use at home increases vulnerability and lack of emotional support or parental supervision drives students toward risky coping mechanisms*”

TABLE: 2 Represent results of research question 2

Factors	Frequency	Percentage %
Peer pressure	30	25.0
Family background	32	26.7
Availability of the drugs	9	7.5
School failure	9	7.5
Frustrations at home (e.g. family breakup, conflict with parents)	10	8.3
Stress at home (e.g. financial problems)	12	10.0
Influence by mass media	15	12.5
To keep me awake	3	2.5
To read more	2	1.7
Total	120	100.0.

Source: Field Data (2025)

The analysis in Table 2, indicates that peer pressure 30% and family background 32% emerged as significant factors influencing students to abuse drugs. This suggests that both social influence from friends and the environment at home play critical roles in shaping students' decisions regarding drug use. This study supported and is similar with the study of (UNODC), report (2018) in Nigeria, one in seven persons aged 15-64 years had used a drug (other than tobacco and alcohol) in the past year.

Peer Group Pressure

Peer pressure as shown in chapter four above is among the reasons for student’s engagement in drug abuse. These findings are supported by the argument given by Maithya (2019) who found that peer pressure is one of the leading factors that contribute to drug substance abuse in schools. Therefore, peers' age groups approved of such a habit of drug abuse. It could be difficult to escape from being prone to drug abuse habits, therefore the fact of being likely to increase drug abuse to students. Furthermore the findings align with another study by Ondieki and Mokuua (2016) that supports that both initial and continued drug use are based on membership in a peer group that approves their involvement in drug taking. Apart from

that, there are different authors who support these results, for example. Abdu-Raheem (2018), who posits that peer group influence is noted to be a primary reason for substance misuse. Similarly results were also presented Ekundayo (2015), mention some reasons for students engaged in drug abuse and illustrate peer group influence. Hence, if society will be involved into drug abuse control, the problem of drug abuse would not exist anymore, this had supported by NIDA (2003), who asserts that, in an environment with no drug-abusing peers and strong antidrug norms, child is less likely to become a drug abuser.

This study mentioned imitation from social media and imitation from the actual environment or society including friends, parents, neighbors and peers. Imitation may drive a high rate of students engaging in drug abuse through watching the video model, business promotions and advertisement. They do not realize the truth, and it is part of artistic work to society.

Family Background

Results from the students and teachers and interviews with heads of schools revealed that family backgrounds can inhibit or promote the initiation of psychoactive substance use among secondary school students. Participants reported that the use of psychoactive substances like alcohol, marijuana, cigarettes and other substances by the students resulted from family contexts. Results show that family-related factors such as parental or sibling use, poor parental care, single parenthood, family relational conflicts and economic hardship are motives for initiation and use of psychoactive substance use.

Some participants pointed out the role of family and later substance use was narrated in the following quote from the interviewed head of the school: "Family structure is the major source as to why students engage into the use of psychoactive substances. Parents have failed to identify peer groups which initiate their children (students) into the use of substances (Head of school). This shows that substance use among students can be attributed explicitly or implicitly by the nature of parent-child interactions. For example, some students come from families in which its members are victims of substance abuse as parents tolerate and accept children to try and use alcohol. The results concurs with study findings by Zrour, et al. (2021) and Geleta, Amdisa and Tilahun (2021) who confirmed that family backgrounds like family dysfunction, family environment, poverty, parents' education and disharmony can predict adolescent drug abuse.

Availability of the drugs

Participants pointed out the easy availability of substances as a motivating factor for students to use psychoactive substances such as alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana. The studied secondary schools are located in the city of Zanzibar where drugs are easily available. Participants pointed out that the use was due to presence of illegal gangs, users of substances, sellers, local brews, bars, restaurants and other recreational centres near school, and at home. All these motivated students to engage in psychoactive substance use. One participant reported that

"majority of students engage into the use of substances because they come from places where many users are living including family members. Also, some students use substances because they are easily accessed in the streets". Findings further indicate that easy accessibility of these three commonly used substances to students, be it at school, at home or in their neighborhood, increases their chances of using and abusing the substances. For example, alcohol and tobacco can be accessible at home or near homes due to parents and community members who use or abuse them openly. The findings are supported by Ananias *et al.* (2019) and Kimabi (2018) who found that teachers and school principals agreed that the availability and accessibility of substances within or near the school increased the chances of abuse and behavioural risks. Additionally, Tshitangano and Tosin (2016) found that the majority of the students use drugs because of easily accessibility in their communities or villages.

Depression and Anxiety

The finding of this study revealed that students who engage in drug abuse are at a higher risk of experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety. The study revealed that prolonged use of substances such as alcohol, marijuana, and inhalants often leads to persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and fear. Many of the respondents noted that students who abuse drugs tend to isolate themselves, lose interest in school activities, and exhibit signs of emotional distress.

This is consistent with findings from earlier research, which suggests that drug use interferes with the brain's neurotransmitter systems especially serotonin and dopamine leading to mood disturbances. Furthermore, the pressure of hiding substance use, declining academic performance, and deteriorating family relationships can increase stress and anxiety levels, thereby worsening emotional health.

TABLE: 3 Represent results of research question 3

Effects	Frequency	Percentage %
Increased Risk of Suicide	7	5.83
Emotional Blunting	10	8.33
Anxiety	29	24.17
Increased Stress	24	20.00
Impaired Social Relationship	18	15.00
Sleep Disorders	3	2.50
Aggression	14	11.67
Mood Swings	9	7.50
Depression	6	5.00
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

According to the findings above, it was clear that the highest percentage 24.17% reported anxiety, followed by increased stress 20% and impaired social relationships 15%, indicating these are the most common issues. Emotional blunting and mood swings were also significant, affecting 11.67% and 8.33% respectively. Less frequently reported were sleep disorders, aggression, and risk of suicide, each under 6%. This suggests that while severe outcomes exist, day-to-day emotional and psychological struggles are more prevalent among the participants.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal that drug abuse among students in public secondary schools remains a pressing concern within the urban context. Various substances both legal and illegal are being misused, and their accessibility within school environments and surrounding communities has significantly contributed to their prevalence. The factors driving this behavior are multifaceted, often rooted in peer influence, emotional stress, and social normalization of substance use among adolescents. The data also reflect a concerning trend in which substance abuse is gradually becoming embedded in the daily experiences of some students, indicating the need for urgent, multifaceted responses.

Moreover, the consequences associated with drug abuse in these educational settings are both profound and far-reaching. It negatively affects academic performance, student discipline, physical and mental health, and overall school safety. While some students demonstrate awareness of the dangers associated with substance use, this awareness does not always translate into preventive behavior, as perceptions are often shaped by social pressures and limited support systems. These findings suggest that addressing drug abuse in schools requires more than awareness campaigns; it calls for integrated intervention strategies involving educators, parents, community stakeholders and policy makers to reshape attitudes, reduce access and support at-risk students.

Recommendations

All schools should set up guidance and counselling offices facilitated by professionals to counsel students who indulge in drug abuse. This will help take care of the students with emotional needs that they wish to share in confidence but lack the platform to do so and in return end up turning to drug abuse. Principals also should invite specialists often to talk to students on dangers of drug abuse. The government needs to build hostels for public schools so that to allow students to stay at schools in order to avoid being persuaded to be involved in drug abuse and also desire of being a drug user would not be in their mind. The government and NGOs need to organize frequent education campaigns to students and parents to raise their awareness about the effects of drug abuse towards students in school life. The government and NGOs should emphasize the use of drug tests instead of using local methods in identifying students who are abused. To students who are engaged and those who desire to get involved to stop the use of drug abuse because their effects and cure is very expensive which lead to family economic disturbance and national economic problems for saving the budget for more treatment. If there would be no one affected with drug abuse, then the government budgets would be used for other development activities.

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