

**INVESTIGATING THE USE OF ILLEGAL DRUGS ON THE SOCIAL,
PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF
YOUTHS IN URBAN CENTERES.
CASE STUDY: BO CITY**

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ABSTRACT

Illegal drugs on youths have been a serious problem that is disturbing parent and their communities in Sierra Leone. Youth are highly vulnerable in the societies as a result of poverty and they are always involving themselves in criminal activities like illegal drug selling and the commercialization of harmful items in their communities. Illegal drugs affect the youths socially, physically, mentally and their emotional development in the urban centers.

The government, stakeholders and non-governmental organizations need to intervene to help solve or provide solution to the problem of youths taking illegal drugs

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

What are drug? How do drugs work? Which drugs are illegal? How can I avoid the dangers of drugs? These are just a few of the many questions teenagers ask about drugs. You can probably think of many more questions you would like to have answered. The widespread availability of drugs in many communities today increases your need to find about the facts about drugs. The decision you make about drug use will affect your

health and well being now and in the years ahead. Knowing these facts and dangers associated with drugs use can help ensure that your decision will be wise ones.

Almost everyone has used a drug at some time to prevent or treat disease. Drugs used for these purpose have saved many lives and have helped to improve the health of millions of people. Sometimes, however, drugs are used for reasons that have nothing to do with the prevention and treatment of diseases. Drugs ordered by Doctors are been used improperly. Other drugs used on these ways seriously threaten your health and even you life.

A drug for the purpose of this text is any substance other than food that causes changes in your body when it is swallowed, inhaled or applied to your body. Depending on how they are used, most drugs either improve or damage your health. For this reason, many drugs are controlled in various ways by different nations.

Drugs used to prevent, treat, or cure illness are called medicines. Prescription drugs are medicines available only on the order of a Doctor. They are safe to use only when they are prescribed for you by a Doctor. Other types of medicines such as aspirin and most cough syrups are not controlled.

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They are available without a doctor's prescription and are often called over-the counter drugs (OTC drugs). If properly used, many drugs are beneficial. For example, antibiotics can cure many infections. Vaccines causes your body to develop immunity to certain communicable diseases.

No matter how beneficial a drug may be, if it is used improperly it can be dangerous. Any improper use of a drug is called drug misuse. Whenever you take a drug for reasons other than its intended purpose, you risk, harming yourself. You also risk harm if you do not follow the instructions given by the Doctor or included in the package. Any medicine is capable of causing side effects. These are from person to person,

depending on a person's body chemistry. Side effects cannot always be predicted with certainly common mild side effects of medicines include upset, stomach, headache and a tired or sleepy feeling. More serious side effects include vomiting, blurred vision, dizziness and weakness. Even prescribed drugs by doctors have same side effects on the health of the user. Those who misuse medicines may gradually increase their use of these drugs. Heavy and repeated drugs use that causes damage to the body or interferes with a person's social life or work is called drug abuse. It is not always possible to determine where misuse stops and abuse begins.

Many abused drugs can only be obtained illegally. The use of any illegal drug is considered drug abuse. Abusing illegal drugs seriously affect or harm the body in different ways. Some drugs act on the blood, blood vessels and heart. Other drugs act on the lungs and breathing passages. Besides acting on these parts of the body, many drugs also cause changes in the brain and nerves.

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Drugs affecting the brain and nerves have a great impact on the way you feel. There are some of the illegal drugs that are commonly used by adolescents during the war and the present post war era:-marijuana and hashish, amphetamines, cocaine, tranquilizers and berituratics.

Though some of these illegal drugs have been in use before the war. Marijuana at a very low rate, the commencement of the ten (10) years rebel war have served as a contributing factor for the use of many illegal drugs as staged about.

Reasons advanced for their use is that, some are produced on a large scale in this country while others are largely imported by different warring factions. Nonetheless, the effects for the use of such dangerous drugs especially by the youths or adolescents

cannot be underestimated. Physical body damage, social and emotional instability and the alarming rate of crimes to a general concern for all.

Many drugs are taken in the form of injections, either because these drugs come in the liquid form or they are prepared as liquid for injection. Cocaine and heroin are examples for drugs that are commonly injected. However, many people use drugs for a wide range of reasons such as:

- Alleviate pain
- For reaction purposes
- To help people feel good in most of their work
- Some people say, drugs use is part of their culture which they are born into and they consider it as their accepted ways of lives.
- Some people use drugs for enjoyment purposes
- Some say drugs is good for loneliness.
- To escape from problems just for a moment

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- Some people use drugs cope with feelings of depressions.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS:

The role of law enforcement agents such as police in their duty to minimize the use of drugs among the youth in New Site Community Bo City since to be questionable over the years. This is attributed to the fact that, most of the police themselves are victims of using drugs especially alcohol and marijuana. In previous years and even before the advent of the 10th to the 11th year's civil war in Sierra Leone, police of law enforcement agents were since to be purely and strictly executing their work by helping drug users as well as those who sell drugs. But the sales of drugs and drug use tend to be in partnership affairs in which most of the police are now suppliers of drugs to the youth, and in most cases they even smoke together with the youth.

In the midst of other problems there is a big debt over the ineffectiveness of the central government for failing to combat the abuse of drugs. This is in view of the rate of crime committed in New Site Section in Bo City such as violence, gambling, prostitution, gangsters, the creation of ghettos, slums, to name among other problems.

Hence the main thrust of research is to assess the problems associated with the drug abuse among youth in New Site Community Bo City.

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AIMS OF THE STUDY:

The aim of this exercise is to educate the youths or adolescents on the use of illegal drugs with respect to the effects on the social, physical, mental and emotional development – all of which directed towards a drug (illegal) free society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of this work are therefore:

- To identify some of the illegal drugs used by youths or adolescents.
- To identify the major sources of access to the drugs.
- To identify reasons why they use them.
- Highlight the effects of illegal drugs when used.
- To recommend some possible measures or ways that will prevent the use of such illegal drugs.

6.

JUSTIFICATION:

The development of any nation lies in the hand of the youths- producers. Today most of the adolescents are found in the streets without jobs thus getting themselves involved in crimes rather than nation building. Most are involved in such activities not for any other reasons but the excessive use of illegal drugs which have greatly contributed in their staying out of educational institutions (schools) and to a large extent their homes thus becoming street children. These can be easily involved in crimes and other anti-social activities not in the interest of themselves let alone the nation. Until such massive education is given on the use of illegal drugs the nation is always prone to some danger and insecurity.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is difficult to give a precise definition of what drugs and youths are. Nonetheless for the purpose of this text drugs can be defined as any substance, solid or liquid, that medical practitioners use to claim down patients that are in terrible pain.

Youths on the other hand here refer to those people within the age group of 18 to 21 years taking into consideration both sexes. The abuse of drugs by youths is not a new issue in our present generation in developed and developing world. According to Newsweek of March 1990 edition, the rate of drug abuse is growing at an alarming rate right through the world and it must be a global since it is an underlying factor that is responsible for most of the crimes and unaccepted social behaviours.

Peacock in his article, "Drug and Youths" 1991 had this to say, "Greater population of youths today are associated with the misuse of drugs especially those prohibited by most nations". He further added that the drugs especially illegal ones has an open market across the world and in-deed it is providing a substantial amount not personally enrich the sellers but have drifted most youths out of the normal track of life; this

encouraging a lot of crimes. Winifred (1994) in the publication “Drug World” stress the point that in advanced nations such as America and Britain government find it difficult to check the illegal importation of illegal drugs. This is so because the network for such a trade is highly co-ordinated to penetrate through.

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Abdul Aziz Bakarr of Egypt in his presentation, the effect of drug misused on youths in Egypt stressed the point that Africans must be aware of another market that is established to generate fund though illegally through the sale of drugs.

Beside the economic benefit acquired by those involved in it the growing population of Africa is to be affected in the far future if an immediate stop to it is not implemented. Hassan Kallon (1997) submitted in his dissertation “The Alarming Crime rate among youths” said that “Most of the crimes in Sierra Leone will by any means be disconnected from the abuse of drugs by youths” and desperate effort is needed by the Government of Sierra Leone to put the situation under control otherwise they would be leaders of this nation will lead it to an envelop of crimes.

Neneh Babar of the Gambia in January 1998 “Awake” publication drew the attention of the world to the involvement of female youths in the sale and use of drugs. By the way of comparison to the male in the last decade the gap is closing at a high speed in it is likely that females will take a lead in the sale and use illegal drugs in next decade if the situation is left unchecked. By implication, it must be observed that female and getting deeper in crime rate than the male. Ibrahim Sheriff (1996) “Marijuana” use and its effect on youths in Kenema hammered home this view- “The use of cannabis in the township of Kenema and its environs must be a concern of the leadership as it is greatly involving pupils from schools to “ghettos” and further creating a high crime rate. “He went on to say that the present trade is mostly done by combatants as middle men supplying various ghettos”. It is difficult for the police to take the necessary measures either because they are shareholders or year for an attack if they reprehend criminals”.

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Presenting a paper on “the role of Police in checking the sale and use of illegal drugs in the Eastern Region in the Republic of Sierra Leone”, said that “the Police will do all in its capacity to check this unlawful act but the support of the public by a way of information on the movement and established selling points must be supplied to the police”. He stressed that the public support is needed because the entire business is highly coordinated that it is difficult for police along as a separate entity to crack down on those involved.

A drug is another name for medicine. The term drugs, is generic term for every natural synthesis substances that leads to a modification of one or several function of the body when abused. In simple term a drug is any substances other than food which when taken orally and intramuscularly affect the body functions or mind and behaviour especially the central nervous system. Central nervous system such drugs called Psycho traps drugs.

This is the taking of drug under medical prescription and guidance for its intended purpose in the appropriate amount, frequency, strength and manner to fight disease, correct imbalance in the body's chemistry or receive pain for example cocaine (a pain killer) one three times a day.

10.

This is the taking of drug for intended purpose but not in the appropriate or correct amount, frequency, strength, manner, to get well quickly. An example is taking four tablet of codeine three times instead of one three times a day.

This is the use of drugs without prescription or authority in such a way that lead to mental health impaired maturation, lost of productivity and involvement in socially descriptive or illegal activities like burning down of houses, rape case, looting, violence, sex abuse and the like.

There are two types and they include:

- Physical dependency and
- Psychological dependency

Physical Dependency: this occur when the body chemistry or make up is altered by repeated use of drugs to extend that the user developed an actual physical craving for the drug.

Psychological Dependency: this occur when the user has learnt to use the drug as a mental or emotional content. The need is real but is psychological than physical. Habituation is psychological dependency and as cessation can cause severe trauma.

There are mainly two categories of drugs, they are:

Soft drug and Hard drug

1. **Soft drug:** they are called so because there complications are destructive than hard drug examples are:

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- a. Alcohol, smoke, sarman, 3 stars, palm wine, diamond gin, mother and dad, total pack, stout , whisky, brandy, other imported spirits.
- b. Marijuana (Cannabis sativa) also known as stuff.
- c. Tobacco (whatever forms) cigarettes, cigar, pipe and snuff.
- d. Kula not- they contain caffeine; the red ones are medical and its relieving rheumatic pain.
- e. Kumbayjara - a local mandigo dialect which cure all diseases. This is planted in the compound and front of houses towards off snake.
- f. Coffee, tea, they also contain caffeine; green tea is called ataya and mixed with gun powder.

These are drugs which produce euphoria followed drowsiness, nausea and vomiting. They are very destructive and can carries watery eyes, body itching, slow and heavy breathing, convulsion some cases dementia and death. These are imported drug and they are very expensive and secretive to acquire some of these are cocaine and derivate crack heroine, brown-brown, morphine etc.

Mind alerting drug. Example: most recent gun powder from bullets. However, there are many different kinds of problems associated with drug abuse.

HIV/Aids are one of the clear problems but this may not be the biggest concern on the lives of people who use drugs. Most drug users are wage workers and business men, government staff, public sympathies. They mainly use different kinds of drugs such as raw opium, hereon, morphine, tobacco, alcohol etc.

This is a lot of misunderstanding and misinformation about link between drug use and drug abuse. Not all drugs is harmful, this is why it is essential to consider carefully how drug may not be harmful. Therefore, it is important to look at the different categories of problems associated with drug abuse which include the following.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

There was both formal and informal discussion with drugs sellers and users as well as the law agent (police). This discussion included those who sell drugs in the various ghettos based or located in New Site Section Bo City. This is meant to bridge the ways and possibility to combat the abuse of drugs among youth in New Site Section, Bo City. An agreement was reached with the focus areas on how to implement these research methods. The sampling methodology used in this survey was designed to provide an estimate number of areas where drugs sellers and users live.

SPECIFIC METHOD:

Data was collected using verbal discussion, interview ghettos owner that sell drug, talk with drug users and used structure questionnaire administered by the researcher to the target areas including the law enforcement agent (police).

This questionnaire was focus on group discussion and faced to faced interview with the various participant in sample of population highlighted. In all, there were five areas or places specifically selected as ghettos for drugs sellers and users all of which are located in New Site Section Bo City.

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3.1 STUDY AREA:

This is the Map of Sierra Leone showing the location of Bo District and the Map of New Site Community in Bo City.

14.

SAMPLE POPULATION:

New Site is densely populated about two thousand five hundred (3500) people and few proposed street or line was selected. These street or line includes the following:

- Nyakai Street
- Tangabay Street
- Sukutamba street etc

These areas were selected because of the following reasons:

- Human population
- Its location and
- Business activities
- Maheiboima Road

This research was made in New Site Section found in Kakuwa Chiefdom, in Bo City. The selected ghettos were the main target in the investigation. Altogether five ghettos were included in the sample population size.

Altogether twenty (20) personnel form the sample population size of this research and are as follow:

PERSONNEL	NUMBER
Ghetto owners	5
Drug sellers	5
Drug users	5
Government authorities	5

These were all selected from the New Site Community in the City of Bo, Southern Province of Sierra Leone.

15.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDING

The data collected was analyzed to determine the performance of dispariority trend in drug abuse. Descriptive statistical techniques (tables and figures) were used to complete the analysis. The raw data collected was transformed into percentage n order to make work easier.

The percentage (%) represents the distribution of respondents by the various areas and sex:

TABLE 1:

Areas/Places	No. of Respondents by Sex				Total No. Of Respondents (%)	
	Male	%	Female	%		
	No	%	No	%	No	%
	Alpha ghettos	3	12	2	8	5

Dry eye ghettos	4	16	1	4	5	20
Bottom mango ghetto	3	12	2	8	5	20
Bunker ghetto	3	12	2	8	5	20
Lucia’s ghetto	3	12	2	8	5	20
Total	16	64	9	36	25	100

SOURCE: Field Survey

From the table above, we know that there were five (5) ghettos areas were targeted in New Site Community. For each of the area there were a total number of 5 respondents drawn combined together makes a total numbers of 25 of the entire sample population. Further respondent were drawn on the bases of sex as follows:

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Three (3) male (12%) and 2 female (8%) for all the target areas for the other one (1) area The following was drowning in each case: 4(16%) male and 1 (4%) female. Therefore, there were in all 16(64%) male and 9 (36%) female who formed the entire sample population.

TABLE 2: DATA REPRESENTATION:

AREAS/PLACES	MALE	FEMALE
	NO.	NO
Alpha Ghettos	190	100
Bottom Mango Ghetto	108	40
Dry Eye Ghetto	111	30
Bunker Ghetto	200	80
Lucia’s Ghetto	180	80
Total	789	300

SOURCE: Field Survey

From table two labeled above, we know that areas were target had a total of male and female on all. For male there were 789 drug abusers indicated and for female there were 300 drugs abuses and these are all the New Site Community, Bo city.

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TABLE 3:

Areas/Place	No. of Respondents				Do you faced with Problems the Areas Visited? Yes or No			
	Sex				No.	%	Yes	No
	Male		Female					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Yes	No
Alpha’s Ghetto Place	3	12	2	8	5	20	✓	-
Bottom Mango Ghetto	3	12	2	7	5	20	✓	-
Dry Eye Ghetto	4	16	1	4	5	20	✓	-
Bunker Ghetto	3	12	2	8	5	20	✓	-
Lucia’s Ghetto	3	12	2	8	5	20	✓	-
Total No. of All	16	64	9	36	25	100	✓	-

SOURCE: Field Survey

From the three(3) labeled above, we note that respondents were indicated from the five (5) areas/ places on the question of whether drug abusers faced problems in their various areas/place of meeting or not. To this question and the respondents in the targeted areas/places indeed faced problems. They went further to give various problems they faced and these are the summarized as follows:

18.

DISCUSSION OF RESULT:

This investigation focuses on the objectives to investigate and determine the problems associated with drug abuse among youth in New Site Section Bo City on the 27th April, 2015 on Sierra Leone independent celebration.

A close look was made on two assessment parameters.

1. The success of the programme
2. The challenges by the programme

A total of 100% participants from New Site Community were engaged in data collection for this investigation. These participants were distributed. They include;

- ❖ The implementation of the programme in New Site Community.
 - ❖ Youth who have come to either any of the ghettos? Locating youth who come to the ghettos in New Site Community and members of the ghetto/ghetto owners.
- In total 100 people were inter view or completed the questionnaires.

The following represent the percentage distribution the under mentioned respondents:

- Ghetto owners: 5% present
- Medical personnel: 28% present
- Women: 27% present
- Men: 40% present

The findings of this investigation in relation to the success of the programme include the following:

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It was prevailed that all the 27 women, 40 men have visited either any of these ghetto in the New Site Community. They all also agree that they were treated and given required drugs they need.

TABLE 4: THE AGES OF THE HEAD OF THE FAMILIES SELECTED:

FAMILY	AGE OF HEAD OF FAILY
A	70 yrs
B	67 yrs
C	76 yrs
D	43 yrs
Average Age	64 yrs

According to table one (1), most of the families were headed by older men except family D at Combema Road that was headed by a female. The average age was about 64 years.

The number of children in each family was also investigated and this was presented in table two below:

20.

TABLE 5: NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN EACH OF THE FOUR(4) SELECTED FAMILIES:

FAMILY	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	NUMBER OF ADULTS
A	5	4
B	8	3
C	10	6
D	4	3
Average	7	4

According to table five (5), there were many children and adults in the four selected families. The highest number of ten (10) children was located in C at New Site Community. The average number of children was (7), while for the adults it was four (4).

The types of drugs used by members of the families were as follows:

1. Alcoholic drinks and beverages
2. Marijuama
3. Imported overseas drugs eg. Cocaine, brown-brown etc.

The educational level of the children in the four (4) families was also investigated to understand the effects of drugs use on the education of the children. This data was analyzed and presented in table three (3).

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TABLE 6: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN OF THE SELECTED FAMILIES:

LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF CHILDREN	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	PERCENTGE OF TOTAL
Number of Education	22	70.4
Nursery School	6	20.0
Primary School	6	9.6
Total	31	100.0

In table six (6), a large percentage of the children did not go to school. Only six (6) children were in nursery school, while six (6) in primary school.

The status of the health and general physical conditions of the children was alsos invested and analyzed.

TABLE 7: HEALTH AND PHYSICAL STATUS OF THE CHILDREN:

HEALTH STATUS	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	PERCENTAGE
Poor	15	52.5
Fair	12	42.1
Good	3	10.5
Excellent	1	3.5
Total	31	100.0

An evaluation of the health and general physical conditions of the children were presented in table seven (7). The results showed that most of the children living under poor socio- economic conditions and therefore over half of the children surveyed were living in poor health and physical conditions

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION:

This research was concerned with investigating the effects of drugs on the development of children. A total of four (4 families) were selected from various part of New Site Section. Those families had significant members that were drug abusers including some of the children. Using a variety of data collection techniques, the effects of drug abuse on children were described.

Firstly, a number of drugs were used by family members, which included alcohol, imported drugs and marijuana. Physical and Health observation of the children showed that most were in poor conditions, which is one of the noticeable effects on the development of the child.

Drug abuse has significant effects on the educational development of the child. In this research, out of the 31 children investigated, a large percentage (70 percentge) did not and were not attending school. This is true in all drug abuse settings because drug use consumes scale, income and also wakes parents to be disinterested in the education of their children.

23.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The results of this research have shown that drug abuse has significant effects on the development of the child.

The following recommendations are offered to minimize the effects of drug abuse on children.

1. The police should endeavour to stop the trafficking of dangerous drugs.
2. There should be increased public awareness and sensitization within the township.
3. The public and the police should organize workshops to teach and sensitize the dangers of drug use.
4. That adequate plan is put in place for the continuity of the scheme when the donor partner pulls out.
5. That some insurance scheme be introduced to be able to bring on board other sector of the population.
6. That monitoring team for the programme involve person with good knowledge in drugs and drugs administration.
7. That some drugs must be stop to sell and distributed in the New Site Community.
8. That the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, WHO, UNICEF is to put more emphasis in order to reduce the high rate of drug abuse in New Site Community.
9. That Ministry of Health and Sanitation, WHO, UNICEF and her implementing partners should put mechanism in place to combat drug abuse not only in New Site Community but they entire country as whole.
10. The citizens of New Site Community and the law enforcement agency should work hand in hand to stop harmful drugs selling.

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