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**The Challenge of Second Generation Alcohol Abuse in Kenya:  
Examining the Relevant Factors Among the Roman Catholic Church Believers in  
Eldoret Municipality, Uasin Gishu County**

Elijah Kibiego Cherus Matelong,<sup>1</sup> Prof. Emily Choge<sup>2</sup> and Fr. Dr. Stephen Njure<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Philosophy, Religion and Theology, Moi University

Contact 0715446165; email, [elijahkibiegocherus@gmail.com](mailto:elijahkibiegocherus@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Lecturers, Department of Philosophy, Religion and Theology  
Moi University

P.O. Box 3900-30100, Eldoret, Kenya.

**Abstract**

This article analyzes the factors that influences alcohol abuse, and especially second generation alcohol types such as *busaa* and *chang'aa* among the Roman Catholic Church believers. Alcohol abuse brought about by addiction is of great concern in Uasin Gishu County due to its disastrous effects on health, socio-cultural and economic well-being of the society. The church, in this case, the Roman Catholic has a dominant role to play. The paper pursued factors influencing alcohol abuse among Roman Catholic Church believers in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The Structural Functional Theory by Emile Durkheim and Symbolic Interaction Theory by Marx Weber were used to guide the study. The study targeted the Roman Catholic believers, clergy, rehabilitation counselors, Alcoholic Drinks Control Board and reformed addicts within the study area. Snowball and simple random sampling were used to select 16 informants to form the sample size for the study. Data was collected using the Interview Guide and Observation Schedule. Data was cleaned and organized before analysis. Data was analyzed by discussing information within the context of the study. The findings of the study revealed that some of the Roman Catholic Church believers indulged in alcoholism. Major factors that contributed to this vice were peer influence, poverty. Stress, influence of media availability and accessibility of alcohol. The findings of the study would be of great significance to the Roman Catholic Church clergy and believers. It would also be of utmost significance to both the National and County Government in informing workable policies to ensure control of the "second generation" alcohol. Among the key recommendations are that: there should be combined effort by Roman Catholic Church and other denominations, the community as well as Government institutions and agencies such as NACADA to campaign against alcohol abuse among the people and more so believers; the National and County Governments should work hand-in hand to initiate projects that would economically empower the youths; they should also be provided with permanent employment. The Roman Catholic Church should provide easy interpretation of certain scriptures on alcohol which are philosophically understood such as transubstantiation. The Government should keenly work towards preventing the production, sale and consumption of the second generation alcohol while considering building affordable rehabilitation centers and hiring paralegal helpers to champion rights of the poor addicts and their families.

**Keywords:** Alcohol control, second generation alcohol, substance, alcoholism, alcohol abuse, contextual.

**1.1 Introduction**

Alcohol is a depressant drug affecting the central nervous system which slows down the activity of the brain and is the most widely used drug worldwide (Gelinas, 1990). There are 2 billion alcohol users in the world (Colombo Plan, 2015). Harmful use of alcohol causes diseases, economic and social burden in societies (WHO, 2014). The global

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burden disease attributed to alcohol amounts to 5.4% of the total burden of disease (WHO, 2010). Europe leads the world in alcohol consumption where 73.4% are male drinkers and 59.9% are female drinkers, America comes second with 70.7% male drinkers and 52.8% female drinkers, Africa has 40.2% (WHO, 2014). World Health Organization Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health, reported that harmful use of alcohol led to about 3 million deaths globally in 2016 (WHO, 2019). The contribution of alcohol consumption to world death was estimated to be 5.3 % which is higher than mortality due to tuberculosis (2.3 %), HIV and AIDS (1.8 %), diabetes (2.8 %) and road injuries (2.5 %) (Manthey, et al, 2019). Chemicals meant for industrial and medical use such as formalin and molasses have been abused to make illicit lethal alcohol (WHO, 2014).

A study by National Agency for Campaign against Drug Abuse (NACADA, 2012) showed that use of alcohol and drugs continues to emerge due to unemployment and neglect among the youth. Religion plays a vital role and offers opportunities for positive social engagement which promote abstinence from alcoholism (Gomes, et al, 2013; Mason, et al, 2001). The Church, especially the Roman Catholic Church among others, use wine in their religious observation during Eucharistic Celebration. The practice dates back to Jesus where he served the bread and wine which represented his body and blood (Mathew, 26:26-29). While this is a sacred undertaking across Christian Faithful, misinterpretation may arise especially when one is camouflaging their alcohol abuse. Eucharist celebration among the Roman Catholic Church involves transubstantiation which means that the elements of bread and wine turn to body and blood upon being blessed by the Priest (Britannica 2019). One may argue how possible for blood to intoxicate an individual especially when taken in larger quantities. The process as to when wine changes to blood is philosophical and not symbolic. Transubstantiation is loaded with philosophical meaning that may pose an interpretation challenge to some Catholic congregants.

Alcohol consumption is a personal choice but the real problem of alcohol is its addiction and consequences. It is worsened by the emerging second generation alcohol cutting across major brands including *busaa* and *chang'aa* also known as surrogate alcohol. The abuse of alcohol cuts across all brands. Second generation alcohol are loaded with deadly adulteration in Kenya. Alcohol is rapidly losing the religious, social and cultural dimensions, taking on economic greed and adventure, thus becoming a real killer and source of health burden. It is against this background that urgent discussion and engagement by all stakeholders is needed to prevent its consumption, consequences and human toll, especially ravaging the poor in the society. Bearing in mind that prevention is better than cure, this study looked at areas of contextual vulnerabilities that have capacity to influence consumption of alcohol in Eldoret Municipality.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Alcohol is the most abused drug in Kenya such that the population of alcohol lifetime usage stands at 6,668,776. The NACADA, reports alcohol related deaths between July 2013 and March 2014 as 841 of which 687 were male and 154 were female. Kisii led with 166 deaths, Kiambu 81 and Uasin Gishu came third with 64 deaths. Uasin Gishu County was known for harbouring many *busaa* clubs in the late 1970s. When former President Moi clinched power, he declared war on alcohol and this led to closure of the *busaa* clubs. However, illegal trade on illicit alcohol has continued, leading to the current state of alcoholism and several deaths. A baseline survey carried by NACADA in Uasin Gishu showed that 12.1% of Uasin Gishu residents are dependent on alcohol and traditional liquor especially *chang'aa*. Alcohol is strongly associated with health burden and negative socioeconomic consequences (NACADA 2016).

With the inauguration of the new Kenya constitution (2010) the country was subdivided into 47 counties who are headed by governors with county assemblies. Among these counties is Uasin Gishu County situated in Western Kenya which is the focus of this study. The County has registered third place in high death rates from alcohol after Kisii and Kiambu (NACADA, 2014). Uasin Gishu County is an agricultural area known to produce maize and wheat which are mainly consumed in the country. These activities that guarantee food security are at a risk due to traditional alcohol consumption.

Roman Catholic Church has a high population of 250,572 according to 2019 census and is spread in the study area with grassroots support (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics web 2019). Increased situation of alcohol consumption in Kenya has been exacerbated by the prevalence of the "second generation" alcohol, loosely called *busaa* and *chang'aa* - which has been far much adulterated. Adulteration of alcohol is a new phenomenon that has

gripped some of the Roman Catholic Church believers. Once consumed, this type of alcohol increases the rate of intoxication on the body with almost immediate blackout. With the emergence of precursor chemicals meant for industrial and medical use such as formalin, molasses and after shave, some of these chemicals have been abused to make illicit alcohol that kills. WHO (2014:5), identifies these emerging issues in alcohol that have taken place in some countries: Notable exceptions were outbreaks of methanol poisoning and the use of surrogate alcohol, which refers to liquids usually containing ethanol, which is not intended for consumption as beverages. However, illegal trade on illicit alcohol has continued underground leading to the current state of alcoholism and several deaths from the same. *Kumi kumi* which is a type of SGA made from maize and sorghum is mixed with methanol, car battery acid and formalin (NACADA 2010).

The above is corroborated by two informants who one said, "I added urine to the brew because of its acidity" (O.I 21/09/2019), while another said, "Brewers add urine to make it concentrated" (O.I. 20/09/2019). One of the respondents said, "I regret to have started using second generation which has affected my male functionality and two spouses left me in different times and now my job is at risk" (O. I. 25/09/2019). The havoc and menace caused by the "second generation" alcohol abuse in the society is disheartening and of great concern. One of the informant (O. I. 10/9/2019) said that, "*kama hauwezi kombora ya mbali tumia mkuki wa karibu*" meaning "if you cannot afford long missile then use the nearest spear." This statement means that legal alcohol is out of reach for some consumers but Second General Alcohol can substitute because it quenches the thirst, affordable and available. The second generation *busaa* and *chang'aa* phenomenon is evolving fast to escape detection and lacks documentation for lack of testing by KEBS. Deaths associated with SGA are not accounted for because it passes as normal alcohol toll.

Eucharistic celebration by the Roman Catholic Church which involves a process of transubstantiation as opposed to Protestants' consubstantiation is loaded with philosophical interpretation which may pose interpretation problems for some to make well informed decision. Apostle Paul in 1Corinthians 11:34, said that the Lord's Supper should be taken with respect and not like any other meals and drinks. Therefore, believers should not come to the celebration hungry for the elements of Eucharist. This coupled with the Roman Catholic Church position of respecting one's choice and conscience may be misunderstood and seen as encouraging their congregants to alcohol intake. The study investigated factors that contribute to the spread of this menace among some Roman Catholic Church believers in Eldoret Municipality for which this paper discusses the findings.

### 1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The aim of this paper was to investigate the role of the Roman Catholic Church in controlling "second generation" alcohol abuse in Eldoret Municipality with an aim of establishing causes and ways of controlling the vice. The research study is objective as it has considered the contextual face of alcohol, that involves SGA *busaa* and *chang'aa* in its changing and/or erratic nature.

### 1.4 The Mission of the Church

Understanding the work of the Church in this study is imperative. The vices plaguing the society can be evaluated against the destined role of the church. The work of the church began with the commission of Jesus when He sent out His disciples to preach His word (Mathew10; Luke10). The mission was emphasized again when Jesus was just about to depart from the world (Mathew 28: 19) and confirmed after His resurrection. The gospels relate episodes of the sending of disciples in the stipulated mission with defined challenges that would be met (Mark 16: 14-18; Mathew 28: 16-20; Luke 24: 47-48 & John 21: 15-17). The disciples were also warned against compromise and gluttony.

Right from the fall of man in Genesis 3:1-13 sin entered and man has been struggling until the seed of a woman in Genesis 3:15 promised and was manifested in the New Testament when Jesus was born to destroy the works of the devil in 1 John 3:18. In 1Cor. 6:12 Paul outlines the power of sin to enslave man through food and lust. Alcohol as a drink or food can become addictive and enslave its victims with devastating results. God instructs that we honour Him with our body. In 1 Corinthians 6, the apostle Paul condemns sexual immorality, reminding us that by indulging into the same, we defile the temple of the Holy Spirit. That we are not our own but we were bought, and as such we should honour God with our bodies (1 Corinthians 6: 19-20). In reference to this, we should not subject our bodies to pleasures of sin (Hebrews 11:25) that do not honour and glorify God in the name of search for insatiable satisfaction (Jeremiah

2: 13). The Roman Catholic Church (RCC) is on mission to world service as Pope Francis said in *Evangelii Gaudium* that the church should be poorly centered in all its actions so as to address equality and justice (mission of the Church [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk) 2022). His sentiments are reflected in Luke 14:14. His position in regard to the voiceless and the hurting resonates well with the plight of the poor being ravaged by second generation alcohol in Kenya. Therefore, there is a need for RCC in Kenya to rise up and challenge second generation alcohol.

In considering the mission of the church that has been clearly explained, there appears to be a digression from what Jesus commissioned the believers to accomplish. The church is the salt and light of this world as Jesus said, but competition for survival and resources is at play. What may have been good ends up bad because of the greed of human beings. The body of believers appears to have been influenced by the world in making certain decisions which may not be in line with scriptures. The current study investigated the role of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in controlling "second generation" alcohol abuse in Eldoret Municipality through its teachings and advocacy. Evaluation of the role of the RCC is gauged against the outlined mission of the church and Biblical doctrines on the expectations of God on believers who congregate in His assemblies. This understanding might easily help the study to critically argue the place of alcohol among the RCC believers in the light of the Bible and the mission of the Church.

### 1.5 Theoretical Framework of the Study

The study applied Structural-Functionalist Theory (SFT) by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) which helped to explore the functional role of religion in stabilizing society through social institutions. This theory argues that alcohol abuse is a response to the weakening values and norms in society as it undergoes complex social change (Mooney & Schacht, 1943). Second generation alcohol abuse raises fundamental social disruption by the effects it brings on family and society at large.

Causes of the abuse of alcohol must be explored so as to inform prevention strategy. The SFT further assumes that when one part of the society is not functioning well, it can cause dysfunction to the rest of the society leading to disruption of life. Much as this study majorly concerned with the functional role of religion it did not leave out the interactions within the phenomena since human beings are social beings by nature. For clearer understanding regarding institutions and its dynamism of interaction, the SFT was supplemented by Symbolic Interaction Theory (SIT) by Marx Weber (1864-1920). The SIT helped in exploring the interaction of human beings as social beings which may create opportunities for possibilities of alcohol abuse.

Human beings are social in nature and operate within an environment of interaction either to fulfill a cultural, social or religious function. Moreover, his assertions of survival for the fittest ignites the competition for resources and the brewers upsurge their victims through sale of adulterated second generation alcohol to the peril of alcoholics.

### 1.6 Methodology

The research study was done in Eldoret Municipality of Uasin Gishu County. The researcher adopted a philosophical paradigm to select methodology used in the study. Philosophical Paradigm creates profound understanding on the right methodological design for a research adventure. The researcher applied qualitative research and embraced social constructivism. The approach vividly elucidated an understanding of social research as has been favourably argued by Creswell (2013).

Descriptive survey research design as advocated by (Tromp & Kombo, 2006; Orodho, 2003) was used. The choice of this design enabled the researcher to select the right methodology, the right research instruments and the kind of data analysis. In addition, research design refers to the structure of research that gives guidelines towards achieving the desired objectives (Kombo, et al, 2011; Kothari, 2014 & Kumar, 2011).

The research study targeted a population of the Roman Catholic believers, clergy, rehabilitation counselors, administrators, Alcoholic Drinks Control Board (UG ADCB), reformed addicts and addicts within Eldoret Municipality. The researcher employed snowball and simple random sampling techniques in the study. A sample size of 16 respondents was selected for the study. After interviewing 16 informants, the researcher realized that, a point of saturation had been attained and stopped further interviewing. Purposive sampling was employed to select the respondents of the study which constituted the sample size. The selection of the respondents was informed by informants who know the area and the background of the respondents. They also knew their religious affiliation which

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was also confirmed by the interviewed respondents. Clergy, rehabilitation counselors, administrators, Uasin Gishu Alcoholic Drinks Control Board were easily identified by the researcher. A pilot study to test validity of the instruments was conducted in Emgwen Sub-county of Nandi County. Data was collected using two instruments. These were Interview Guide (IG) and Observation Schedule (OS). The OS was used to collect data from the informants in real-life situations. Procedures of data collection entailed four stages which included collection of secondary data from books, journal articles, internet sources, magazines, published and unpublished theses and dissertations. The next stage was a pilot study to test validity and reliability of data-collection instruments in order to enhance validity and reliability of responses. The pilot study was done in Emgwen sub-county, Nandi County. The third stage was to identify potential informants through the snowball approach and pre-visiting them. The last stage was the actual collection of primary data from the field.

The collected data was cleaned, organized and analyzed (Tromp & Kombo 2006). The researcher used Document Analysis since data collected was qualitative in nature. Documents that the researcher used included pictures of illicit brews that were found hidden. Others included recent photos indicating how a catholic priest went to bless the opening of a bar and restaurant. Issues of ethics were considered by the researcher. This involved getting permits from Moi University, the awarding institution, the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and the Uasin Gishu County Government. The participants gave their informed consent and voluntarily participated in the study.

### **1.7 Previous Research on Factors Influencing Alcohol Abuse**

In Saudi Arabia, drinking among the youth was driven by peer pressure and family influence (Alinsaif, 2012). They see alcohol as drinking a beverage and as such do not consider themselves to be having a drinking problem. The majority had their first drinking experience between ages 18-24 and that they had been influenced by friends and families. The participants confessed that each had more than 5 drinking friends who continually encouraged them to keep on with drinking practices.

Peer pressure, otherwise referred to as peer influence, is among key contributors to alcoholism by the youths. As teenagers struggle for independence and desire to create a self-identity, relationships with their family members and peers drastically change with the latter given higher considerations. This implies that peer groups may assume more important to the youths than their families, and peers sometimes provide some of the same functions that family provided earlier. In this connection, peers become the bridge between the family and the adult social roles the young person must assume (Berk, 2009). Youth look to their peers for support, approval, and belonging (Vernon, 2002).

The study done by (Keiuwa, 2016), lamented that peer pressure subjected the youth to indulge into alcoholism. Next, was the study carried out by (Kabwama, et al, 2021) in Uganda, which established that adolescents who were out of school had higher risks of consuming alcohol compared with them in-school counterparts. Lastly, was the study conducted by Sharrad (2020) which revealed that the adolescents who were abstinent had lower risk compared to those who interacted with their peers who were alcohol consumers. Those who took alcohol influenced their peers by the way they behaved under the influence of alcohol. So the peers were also curious about tasting the same experience, and by doing so, they easily found themselves in their drinking cocoons.

Peer pressure was also found to be a major contributing factor to alcohol consumption in school since students were introduced to alcoholism by their friends (Munyua, et al, 2014). Again, peer pressure was found to be a contributing factor to alcoholism and other drugs since the majority of those interviewed had close friends who used alcohol, and in turn convinced them to take the same (Ndegwa, et al, 2017).

The research study conducted in Bungoma County by Masinde (2014), resonates with an earlier study which revealed that as much as the youth tried to avoid consuming alcohol, the bond and gravity of peers overwhelmed them. They had to give in to drinking since every youth in the village took alcohol, and any bid to avoid the same would make one appear like a social misfit in the community.

In Canada, the rate of alcohol consumption was found to be highly escalating and was attached to cultural orientation where people see alcoholism as the norm in the society. Canadians live in a culture that values use of alcohol. The young people live under peer pressure to make drinking a central focus in their life. Abuse of alcohol in Canada is a significant social problem more so among the young people (PAOC, 2013).



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The findings from a study conducted by Birech (2000) observed that socio-cultural changes encourage alcohol abuse. Cultural factors contributed to alcohol intake within most communities in Africa. This is because traditional and religious regulations that used to guard against the misuse of alcohol have broken down in contemporary society. In addition, Cherus (2014) established laxity in the socio-cultural norms as a contributing factor to alcoholism. He explained that in the past, the youths were mentored by culture, right from circumcision to marriage. They were mainly warned against social vices such as immorality, alcohol, theft, giving birth before marriage and incest among others. Rites of passage were a creation of African Traditional Religions which have been mostly influenced by the missionary religions, that is, Christianity and Islam (Gathogo 2001). Consequently, Christianity as far as this study is concerned has a role to play in controlling alcohol abuse among its members and the society at large.

Family environment dictates the level of indulgence into alcohol consumption. In Uganda, this was among the key issues associated with alcohol intake among Adolescent Boys and Young Men (ABYM) in Kampala. Compared with ABYM whose parents or guardians did not consume alcohol while ABYM whose both parent's drunk alcohol had significantly higher risks of taking alcohol as in the case with only a mother or guardian who consumed alcohol. ABYM who had siblings that drank alcohol also had significantly higher risks of consuming alcohol (Kabwama, et al, 2021).

The findings of a study that was conducted by Oricho (2014) in Kenya revealed that family background influences alcohol intake. The findings further revealed disparity in alcohol intake considering family backgrounds. Students who come from homes where alcohol is brewed registered dismal academic performance compared to those who hail from homes where alcohol is not brewed. The main contributing factor was exposure to alcohol as well as parental negligence. Most parents do not avail enough time to advise their children since they lack moral authority to address the same.

The findings of Kituyi (2018), which was conducted in the village of Siuna of Kimilili Sub-County in Kenya revealed that high levels of poverty compelled people to sell *chang'aa* in order to meet their basic needs. It also found out that *chang'aa* does not need an established premise to conduct sale, instead, it is sold in houses and in banana plantations. Again, it does not require a lot of capital to start or to sustain the business. It is in agreement with an earlier finding of Mathenge (2016) in Kirinyaga that harsh economic conditions and the high inflation affecting majority of the people in most cases compel people to consume cheap and adulterated alcohol.

The more highly learned an individual is, the more likely they are to drink alcohol. 80% of college graduates in the United States Drink Alcohol; while only 52% of persons with no college education drink. College graduates who drink are 61% more likely to say that they have consumed alcohol within the last 24 hours than non-college graduates who drink (Juergens, 2018). College graduates in the United States mostly prefer wine than beer, while non-college graduates prefer beer than wine. Intertwined with this is the aspect of profession. Those who are professionals are more likely in a position to develop the practice of alcoholism than others. This is because of high-stress or high-risk professions; it may also be true of professions dominated by younger adults. Of specific orientation are those in the military as they have a higher likelihood to indulge in alcoholism and develop alcohol-related disorders. In short, employment generally influences alcohol consumption (Juergens, 2018).

The US Congress raised the drinking age to 21 years as a formidable strategy to reduce alcoholism and increase the health and safety of the youth. Nonetheless, youth and young adults under age 21 years continue to take alcohol since its uptake is accepted as normal adolescent life practice. According to a 2011 report from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, by the time teenagers reached grade 12, almost 71 percent had used alcohol at least once in their lives and 41.2 percent had drunk alcohol during the past month (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2011). Older adolescents and young adults drink at even higher levels (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2011). Although it is apparent that significant progress has been made in controlling alcohol drinking, still, the youth, young adults under age 21 and the general public has been increasingly taking alcohol.

Study by Changwony (2005) and Kanus (2008) in Kenya both revealed the dangers of substance and alcohol abuse which the drinkers wanted to experience. The major contributing factors were curiosity to adventure in the unknown, which eventually adversely impacts on their individual lives. Further, the findings of the two studies commonly agree that many people are aware of the dangers of alcohol. However, the more they are reprimanded against the dangers of alcoholism, the more they wanted to indulge in the same in a bid to explore more.

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A study by Masinde (2014) established that frustration and desperation drove people into alcohol consumption. A number of young people indulge into drinking illicit brews because of shame and guilt in failure to sustain employment due to binge drinking. The other revelation was that many people resorted to alcoholism in order to forget frustration which they undergo in life. A study in South Africa found out that relieving stress drives people to drink. Most of those who drink alcohol argue that it temporarily relieves them of stress very rapidly. The drinkers who were driven to take alcohol due to underlying difficulties such as stress and anxiety are dubbed as "problem drinkers" (Kgabe, 2011).

Emotional satisfaction can easily drive people into alcoholism, especially the youth. First-time drinkers want to feel different when under the influence of alcohol (Johnson, 2004; Bonnie & O'Connell, 2004). Key reasons behind their quest to feel different are: to reduction of stress, worries and tension, increase feelings of power and courage, to increase sexual attractiveness and performance; to relax their mind and actualize their curiosity about the feelings which alcohol produces.

Media plays a key role in changing people's behaviour since its exposure helps influence societal social practice about alcohol through marketing, product placements and stories in a wide range of sources. These include television, cinema, social media and other forms of entertainment. Alcohol marketing and sales are highly regulated and people are exposed to a range of variety of alcohol and liquor advertisement. Whether these advertisements directly result in an increase in consumption has been the subject of many public debates and much alcohol and consumer study (Grenard, et al 2013; Koordeman, et al, 2012).

The finding which was revealed by Alaniz and Wilkes (1998) assert that, it was likely that the effects of advertisement differ across age groups and races but eventually have the same impact on the viewers. The alcohol industry uses complex marketing strategies which mainly focus on citizens, especially the youths (Moore, et al, 2008). Pragmatic studies show that targeted alcohol marketing results in a persons' developing positive beliefs on drinking alcohol. This in turn creates and expands an environment where alcohol use is socially acceptable and encouraged (Hastings, et al, 2005; McKee, et al 2011). The media factor can influence binge drinking and create an increasing in alcohol consumption (Tanski, et al, 2015). Advertising also influences indulgence into alcoholism, although this largely differs by age group (Sancho, et al, 2011).

## **1.8 Study Findings**

The following are findings of the study which this paper addressed. The evidence in the findings of the study have been addressed within the context of the findings of other earlier studies. These are concerned with factors influencing alcohol abuse among some Roman Catholic Church believers.

### **1.8.1 Peer Pressure**

The findings of the current study revealed that peer pressure enticed many youths to engage in alcoholism. Our informant said that, "I used to drink with my age mates and especially those circumcised together" (O. I. 28/09/2019). As related by one informant, many young people are highly influenced by their peers and age mates to engage in alcoholism (O. I., 25/09/2019) also corroborated by (O. I. 12/9/2019). The findings of the current study were found to be consistent with the earlier findings of Alinsaif (2012) conducted among the Saudi Arabians. The established findings revealed that there was a strong connection between alcohol dependency and friends' influence in alcohol intake. It was also found to be consistent with later findings of Isanda (2016) in Eldoret, Kenya. His findings established that many youths were influenced in taking alcohol, tobacco and other related drugs by their peers. This was due to close interactions they had together as they grew as cronies.

The other findings of the current study were that some RCC believers who were in the same age groups and lived within the same locality highly influenced their peers to consume alcohol (O. I., 13/09/2019). The informant further pointed out that those who were of the same age group easily identified with one another. This situation could easily cement together their intentions and urge to consume alcohol.

To counteract the vice of alcoholism among the peers, the study revealed that there was a need to avail peer education among the RCC believers, especially the youths who were found to be extremely prone to the "second generation" alcohol abuse according to our informant (O. I. 28/09/2019). This implies that the RCC congregation

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requires peer educators to help counteract alcohol menace through educating the believers on the dangers of alcohol and the need to consider their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit.

The findings of the current study are in tandem with the earlier assertions of Strange (2006) that peer educators were extremely scarce for interventions regarding social vices such as alienation of the youths from societal expectations both in behavior and following the established norms of the society in which they live. The change that Strange (2006) laments, is the difficulty in finding the best peer educator for relevant entrenched vice. This problem has, more often than not, led to failure to initiate effective peer education. Within the same breath, Kristjansson, et al, (2010) found out that adolescent social interactions among peers led to enormous indulgence in alcoholism.

### **1.8.2 Family Environment**

The environment in which an individual resides plays a role in alcoholism according to the informant (O.I. 13/9/2019). She said that, "it is so because those who come from rich families can easily access alcohol owing to their financial muscle". This is supported by the work of Hanes (2012) who said that drinking parents and siblings have a higher propensity to influence their own to engage in alcoholism. Juergens (2018) resonates with this study when he said that family wealth is also a factor. Persons with greater family wealth are at risk to indulge in alcoholism and develop alcohol use disorders.

The findings of the current study also revealed that a number of RCC believers, especially the youth, indulged in second generation alcohol due the influence of their drinking parents according to informant (O.I, 14/09/2019). The findings of the current study confirm earlier revelation of (Keiuwa, 2016), that drinking parents influenced their students to take alcohol. This clearly shows that the youth highly emulate the behaviour of their parents. Therefore, should parents present themselves as good role models; alcohol consumption would either be controlled or reduced to a greater extent.

Family income, as an economic environment, was found to be highly influencing binge drinking among both the youth and brewing women (O.I, 21/09/2019). The informant further said that, "she was married in a family that experienced abject poverty and alcohol brewing was their sole means of getting reliable income". She further explains that such a situation forced her and other women in the village to indulge in alcoholism.

The findings of the current research study also revealed that some of the youth of the RCC consume alcohol because of town influence where they live with their parents compared to those in the rural set up (O.I. 10/09/2019). These findings match with that of Stafstrom (2012), which established that students from a more affluent and less traditional background were more likely to use alcohol. It is also in line with findings by Mbutu (2009) who said that the family highly influences alcohol consumption among its members. However, the findings of this study were found to be divergent with earlier findings of Sancho, et al (2011) which revealed that family (parental) influence had nothing to do with one involved in alcoholism.

The findings of this research study revealed that broken family stability contributed to the indulgence of alcohol by some of RCC members. One informant said that, "my parents separated earlier on and the situation exposed him to alcoholism at an earlier stage since my single mother could not effectively monitor his behaviour when growing up (O. I. 28/09/2019). The findings of the current research study were found to be in tandem with earlier findings of Kioko (2005) that children who were neglected by parents were more likely to consume alcohol and that students who come from broken homes lack parental advice from parents on social life including substance abuse. Therefore, such students easily fall prey to alcoholism.

The current research study also revealed that a number of women were involved in alcoholism due to family pressure. As indicated by one informant who said that "she left her home where they did not brew alcohol and got married in a family where alcohol production formed the main means of income" (O. I. 22/09/2019). The informant had to be impelled to actively participate in the business and even ended up producing, drinking and selling alcohol. She attributes her woes to the poor family she got married to (O. I. 22/09/2019). Another informant (O. I. 21/09/2019) attested the same experience and said, "her choice in marriage is the source of her brewing problem, trying to make ends meet for family."

The research study found that the majority of men abuse second generation alcohol alone without women (O.I.10/09/2019). He attributes these to the vulnerabilities faced by women upon taking SGA. He said, "Some are raped



and violence meted on them and therefore avoid drinking with men". He went on to say that some women would rather consume alcohol with a relative or spouse to avoid interfering with their marital status. This was divergent from the earlier findings by Mathenge (2016) who revealed that women who drank alcohol preferred drinking with male companions who shouldered the purchase of alcohol.

### 1.8.3 Economic Constraints

The findings of the study as already discussed above under family environment revealed that economic constraints were among the contributing factors that promoted alcoholism within the study area according to our informants (O. I. 22/09/2019 and (O. I. 21/09/2019). In line with this, the study established that manufacturing alcohol was popular to many people, including some of the Catholic Church believers due to economic constraints. Since money is hard to get, given the low rate of employment, people find making alcohol relatively cheaper compared to engagement in other viable income generating activities. One of the informant (O. I. 10/9/2019) said that, "*kama hauwezi tumia kombora ya mbali tumia mkuki wa karibu*" meaning "if you cannot afford long range missile then use the nearest spear" This statement is allegorical and means that, legal alcohol is out of reach for some consumers but second general alcohol can substitute because it quenches the thirst, affordable and available. The same informant when asked whether he knows SGA said, "yes, it is my choice of brand because it is pocket friendly and just one glass satisfy his craving and goes black out forgetting the prevailing problems" (O. I. 10/9/2019). One informant said, "although he works and comes from a rich family, his drinking habits cannot be sustained even upon selling off some important items at throw away prices, therefore resorts to second generation alcohol which is cheaper" (O. I. 25/09/2019). Taking into consideration the view of above informants shows that lack of finances to finance their legal alcohol has forced them into second generation alcohol which is creating a certain class of population to be considered as poor. This is one of the predicaments suffered by addicts and their families which requires empathy on them

Coupled with a readily available market in which those who consume the liquor are many, high indulgence in alcohol is prevalent (O.I, 13/09/2019). She also said that, "SGA has helped her educate her children because the husband is also an alcoholic and therefore cannot support the family". The findings of the current study align with the earlier findings of Kituyi (2018) in Siuna which revealed that high levels of poverty compelled people to sell *chang'aa* in order to meet their basic needs. The study in Siuna also found out that *chang'aa* does not need an established premise to conduct sales. Instead, it is sold in houses and in banana plantations. Again, it does not require a lot of capital to start or to sustain the business.

The other observation that the current findings established was that those whose family background were of affluent means tend to indulge in alcohol consumption compared to those who hailed from relatively poor families (O. I. 16/09/2019). Another informant said, "youths from rich families are their potential customers who pay unlike the poor who ask for credit" (O. I. 20/09/2019). This revelation concurs with earlier findings of Keiuiwa (2016) which established that youths from higher economic status abuse alcohol to a greater extent.

### 1.8.4 Availability and Access to Alcohol

Our informant said that, "access to, and availability of alcohol especially cheap *busaa* and *chang'aa* has helped him quench his thirst without traveling far incurring more expenses" (O. I. 23/09/2019). This was also corroborated by another informant who said that focus of law enforcers on homes has shifted dens of illicit alcohol to mobile maize plantations and forest" (O. I. 10/9/2019). This is also observed by Hanes (2012), who said that not all merchants are vigilant on the extent of selling alcohol to their customers. He said that people are allowed to buy alcohol for themselves and sometimes minors. It was established that alcohol was readily available and could easily be found anywhere anytime one was in need. Those who take alcohol have unique networking to the extent that they could easily identify with their own who drink alcohol according to our informant (O.I. 16/09/19).

The findings revealed that negligence in the enforcement of the Alcoholic Drinks Control Act (2010) has rapidly increased access to alcohol. This makes local brews and alcohol too available, which in turn leads to escalated alcohol consumption. One informant said that, "*pesa huvunja mlima*" meaning, "they use money to close the eyes of the law enforcers" (O.I. 22/9/2019).

Apart from being readily available, illicit drugs such as alcohol were as well easily accessed. The findings of the current study revealed that alcohol could easily be accessed by a number of drinkers at will to promote the interest of those who wanted money in exchange of selling alcohol (O.I. 22/09/2019). It is also in agreement with a report conducted by NACADA (2015) which established that many households (49.9%) are involved in the activities of brewing, buying and reselling of brews, thus increasing its access.

### 1.8.5 Drinking History

The findings of the current research study revealed that those who hailed from the lineage in which alcohol was consumed, in most cases end up being binge drinkers according to informant (O. I. 15/09/2019). One informant said that, "he goes drinking with his father and comes home together" (O. I. 23/09/2019). This is a pointer of how family lineage can be a great factor in alcohol abuse. The findings of the study as well revealed that most of those who were affected by drinking history were male youth and men (O. I. 12/09/2019). This shows that for alcoholism to be reduced or controlled, the past history of the alcoholic has to be properly established as they do in rehabilitation centers. This would save the males to a greater extent. The findings are also indications that most males appear irresponsible, hence unnecessarily overburdening the female folk with family responsibilities.

Juergens (2018) agrees with the study by saying history plays an indomitable role in digging deep into the past life of an individual. He points out that an individual's drinking history heavily impacts their likelihood of developing alcoholism. A person with a long history of drinking is more likely to turn into alcoholism than those who have been drinking alcohol for less time. At the same time, individuals who have consumed more alcohol are more likely to become alcoholics than individuals who have consumed less alcohol. Alcohol abuse rewires the brain to desire and depend on the same and these effects are cumulative (Juergens, 2018).

### 1.8.6 Education and Career

The findings of this research study revealed that those who are in the same profession tend to form cliques which initially bring them together. In the long run, they end up drinking. This was the same as those who either schooled or are schooling together according to our informant (O. I. 23/09/2019). Another informant said, "those who went to school together have the tendency of meeting together through the alumni group" (O. I. 16/09/2019). This kind of socialization mostly involves those aged between 20 and 35 years. Majority of those in these alumni groupings take alcohol and easily influenced the few who were not, since taking alcohol was normal to them. The RCC believers who find themselves in these groupings end up heavily consuming alcohol (O. I. 16/09/2019).

The revelation of the current study was found to be consistent with earlier findings of Boitt, et al (2016) that there was a high prevalence of alcohol abuse among students who were within the same academic year of learning. This attachment was associated with environmental adjustment and the newly-found freedom from home. It was also associated with exploration adventure and testing alcohol experience. For this finding, education, within the aspect of the academic years of learning, presented a clique of alcohol drinking indulgence.

### 1.8.7 Age Factor

According to the findings of the current study, it was asserted that stopping drinking was difficult since they started at an early age, and as such they were already addicted (O. I. 25/09/2019). This was also attested by our (O.I. 12/09/2019), who said that, "while counseling addicts, many have confessed to have started drinking at an early age because of parental influence and peer curiosity, therefore discontinuing abuse takes time". Another informant (O. I. 25/09/2019) said that, "he hangs out with "Bakule" meaning one who was circumcised with although not learned as he is". This attest how African traditional religion of passage of rites influences some youths to abuse alcohol. Age plays a cardinal role in enticing positioning an individual for alcoholism. An individual's age has a strong influence on the likelihood of alcohol abuse. Alcohol intake and abuse tends to commence at the late adolescents or in early twenties, and reaches peak in the mid and late twenties. It starts reducing by early thirties. Persons who are in their early to mid-twenties are the most likely to engage in alcohol abuse and eventually suffer from alcohol use disorders. The younger the individual starts drinking alcohol, the more likely they are prone to increase in alcohol abuse later in life (Juergens, 2018).

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The findings of the current study revealed that most of those who consumed alcohol were the youth, which was contributed by the fact that they were adolescents and as such were influenced by their age-mates. Since most of them were exposed to drinking at a tender age, they had to continue with their drinking behaviour to reflect back their age adventure experiences according to our informant (O. I. 23/09/2019). The findings of the current study were found to be consistent with that of Keiuwa (2016) which established that alcohol use tends to be more experienced in adolescents. Most of those who started consuming alcohol at the stated stage had low chances of quitting alcohol.

However, the findings of the current study on the fact that the majority of those who took alcohol were youths were found to be divergent with two earlier findings. One, was that of Ndegwa, et al (2017) that alcohol consumption increases with age. The findings showed that those who were below 22 years had low consumption of alcohol compared to those who were 22 years and above. This disparity in findings could be related to the socio-economic background of the population that was sampled for the study. Two, were the findings of Boitt, et al (2016) which found no association between age and the level at which one is involved in alcohol consumption.

### 1.8.8 Emotional Satisfaction

The findings of the current study also revealed that some believers in the RCC indulge in alcohol because one informant said, "they want to feel the other side of themselves which they are uncertain about, and which could only be revealed when they are under the influence of alcohol" (O. I. 15/09/2019). In addition to this, another informant explained that there was nothing good in alcohol after being attracted to it, but he puts it clear that, "the curiosity to feel the extent it can take one when drunk is what makes people get enticed into alcohol indulgence as it happened to him" (O. I. 23/09/2019).

The study found out that stress is one of the factors which contributes to alcohol abuse, according to our informant (O.I. 28/09/2019). He said that economic stress made to drink alcohol and wasted a lot of his resources. This is congruent with earlier findings of Munyua, et al (2014) that stress was the main factor for alcoholism among High school students. Majority of those who indulged in alcohol wanted to get rid of stress. Again, the findings of the current study had been earlier on, echoed by Connie (1994). The study established that young people who hailed from depression-prone environments felt greatly alienated and hopeless to the extent that they desperately yearned for use of alcohol with high anticipation that consuming alcohol would perhaps provide answers to the feelings of personal stress and inadequacy.

The findings of the current study revealed according to an informant who is a counselor said, "some indulge into alcoholism because alcohol would satisfy their emotional quest of life" (O.I. 24/09/2019). In their bid to do this, most of them admitted that they felt relieved after taking alcohol (O.I. 24/09/2019). However, the findings of the current study were divergent with earlier findings of Knylchala, et al (2015) that revealed otherwise. It, instead, indicated that those who exhibited harmful use of alcohol were associated with higher anxiety symptoms and depression among many people. As well, those who indulged in alcoholism, after getting anxiety and depression symptoms exhibited high risk alcohol use more than those without the symptoms.

### 1.8.9 Influence of Media

The findings of the current study revealed that some of the RCC believers and people in general were influenced into indulgence in alcoholism by the media (O.I. 24/09/2019). Another informant admitted that the media's advertisements and promotion strategy was irresistibly enticing since one would feel like he/she was a social misfit without taking alcohol. Sometimes, the viewer could not have been in a position to know even the new brands in the market. But the media comfortably brought this to their attention (O. I. 12/09/2019). This was a clear indication that the media, whose advertisements are not properly regulated by the concerned authority, would end up influencing people to engage in alcohol consumption.

The findings of this research study revealed that upon watching advertisements in the media, one of the RCC believers desired to take alcohol the way he watched it demonstrated in the media. Such heart-searching advertisements induced the viewers with great craving for alcohol. One of such craving advertisements in the media was when the "Pilsner" brand was being advertised as "*beer imara kama simba*" (Beer that stands strong and firm like

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a lion). This particular advertisement said the informant "greatly influenced some drinkers" (O.I. 10/09/2019). This shows that some RCC believers need to be helped in shaping their conscience.

The findings above were found to be congruent with earlier findings of Ndegwa et al (2017) that alcohol intake had a relationship to media influence. There was also a significant association between alcohol intake score and celebrity influence to start drinking. Those who indicated that they were influenced by the celebrities in the media were also higher than those who were not influenced by celebrities. This is therefore a clear indication that the media has a strong magnet in terms of its influence on people to start taking, or continue consuming alcohol.

#### 1.8.10 Medicinal Aspect of Alcohol

One of our informants said that "Alcohol possesses medicinal value" (O.I. 23/09/2019). The findings of the current study revealed that some RCC believers indulge in alcoholism because it has the capability of treating myriads of illnesses. For instance, one informant narrated how, "on a few occasions he got invaded by a severe stomachache coupled with influenza and after taking alcohol, the maladies immediately disappeared" (O. I. 25/09/2019). This is a clear indication that, even if one would not intend to drink alcohol but found oneself sick, they would quickly resort to alcohol. With time, such would be within the group of alcoholics.

The findings of the current study were found to be congruent with earlier findings of Masinde (2014) that many alcohol abusers preferred *chang'aa* because they believed it could cure flu and stomach ailments such as typhoid and diarrhea. Further, the main reason for preference of *chang'aa* to *busaa* for medicine was that it was more potent and took a longer time to sober up. This allowed for faster and more effective healing process.

In view of the above, it would be prudent if the RCC stood strong to demystify the Scriptures that the members use to justify the medicinal aspect of alcohol. This will counter argument that alcohol has medicinal value. This argument can also be criticized since not all people are sick every time to warrant alcohol use every time.

#### 1.8.11 Religious Factors

The findings of the current study revealed that, in one way or the other, the RCC influenced their believers to consume alcohol. This was very much pronounced in the Church's conspicuous silence on the matter since it does not condemn alcohol according to our informant (O.I, 25/09/2019). One informant said, "if Christ could change water into wine in Cana wedding (John 2:1-10), then who would stop them from alcohol intake?" (O. I. 28/9/2019). The scenario reflects different contexts that need proper interpretation especially to some populations in order to make informed choices.

The philosophical interpretation of some scriptures such as the understanding of Eucharist celebration (transubstantiation) can be abused to mean permissiveness to take alcohol by the RCC (O. I. 14/09/2019). The RCC observes Eucharist celebration as an important sacrament according to our informant (O. I. 15/09/2019). Whereas Eucharist celebration is a sacred observance, there is a need for breaking down the understanding of some terms for lay people to avoid misinterpretation. As Apostle Peter said in 2Peter 3:16 that 'the letters of Apostle Paul contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort to their own destruction'. It attests that indeed there are scriptures which need proper interpretation, that is, theological, philosophical, cultural and historical understanding for lay people to comprehend.

The research study also, as revealed by our informant, noted that "the church respects individual conscience in making their informed decisions" (O. I. 15/9/2019). The right for choice as dictated by one's conscience is worth noting and respected, however in the prevailing circumstances posed by hazardous second generation alcohol in human toll should concern all. There is death in the bottle or cup of second generation alcohol and other alcohol when one is dependent and therefore people should be guided in order to make informed decisions. This is corroborated by one of our informants who said that he regrets having started drinking (O. I. 25/09/2019).

The findings of the current study established that some men were more involved in alcohol consumption compared to women. This has left a number of women subjected to overwhelming family responsibilities that were supposed to be done by their husbands who have since fallen prey to the grip of alcoholism according to our informant (O.I. 14/09/2019). Another informant stated that "some of these men who indulged in alcoholism were committed RCC believers who used their devotion to camouflage their drinking habits" (O.I. 28/9/2019).

The study also established that African Traditional Religion through rites of passage play some role in alcohol intake among some RCC youths. Our informant (O.I. 25/09/2019) said that, 'I hang out with my "*Bakule*" (which means, one who was circumcised with) although he is not learned as I am'. This rite of passage has a cultural bonding effect among the initiates prompting them to do certain things together such as alcohol abuse. This is corroborated with the study of Cherus (2014) which explained that Christianity needs to assume full responsibility in dealing with vices posed by socio-cultural change especially in the displacement of African Traditional Religion.

#### **1.8.12 Observation schedule on Health and Psychological Factors**

The research study observed that the majority of addicts and reformed addicts suffered bruises and others had scars on their faces. It revealed cases of violence and neglect on those abusing second generation alcohol. Some showing psychological problems associated with their drinking. The toll is taking on them and One of the respondents said, "I regret having started using second generation alcohol which has affected my male functionality and two spouses left me at different times and now my job is at risk" (O. I. 25/09/2019). He also said that "although he comes from a well off family, his drinking habits could not be sustained by his salary and family, hence sales off any item that belongs to him or family at a throw away price to sustain his drinking habits'. He went on to say that, "financial constraints have caused me to drink second generation alcohol". One informant narrated how he lost a comrade to second general alcohol and prays that it will not happen to any one of them (O. I. 10/9/2019). They have a sense of belonging to each other for they understand each other well and share. One informant said, thus: "reaching home after a drink of SGA is a problem because of the almost instant black out experienced and may end up sleeping outside in the open air exposing themselves to danger and accidents" (O. I. 23/9/2019). Physical outlook shows health deterioration and loss of weight due to lack of eating well. There is evidence of uneasiness in talking before taking SGA and brightens up when high. They exhibit exhaustion, stigma and rejection and need counseling and periodic mental checkup. Therefore, there is a need for them to be helped not only by the Roman Catholic Church but by all especially the family and community around.

#### **1.8.13 Summary**

This research study has addressed the third and the last objective of the study. The main theme was critical analysis of contextual factors influencing alcohol abuse among the Roman Catholic Church believers in Uasin Gishu County. The established factors that have been discussed are as follows: peer pressure, family environment, economic constraints, availability and access to alcohol, drinking history, education and career, age factor, emotional satisfaction, influence of media, medicinal aspects of alcohol, and religious factors. The study in observation schedule observed the critical health and psychological factors affecting the victims.

#### **1.9 Conclusion**

The main theme addressed in this paper was an analysis of contextual factors influencing alcohol abuse among the Roman Catholic Church believers in Uasin Gishu County. The researcher observed permissiveness in the society which acts as breeding ground for indulgence into alcoholism. Peer pressure, poverty, stress, media influence, religious factors and, availability and accessibility of alcohol were identified as key among the leading causes to indulgence into alcoholism. The study therefore concludes that there are factors that compel some RCC believers to take alcohol which could be controlled if the clergy taught from the pulpit that alcohol consumption is sinning against God.

#### **1.10 Recommendations for Policy Implication**

The study made the following recommendations for consideration:

- i. There should be a combined effort by the Roman Catholic church and other denominations, the community as well as Government institutions and agencies such as NACADA to campaign against alcohol abuse among the people and more so believers. RCC should interpret scriptures in a contextual manner without being too philosophical for correct informed choices.
- ii. The RCC, National and the County Governments should work hand-in-hand to initiate projects that would economically empower the youths. They should also be provided with permanent employment.



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- iii. The Government should keenly work towards preventing the production, sale and consumption of illicit alcohol while discharging enforcement without favour. There should be testing of illicit alcohol by KEBS to determine their adulteration and this will help eradicate second generation alcohol of *busaa* and *chang'aa* when culprits are netted.
- iv. The religious, civil society and community should be brought on board to actively engage in a workable policy development process geared towards controlling alcohol.
- v. Policies on abstinence should be formulated and this can be achieved by designing workable policies that would provide incentives to those who were once alcoholics and have since exhibited marked levels of abstinence within a certain time span.
- vi. The RCC should build affordable rehabilitation centers with National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) cover and solicit corporate social responsibility to cater for the poor in the study area.
- vii. The government should employ paralegal helpers to champion for the rights of addicts and their families while protecting them from exploitation.

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3. Alice Bowen (not her real name) (Brewer, Chepkongony) in an oral interview with the researcher on 21/09/2019.
4. Father Njoroge (Moi University Chaplain, Catholic Church) in an oral interview with the researcher on 15/09/2019.
5. Father Okoth (Introductory Catholic Church, Eldoret) in an oral interview with the researcher on 26/09/2019.
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7. Jonathan Some (not his real name) (A drunkard living at Ngeria) in an oral interview with the researcher on 23/09/2019.
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