

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING THE REGULATION OF ALCOHOL AT ALL LEVELS.

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Scope of Presentation

- Introduction
- Challenges Facing the Regulation of Alcohol at all levels
- Opportunities Available for Regulation of Alcohol at all levels
- Recommendations

Introduction

Whereas alcohol is traditionally regarded as a very important beverage, served at all types of ceremonies (whether joyous or sorrowful), alcohol drinking commonly results in alcohol harm that has health and socio-economic outcomes to individuals, families and communities in form of sickness, domestic violence, marital break down, failure to work, poverty, crime, accidents, diseases, high medical expenses, blindness, death, etc.

CHALLENGES:

Why is alcohol producing, selling or drinking a problem?

- The old laws have gaps in regulating alcohol.

E.g. 'Everyone distilling waragi shall have a licence.' It doesn't explicitly prohibit consumers from taking waragi. Nor does the law require the producer to declare the alcoholic content of the brew.

CHALLENGES:

- Producers sometimes add to alcohol some toxic substances, with a motive to intoxicate consumers in 5mins. These, may lead to blindness or death.
- Other producers package alcohol with misleading information.
- Some cultural norms are bad. E.g. A newly born infant from the royal clan in Busoga is normally washed with alcohol. So, drinking in that clan is very normal.

Challenges (**Why**) Contd....

- Alcohol sellers think it is the easiest trade one can do with little capital. Discouraging them from the business creates enmity if you can't assist them with alternative capital.
- Selling alcohol outside the acceptable drinking hours is hard to addicts.
- Also, alcohol sellers admit that they incur a lot of debts from consumers. So, the business is not very profitable.

Challenges (**Why**) Contd....

- Some leaders (in Kikaramoja and Soweto) in Walukuba Division encourage new sellers to open drinking joints. So, they are not exemplary.
- Leaders at higher levels don't encourage formulation or enforcement of laws.
- Some people misconceive that since alcohol is an external sanitizer for COVID, so they drink it to sanitize against systemic COVID.

Challenges (**Why**) Contd....

- In early and late stages of alcohol addiction, alcohol consumers fail to avail human basic needs (like food) for their families. School children may drop out of school for lack of school fees. Fighting, violence, crime rates, poverty and marital break down increase.
- Sometimes the users become very abusive/ discouraging to the Change Agents, e.g. when we say alcohol causes death, people don't quickly see this.
- Some addicts who need rehabilitation cannot meet the expenses at a Rehabilitation Center.

Challenges (How)

- Some drunkards with hangovers report to health facilities for treatment creating a nonrealistic claim/ expense. They cannot report to work.
- Some youth consume alcohol retrospectively with other drugs like tobacco or marijuana, which may result into mental disorders that are very expensive to treat let alone the self denial in them.
- Those who agree to leave alcohol producing or selling may need substantial capital for other businesses as an alternative source of livelihood.

Challenges (**How**) Contd...

- Lack of funds for follow up and monitoring esp. now that the project is ending.
- Some converts who left alcohol drinking need to be continually followed up and counseled.
- This would help them to avoid resuming to drink, but transport funds cannot be readily got.
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OPPORTUNITIES:

- In attempting to address the above challenges, we have to use our achievements in getting and using relevant **opportunities** for regulating production, sale or consumption of alcohol.
- Kakira Sugar Limited (KSL) being the area where the project started in Jinja District in 2012 (for instance) experienced higher benefits in terms of increased production. Therefore, all stakeholders should re-kindle the methods that worked to ensure that the following successes are not reversed:

Opportunities Contd.....

- Many leaders supported us to formulate the 'Jinja District Alcohol Ordinance.'
- All stakeholders (managers, leaders and others) need to appreciate and observe the alcohol control measures.
- Everyone should be encouraged to leave harmful businesses and form SACCOs for socio-economic actualization.

Opportunities Contd.....

- As Kakira Sugar Factory stopped giving out molasses free for waragi making, it is, now, using the molasses to make spirits.
- Other individual achievement could be used to conduct community sensitization like allowing converts to give life testimonies, with reference to new businesses or family ties & care expenses.
- Observe also that people report better performance by men and reduced crime rates.

Opportunities Contd.....

- Increased school sensitization and drama to consolidate the better academic performance in schools.
- Integrate a multisectoral approach with depts like Community Development, Security and others to consolidate the reported reduced crime rates, GBV, child neglect.

Recommendations

Notwithstanding the enormous previous support from UNACOH/ IOGT we continue to appeal for more financial support to keep the alcohol fire burning.

Thank you for your attention!

