

**THE IMPACT OF TRADITIONAL LIQUOR BREWING AND  
CONSUMPTION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF  
IKORONGO LOCATION, KISII DISTRICT.**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

This study focused on the impact of brewing and consumption of traditional liquor (*busaa* and *chang'aa*) on the rural people of Ikorongo location in Kisii district. The study was prompted by the assertion of the Kenya Government that traditional liquor retards rural development. The study focused on two specific areas: one, how the brewing and consumption of traditional liquor impacts on rural development in terms of housing, dietary needs, clothing, farming, self-help activities and formal education and, two, the causes for traditional liquor brewing and consumption.

Two theories were advanced for the study: Symbolic interaction and modernization theory. The sample selected for the study included brewers and consumers of traditional liquor and the ordinary public (those who do not drink or brew traditional liquor). Questionnaires with both open ended and closed questions were administered to 100 respondents. Direct observation and documentary materials were also used as sources of information for this research.

The study found out that traditional liquor has socio-economic and cultural connotations among its users and like any other type of alcohol, if abused can have negative consequences for the abuser's life and the community. According to the research findings, traditional cultural practices, lack of alternatives to livelihood, absence of recreational activities and community socialization both combine to perpetuate the brewing and consumption of traditional liquor.

The data reveal that the ban on traditional liquor is still ineffective due to corruption and the poor approach in its enforcement. The use of force in arrests, fines and imprisonment of illicit liquor has had little success. Instead the issue of illicit liquor

has gone underground. The study suggests that individuals who brew and consume illicit liquor may only be reformed outside their social environment because the liquor is part and parcel of their social menu.

Further, the data indicates that religion, age, level of education and gender influenced the respondents' views and their stand on the issue of traditional liquor in relation to rural development. According to the data obtained from the field, promotion of farming activities and government aid to farmers in terms of farm inputs and crop marketing was said to be important in boosting rural development. However, attainment of formal education, moderate drinking of alcohol, unity and business undertakings can combine to promote rural development.

Also the study suggests that the ban on traditional liquor portrays the Kenya Government's insensitivity in harnessing of local resources to develop local brewing industries in favour of multinational companies like Kenya Breweries Limited.

However, a better solution about the problem of illicit liquor (*chang'aa* and *busaa*) in Kenya still lies with the individuals involved in its brewing and consumption.

On the basis of the findings, the ban on traditional liquor should be lifted and better methods of controlling its brewing and consumption for the welfare of the rural people be devised.