

## The Prevalence and Effects of Drunkenness among Farmers in Mubi North Local Government Area, Adamawa State

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**Abstract:** Farming in most developing countries has been described to be labour intensive. The unavailability of farm labour is an important constraint to crop and livestock production. Existing farm labour in most farming communities is threatened largely by consumption of alcohol and related drugs. The causes and effects of alcohol consumption among farmers in Mubi North Local Government area of Adamawa State were evaluated. Four villages were selected, questionnaires were administered and data collected were summarized and analyzed. The study indicated that majority (64.44%) of the respondents are above 30 years. 92.13% are male with 67.70% of them married. Majority (54.65%) had only one wife, while to a lesser extent 25.58% of the respondents were polygamous. A good proportion (46.49%) of the respondents is crop farmers. The study indicated that despite industrially produced alcohol; locally made alcohols as burukutu, pito abound in the study area. The level of education of the respondents could not reduce the desire for drinking. The youth (17-30 years old) accounted for 32.95% of drunkards in the study area. As found in this study, the preponderance of youths in this act could be traced to both parental and peer group influences. The consumption of alcohol was found to be gender specific with the male sex. The non availability of farm labour, idleness and lack of capital are some of the identified consequences of drunkenness among farmers and these require amelioration.

**Key words:** Socio-economic characters, alcohol, gender specific, drunkenness, parental and peer group influences

### INTRODUCTION

Crop production systems in the rural communities are predominantly labour intensive, with family labour (men, women and children) accounting for a larger proportion (Ani, 2001). The distribution of farm labour among male and female sexes indicated that men are actively involved in laborious work as land preparation, cutting down and planting. Killer (1982) had indicated that women play significant role in weeding, planting, harvesting and processing of food crops with little or no intervention from men. The availability of labour for farm activities has been on a decline due to rural-urban drift among other reasons. The remainder of the human labour in the farming communities is threatened by the consumption of alcohol and associated drugs, worse still is its abuse (Killer, 1982). Alcohol is any liquid drink that can make one drunk, when taken in excess. Killer (1982) reported that alcoholism is a psychological dependence or psychological addiction to ethanol manifested by the inability of the alcoholic to control either the start of drinking or its termination once started. Shaddock (1995) indicated that an alcoholic is unable to control himself, losses appetite, experience

insomnia and vitamin B deficiency. All of these could translate to a loss of farm labour and eventually poor agricultural productivity.

In most communities, alcohol is used for social occasions such as rituals, weddings, magical rites, meeting etc. It also serves as an essential function in recreations and entertainments. Drinking pattern could be learned from those whom the drunkard is in close contact or immediate environment, also in interaction with age mates and peer group. Shaddock (1995) believed that children can inherit drinking habit from their parents. It is assumed that taking alcohol, stimulant or drug (alcohol, hemp and cocaine) could enhance work rate on the farm, but this has not been proven right.

More often, families affected with alcoholism have to survive with less farm labour, low productivity and income from sales of farm produce (Priest, 1988). The effects of alcoholism on rural farmers includes: Economic, social, psychological and medical effects. Higher doses of alcohol results in unconsciousness and withdrawal effect (hangover) (Famuyiwa, 2003). It has been estimated that about 75% of young people, boys and girls have started drinking alcohol at the ages of 16% Trethorn (1979).

**Problem statement:** In the time past, some farmers (young or old) consume alcohol for pleasure, over time this habit has turned into situation wherein alcohols are consumed to enhance tedious farm activities as land preparation, weeding etc. The consumption of alcohol may be associated with the desirability for other drugs (Indian hemp and cocaine). Drunkenness may be associated with age, sex, social status, educational level more importantly peer group influences. Mubi North Local Government area has been known for high agricultural activities and population density. The dearth of farm labour has been an important problem in the study area; this has resulted into a high cost of farm labour during cropping season. There is the tendency that the available labour may indulge in the consumption of alcohol to enhance performance and notably income. Information on the effects of alcohol consumption on rural farmers in this area is highly limiting, despite its agricultural importance as contributing to food security of the state. An accomplishment of this study will assist in understanding the causes and effects of alcohol consumption.

**Objectives:** The broad objective of this study is to determine the prevalence and effects of drunkenness among farmers in Mubi North Local Government Area. The specific objectives are:

- To study the socio-economic characteristics of rural farmers in the study area.
- To determine the causes and effects of drunkenness among farmers in the study area, suggest strategies for amelioration.

**Hypothesis:** Based on the objectives of this study, this null hypothesis was tested.

- There is no relationship in the distribution of the socio-economic characters of the farmers.
- There is no similarity in the frequency distribution of the age of the alcoholic, signs of drunkenness, feeling of an alcoholic person, consumption of other drugs associated with alcohol and consequences of drunkenness.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Mubi North local government area is bounded in the North by Michika local government area, Mubi South local Government Area to the South and to the West by Hong local government and to the East by Republic of Cameroon. Agriculture is the major occupation of the people of this area. Farmers cultivate annual crops in

mixed cropping system due to shortage of fertile land. Groundnut and cowpea are the major cash crop, while the food crop grown includes sorghum, maize, millet and rice. The major livestock reared in this location are ruminant and small ruminant animals, crop production is rain fed. For the purpose of this study four districts heads (Vimtim, Muchala, Muva, Muvur) were purposively selected, because of their high agricultural activities and population density.

### **Variable specification**

**Age:** Age of the respondents was measured by asking them to provide their actual age in years. Ages less than 40 years were considered young while those above 40 years were considered as old.

**Level of education:** The respondents were asked to indicate the highest level of education they have attained from a list of options provided.

**Marital status:** Marital status of the respondents was determined by asking them to indicate the most appropriate option that reflected whether they are married, single, divorced or widowed.

**Types of cropping system:** The various types of crops planted and animal reared by the respondents were determined by requesting them to list all the crops planted and Livestocks on their farms

**Data analysis:** One hundred questionnaires were administered and 88 were received. Data collected summarized and submitted for descriptive and inferential statistics (Chi-Square). Inferential statistics was employed to test the significance of the relationship in selected classes.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents from Mubi North Local Government Area (Table 1) indicated that 35.56% of the respondents had their ages ranging between 17 and 30 years. The age brackets 17 years and 50 years accounted for 90% of the respondents. Thus representing the productive age group. Majority of the respondents (92.13%) were male, while 7.87% were females. The study area is characterized by male headed household. The few female respondents available for interview may be attributed to the busy nature of the women farmers, who are engaged in domestic activities. The study indicated that 67.70% of the respondents were married, while 31.11% were single. In addition 54.65% of the respondents have one wife,

**Table 1: Socio- economic characteristics of the respondents**

Age of respondents	Frequency	(%)	Chi square	F. value
17-30	32	35.56	13.55	0.08
31-40	28	31.11		
41-50	21	23.33		
51>	9	10.00		
Total	88			
Sex			63.20	0.001
Male	81	92.13		
Female	7	7.87		
Total	88			
Marital status			60.20	0.0001
Single	27	31.11		
Married	60	67.70		
Widowed	1	1.11		
Total	88			
Number of wives			18.02	0.0001
1 wife	47	54.65		
2 wives	22	25.58		
More than 3 wives	17	19.77		
Total	86			
Educational qualification			9.87	0.02
No Schooling	20	22.99		
Primary	11	12.64		
Secondary	31	35.63		
Diploma/University education	25	28.84		
Total	87			
Type of cropping system			6.92	0.03
Crop farming	29	46.49		
Animal farming	20	23.81		
Mixed farming	25	29.76		
Consumption of alcohol by sex			63.20	0.0001
Male	81	92.13		
Female	7	7.87		
Total	88			

Source: Field survey, 2006

**Table 2: Production of local alcohol by farmers**

Distribution	Frequency	(%)
Yes	80	90.91
No	8	9.09

Source: Field survey, 2006

**Table 3: Distribution of age of the alcoholic**

Distribution	Frequency	(%)	Chi square	F value
17-30	29	32.95	7.18	0.07
31-40	12	13.64		
41-50	22	25.00		
51>	25	28.41		

Source: Field survey, 2006

**Table 4: Signs of drunkenness**

Distribution	Frequency	(%)	Chi square	F value
Difficulty in walking	39	41.51	50.84	0.0001
Body odour	31	34.24		
Memory lapse	10	11.24		
Blood shot eyes	6	6.72		
Neatness	5	5.62		
Total	88			

Source: Field survey, 2006

while 25.58% were polygamous. Majority of the respondents (64.47%) had formal education ranging from secondary to tertiary education, while 22.99% had no formal education. Therefore the study area can be taken

as fairly educated area compared to other rural areas in the country. The type of cropping system in the study area was crop farming (46.99%) as compared with animal farming (23.81%) and mixed farming (29.76%). In the study area, it was evident that 90.91% of the respondents indicated that farmers in the communities' produce local alcohol, while 9.09%, indicated otherwise (Table 2).

Since majority (67.70%) of the farmers are married, with 45.35% having more than 2 children. There is the possibility that the children could learn from their parents drinking habits. Our conclusion agrees with Trethon (1979) who reported that an estimate of 73% of young people, boys and girls have started drinking at the age of 16 years and above. In the same vein Shaddock (1995) had noted that drinking pattern could be learned from those to whom the drunkards are in contact with or immediate environment. However, the age distribution of the respondents that are alcoholic (Table 3) showed that the age bracket 17-30 accounted for 32.95% of the respondents that have taken to alcohol at the early stage in life, while age groups 31-40, 41-50 and 51 years and above recorded a total of 66.05% of the respondents that are alcoholic. This showed that a large proportion of the productive sector in farming are addicted to alcohol and the possibility of losing active farm labour is inevitable, if this trend continues.

Several signs of drunkenness were noticed in the survey area, difficulty in walking was most prominent among the respondents, thus accounting for 41.59% and body odour (34.83%) (Table 4).

In addition, the feeling of an alcoholic, when deprived for a day from this survey showed that majority (73.03%) of the respondents felt very uncomfortable, while 17.98% were deeply worried, 5.62% were angry and 3.37% felt normal (Table 5).

Also, 88.89% of the respondents indicated the presence of drugs or stimulants in the community. Our study showed that Indian hemp was most consumed (39.08%), closely followed by Cocaine (32.18%) and to a lesser extent is tobacco (27.59%) and Kola nut (1.15%) (Table 6).

The survey indicated that the immediate consequences of alcohol addiction among farmers in the study area (Table 7) includes the non availability of farm labour, which accounted for 35.56% as compared with idleness (26.677%) and lack of capital for farm activities (10.00%). This trend is however of a great concern, as it could lead to a non availability of farm labour and an eventual reduction in the production potentials of the farmers. This development is of great concern to policy makers and agricultural experts. On the long run the

**Table 5: Feeling of an alcoholic person**

Distribution	Frequency	(%)	Chi square	F value
Very uncomfortable	63	73.03	113.92	0.001
Worried	16	17.98		
Normal	3	3.37		
Angry	5	5.62		

Source: Field survey, 2006

**Table 6: The consumption of other drugs associated with alcohol**

Distribution	Frequency	(%)	Chi square	F value
Indian hemp	34	39.08	28.72	0.001
Cocaine	28	32.18		
Tobacco	24	27.57		
Kola nut	1	1.15		
Total	87			

Source: Field survey, 2006

**Table 7: Consequences of drunkenness on crop and livestock farming**

Distribution	Frequency	(%)	Chi Square	F value
Labour availability	32	35.56	12.48	0.005
Idleness	24	26.67		
Non availability of capital for farm activities	9	10.00		
Others	25	27.78		

Field survey, 2006

menace of alcohol addiction and drugs associated with the consumption of alcohol, may erode the family labour and the availability of youths for farm activities. Thus resulting in drastic reduction in crop yield and threatening the fragile food security in Adamawa state.

## CONCLUSION

The study revealed the negative effects of drunkenness on the farmers in selected villages of Mubi North local Government Area. Therefore the need for an increased awareness on the consequences of excessive alcohol consumption by the Extension Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture.

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