

**IMPACT OF MIRAA ON PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN  
GACHOKA DIVISION, EMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

Miraa is a drought tolerant evergreen tree or shrub whose twigs and leaves are chewed as a stimulant. Many women, children and young men chew it regularly. Miraa production and use is associated with health problems such as insomnia and lack of appetite, violence and other social problems such as young children harvesting it when they are supposed to be in school. The purpose of the study was to establish the impact of miraa on pupils in public primary schools in Gachoka Division, Embu County. The target population was 548 and the sample size comprised 164 participants. Simple random sampling was used to select the schools that were studied. Data analysis was aided by use of a computer package known as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 6). The findings based on the objectives are presented in tabular and graphical forms using figures, frequencies and percentages. The study established that miraa growing encourages pupils to drop out of school; it encourages them to get married early and also results to low academic achievement. Miraa consumption leads to addiction and consequently bad behaviors develop in the pupils making learning difficult. Increasing income from miraa is used in the development of education to a greater extent but it also influences education negatively. The study revealed that most miraa farmers have low levels of education and therefore, do not see the need to educate their children. The research made the following recommendations: The County Administration under the County Commissioner to develop a policy that will ensure that all parents take their children to school and also address the issue of alcoholism and drug abuse. The administrators including the area chiefs and assistant chiefs should play an active role in compelling the miraa farmers not to employ school children on the miraa farms. Legal action should be taken on those who fail to comply. The DEO, the sponsors and other stakeholders should initiate educational and awareness-raising campaign to sensitize the miraa farmers on the importance of educating children. The Sub-County Children's Office should come up with ways of dealing with early marriages by miraa traders in order to enable the pupils to complete education. Guidance and counseling program to be enforced and monitored so as to help the pupils who are already addicted to miraa and also assist them to stop chewing it especially at that early age.