

**PREVENTION OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONGST THE YOUTH IN VHEMBE
DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the challenges faced by the Department of Social Development with regard to the prevention of substance abuse amongst youth in Vhembe district. South Africa is faced with a growing and multifaceted substance abuse problem within both rural and urban areas. Many people are becoming involved in drug taking and trafficking, especially young people. The age of the first experimentation with substances has dropped to between nine and ten years.

The research process was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Purposive sampling method which is a non-probability sampling was used to select participants of the study. A survey questionnaire and interview schedule was used to collect data. Two data analysis methods were used, namely, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and thematic analysis. The following ethical aspects were considered and applied when conducting the study and they are: Informed consent, Voluntary participation, Anonymity, Confidentiality and Discontinuance of participants.

The major findings of the study are:

- There is poor capacitation of staff on matters of substance abuse,
- The National sphere of Government does not recognize implementer's inputs when developing policies on substance abuse,
- There are insufficient resources for substance abuse prevention programme,
- There is a need for good coordination amongst role players in substance abuse prevention,
- Peer pressure is the leading cause of substance abuse by the youth, followed by poverty and unemployment, social problems, media advertisement, experimentation, exploration, boredom, low self-esteem, poor school performance, poor relationship with parents and being pessimistic about the future,
- Dagga, Alcohol and Cigarette are the commonly abused substances by the youth, followed by, Glue, prescribed medication and Nyaope and
- That there is a need for recreational facilities in all residential areas.