

## **Socio- Economic Impact of Khat Addiction on the Family Wellbeing in Dire Dawa City in Particular in Sub-City of Sabean**

**Shambel Tufa Telila**

[shambeltufa@yahoo.com](mailto:shambeltufa@yahoo.com)

Dire Dawa, Ethiopia

### **Abstract**

*The main purpose of this research is to investigate the socio-economic impact of khat addiction on well-being family among peoples of Dire Dawa particularly in the Sub- city of Sabean. Ethiopians especially the people of Dire Dawa has experienced chewing Khat for a long period of time. They had been socially and culturally on emphasizing of chewing Khat and an unaware about the impact of khat on family wellbeing less recognized the prevalence of consumption, and existing dominant discourse on family.*

*Therefore, chewers have caused much family harm that include the socio- economic, problems, and family broken down that strike children, which would be investigated by this research. The number of khat chewers increases from day to day particularly more men are highly addicted than females for thinking if they were relaxed, doing better, and to enjoy with friend. Smoking and drinking alcohol was highly associated with khat chewing. Majority of khat chewer lead to serious problems related to social and economic dependence than non- chewer, who were found to be better than that of khat users on their overall activities.*

*To bring this paper into being the researcher had looked into gap, which had been identified as socio-economic impact of khat on well-being of family in Dire Dawa city and sub- city of Sabean. The data was collected by structured interviews and field observation that have been gathered and analyzed by using qualitative method of data analysis.*

### **Key Words**

Impact of Khat Addiction, Socio-Economic Problems

## 1. Background

*Khat* is evergreen shrub that grows on high altitudes in the region extending from Eastern Africa to Southern Africa, as well as on the Arabian Peninsula. *Khat* acquires the status of cash crop in Ethiopia the country thought to be the place-of-origin of the use of *khat* (Cox and Rampes, 2003: 456–463). *Khat* (*Catha edulis*) is a slow growing stimulant shrub or tree that grows in rainy area of highlands. *Khat* while others called *Khat*, *Qat*, *Jimma*, *Qaad*, *Jaad miraa*, *Mairungi*, and *Cath* (Luqman and are several names for (*Catha edulis*) depending on its origin and area of distribution; most of people call it. As different studies, shows the most users of *Khat* are younger who have an age between 18-30 years, now day most of young adults are also addicted to it (Kalix, 1994: 69-74). More men habitually chewed *Khat* than women about 75% of men chewed *Khat* regularly. When compared with only 7%-10% of women, this show that men are more addicted to it than women (Alem, 2007 and Kennedy, 1983). The chewing of *khat* usually takes place in both a social and cultural based activity in order to enhance social interaction, playing role in ceremonies such as wedding (Kennedy et al, 1983:783-793).

Ethiopia is the world's largest producer of *Khat*, which is the country's fastest growing export. About a one- third of the production is exported to Djibouti and Somalia, but the bulk of it is marketed and consumed within the country, mostly in the Somali administrative region (Green 1999:33–49). In 1998–1999, *Khat* accounted for 13.4% of Ethiopia's export earnings and was the country's second largest export item next to coffee that year (US Department of Commerce, 2000). In many parts of Ethiopia, *Khat* sometimes called (*Chat*) or (*Catha edulis*) has emerged from an incomprehensible garden tree to an intensively cultivated, openly grown, high value crop (US Embassy in Ethiopia 2001). *Khat* is a plant of unique a stimulant consumed by millions of people, a crop preferred by smallholder farmers, a commodity of high foreign currency source, and an agent of socio-economic and biophysical change (Kalix, 1990). Today in Ethiopia, all societal groups regardless of Religion, Age, Sex, Wealth, peer Group, Education, and Occupation consume *khat*. In *Khat* chewing the leaves are effective ways of extracting Cathinone: the chemical constituent of *khat* that produces an amphetamine-like stimulatory effect (Ayana & Mekonen, 2004 and Gebissa, E. 2008: 784).

In Ethiopia, *Khat* is commonly known as cash crop grown by great majority of smallholder farmers in Eastern and Southern Ethiopia. Despite the daily use and consumption of *Khat* by

millions of people and *khat*, left over by livestock in Ethiopia and other countries chewing it has deep-rooted social and cultural tradition (Kalix and Braenden, 1985).

The fertile Hararghae high lands are the most suitable area for the production of *Khat* in Ethiopia. It reached to customer legally or illegally most of consumption for the Eastern Ethiopia and neighboring countries such as Djibouti, Somalia, Somaliland (Hargesa) are exported from this region (Gebissa, 2004 and Getachew, 1996:4-6).

Dire Dawa is the main area of destination of *Khat* that brought from different areas of Hararghae, after it reached Dire Dawa most of it exported to the neighboring countries the rest is ready for local consumption. "Khat Tera", "Feres Magala", "Ashewa" etc are the main market places of *Khat* in Dire Dawa. The people who were/are addicted with it, flow to the areas where *Khat* was/is sold to consume their daily fresh *Khat*

In communities where *Khat* is used regularly, it has negative impacts on socio-economic conditions and health. It leads to loss of work hour, decreased economic, malnutrition and diversion of money in order to buy further *khat*, this is indirectly linked to absenteeism from work and unemployment which may in turn result in fall in over all national economic productivities in Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda and Kenya (Carrier, 2007 and Hailu, 2005).

## Research Design

The research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the proposal for the collection, and analysis of data. The design includes a sketch of what the researcher will do from writing the suggestion and its operational implications to the final analysis of data (Kothari, 2004:32).

This research designed which stands for advance planning of the methods to be adopted for collecting the relevant data and the techniques to be use in their analysis, keeping in view with the objective of the research and the availability of time and money. Therefore, the researcher used the qualitative descriptive method to analyze it. So, as to make the more reliable, secure the validity and reliability of the study and increase the depth and of my study qualitative data types were used and qualitative type data analysis has been employed. Thus, the researcher have

designed to undertake social and economical problems that face family because of the addiction in Dire Dawa city the sub-city of Sabean

## Methodology

Research methodology is a way of systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In, it we study the choice of steps that are generally approved by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind the problems. It is necessary for the researcher to know not only the research methods/techniques but also the methodology. Research is the process of correcting the existing problems in order to propose the possible practical solutions. (Kothari, 2004:8).

Thus, in this paper the researcher tried to show procedures that should be followed to tackle the proposed objectives in dealing with social and economic shocks of *khat* addicted individuals for the family wellbeing.

## Types of Data

The researcher used qualitative type of data. The qualitative type of data is obtained from interview and from field observation. Interview question was generated by the researcher and interviewed some selected individuals who are living in Dire Dawa City and Sub-city of Sabean. Thus, primary data's were collected through interview method and field observations were directly collected from the field. Secondary data types were also used from different written sources.

## Sources of Data

The researcher used two sources of data, the primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained from field through interview and field observation. Secondary data sources were obtained from published and unpublished sources. These secondary source of data were used to relate the research problem of the past with situations on real ground which was obtained from primary sources of data, obtained from the field.

## Instruments of Data Collection

The researcher employed different instruments to collect the necessary data, which include the following: Structured Interview as method of primary data collection was used that involves presentation of oral-verbal reply and response in terms of oral-verbal reaction. The structured

interviews are characterized by a flexibility of approach to questioning. In this structured interview method, the researcher used deep knowledge and greater skill on the part of the interviewer. Therefore, the researcher also used the field observation, which follows a system of pre-determined looking into the host society, to observe many things in natural settings.

## **Method Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed using descriptive qualitative interpretations that were based on the qualitative data collected through field observations and interviews and describe the findings of the study. Once the qualitative data was collected via personal observation and interviews, the researcher used secondary data to strengthen the ideas obtained from the qualitative analysis.

## **Ethical Consideration**

Anthropologists are concerned with ethical issues associated with societal matters in the fieldwork. Fieldwork researchers seek permission, cooperation, and acknowledgments from governmental officials, scholars and most importantly from the society being studied.

In this research, as a part of Anthropological fieldwork, the researcher had a responsibility to consider the ethical issue of the people under the study. Therefore, before proceeding to the data collection through different techniques the researcher had informed to the host society about the nature and the purpose of the research to gain consent and access to the field site.

## **Finding**

### **Social Effect of *Khat* Addiction**

According to my informants, *Khat* chewing is important for the social relations and it was chewed in groups as essential centers for the exchange of information. Chewing *khat* is merely social event in Dire Dawa city. *Khat* chewing usually takes place in groups in a social sitting, and only few of the chewers regularly chew alone. *Khat* chewing was started after lunch, after the main meal of the day which they call it (*Barcha*), even though some chewers start it in morning which was called (*Ijabana*). *khat* chewing mostly happens in private homes, with all attendants bringing their own *khat*. *Khat* chewers were provided the opportunities to discuss a whole range of local and national affairs. The conversations of *khat* chewers also reflect the

interests and current worry of the present situations, of their community and of the segments of society, they had belonged.

For instance in my research place in Dire Dawa city sub-city of Sabean these *khat* chewer form groups of more of younger generation and majority of population involved in it. During my discussions with these *Khat* chewing groups, many important administrative, business and family decisions were addressed accordingly. After about an hour's of chewing, tension, emotionality, instability and irritability begin to appear, which later leading to feelings of low temper and laziness. Chewers are likely to leave the sitting feeling tired.

The problem was occurred after these conditions were happened; indeed, *Khat* chewers feel social isolation, feel loneliness after being stimulated. This was to mean that they caused trouble to their family after being stimulated, even though their families understand what they feel. For those who had already married they caused trouble at home, children's were shocked, if it continued family broke down was happened.

### **Economic Effect of *Khat* Addiction**

*Khat* chewing initially created joyfulness, confidence and enjoyment as general sense of individual comfort for those who were addicted to it. Chewers also lose interest in their family, which could due to his inability to provide the financial support and also the impotence production they produced to constant *Khat* consumption. The family too may suffer from underfeeding and becomes accountable to attract various infective or deficiency diseases.

The related use of alcohol to counteract the stimulant and troubled effects of *khat* raises the risk of difficulty in economic disturbance which made the family irritated about the financial issue. *Khat* chewing is male dominated behavior of action in a society of Dire Dawa in general the sub-city of Sabean in particular.

According to one of my informant, the use of *khat* causes loss of appetite leading to malnutrition, the undernourished system becomes an easy victim to sensitive and chronic diseases. *khat* consumption affects the family budget and limits financial resources for other basic needs and services, such as food, medication, clothing and schooling This created social evils among the family for family breakdown, for children's to be orphans', and some others become chain-

smokers of cigarettes which caused economic decline. *Khat* chewers tend to sell their properties when they were out of money to afford the daily consumption and unable to managed and overcome the chronic problems they face at home, which finally lead to family breakdown.

### **Effects of *Khat* addiction on the Family Wellbeing**

The dominance of male *khat* chewers in Dire Dawa is revealed that all family occasions, such as weddings, birth, death, and circumcision ceremonies, and the return from the burial of places. It was the core action to bring *khat* at all family occasions regardless of race, religion, sex and age in Dire Dawa city of Ethiopia. In occasions such as baby male circumcision, it is a gathering forced upon the hosts by family relatives, friends and neighbors *khat* was brought for blessing.

Family needs change with developmental conditions of nation's social, economic and educational status of the community. Family members start to look for some reasonable ways to increase their income either by high education and finding qualified jobs, trading, and growing high productive and valuable works. *Khat* therefore, must be held directly responsible for causing damage to family ties and slowly leading to a change in the structure of families in Dire Dawa

Furthermore, *khat* has been taken as a causal factor for family instability, divorce, collapse and encouragement of criminal behavior. The chewer often shows bad temper and spends much of the time away from home thus threatening the unity of the family.

Thus, *khat* consumption in Dire Dawa is legally and socially unsanctioned public event which had affected families of addicted chewers, and the families of chewers took it easy as if it were commonly happened occasions.

## Conclusions

In this study I had tried to show that addicted *khat* chewers had created social and economic evils on family wellbeing, which was harm effect on family. This paper was also significantly deals with young adult *khat* chewers, who have a problem on family breakdown.

The findings suggest that *khat* have a continuous effect as social evil and economic troubles among regular *khat* chewers especially for those who had a family in City of Dire Dawa in general and Sabeen sub- city in particular. The attachment between regular *Khat* chewing and the family had caused pressure on family wellbeing with the intended occurring in leveling significant relevance for family health.

Thus, addicted *Khat* chewers had been observed that they tend to break their families, leave their children's with being orphans' and finally they felt lonely and some of them were affected with mental disorder.





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