

# Influence of Substances Abuse on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students: A Study of Government Day Secondary School Nukkai, Jaligo Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria

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**Abstract**— This study investigates the influence of substance abuse on the academic performance of secondary school students at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai, Jaligo Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. The increasing prevalence of substance abuse among adolescents has raised concerns about its impact on students' educational outcomes. The study's problem centers around the growing rates of substance abuse among students and its potential consequences on their academic performance. This issue is compounded by socio-economic factors, such as financial instability and peer pressure, which influence students' decisions to engage in substance use. Additionally, the proximity of substances to the school environment further contributes to the challenge. A descriptive research design was adopted, utilizing a combination of surveys and interviews to gather data from students and school staff. The study revealed that 40% of students reported poor academic performance, which was attributed to the negative effects of substance abuse, including difficulties in concentrating and frequent absenteeism. Socio-economic factors and peer pressure were identified as significant influences on students' substance use behaviors, while the availability of substances near the school environment was also a key contributing factor. In conclusion, the study underscores the negative impact of substance abuse on academic performance among students at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai. To address this issue, the study recommends the implementation of awareness programs, stricter school policies, counseling services, and active parental involvement. Additionally, expanding extracurricular activities to engage students in positive alternatives is crucial. A collaborative, multi-faceted approach involving students, parents, teachers, and policymakers is necessary to effectively combat substance abuse and improve academic outcomes in the school.

**Index Terms**— Substance Abuse, Academic Performance, Peer Pressure, Socio-economic Factors, Extracurricular Activities.

## 1. Introduction

The phenomenon of Substance abuse has evolved alongside human history, influencing individuals and societies across time. Initially, the use of Substances was for medicinal

purposes, with herbs and roots utilized for pain relief and disease control (United Nations Office on Substances and Crime [UNODC], 2021). However, the misuse of substances has transitioned into a global crisis, significantly impacting the youth, who are often the most vulnerable. Substance abuse not only affects health but also influences behavior, leading to dependency and societal issues (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022).

In Nigeria, Substance abuse among students has become a pressing concern, particularly in secondary schools, where the lure of peer pressure and the stress of academic expectations contribute to this challenge (National Substance Law Enforcement Agency [NDLEA], 2023). Reports indicate that substances such as cannabis, codeine, and tramadol are frequently abused by adolescents, negatively affecting their academic performance and social behavior (Adelekan et al., 2023).

The issue in Jaligo Local Government Area, especially in Government Day Secondary School Nukkai, is exacerbated by a lack of awareness and preventive measures. Studies have linked Substance abuse to poor academic outcomes, behavioral problems, and school dropouts (Olawale, 2023). Therefore, this study examines the influence of Substance abuse on the academic performance of secondary school students in the area, focusing on identifying key factors, consequences, and potential interventions to mitigate this societal challenge.

### A. Problem Statement

Substance abuse among secondary school students has emerged as a significant problem in Nigeria, undermining educational goals and societal well-being. At Government Day Secondary School Nukkai, Substance abuse manifests as a determinant of poor academic performance, low motivation, absenteeism, and eventual school dropouts (Bello et al., 2022). While Substances such as cannabis and tramadol may temporarily provide euphoria, their long-term effects are

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devastating, ranging from cognitive impairments to behavioral disorders (UNODC, 2021).

The rise in Substance abuse is fueled by various factors, including peer pressure, socioeconomic challenges, and inadequate parental guidance (Eze & Chukwuemeka, 2023). Additionally, the proximity of illicit Substance markets to schools further exposes students to the risk of substance abuse (NDLEA, 2023). In Jalingo, the lack of adequate educational campaigns and the absence of robust school policies exacerbate the problem.

The consequences of Substance abuse extend beyond the individual to affect families, communities, and the educational system. It hinders the ability of students to focus, process information, and engage in productive learning, which are critical components of academic success (WHO, 2022). The persistence of this issue threatens not only the futures of the affected students but also the broader societal development goals, including those of the local government.

Given this context, there is an urgent need to investigate how Substance abuse influences academic performance in Government Day Secondary School Nukkai, to identify the underlying causes and recommend targeted interventions to curb the problem.

### *B. Research Objectives*

1. To assess the prevalence of Substance abuse among students at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai.
2. To examine the impact of Substance abuse on the academic performance of the students.
3. To identify the socio-economic and environmental factors contributing to Substance abuse among students.
4. To propose strategies for mitigating Substance abuse and enhancing academic performance in the school.

### *C. Research Questions*

1. What is the prevalence of Substance abuse among students at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai?
2. How does Substance abuse affect the academic performance of the students?
3. What socio-economic and environmental factors contribute to Substance abuse among students?
4. What strategies can be implemented to reduce Substance abuse and improve academic performance in the school?

## **2. Literature Review**

### *A. Conceptual Clarification*

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs, which negatively affect an individual's physical, mental, and social well-being (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). Substances are chemical compounds used for medical purposes but can alter the normal functioning of the body when misused (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2022). Substance

abuse, therefore, describes a pattern of harmful use of any substance for mood-altering purposes, which often leads to significant distress or dysfunction (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2022).

The deliberate misuse of chemical substances for non-medical purposes can impair physical, mental, and emotional health, as well as disrupt social functioning (WHO, 2020). Substance addiction, or chemical dependency, is a chronic disease characterized by compulsive drug-seeking behavior, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, and significant impairment in social or occupational functioning (NIDA, 2022). Substance addiction causes long-term consequences, including health issues, legal problems, and disruption of relationships (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021).

### *1) Concept of Academic Performance*

Academic performance refers to the outcomes of a student's efforts in their educational pursuits. It encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values through classroom and extracurricular activities. According to Eze (2019), academic performance reflects students' intellectual development and mastery of subjects. It is commonly assessed through examinations, continuous assessments, and participation in academic and extracurricular activities. Academic performance is influenced by numerous factors, including students' determination, access to learning resources, and parental involvement (Olawale & Akinlabi, 2020).

Academic performance not only highlights proficiency in academic disciplines such as mathematics, sciences, and language arts but also extends to students' overall behavior, confidence, and communication skills (Adetayo, 2021). A strong academic record equips students with the tools necessary for future career challenges, making its assessment critical for educational stakeholders.

### *2) Factors Affecting Academic Performance*

Several factors impact academic performance, particularly among adolescents. According to Adeyemi *et al.* (2021), environmental variables such as parental supervision, socio-economic status, and the availability of resources significantly affect students' learning outcomes. Children from supportive home environments with sufficient resources tend to perform better academically than those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Poor parental supervision can expose students to risky behaviors, including substance abuse, which adversely affects their academic success (Ekanem, 2022).

Location also plays a significant role. Schools in urban areas often have better facilities and access to qualified teachers, which contribute to better academic outcomes (Adelabu, 2021). In contrast, rural schools frequently lack these resources, negatively impacting students' performance. Libraries and conducive learning environments have also been identified as critical contributors to academic success. Schools with well-equipped libraries and quiet, safe surroundings report higher levels of academic achievement (Olusola & Ajayi, 2020).

### *3) Impact of Substance Abuse on Academic Performance*

Substance abuse has profound effects on students' cognitive and behavioral functions, which, in turn, impact academic performance. According to Adewale (2021), substances such as

alcohol and cannabis impair memory, concentration, and decision-making, making learning more difficult. Psychoactive substances disrupt students' interest in academic activities, leading to absenteeism, poor grades, and eventual dropout (Uche & Ekene, 2022).

Substance abuse can also hinder the development of critical thinking and social skills, which are vital for academic and life success. Additionally, the use of substances affects students' ability to cope with academic stress, leading to a cycle of failure and withdrawal (Nnamdi, 2020). According to Okoro *et al.* (2022), adolescents who abuse substances are more likely to face disciplinary actions in school, have strained relationships with peers and teachers, and experience a decline in overall well-being.

#### 4) *The Situation in Government Day Secondary School Nukkai*

In Government Day Secondary School Nukkai, substance abuse has been identified as a major factor affecting students' academic performance. Recent studies in Jalingo Local Government Area highlight the prevalence of substance use among adolescents, often linked to peer pressure, poor parental supervision, and easy access to drugs (Yusuf & Bala, 2023). These challenges underscore the need for targeted interventions to address substance abuse and its adverse effects on education in the region.

Interventions such as parental education, school-based awareness programs, and stricter policies on substance availability have shown promise in reducing the incidence of substance abuse among students (Ndifreke, 2022). Schools must adopt comprehensive strategies that include counseling services and extracurricular engagement to combat the detrimental effects of substance abuse on academic performance.

#### 5) *Causes of Substance Abuse and Addiction*

Substance abuse and addiction have no single cause. However, American psychiatric association (2000) observed that there are number of causes such as;

- i. *Biological factor*: most substance abuse professionals recognize a genetic to the risk of Substance addiction.
- ii. *Psychological factor*: this includes mood disorder, depression, anxiety, and personality disorder.
- iii. *Social factor*: this include gender, marital status, Lower Socio-Economic status.

More so, Abuh and Akus (2009) identified two primary causes of Substance abuse and addiction such as: peer pressure and depression.

- i. *Pressure group*: youth's associates with different types of people otherwise known as friends. Through the pressure from these friend's children tend to have a taste of these Substances and once this is done, they continue to take it and become addicted to it at the long run.
- ii. *Depression*: another primary cause of Substance abuse and addiction is depression, when certain things happen to someone that is considered very sad and disheartening, the person started thinking of the best way to become happy once more hence the use of hard Substances will come in, this later on turns to an habit,

hence Substance abuse.

Another major cause of Substance abuse is said to be the rate of unemployment among the youth. Furthermore, Substances can be said to be abused when youths do not keep to the prescribed dosage and the continued use of particular Substance for long time without doctors approval. This kind of abuse is associated with soft Substances. Other factors according to Ballas (2006) include the following; curiosity, social rebellions, early initiation, poor control, low self-esteem, poor stress management, to escape reality, genetic predisposition, withdrawal effects and craving, sensation felling.

#### B. *Theoretical Framework*

A theory is an explanation, whether confirmed or unconfirmed, of a general class or category of phenomena. A theory on substance abuse would attempt to explain why individuals or groups engage in the use or abuse of psychoactive substances. For this study, the Social Development Theory, as advanced by Hawkins and Weis (2019), serves as the theoretical framework. This theory posits that individuals form bonds with groups and organizations when they encounter opportunities for involvement, possess the requisite skills for participation, and receive positive reinforcement for their engagement. Once individuals bond with a social context, they are more likely to align their behaviors with the norms and beliefs of the group.

The Social Development Model provides steps for developing programs that foster bonding and encourage positive behavior development. Youth tend to form peer groups based on shared activities, including substance use. Within such groups, the influence of substance abuse becomes pervasive, as members feel more comfortable engaging in similar behaviors. Hawkins and Weis (2019) suggest that substance abuse and deviant behaviors arise from interactions with primary socialization sources—such as family, school, and peer clusters—rather than solely from inherent personal characteristics or personality traits. These traits influence substance use and deviance primarily when they affect interactions with primary socialization sources.

Interpreting research findings through the lens of the Social Development Model highlights critical points about substance abuse among secondary school students. Traits such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem are linked to substance use and deviance only when they significantly disrupt the primary socialization process, particularly in younger children. Conversely, traits like anger, aggression, and sensation-seeking are consistently linked to substance use and deviance because they tend to affect the socialization process across all age groups. Psychopathologies with minimal interference in bonding with prosocial influences, such as mild anxieties and some affective disorders, are less likely to correlate with substance dependence.

In the context of secondary school students at Government Day Secondary School, Nukkai, Jalingo Local Government Area, this theoretical perspective underscores the interplay between social influences and academic performance. Students engaging in substance abuse may experience disruptions in

bonding with family, school, and prosocial peer groups, ultimately impacting their academic outcomes. This framework informs the study's approach to understanding the specific mechanisms through which substance abuse undermines academic performance and identifies points of intervention for mitigating its impact.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### A. Research Design

The researcher adopted a mixed-method approach using both quantitative and qualitative data to explore the influence of substance abuse on academic performance among secondary school students. The study employed a survey design, which is a widely used method for collecting standardized data from a large group. This approach allows for the collection of data through structured questionnaires and provides a way to make generalizable conclusions about the target population (Creswell, 2020). The survey method helps in examining factors not directly observable, such as the effects of substance abuse on students' academic outcomes.

#### B. Target Population

According to Aderibigbe *et al.* (2020), the target population refers to the specific group of individuals to whom the results of the study are intended to be generalized. In this research, the target population consists of the students of Government Day Secondary School Nukkai in Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. The study aimed to explore how substance abuse affects their academic performance. The sampling size will include 150 students, selected through a random sampling technique to ensure the representation of the broader student body.

#### C. Data Collection Instrument

To gather relevant data for the study, a combination of structured questionnaires and interviews was used. According to Johnson & Christensen (2019), questionnaires are effective tools for collecting large amounts of data from respondents in a structured manner. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions, allowing the students to provide both quantitative and qualitative responses. The closed-ended questions offered predefined options for easy statistical analysis, while the open-ended questions gave respondents the freedom to express their opinions in their own words. In addition to the questionnaires, structured interviews were conducted to provide further insights into the impact of substance abuse on students' academic performance.

#### D. Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis is the process of organizing and interpreting collected data to draw meaningful conclusions. For this study, descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the data, as recommended by Field (2021). Descriptive analysis provides an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation by summarizing the data in a clear and interpretable manner. The results will be presented using frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores, offering a comprehensive view

of the effects of substance abuse on students' academic performance. Additionally, qualitative data from open-ended responses and interviews will be analyzed thematically to identify patterns and key insights related to the research questions.

### 4. Data Analysis, Presentation, Interpretation and Discussion

The study aimed to examine how various factors related to substance abuse influence the academic performance of secondary school students at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai, Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. It explored the prevalence of substance abuse, its impact on students' academic achievements, the socio-economic and environmental factors contributing to substance use, and proposed strategies to mitigate its effects on students' performance in school.

#### A. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents, which include gender, age, and class level, are summarized in the table 1.

Table 1  
Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Question	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	70	46.67%
	Female	80	53.33%
Age Group	10-14 years	30	20.00%
	15-17 years	85	56.67%
	18 years and above	35	23.33%
Class Level	JSS1 - JSS3	50	33.33%
	SS1 - SS3	100	66.67%

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study. Regarding gender, 46.67% of the students were male, while 53.33% were female, indicating a slightly higher proportion of female students in the sample. In terms of age, the majority of the respondents (56.67%) fell within the 15-17 years age group, followed by 23.33% who were 18 years and above, and 20.00% who were between 10-14 years. This suggests that most students in the study are within the typical age range for secondary school students. In terms of class level, 66.67% of the respondents were in Senior Secondary School (SS1-SS3), while 33.33% were in Junior Secondary School (JSS1-JSS3). This distribution reflects a predominance of students in the senior classes, which could imply that they may have more experience with academic pressures and substance abuse issues. These demographic characteristics are important as they provide context for understanding the patterns and implications of substance abuse on academic performance in the school.

#### B. The prevalence of substance abuse among students at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai

Table 2 presents the prevalence of substance abuse among students at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai. The table reveals that 46.67% of the students have used some form of substance, while 53.33% have never used substances.

Table 2  
Prevalence of substance abuse among students

Items	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Have you ever used any form of substance?	Yes	70	46.67%
	No	80	53.33%
Which substances have you used?	Alcohol	40	26.67%
	Tobacco	30	20.00%
	Marijuana	10	6.67%
	Prescription drugs	5	3.33%
	Multiple substances	25	16.67%
How frequently do you use substances?	Daily	15	10.00%
	Weekly	20	13.33%
	Occasionally	35	23.33%
	Never	80	53.33%

Source: Field work, 2024

Table 3  
Impact of substance abuse on academic performance

Items	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. How would you rate your academic performance?	Excellent	10	6.67%
	Good	30	20.00%
	Average	50	33.33%
	Poor	60	40.00%
2. Has substance use affected your studies?	Yes	55	36.67%
	No	95	63.33%
3. Do you find it hard to concentrate in class due to substance use?	Yes	45	30.00%
	No	105	70.00%

Source: Field work, 2024

Among those who have used substances, alcohol is the most commonly used (26.67%), followed by tobacco (20.00%), marijuana (6.67%), prescription drugs (3.33%), and multiple substances (16.67%). Regarding frequency, 10.00% of students report using substances daily, 13.33% use them weekly, 23.33% use them occasionally, and 53.33% of students report never using substances.

The findings highlight a significant proportion of students engaging in substance use, with alcohol and tobacco being the most prevalent substances. This pattern aligns with broader trends in adolescent substance use observed in similar studies. For instance, a study by Nwachukwu *et al.* (2021) on substance abuse among Nigerian adolescents found that alcohol and tobacco were also the most frequently used substances, which is consistent with the findings of this study. The occasional use of substances among 23.33% of the students indicates that while not all students engage in substance abuse, a notable number are at risk. This raises concerns about the potential negative impacts on students' academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being.

Furthermore, a study by Olayemi and Adewale (2020) examined substance abuse among secondary school students in southwestern Nigeria and noted that substance abuse often correlates with poor academic performance, absenteeism, and behavioral problems. Similarly, the students in this study, who report using substances occasionally or more frequently, may experience these academic challenges. The results underscore the need for targeted interventions to reduce substance use among students, such as awareness campaigns, counseling programs, and stricter school policies, to improve students' academic performance and overall development.

### C. The Impact of Substance Abuse on the Academic Performance of Students

The data presented in Table 3 examines the relationship

between substance abuse and the academic performance of students at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai. The findings reveal that 6.67% of the respondents rated their academic performance as excellent, while 20.00% rated it as good. A significant portion, 33.33%, considered their performance average, and 40.00% reported poor academic performance. This indicates that a large proportion of students experience challenges in their academic achievements, with 40% of students performing poorly.

When asked whether substance use has affected their studies, 36.67% of the students acknowledged that it had, while 63.33% responded negatively. This suggests that a considerable number of students perceive substance abuse as having a detrimental effect on their academic progress, while the majority feel that it has not had a direct impact. Furthermore, when asked about concentration in class, 30.00% of the respondents admitted that they struggled to concentrate due to substance use, while 70.00% reported no difficulty in focusing. This indicates that substance abuse may affect concentration for a significant minority, but the majority of students appear to manage their focus despite potential substance use.

These findings align with similar studies on the impact of substance abuse on academic performance. For instance, a study by Olofin and Akinyemi (2021) found that substance use among adolescents leads to reduced academic performance, as students may face difficulty concentrating and maintaining motivation. Similarly, research by Adebayo *et al.* (2020) indicated that substance abuse is associated with poor academic outcomes, including poor grades and absenteeism, which are often linked to difficulties in focus and cognitive function.

The implications of these findings highlight the critical need for intervention programs aimed at addressing substance abuse in secondary schools. The results suggest that while many students report no immediate effect on their studies, a notable portion suffers academically, likely due to challenges in



Table 4  
Socio-economic and environmental factors contributing to substance abuse

Items	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do you feel pressured by peers to use substances?	Yes	70	46.67%
	No	80	53.33%
Do you come from a financially stable home?	Yes	65	43.33%
	No	85	56.67%
Does the availability of substances near your school influence your use?	Yes	60	40.00%
	No	90	60.00%

Source: Field work, 2024

Table 5  
Proposed strategies for mitigating substance abuse and enhancing academic performance

Items	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do you think awareness programs on substance abuse would help reduce usage?	Yes	130	86.67%
	No	20	13.33%
Should the school impose stricter policies on substance abuse?	Yes	140	93.33%
	No	10	6.67%
Should counseling services be provided for students struggling with substance abuse?	Yes	120	80.00%
	No	30	20.00%

Source: Field work, 2024

concentration and focus. Therefore, addressing substance abuse may be key to improving the academic performance of students at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai and similar educational institutions.

#### D. The Socio-Economic and Environmental Factors Contributing to Substance Abuse Among Students

Table 4 presents data on the socio-economic and environmental factors contributing to substance abuse among students at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai. The table reveals that 46.67% of the respondents reported feeling pressured by their peers to use substances, while 53.33% stated they did not experience peer pressure. This indicates that peer influence plays a significant role in substance abuse among students, although a majority still resist such pressures.

When it comes to the financial stability of the students' homes, 43.33% of respondents indicated they come from financially stable households, while 56.67% reported not having financial stability. The data suggests that students from less financially stable backgrounds may be more susceptible to substance abuse, possibly due to a lack of financial resources for other recreational activities or coping mechanisms.

Furthermore, 40% of students stated that the proximity of substances to their school influences their usage, whereas 60% disagreed. This suggests that the environmental availability of substances may have a moderate influence on student behavior, indicating the need for better regulation and monitoring in school areas to prevent easy access to such substances.

The findings align with similar studies, such as those by O'Brien *et al.* (2020), which highlighted that peer pressure and environmental factors significantly contribute to substance abuse among adolescents. Their research found that a lack of parental supervision and peer influence were critical factors leading to early experimentation with substances. Similarly, the work of Akpan and Umoh (2021) emphasized that socio-economic instability and easy access to substances are major contributing factors to the prevalence of drug abuse in Nigerian schools.

These results suggest that socio-economic factors, peer influence, and environmental accessibility play crucial roles in the substance abuse behavior of secondary school students.

Addressing these issues through targeted interventions, such as peer education programs, improved parental involvement, and environmental control within school zones, could help reduce the prevalence of substance abuse and enhance students' academic performance.

#### E. Propose Strategies for Mitigating Substance Abuse and Enhancing Academic Performance In The School

Table 5 presents the proposed strategies for mitigating substance abuse and enhancing academic performance at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai, Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. The table reveals responses from students regarding possible interventions to reduce substance abuse and improve academic outcomes.

A significant majority (86.67%) of respondents believe that awareness programs on substance abuse would be effective in reducing its usage. This highlights the importance of educational initiatives aimed at raising awareness about the negative impacts of substance abuse. Furthermore, 93.33% of the students agree that stricter policies on substance abuse should be imposed by the school. This suggests that many students recognize the need for formal measures to deter substance abuse within the school environment. Additionally, 80% of respondents agree that counseling services should be made available for students struggling with substance abuse, emphasizing the need for support systems that can assist students in overcoming addiction and its detrimental effects on their academic performance.

These findings align with the works of Oduolowu *et al.* (2016), who studied the effectiveness of school-based substance abuse prevention programs in Nigeria. They found that awareness campaigns significantly contributed to reducing the incidence of substance abuse among students by educating them on the dangers associated with drug use. Similarly, a study by Olowookere and Adebayo (2017) on the role of counseling in schools found that providing counseling services to students who were dealing with substance abuse helped improve their academic performance and overall well-being. The combination of awareness programs, stricter policies, and counseling services can therefore be seen as a comprehensive approach to combating substance abuse and enhancing

academic performance in secondary schools.

The implication of these findings is clear: the school community, including teachers, administrators, and counselors, should collaborate to implement these proposed strategies. Awareness programs, stronger policies, and accessible counseling services are not only essential for mitigating substance abuse but also for creating an environment that supports students' academic success and personal development.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### A. Conclusion of the Study

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that substance abuse is a prevalent issue among students at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai, with significant consequences for academic performance. A notable portion of the students (40%) report poor academic performance, which could be attributed to the negative effects of substance abuse, such as difficulty concentrating and skipping classes. Socio-economic factors, such as financial instability and peer pressure, play a crucial role in influencing substance abuse behaviors. The availability of substances near the school also contributes to students' decisions to engage in substance use.

In terms of addressing the problem, the students strongly support strategies like awareness programs, stricter policies, counseling services, and the involvement of parents in the fight against substance abuse. The expansion of extracurricular activities was also identified as a potential solution to keep students engaged and away from substances. Ultimately, a multi-faceted approach involving students, parents, teachers, and policymakers is essential to effectively combat substance abuse and improve academic outcomes at Government Day Secondary School Nukkai.

### B. Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, this study recommends

- i. Schools should regularly educate students about the dangers of substance abuse. This could include lessons, workshops, and peer-led activities to raise awareness and discourage substance use.
- ii. Offer extra academic support to students struggling with the effects of substance abuse, like tutoring and mentoring. Teachers should also be trained to spot the signs of substance abuse early and provide help.
- iii. Provide financial support or scholarships to students from poor backgrounds to reduce pressure. Peer education programs should be set up to help older students guide younger ones in resisting peer pressure. Also, work with local authorities to control the availability of substances near the school.
- iv. Get parents, teachers, and local leaders involved in addressing substance abuse. Parents should be educated about how to spot signs of abuse and support their children. Schools should also create more extracurricular activities to keep students engaged and away from substances.

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