...you realise very quickly that being skilled does not automatically make life easier



Dr Kezaabu warns on porn and damage at home

Homewrecker. Mocked by some and dismissed by others, Dr Annette Kezaabu says pornography is no harmless pastime. From broken families and distorted relationships to addiction and revenge porn, the head of Uganda's Anti-Pornography Committee argues that the real cost only becomes visible when the crisis reaches home.

BY EDGAR R. BATTE

As head of the Anti-Pornography Committee in the President's Office, Dr Annette Kezaabu reflects on the social cost of normalised sleaze and why what many dismiss as harmless entertainment is, in her view, negatively reshaping values, relationships, and the moral fabric of society.

Besides the committee, Dr Kezabu is an educationist, mentor, and policy leader over the years, she has found herself at the centre of a contentious national conversations that attract ridicule. She has remained consistent, drawing from lived encounters with young people, families, and communities affected by what many dismiss too easily. For her, this is not about policing behaviour but confronting a glaring reality.

You have been very vocal about pornography and what you call the rise of sleaze entertainment. What drew you into this space?

I have seen and heard too many stories. Girls and boys whose futures were being diverted with abuse, exploitation, and confusion. In many cases, pornography was part of that grooming. So when I was appointed to the committee, it aligned with what I had already been witnessing. It wasn't just policy for me, it was personal."

You've faced criticism and even mockery for your views. How do you take that?

People laugh. They mock. They say, 'Why are you regulating behaviour?' But the same people come quietly when something happens in their homes. Mocking does not faze me. I know the work I am doing and why.

Many still treat pornography as harmless entertainment. From your experience, how serious is it?

It is very serious. I have seen families break down and young people lose direction. I have seen careers destroyed. These are real life stories.

What are some of the patterns you've observed among those affected by pornography addiction?

It often begins with simple curiosity or accidental exposure. Over time, it can turn into a habit and then a form of dependence.

As it grows, some individuals begin to rely on it more frequently, which affects their concentration, productivity, and motivation. Eventually, it can interfere with daily responsibilities, relationships, and overall well-being, often progressing quietly before it is fully recognized.

You've spoken about escalation. What does that look like in real terms?

What someone watches today may not satisfy them tomorrow. So they go looking for something more intense. Over time, what once felt optional starts to feel necessary, and it begins to take up more space in their thoughts and routines. At that point, it is no longer just entertainment. Addiction sets in and it becomes a habit that starts to shape behaviour and expectations. Before long, it turns into a cycle that is difficult to step out of without deliberate effort and support.

How does this spill into relationships and family life?

It distorts expectations. People begin to think what they see is reality. You find strain in marriages, conflict and breakdowns. Trust and emotional connection are affected. It doesn't stay with one person, it affects everyone around them."

Are young people particularly at risk of this addiction?

Yes. Very much so. Many young people are exposed far earlier than we realise, sometimes through friends, sometimes through devices, and at times even by people they trust. That first exposure may seem small, but it opens a door they are often not emotionally prepared to manage. What follows can be confusion about relationships, distorted expectations, and a gradual loss of focus on what truly matters in their growth. In some cases, it can even make them vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation. Some of these effects follow such persons till they find themselves in rehabilitation or incarceration.

There is also a rise in cases like revenge pornography. How significant is this?

It is increasing. People share private content in relationships and later release it, and we have seen lives deeply disrupted as a result. Revenge pornography is not just about images. It is a serious violation of trust. Victims often feel exposed, ashamed, and unable to face others, as if their private lives have been taken from them. The impact goes beyond emotions, affecting relationships, reputation, work, and overall wellbeing, with women often facing harsher judgment. And because the internet does not easily forget, the harm can follow a person long after the incident.

From what you've seen, is recovery possible? Is there a possible point of return for porn addicts?

Yes, recovery is possible, and it happens more often than people think. It starts when a person is honest with themselves and admits, "this is affecting me, and I need to change." Like any addiction, it takes time, support, and effort; through counselling, self-discipline, and having people who can support and guide you. With the right support and commitment, people can regain control, rebuild their relationships, and return to a healthier, more stable

What challenges have you faced trying to address this at a national level?

One of the biggest challenges is lack of support. Some leaders don't take it seriously. They don't fund it. They don't prioritise it. But when it becomes personal, they understand. The problem is, by then, the damage has already happened.

What would you say to those who still dismiss your concerns?

Don't wait until it reaches your home. Because when it does, it becomes very real. This is not about controlling people, it is about protecting lives and futures.

In a world where digital content flows freely and boundaries are increasingly blurred, we must take the warning on porn addiction seriously. The question is whether it will be heard before the laughter fades.



Head of the Anti-Pornography Committee in the President's Office, Dr Annette Kezaabu. PHOTO/ EDGAR R. BATTE

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