



“Physical and Psychology Issues among Drug Abusers: A Case Study of Kashmir Valley”

Mudasir Bashir Sheikh¹

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, J S University, Shikohabad Firozabad.

Abstract

Drug abuse is extensive and chronic use/consumption of a drug which the person consumes in amounts, by ways are very hazardous and harmful for him and others. The purpose of this study was to analyze the psychological impact of drug abuse on its users. In this study 408 drug abusers were selected to analyze the psychological issues arise out of drug addiction on. The findings of this study indicated that the age group of 16-25 is found to be comprising of 64 percent of drug abusers and most consume it due to break down in relationships. Physical weakness is reported with the highest percentage i.e. 28.04 percent. Hence it can be concluded that drug abuse strongly causes physical weakness among drug abusers. This physical weakness can be result of withdrawal symptoms and increased tolerance level of drugs. Drugs grossly affect body. Respondents reported that they face social stigma due to drug addiction. Social stigma leads to loneliness which exacerbates psychological issues among drug users, which include weak memory, loss of consciousness, lack of support from friends and family etc. The finding of this indicates that drug abuse has become a serious concern for the younger generation. Alienating the existing drug abusers, would further exacerbate the problem. Hence counseling and guidance for both drug abusers and family of the drug abusers is utmost necessity.

Keywords: *chronic use, hazardous, psychological impact, drug addiction, physical weakness, symptoms, exacerbates, consciousness, alienating,*

Introduction

Drug abuse is extensive and chronic use/consumption of a drug which the person consumes in amounts, by ways are very hazardous and harmful for him and others. According to W.H.O “substance abuse is persistent or sporadic drug use inconsistent with or unrelated to acceptable medical practice” (WHO). Drug abuse is one

of the social problems that affects everyone, everywhere, either directly or indirectly (Mabeyo, 2010:8). This substance abuse turned out menace for every society. Present society is flooded with the substance abuse and about 250 million people around the globe have misused drugs only in the year 2015 (World drug report, 2017). It's been reported that drug abuse has caused most of the premature death to the people. Disability caused by drug abuse is another grave concern for the society as 30 million people suffered disability due to drug abuse.

The problem of drug abuse has set its evil foot on every inch of the growing global scenario that no country could escape from it. It poses a great threat to humanity which has the potential to create havoc in the society. It is increasing day by day and is one of the major challenges, apart from the devastating consequences, for the users as well as social integration of the family and community. Kashmir has become heaven for drug users where they can access and use drugs freely. Over the years, drug addiction in Kashmir has touched new grounds and has become an area of concern. Margoob (2008) projected that there are 24.32 lakh substance abusers. The disintegration of the moral fabric of the society has resulted in chaos and confusion whereby the social values are being ignored giving rise to a fractured society full of evils and deviances. The use of drugs to experience satisfaction, stimulation, escape or euphoria had remained under control in the state for centuries.

Drug abuse in the last few years has increased very much and is fast proving disastrous to the society-which is already bereft of any systematic organization. With the introduction of synthetic drugs and intravenous drug use, the drug abuse problem has acquired alarming proportions with extensive social, legal, moral and economic, ethical or even political ramifications. There are multiple reasons responsible for the increased drug abuse in Kashmir valley. The foremost reason is manifested in the socio-psychological aspects of youth. Due to the ongoing turbulent situation in the valley, the youth are facing enormous problems of this nature due to the political instability and unemployment scenario (Dabla 2011; Naqshbandi (2012; Sheikh (2012).

Given the amount of the problem, the present study aims to analyze the drug addiction problem among youth of Jammu and Kashmir. The primary objective of this study was to examine extent the addiction of drugs, and its impact on physical and mental well-being of the drug abusers.

Research Methodology

Research Design and conceptual framework

The present study is a cross sectional survey framework which utilization both quantitative and qualitative techniques. This design was found appropriate to realize epistemological, theoretical and methodological way of working to serve research purpose (Saldana, 2011). It was cross-sectional involving students from undergraduate courses across all stream and subjects.

3.4 Sample size and Sampling techniques

In this study, multi-stage sampling technique was used to draw samples for the final survey. The first multistage sampling entailed cluster sampling to select districts for the survey. Due to complex nature of the society, collection of samples (or final respondents), was done in a controlled environment. The second stage was purposeful sampling techniques to enable selection of drug de-addiction centers from each district. 4 drug de-addiction centers were selected from Srinagar for the survey. Two each drug de-addiction centers were selected from Baramullah and Anantnag. The third stage was a random selection of the main respondents from each center and purposeful sampling to identify various kinds of substance abusers. The subjects of the study consisted of students, laborers, businessmen, drivers and other common drug abusers on regular mode of study randomly selected.

Table 1: Sample size distribution and places of data collection

Sampled drug de addiction center	Respondents	Sampling technique
Reality Foundation drug counseling and rehabilitation center (Srinagar)	51	Cluster, Random, purposeful
Khyber Medical Institute, Drug De-addiction Center	51	Cluster, Random, purposeful
Hindustan National Social Society Drug Rehabilitation Center (Srinagar)	51	Cluster, Random, purposeful
Drug De-Addiction and Rehabilitation Center, (PCR Srinagar)	51	Cluster, Random, purposeful
Rehabilitation Center in Baramullah for Alcohol (Baramullah)	51	Cluster, Random, purposeful
Max De-Addiction Center (Baramullah)	51	Cluster, Random, purposeful
Drug De-Addiction Center (DPL Anantnag)	51	Cluster, Random, purposeful
New Generation Care Foundation Rehabilitation Center (Anantnag)	51	Cluster, Random, purposeful
Total	408	

Results and Discussion

Gender Wise Distribution of Substance Abuse

Gender is regarded as very crucial in role identification in society. But in case of mental health setting, gender doesn't play any differential role with respect to prevalence of psychological problems. Though substance abuse in case of women is very un-acceptable phenomenon in Kashmir. But the results reported in Table 2 reports that 7.08 percent of women from the sample lot of 410 respondents were found substance abusers. This disparity in the ratio of substance abusers is the clear indication of those male abusers (92.92 percent) has more interaction with the outside environment than their counterparts, and this turns out to be the conducive and reinforcing factor for them.

Table 2: Gender wise distribution of Substance abuse

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	381	92.92
Female	29	7.08
Total	410	100

Sources: field survey data

Occupations of Drug Abusers

Table 3 Showing occupations of drug abusers

Occupation	Number	Percentage
Student	128	31.30
Business	46	12.00
Driver	106	25.85
Laborers	75	18.30
Others	55	13.47
Total	410	100

Sources: field survey data

As clear from the above table, that most of the substance users are students (31 percent) followed by drivers (25.85 percent) and laborers (18.30 percent). Social environment and uncertainty about the future, forces students to divert from studies and indulge in drug related activities. Students and unemployed youth found themselves against the walls due to rising unemployment and pressure of studies. This pressure and uncertain future had devastated the life of youth in the Kashmir valley. Again, due to political instability and prolong conflict had badly affected all sector of the economy and transport sector is no exception. As a result of no earnings, people affiliated with sector are getting involved in illicit activities like substance use, especially drivers.

Age Distribution of Drug Abuse

Table 4 is showing the age wise distribution of drug abuse and source for introducing to it. The age group of 16-25 is found to be comprising of 64 percent of drug abusers. As it is significantly clear that age group of 16-25 is largely influenced by this menace. It is pertinent here to mention that this age group includes adolescents as well. Adolescence on the other hand is marked by the transition from childhood to adulthood; it is an important developmental phase, marked by a multitude of significant physical, psychological and social changes.

Additionally it is characterized by extreme mood changes and difficult behavior that can affect adolescent's emotional well-being and may cause a considerable amount of stress and they eventually can become soft target for drug abuse. Combining these factors with the increased social conformity, peer pressure, curiosity and perception of source of pleasure for drugs again serves as mediator for substance abuse.

While deciphering the source of introducer to the drug abuse, it can be pertinently said that friends serve as strong source of peer pressure and social conformity in drug abuse. Particularly in adolescence an individual perceive their friends as ultimate source of advice and social support and spontaneously this friend circle turns out to be a strong introducer to the existing environment and to the drugs as well.

Table 4 – Age wise distribution of drug abuse and Source for introducing to it

AGE	NUMBER	PERCENT AGE	INTRODUCE R	Number	Percentag e
BELOW 15	10	2.43	Friends	234	57.07
16-25	262	64.40	Colleagues	119	29.02
26-35	90	22.20	Self -motivated	16	4.00
ABOVE 35	48	11.70	Drug dealer	41	10.00
TOTAL	410	100	Total	410	100

Sources: field survey data

Type of Drugs and Mode of Administration

Charas is tremendously used in the areas where its cultivation is at peak. There are a number of ways in which a drug may be taken into the body. Drugs may be swallowed (eaten or drunk), chewed and absorbed through the lining of nose, inhaled through the lungs or injected beneath the skin into the muscles or into the veins. The different methods of getting drugs into the body have important implications for drug users, risking their dependence and health. The information in this regard is given in following table.

Table 5-Type of Drugs and Mode of Administration

Type o Drug	Number	Percent	Mode of administration
MEDICINES	169	41.21	Oral
CHARAS	95	23.17	Smoked in Chillam and cigarette
ALCOHOL	87	21.21	Oral
BROWN SUGAR	54	13.17	Sniffing
SOLVENT	05	1.21	Sniffing
TOTAL	410	100.00	

Sources: field survey data

The above table shows that 41.21 percent respondents abuse medicines; 23.21 percent go far charas: 21.21 percent alcohol. Regarding the routes of administration 62.42 percent respondents do drugs through oral mode. A substance that is eaten will produce effects that are less rapid on onset and less intense than, when same drug is injected. Thus highest prevalence rates were observed for medicines, charas, alcohol and solvents. The major route of administration was found to be oral.

Distribution of Reasons

Table 6 is reporting frequency of the causes stated by the respondents, as it is already mentioned that people living there in Kashmir are always under the grip of traumatic experiences. All these factors instigate the tendency of indulging oneself into substance abuse. As far as the given table is concerned, overcoming tension has been reported as the most intriguing factor in drug abuse.

Table 6- showing the distribution of reasons

Reason for substance abuse	Number	Percentage
To overcome tension	106	25.85
To satisfy curiosity	41	10.00
Failure of love affairs	91	22.19
Family disturbance	49	11.95
Unemployment	66	16.09
Death in family	42	10.24
Fun	15	3.65
Total	410	100

Sources: field survey data

From the total sample (n=410) almost 26 percent of the respondents reported that because of escape mechanism and seeking hedonistic pleasures they get indulged into substance abuse. Pertinently it can be said that there is hedonistic viewpoint of this menace among youth of Kashmir. Second most frequent response was failure in love affair.

Health Status of Drug Users

This setback in human lives can again shake ones psychological state of wellbeing. In the present research 22.19 percent of the total respondents reported that their love failure is the main reason of falling into the trap of the drug abuse. Because once a person faces this phase in life they experience low self-esteem and they experience their sense of being and sense of vitality for others is being questioned. These factors collectively instigate ones tendency to get involved into the substance abuse, while on the other hand very less percentage has been found from respondents those who took substance abuse for the fun purpose only. This percentage is comprised only 3.65 percent.

Drug abuse generally poses a strong threat to the physical health too. In the present research endeavor physical health status has been taken into consideration.

Table 7 showing Health Status of Drug Users

Kind of health problem	Number	Percentage
Infected respiratory system	41	10.00
Physical weakness	115	28.04
Weak eyesight	57	13.90
Kidney problem	82	20
Liver dysfunction	74	18.04
Joint pain	41	10.00
Total	410	100.00

Sources: field survey data

From Table number 7 it is evidently clear that, physical weakness is reported with the highest percentage i.e.28.04 percent. Hence it can be concluded that drug abuse strongly causes physical weakness among drug abusers. This physical weakness can be result of withdrawal symptoms and increased tolerance level of drugs. Drugs grossly affect body. The second frequent physiological problem found in drug abusers is kidney problem. Kidney is considered to be the vital part of the body and Drug abuse significantly affects kidney. Kidney problem has been reported by 20 percent of the total respondents.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Drug abuse means "the self-administration of chemicals for purposes other than those prescribed by medical and social practice. Drug abuse has also been defined as "the consumption of a drug apart from need or in unnecessary quantities. by Wilson (1968). Drug use or consumption may be in the form of medical or chemical substance that when taken into the body by any means causes a change in the body (Kilonzo, 1996:70)

It is increasing day by day and is one of the major challenges, apart from the devastating consequences, for the users as well as social integration of the family and community. A systematic study of the problem of drug addiction in the state of Jammu and Kashmir has revealed that 40 percent of the youngsters fall prey to drug abuse which includes both boys and girls of the age group between 16-25 years.

The finding of this study shows that indication of those male abusers (92.92 percent) has more interaction with the outside environment than their counterparts, and this turns out to be the conducive and reinforcing factor for them. But on the other hand the ratio of female abusers is alarming too. The clear indication of tendency is visible from the findings that more and more students (31 percent), drivers (25.85 percent) and laborers are substance users. However, it is not the only cause of drug abuse among the youth of Kashmir valley, as there are numerous other reasons for this menace, such as social environment in colleges, universities, and workplaces; prolonged Kashmir conflict, uncertainty about future, unemployment, conflict in family, broken relationships etc.

Nevertheless, the questions here remains that how this young generation gets dragged in this menace, where they get substances and who is responsible? The finding of this study shows that while deciphering the source of introducer to the drug abuse, it can be pertinently said that friends (57 percent) serve as strong source of peer pressure and social conformity in drug abuse. Particularly in adolescence an individual perceive their friends as ultimate source of advice and social support and spontaneously this friend circle turns out to be a strong introducer to the existing environment and to the drugs as well.

It is inseparable fact that unless drugs are not easily available, no friend or colleague or anyone else can lure the others to this menace. Due to ill implementation of existing laws, smuggling of illegal medicine and drugs has continuously found its suitable place in Kashmir. In the present study it was found that variety of drugs differs in terms of their administration, the findings of this shows that medicine, and alcohol is largely used as an oral substance, it is either taken with and without water. Then except charas every other substance is taken via sniffing, while charas is taken with cigarettes and chillum. Consumption of medicine as drugs for the use other than for treatment, accounts for about 41 percent in substance use among the youth. It is followed by Charas which accounts about 23 percent of substance use.

It is important to understand the frequency of the causes stated by the respondents, as it is already mentioned that people living there in Kashmir are always under the grip of traumatic experiences. All these factors instigate the tendency of indulging oneself into substance abuse. As far as the given table is concerned, overcoming tension has been reported as the most intriguing factor in drug abuse. Almost 26 percent of the respondents reported that because of escape mechanism and seeking hedonistic pleasures they get indulged into substance abuse. Pertinently it can be said that there is hedonistic viewpoint of this menace among youth of Kashmir. Second most frequent response was failure in love affair. Broken relationship (22.19 percent) is second major cause of substance use among the young generation of the Kashmir valley. This setback in human lives can again shake ones psychological state of wellbeing. Because once a person faces this phase in life they experience low self-esteem and they experience their sense of being and sense of vitality for others is being questioned.

Drug abuse generally poses a strong threat to the physical health too. In the present research endeavor physical health status has been taken into consideration. It is evidently clear that, physical weakness is reported with the highest percentage i.e.28.04 percent. Hence it can be concluded that drug abuse strongly causes physical weakness among drug abusers. This physical weakness can be result of withdrawal symptoms and increased tolerance level of drugs. Drugs grossly affect body. The second frequent physiological problem found in drug abusers is kidney problem. Kidney is considered to be the vital part of the body and Drug abuse significantly affects kidney. Kidney problem has been reported by 20 percent of the total respondents. Majority of the respondents reported that they perceive there is no such treatment available. Hence different agencies have their due responsibility to mobilize the information and spread the awareness about the possibilities available for treating substance abuse.

Considering the complexity web of drug abuse-causing factors such as social interactions, drug availability and university comrade euphoria, it would be more imperative to put in place all the levels of prevention in order to avoid the spiraling effect of emulation of drug abuse behaviors. The theoretical framework (Self – efficacy and Ecological systems theories) in this study clearly demonstrates this that, students’ perceptions of peers “ alcohol consumption and cannabis use predicts and explains a significant amount of variance in alcohol and cannabis use (2006; Perkins et al., 2005). This shows that it doesn’t suffice to dwell on primary prevention services alone because it would ignore other populations in secondary and tertiary levels resulting in them permeating their drug taking habits to other members.

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