

A STUDY ON DRUG ADDICTION IN KASHMIR VALLEY AND THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF KASHMIRI PEOPLE TOWARDS THE DRUG ADDICTION

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Abstract:

Drug addiction has become a world-wide problem and unfortunately Kashmir is in no exception due to prolonged turmoil, high unemployment and economic uncertainty. Drug addiction affects both brain and behavior and is one of the alarming social problems of Kashmir which is rapidly affecting large number of its population. The Authors of this study provides the overview of the current situation of drug addiction in Kashmir Valley of J&K and the aims of this research paper was to know the reasons of drug addiction, awareness among the people of study area about Drug abuse and solutions and preventive measures adapted by the stake holders. The study was carried out through a questionnaire which was circulated among the 500 male and female respondents throughout Kashmir Valley during the year 2022-23. The results of our study revealed a horrifying picture and a threat for the entire society if the drug menace is not controlled in the area. Finally, researchers have given some suggestions to get rid of drug addiction.

Key words: Drug addiction, Kashmir, Awareness, Drug abuse, Statistics

Introduction: Drug addiction is a burning issue in the so called developing modern world. It is a new emerging concern globally and is destroying the golden lives of our youth. Drug addiction refers to the excessive and repeated use of drugs. They are taking the place of life values and are making life in itself void of meaning. In spite that many people especially, the youth are lost in the charm of deadly drugs. Children and teenagers are a silent victim of drug abuse and are leading to destruction of their own lives. Every 17 seconds someone is arrested for drug law violation. The addiction of drugs is so deadly that people fall prey to its use and almost become like a slave to it. The grave issue of drug abuse is prevalent all around the world and unfortunately our country is more strongly affected by it. In the country 62.5 million people use alcohol, 8.45million people use cannabis, 2 million use opiates, and 0.6 million use sedatives and hypnotics. It was found that the major drugs of abuse in the state of Jammu and Kashmir are tobacco, alcohol, cannabis (charas), benzodiazepines (sleeping pills, like alprax, valium), brown sugar, Inhalants (like FevicolSR, glue, paint thinner, petrol, shoe polish etc.), opiates (like codeine, heroin, morphine) [Margoob& Dutta, 1993; Pirzada, 2013; Bhat, Kumar, & Mushtaq, 2013; Bhat et al., 2016]. The Valley of Kashmir is known as "Pir Waer", the abode of saints but now Kashmir Valley is slowly becoming India's drug hub. More than a million druggists exist in Kashmir at present out of which 4000 are young girls (Kashmir reader). A third cold murder in less than six months, a drug addict son allegedly killed his mother in Sopore area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district on 29 March 2023. This is the third incident in Kashmir where a son has killed his mother since October 2022. On December 22, a man attacked his family members and neighbors with a wooden log killing three persons, including his mother, and injuring seven others in south Kashmir's Anantnag district. Earlier in October last year, a resident of Kehribal in Anantnag killed his own mother only to steal money from the deceased (Zulfikar Majid, DHNS, Srinagar, March-30-2023).As per government psychiatric disease hospital statistics 90% abusers belong to the age group of 17 to 35 years with a lifetime prevalence of drug addiction.A recent study done by the Government Medical College's Psychiatry department has revealed that Kashmir has

surpassed Punjab in drug abuse cases and is currently at the number two position among the top drug abuser states in the country. With Northeast in India topping the drug abuse list, Kashmir is not far behind. This deadly poison is spreading like fire. One of the main reasons for drug addiction in Kashmir is unemployment issues and besides that parent-adolescent relationships and bad influence of friends and peers also plays a vital role in adding fuel to the fire of drug addiction. The government can however do much in this regard by forming campaigns and awareness drives. One such governmental committee is NashaMukht Bharat Abhiyan. NMBA emerged as a savior for millions of lives in India. It is a flagship campaign launched on 15 August 2020 in 242 districts considered to be most vulnerable to drug abuse. The main aim of the organization is to spread awareness on drug addiction and to conduct surveys on the same. It focuses on counseling and treatment facilities in hospitals and rehabilitation centers in India. It has launched awareness programs and destruction drive like a bhang destruction drive in Anantnag for plant drugs. Many preventive steps should be taken not only by the government but NGO's and the public should also join hand to make our society a better one. These prevention measures should aim to boost protective factors and eliminate or reduce risk factors for drug use. For this purpose, awareness programs should be organized at schools and colleges, parents should keep a regular check on the behavioral status of their children, the government and non-government agencies should inspect rehabilitation centers. Moreover, illegal entrance in the country by neighboring states or nations should be strictly restricted. Despite campaigns we should try to make our society drug free. In the literature, we come across a number of studies/reports conducted in various states of India or in other countries [e.g., Drugs UNOO, 2002; Drugs UNOO, 2004; Sudan, 2007; Nadeem, 2009; Naqshabandi; 2012; Bilal et al., 2016] and in the light of those and the importance of topic, we chose our present study.

Study Area: Kashmir Valley of Jammu and Kashmir, India.

Material and Methods: In the present study the questionnaire developed was pre-tested and validated by specialists and experts. The survey was carried out by giving questionnaire to the 500 respondents of Kashmir Valley at random. The data collected at random from the respondents was carefully analyzed using appropriate statistical tools.

The sample size for this study was calculated using (Cochran, 1977)

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha}^2 P (1 - P)}{d^2}$$

Here, we take $p=0.5$, $Z_{\alpha}=1.96$ and $d=0.05$. That gives $n \sim 384$ and we decided to chosen = 500 for our study to get clear picture on topic understudy. The data collected was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted statistically. The statistical software SPSS (version 20) was used for analysis of data in this study.

Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in opinion between male and female respondents regarding causes of drug addiction in study area.

In order to test the hypothesis 1, we use chi-square test (with usual notations) given as

where $X^2 \sim \chi_1^2$, o_i and e_i are observed and expected frequencies. We reject H_0 if p-value is

$$X^2 = \sum_{i=1}^2 \frac{(o_i - e_i)^2}{e_i}$$

less than specified level of significance.

Results and Discussion:

Table 1 shows the gender and age of respondents in study area

Gender	Female	340	68%
	Male	160	32%
Age	10 to 20	97	19.4 %
	20 to 30	297	59.4 %
	30 to 40	69	13.8%
	Above 40	37	7.4%

The data presented in table 1 reveals that the female respondent's makeup 68% and males only 32%. Most of the respondents are from the age group 20 to 30 with 59.4% while as least responses received from above 40 with only 7.4%.

Table 2 shows the awareness of the respondents:

The data presented in Table 2 reveals that 91.0% of the respondents are aware about drug addiction. while as by asking about anybody around them who is addicted to drug 21.2 % of respondents replied yes and 78.8% of respondents were with no and maybe. Similarly, on examining the responses 54.6% of respondents agree that bad company play role for drug addiction, 25% think unemployment, 15.0% think frustration and only 4.8 think for fun. 73.2% of respondents believed that friendship quality effects the person who is addicted to drug while 23.0% disagree with the statement. 91.4% respondents depicts that a good friend can play a great role in saying no to drugs. In response to question asked that can bad friendship quality result in drug addiction 68.0% of both male and female respondents highly agreed. 45.4% think the government is not doing a good job in stopping drug addiction. 89.2% respondents believe that girls are also victim of drug addiction. 79.4% show highly agreement with that parent's negligence play a role in the addiction of drugs in youth. Majority of respondents with 96.0% agree awareness is a social responsibility all the religious leaders, government, educators and parents should take seriously part in awareness programs. Even 46.4% also believed social media play a positive role in stopping drug addiction. 63.0% of respondents are in agreement of that age group from 20 to 30 years are more vulnerable to drug addiction. The result obtained in our study are in agreement with the early studies. 78.4% of respondents are in agreement that Government should launch awareness programs, destruction drives and Illegal entrance from neighboring countries to stop drugs. 95.4% respondents believe there are multiple effects of drug addiction like loss of health, wealth and social status. 83.4% is in agreement that if a drug addicted person is having strong will he can escape from the vicious cycle of drugs.

Table 2: Awareness of Drug Addiction among respondents in the study area

Statements	Responses	Total	%
Do you know what is drug addiction?	Yes	455	91.0
	No	14	2.8
	Maybe	31	6.2
Is anybody around you addicted to drugs?	Yes	106	21.2
	No	231	46.2
	Maybe	163	32.6
Why do you think people especially the youth are addicted to drugs?	Unemployment	128	25.6
	Frustration	75	15.0
	Bad company	273	54.6
	For Fun	24	4.8
Does the friendship quality effect the person who is addicted to drugs?	Yes	366	73.2
	No	23	23.0
	Sometimes	111	22.2
Is there a role of friends in saying "NO" to drugs	Yes	457	91.4
	No	6	1.2

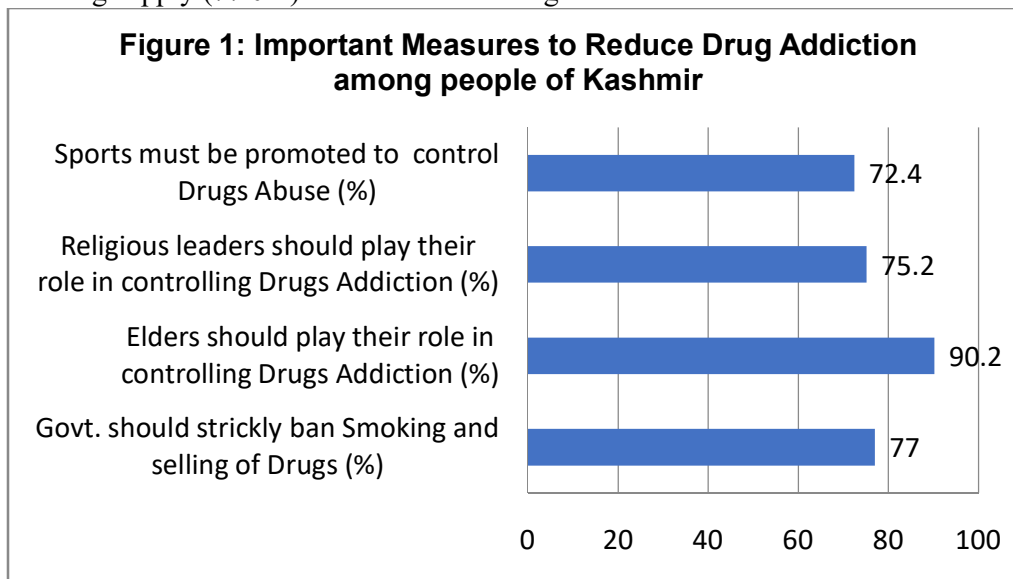
	Maybe	37	7.4
Can bad friendship quality result in drug addiction?	Yes	340	68.0
	No	28	5.6
	Maybe	132	26.4
Do you think the government is doing a good job in stopping drug addiction?	Yes	165	33.0
	No	227	45.4
	Maybe	108	21.6
Are girls also victim of drug addiction?	Yes	446	89.2
	No	3	0.6
	Maybe	51	10.2
Does the parent's negligence play a role in the addiction of drugs in youth?	Yes	397	79.4
	No	11	2.2
	Maybe	92	18.4
who should aware people about drug addiction?	Government	5	1.00
	Religious Leaders	5	1.00
	Elder family members	5	1.00
	Educators	5	1.00
	All of the above	480	96.0
Does social media play a positive role in stopping drug addiction?	Yes	232	46.4
	No	117	23.4
	May be	151	30.2
Which age group is vulnerable for drug addiction?	10 to 20	169	33.8
	20 to 30	315	63.0
	30 to 40	8	1.6
	Above 40	8	1.6
what can the government do to stop drug addiction?	Launch campaign	92	18.4
	Destruction drive	6	1.2
	Illegal entrance from neighboring countries	10	2.0
	All of the above	392	78.4
What do you think are the effects of drug addiction?	Loss of health	20	4.0
	Loss of wealth	2	0.4
	Loss of social status	1	0.2
	All of the above	477	95.4
Can addicts stop the use of drugs if they have the will power?	Yes	417	83.4
	No	9	1.8
	May be	74	14.8

The data presented in Table 3, revealed that majority male (48.82%) as well as female (53.75 %) respondents. Statistically, in the opinion regarding main causes of drug abuse among people of Kashmir there was a significant difference ($P < 0.05$). The hypothesis set in this paper was rejected. The results are in agreement with the earlier study (TahiraSidiq et al., 2016).

Table 3:- Cause of Drug abuse among people of Kashmir valley

Responde nt	Joblessness (%)	Disturbance (%)	Bad Company (%)	Chance Use (%)	For Fun (%)
Male	37 (10.88)	28 (8.24)	166 (48.82)	36 (10.59)	73 (21.47)
Female	16 (10.00)	15 (9.38)	86 (53.75)	26 (16.25)	17 (10.63)
Chi-square=10.691, P-value<0.05					

The data presented in Figure 1, revealed that majority of respondents believe that the important measures to be taken to reduce drug addiction among people of Kashmir are sports must be promoted among youth (72.5.2%), religious leaders should play their role by organizing frequent drug addiction awareness programs (75.5%), elders should play their role by keeping watch on their family members first then on society (90.2%) and Govt. should deal strictly drug addicts and people involved in drug supply (77.0%). The results are in agreement with earlier studies.



Conclusion: The study revealed that majority of respondents (91.0%) are aware about drug addiction and showed their concern on seeing increasing the involvement of youth in drug addiction. The main causes of drug addiction as per respondents were Joblessness, Disturbance, Bad Company, Chance Use and Fun. Statistically, in the opinion regarding main causes of drug abuse among people significant difference was found ($P < 0.05$). Majority of respondents believe that measures taken to reduce drug addiction are sports promotion, organizing frequent drug addiction awareness programs by religious leaders, elders should play their role by keeping watch on their family members first then on society and Govt. should deal strictly with drug addicts and people involved in drug supply business. It is important to recognize that drug addiction is a complex problem that cannot be solved overnight. It requires a sustained effort from all stakeholders, including the government, healthcare providers, community organizations, and the wider public. By working together, we can hope to tackle this issue and provide the necessary support and resources to those who are struggling with addiction. However, it will require a significant investment of time, resources, and commitment to make a lasting impact. Development of the nation and the human race is itself standing in the hands of the youth as they are the chance for the nation to leave a mark on the globe but they are leading themselves to decay by getting involved in such elicit activities. We the society and as a community have to join hands together to secure and rebuild a better, happier and healthier place to live. Together we shall stand victorious in making Kashmir drug free.

Suggestions:

1. The most common way to overcome drug addiction is by spreading awareness as much as possible among the youth and the young generations.
2. Governmental and non-governmental organization should work to reduce exploitation through drugs via increasing access to addiction treatment through setting up rehabilitation centers and counseling hubs.
3. Better implementation of laws prohibiting drug abuse.

4. At an individual level one can report on finding any drug smuggling or drug addiction in one's community.
5. Introduction of new schemes and policies which would invest in making a more drug free society.

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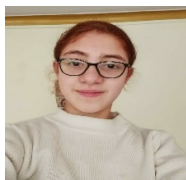
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