
DRUG ADDICTION: A GROWING PROBLEM IN YOUTH

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Though no one can go back and make a brand-new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand-new ending.

- Carl Bard

ABSTRACT:

This paper studied youth as a the most vulnerable population in the society that has become victim of drug abuse and has indeed turn out to be the drug abusers in the society.

Abuse of drugs by youngsters, school going kids has been major problem in the society and various societal unrest. Nelson Mandela Quotes: “The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow.” but youths are involving themselves into illicit drug trafficking as well as abusing the drug and spoiling their entire life. This study has focused on the aspect of how youths get involved into drug abuse and what is the impact of such drug abuse. This study also focuses on the medical aspect of drug addicts, what is their mental health condition and how they turn out to become psychopaths or get isolated from the society. To curb the menace of drug trafficking, drug abuse and the drug addiction, government has major role to play which has to formulate stringent laws and see that there is proper implementation of such laws and also consider the aspect curing the drug addicts by way of rehabilitation of drug addicts majorly focused on youths.

Keywords: Drug Abuse, Drug Addiction, Youths, Rehabilitation and Mental health.

1. Introduction:

The problem of drug trafficking and drug abuse are not recent origin and they existed since ages. The behaviours such as drug abuse, pick-pocketing, loitering, rape, auto-theft, truancy, delinquent or criminal act and insurgency prevail among youths who are either down trodden or neglected by the society. In perpetuating the aforementioned vices, youths may collaborate with their peers, or get parental approvals or being supported by some notable personalities in the society who derive some benefits from such acts. Of all the deviant behaviours listed, drug abuse seems to have a more devastating effects on youths because of its psychological and physiological defects on humans. A few examples of the forms of drug abuse perpetuated by youths include: “smoking of cigarette, Indian Hemp and Cocaine. Others are excessive or wrong use of over-the-counter drugs, taking drugs not prescribed by a qualified doctor, excessive intake of alcohol and excessive use of analgesic tablets, including coffee”¹. The main aim of this paper is to examine drug abuse among youths and its impact on the society.

1.1 Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse:

Drug trafficking refers to global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws. UNODC is continuously monitoring and researching global illicit drug markets in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their dynamics. Drug trafficking is a key part of this research². The concept of Drug abuse or substance abuse is different from that of drug trafficking and it refers to the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain. There are over 190 million drug users around the world and the problem has been increasing at alarming rates, especially among young adults under the age of 30³. Robins as cited in Yusuf, et.al. (2018) defined drug abuse as “the use of a given drug in excessive dose levels, over an unjustified long period of time, or outside therapeutic indications”. Yusuf and associates argued that the use of either hard or prescribed drug against the physician’s advice is termed ‘drug abuse’. Examples of hard and prescribed drugs

¹https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345921079_Perspectives_of_Drug_Abuse_its_effects_on_Youth_and_contribution_to_crime_in_the_Society_Counselling_and_Psychological_Interventions/link/5fb22fc292851cf24cd590b9/download

² <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/drug-trafficking/index.html#:~:text=Drug%20trafficking%20is%20a%20global,comprehensive%20understanding%20of%20their%20dynamics.>

³ <https://www.news-medical.net/health/What-is-Drug-Abuse.aspx>

are cocaine, weed etc. and codeine respectively. In a more professional term, Drug abuse, also called substance abuse or chemical abuse, is a disorder that is characterized by a destructive pattern of using a substance that leads to significant problems or distress⁴.

1.2 Origin of Drug Trafficking⁵:

Humans have used drugs of one sort or another for thousands of years. Wine was used at least from the time of the early Egyptians; narcotics from 4000 BC; and medicinal use of marijuana has been dated to 2737 BC in China. But not until the 19th cent. AD were the active substances in drugs extracted. There followed a time when some of these newly discovered substances—morphine, laudanum, cocaine—were completely unregulated and prescribed freely by physicians for a wide variety of ailments. They were available in patent medicines and sold by traveling tinkers, in drugstores, or through the mail. During the American Civil War, morphine was used freely, and wounded veterans returned home with their kits of morphine and hypodermic needles. Opium dens flourished. By the early 1900s there were an estimated 250,000 addicts in the United States. The problems of addiction were recognized gradually. Legal measures against drug abuse in the United States were first established in 1875, when opium dens were outlawed in San Francisco. The first national drug law was the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, which required accurate labelling of patent medicines containing opium and certain other drugs. In 1914 the Harrison Narcotic Act forbade sale of substantial doses of opiates or cocaine except by licensed doctors and pharmacies. Later, heroin was totally banned. Subsequent Supreme Court decisions made it illegal for doctors to prescribe any narcotic to addicts; many doctors who prescribed maintenance doses as part of an addiction treatment plan were jailed, and soon all attempts at treatment were abandoned. Use of narcotics and cocaine diminished by the 1920s. The spirit of temperance led to the prohibition of alcohol by the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1919, but Prohibition was repealed in 1933.

2. Impact of Drug Abuse:

- **Psychological effects:**

Substance abuse and mental health are linked because the psychological effects of drug addiction, including alcohol, cause changes in your body and brain. A careful balance of

⁴ Yusuf, U.L., Gazali, W.A. & Abdullahi, M. (2018). Drug Abuse among youths in Nigeria: Implication to National Development. Retrieved July 16, 2018 from <http://www.unimaid.edu.ng>

⁵ <https://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/medicine/diseases/pathology/drug-addiction-and-drug-abuse/history>

chemicals keeps the cogs turning inside your body, and even the smallest change can cause you to experience negative symptoms. Excessive alcohol and drug use sends your nervous system into disarray, rewires your brain, and causes inflammation — all of which can cause mental illness. Read on to find out more about the emotional effects of substance use disorders⁶. Drug abuse and consumption of chemical substances affects the functioning of brain and people tend to become psychopaths and may result into they becoming violent.

- **Effect on Society:**

The consequences of illicit drug use are widespread, causing permanent physical and emotional damage to users and negatively impacting their families, co-workers, and many others with whom they have contact. Drug use negatively impacts a user's health, often leading to sickness and disease. In many cases, users die prematurely from drug overdoses or other drug-associated illnesses. Some users are parents, whose deaths leave their children in the care of relatives or in foster care. Drug law violations constitute a substantial proportion of incarcerations in local, state, and federal facilities and represent the most common arrest category⁷. Drug abuse has also resulted into increase in crimes as youth tend to commit crime after consuming drugs.

- **Effect on Health⁸:**

People with addiction often have one or more associated health issues, which could include lung or heart disease, stroke, cancer, or mental health conditions. Imaging scans, chest X-rays, and blood tests can show the damaging effects of long-term drug use throughout the body. For example, it is now well-known that tobacco smoke can cause many cancers, methamphetamine can cause severe dental problems, known as meth mouth, and that opioids can lead to overdose and death. In addition, some drugs, such as inhalants, may damage or destroy nerve cells, either in the brain or the peripheral nervous system (the nervous system outside the brain and spinal cord).

⁶ <https://www.racnj.com/5-devastating-psychological-effects-of-drug-addiction/>

⁷ <https://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs38/38661/drugImpact.htm#:~:text=The%20consequences%20of%20illicit%20drug%20use%20are%20widespread%2C%20causing%20permanent,leading%20to%20sickness%20and%20disease.>

⁸ <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/addiction-health>

3. Laws Relating to Drugs:

- **The Constitutional Approach and the Policy⁹:**

India's approach towards Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances is enshrined in Article 47 of the Constitution of India which mandates that the 'State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health'. Article 47, which is based on Gandhian principle, provides social security and justice to the citizens by enumerating duties of the state which are important for achieving the goal of a better society, and it includes better conditions of living, access to healthy and nutritious food and public health and hygiene. As intoxicating drinks and drugs are injurious to health and therefore it has been expressly provided by article 47 that state should take steps to reduce or stop the consumption of such injurious drinks or drugs. The same principle of preventing use of drugs except for medicinal use was also adopted in the three international conventions on drug related matters, viz., Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971 and the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988. India has signed and ratified these three conventions. India's commitment to prevention of drug abuse and trafficking predates the coming into force of the three conventions.

- **The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985¹⁰:**

The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (the NDPS Act) was enacted to consolidate and amend the law relating to narcotic drugs, to make stringent provisions for the control and regulation of operation relating to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, to provide for the forfeiture of property derived from, or used in, illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and to implement the provisions of the International Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and for matters connected therewith." The Act regulated operations like manufacture, transport, and consumption of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Under the Act, financing certain illicit activities like cultivating cannabis, manufacturing narcotic drugs, or harbouring persons engaged in them is an offence.

⁹ <https://theguardian.com/drug-abuse-in-india-policy-refinement-for-efficient-control/>

¹⁰ <https://www.clearias.com/narcotic-drugs-psychotropic-substances-act/>

Punishment: Persons found guilty of this offence will be punished with rigorous imprisonment of at least 10 years, extendable up to 20 years, and a fine of at least Rs.1 lakh. It also provides for forfeiture of property derived from or used in, illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. It also provides for the death penalty in some cases where a person is a repeat offender. The NDPS Act has since been amended thrice – in 1988, 2001, and 2014. The Act extends to the whole of India and it applies also to all Indian citizens outside India and to all persons on ships and aircraft registered in India.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions:

Drug abuse and drug addiction is not new concept and is existing since ages and the impact of drug abuse is very harmful and effects the society at large. Today we can see that the school going kids can find the drug peddlers but not the Government functionaries. This culture should stop and there must be more stringent laws to curb the drug abuse and eradicate the menace of drug trafficking. In order to combat drug trafficking and to protect the human rights of the vulnerable people in the society, strong political will of the government is crucial in implementing their anti – drug trafficking mandates. Thus, we can say that any crime which can be used as business one day becomes a big social evil. We have to solve the problem by taking stringent measures and see that policies are implemented strictly. It is for the authorities to ensure that the law does not remain a mere theory.