iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 13 **Issue:** I **Month of publication:** January 2025

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2025.66481

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 13 Issue I Jan 2025- Available at www.ijraset.com

Drug Addiction is a Menace for Society: A Case Study on Causes and Awareness among Youth of Udhampur District of Jammu and Kashmir State

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Abstract: ***Drug addiction has now become a large phenomenon in Udhampur District in the past one decade affecting society. The use of alcohol, tobacco, various drugs is spread continuously among youths. The addiction of psychoactive drugs among youths is an issue of national importance. Drug addiction also called substance use disorder is a major preventable cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. Udhampur District of Jammu and Kashmir State is not an exception. The aim of the present study is to know the awareness of drug addiction among people of Udhampur District of Jammu Division. 250 persons 150 male and 100 female selected randomly from different areas of district Udhampur District were asked questions regarding the age at which people start to use drug, their drug habits, their reason for drug etc. The results obtained in our study presents a horrifying picture and a threat for the entire society if the menace is not controlled.***

Keywords: Unemployment rate, youth, Udhampur District, Awareness, Drug Addiction, Substance abuse, behaviour, etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Addiction is a disease that affects your brain and behavior. When you're addicted to drugs, you can't resist the urge to use them, no matter how much harm the drugs may cause. The earlier you get treatment for drug addiction (also called substance use disorder) the more likely you are to avoid some of the more dire consequences of the disease. Drug addiction isn't about just heroin, cocaine, or other illegal drugs. Youth can get addicted to alcohol, nicotine, sleep and anti-anxiety medications, and other legal substances. Youth can also get addicted to prescription or illegally obtained narcotic pain medications, or opioids. These physical changes can last a long time. They make youth to lose control and can lead to damaging behaviors**.[1]** 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 30. Drug addiction can start with experimental use of a recreational drug in social situations, and, for some people, the drug use becomes more frequent. For others, particularly with opioids, drug addiction begins when they take prescribed medicines or receive them from others who have prescriptions. The risk of addiction and how fast you become addicted varies by drug. Some drugs, such as opioid painkillers, have a higher risk and cause addiction more quickly than others.

As time passes, you may need larger doses of the drug to get high. Soon you may need the drug just to feel good. As your drug use increases, you may find that it's increasingly difficult to go without the drug. Attempts to stop drug use may cause intense cravings and make you feel physically ill. These are called withdrawal symptoms. Help from your health care provider, family, friends, support groups or an organized treatment program can help you overcome your drug addiction and stay drug-free.

According to a survey conducted by United Nations Drug Control Progarmme (UNDCP) there are seventy thousand drug addicts in Kashmir division alone including women four thousand. In Kashmir valley 65% to 70% students are drug addicts. 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. Kashmir as it is known for its attraction for tourists and migrant laborers which increase rate of different drug use among drug addicts. Easily availability from parent gateway drugs like Cigarette, Naas, Hookah etc are commonly used by young people aging 12-15 years**[2].**

Drugs *et al.* **[3]** suggests that religion plays a major role in shaping the individuals world view and existential understanding. Hindus believe that god Shiva was very fond of hemp drugs; these drugs are still offered to Shiva in temples on the night of Shivaratri. Sudan **[4]** suggested in his study that youth are at the fore front of violent conflict, often fighting without a choice. Kashmiri youth have serious psychological and social difficulties as a result of on-going violence which leads them drug addiction. Nadeem *et al.* **[5]** have mentioned that changing cultural values, increasing economic stress are leading to initiation in to substance abuse. The study also showed that industrialization, urbanization and migration has led to stresses and strains of modern life.

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A. *Epidemiology Of Drug Abuse*

Cannabis, marijuana and hashish are the most widely abused drugs in the world. Around 141 million people worldwide consume cannabis. The use of stimulants such as amphetamine and ecstasy is also widespread, with nearly 30 million people abusing these drugs. Cocaine is used by around 13 million people across the globe, with the highest number of users in the United States. Abuse of heroin and other opioids is less common than with other drugs and is taken up by around 8 million people worldwide, mainly in South-East and South-West Asia and Europe. Drug abuse is seen in various different age groups and in individuals from nearly all walks of life and socioeconomic strata. However, men are more likely to abuse drugs than women; single people are more likely than married individuals and urban dwellers more likely than rural dwellers. Prisoners, street children and younger individuals are also more likely to abuse drugs.

B. *Extent Of The Problem*

It is estimated that there are about 62.5 million alcohol users, 8.7 million cannabis users and about 2 million opioids users in our country. There are an estimated 250 million tobacco users of age 10 and above. Total about 3 million (about 0.3 per cent of total population) estimated victims of different kinds of drug usages in India. Serious public health problems result from alcohol and other drug consumption. Drug abuse and its impact among women is now becoming more evident in India. Licit substances like tobacco and alcohol are widely prevalent, while abuse of illicit substances like cannabis, heroin, other opiates including opium and propoxyphene is recognized throughout the country. The abuse of psychotropic substances and solvents is also increasingly being recognized. **[6]**

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

In the present study both quantitative and qualitative methods are applied in order to obtain a holistic insight into the objectives of the study. The study adopted quantitative techniques using the survey method because it can empirically test the hypotheses used in this study. The questionnaire developed was pre-tested and validated by specialists and experts using appropriate statistical tools. The survey was carried out by using interview schedule and targeted at random 250 people, 150 male and 100 female from district Udhampur District of Jammu Division. The data collected at random from Udhampur District was carefully analyzed using appropriate statistical tools.

III. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in awareness between male and female respondents selected for study from Udhampur District of Jammu Division.
In order to test the hypothesis, we use chisquare test.

IV. IMPACTS OF DRUG ADDICTION

Substance abuse (alcohol, tobacco and other drugs) is associated with a range of physical, psychological, social and occupational problems. It is a complex problem having medical and social ramifications which impacts all social strata. It affects not only the user and their families but all sections of the society. **[7]** Young people who persistently abuse substances often experience an array of problems, including academic difficulties, health-related problems (including mental health), poor peer relationships, and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Additionally, there are consequences for family members, the community, and the entire society.

A. *Health And Safety*

Psychoactive drugs affect the central nervous system and act by altering a person's feelings, thoughts and behaviour. They act by directly affecting the brain or the central nervous system (CNS) leading to various complication and health and behavioural problems. Injuries due to accidents (such as car accidents), physical disabilities and diseases, and the effects of possible overdoses are among the health-related consequences of youth substance abuse. Disproportionate numbers of youth involved with alcohol and other drugs face an increased risk of death through suicide, homicide, accident, and illness. Trauma, violence, organ system damage, various cancers, unsafe sexual practices, premature death and poor nutritional status of families with heavy drinking fathers are associated with substance abuse.
Substances commonly associated with drug abuse-related deaths are cocaine, heroin (and other opiates), barbiturates and amphetamines (and amphetamine derivatives). Benzodiazepines, hallucinogens, cannabis and other substances are less frequently

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implicated. Combinations of drugs and alcohol were frequently noted. Although commonly used, the term "overdose" is misleading since different reactions, such as hypersensitivity, may be the real mechanism of death in some cases rather than an acute intoxication effect due to excessive amounts of the drugs. Concerning chronic use, there may be greater risks of damaging the lungs by smoking cannabis than tobacco**[8].**

B. Crime

Crime and drugs may be related in several ways, none of them simple. First, illicit production, manufacture, distribution or possession of drugs may constitute a crime. Secondly, drugs may increase the likelihood of other, non-drug crimes occurring. Thirdly, drugs may be used to make money, with subsequent money-laundering. And fourthly, drugs may be closely linked to other major problems, such as the illegal use of guns, various forms of violence and terrorism. Whether illicit drug use should be considered a crime, a disease, a social disorder or some mixture of these is debated in many countries. Often, public policy is ambivalent about the nature of addiction, with social attitudes towards drug abuse reflecting uncertainty about what causes abuse and who is ultimately responsible. A continuum exists in relation to accepted social status and crime. At one end is law-abiding behaviour and at the other, criminal activity. Between these two extremes are found deviant behaviour and delinquency. Many marginal persons who use drugs do not go on to become delinquents or criminals. If progression along this continuum does not take place within a country, the concept of progression is even less applicable across cultures. What is marginal or deviant in one culture may be tolerated or even considered to be part of the mainstream in another**.[9]**

C. Families

In addition to personal adversities, the abuse of alcohol and other drugs by youth may result in family crises and jeopardize many aspects of family life, sometimes resulting in family dysfunction. Both siblings and parents are profoundly affected by alcohol- and drug-involved youth. Substance abuse can drain a family's financial and emotional resources**.[10]**

D. Social And Economic Consequences

In addition to personal adversities, the abuse of alcohol and other drugs by youth may result in family crises and jeopardize many aspects of family life, sometimes resulting in family dysfunction. Both siblings and parents are profoundly affected by alcohol- and drug-involved youth. Substance abuse can drain a family's financial and emotional resources. Many of the families with a substance user also had difficulty in running the day-to-day activities of the household, as the available resources were spent on substance rather than on basic needs. This has a great psychological impact on other family members. Consequently this leads to a disturbed emotional and psychological state among family members, which in turn affects their level of happiness and psychological stability.[11]

E. Academics

Declining grades, absenteeism from school/college and other activities, and increased potential for dropping out of school/college are problems associated with youth substance abuse. Hawkins, Catalano, and Miller **[12]** cite research indicating that a low level of commitment to education and higher truancy rates appear to be related to substance use among youth. Youth may interfere with their academic performance and also present obstacles to learning for their classmates. **[13]**

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that majority of the respondents Male (45.5%) and Female (47.5%) respondents from Udhampur District agree that cause of drug addiction among people is bad company. Further, 17% Male respondents agree that cause of drug addiction is chance use, 9% think unemployment, 7% think frustration and 3.5% think people take drug for fun. Similarly, on examining the response of Female respondents, it has been observed that 12.4% think unemployment, 11% think chance use, 9.5% think for fun and 6.5% think people take drug because of frustration. Statistically, there is a significant association in opinion between male and female respondents ($p<0.04$). The data depicts that majority of the male (43.5%) respondents believe that people become drug addicted in the age group of 20-30 years, followed by < 20 years age group then 30-40 age group and finally >40 years age group. Further, the female respondents in majority (46%) believe that people become drug addicted at <20 years age followed by 20-30 years age group then by 30-40 years age group and finally >40 years of age group. In response to question (ii) asked the majority of the male (43.5%) not believe and female (41.5%) respondents believe that smoking is a door to drug addiction. Statistically, opinion and gender is significantly associated ($p<0.01$).

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The data also reveals that 13.5% believe that effect of drug is loss of health, 24% believe that loss of social status, 9% believe that loss of wealth and majority of male respondents (47.5%) believe that all the three reasons are the effects of drug. Further, in case of n female respondents 18.5% believe that effect of drug is loss of health, 22% believe that loss of social status, 18% believe that loss of wealth and majority of respondents (49.5%) believe that all the three are the effects of drug. Statistically, there is a no significant difference between the opinion of respondents ($p>0.05$).

VI. MEASURES FOR CONTROLLING DRUG ADDICTION

A. *Family Support*

The support of family and friends often plays a vital role in recovery of addiction which is a lifelong journey in itself and requires a hard commitment and family's role is not only limits to take an addict from home to rehab centre but turn his focus towards long term recovery. It becomes crucial for family and friends to create and implement a change in their lifestyle.

B. *Treatment Through De-Addiction Centres*

The problem of drug addiction has become chronic in India and especially in Punjab and to fight with this menace the role of De-addiction cells cannot be disregarded. As far as India is concerned, the Ministry of Social Justice and Employment has been implementing programmes for prevention of alcoholism and substance abuse. Under the scheme, grant-in-aid is provided to voluntary organizations for implementing community based programmes on awareness generation, preventive education, counselling, detoxification, and rehabilitation. It is also true that numerous De-addiction centres have also been emerged, some efforts are still needed to drain this problem like availability of medicines, provision of doctors and counselors are required[14].

C. *Check On The Custom Officers*

It has been analyzed that some time custom officers are also equally responsible for this problem as these officers whose main job is to check documentation while importing goods and these people sometimes become a helpful agent in the supply of drugs to international market for the sake of money should be checked.

D. *Role Of Government*

Government policies and initiatives against drug trafficking should be integrated into development programmes in all countries; the key goal of strengthening institutions should be kept in mind. Firstly, there should be tough penalties against all those who make profits from drug trade. Secondly, the security at the borders should be tightened to protect the infiltration of drugs in the economy. Therefore, drug addiction is a complex disease that has negative consequences for individuals and for society. The alarming extent of drug addiction at a wide scale extent is worrisome for the entire country. Unemployment, social tensions, easy availability of narcotics, sale of prescription drugs at chemist shops are a few reasons for high drug consumption in India. Indeed, every menace has some solutions but we need individual, societal and government support to overcome this problem.

E. *Role Of Medical And Health Education Department In JK*

The Govt. of JK constitutes a committee in 2022 under the Nasha Mukht Abiyan and the committee submitted report as follows:

1) Setting up of Drug De-addiction Rehabilitation Centre in all districts with OPD and IPD facilities by optimally utilizing the existing facilities being run by Police / Social welfare/ NGOs etc.
2) Devising mechanism for collating information on over-the-counter drugs /medicines being misused by the drug/substance · abusers for identification of drug abuse.
3) Devising methodology for taking up research, survey and impact assessments on substance use, as a continuous activity.
4) Devising mechanism for regular counseling with Drug addicts while maintaining anonymity as a continuous activity.
5) Measures to undertake detailed screening of HIV / Hepatitis patients and undertake remedial measures for those found involved in drug abuse as continuous activity.
6) Evolving procedures for community recovery alongside individual recovery by collective support through medical and counseling services.
7) Converging the activities of stakeholder Departments such as Ayush , Social welfare , Youth Sports & Services and others for holding rehabilitative programs including regular Yoga sessions for drug addicts/ de-addicts.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study conducted in Udhampur District of Jammu Division tries to look at the crucial aspect of drug awareness and vis-vis treatment of drug addiction. The study reveals that 89.17% respondents are not aware of the process of drug de-addiction. Only 3.4% respondents know about the NGO(s) working in the field of drug de-addiction and only 3.4% respondents know about the drug de-addiction centres present in J&K. There is a great need for creating awareness about drug abuse among people. In Jammu Division the problem of drug addiction has metastasized for several reasons. To begin with, the role of the drug monitoring agencies and police in controlling the menace in the Jammu Division is very poor. In rural areas of Jammu Division, families are unaware if a drug is being abused in their midst. The latest literature available on the topic reveals that due to armed conflict there is a free access to drugs and alcohol. It is observed that there is an increase in the crime rate, road accidents, suicides and suicidal attempts, deaths due to overdose, psychiatric disorders and high cost on general health issues due to chronic drug abuse like liver disorders, gastritis, accidental injuries and an increased risk for HIV infections due to Intravenous Drug Use (IDU). Addiction also causes irreparable damage to the family structure. People of Udhampur District believe easy availability of the drugs is a huge contributing factor to addiction. To curb the growing menace of drug abuse every person of the state of Jammu and Kashmir should take the responsibility and join hands with each other eliminate the roots of this problem.

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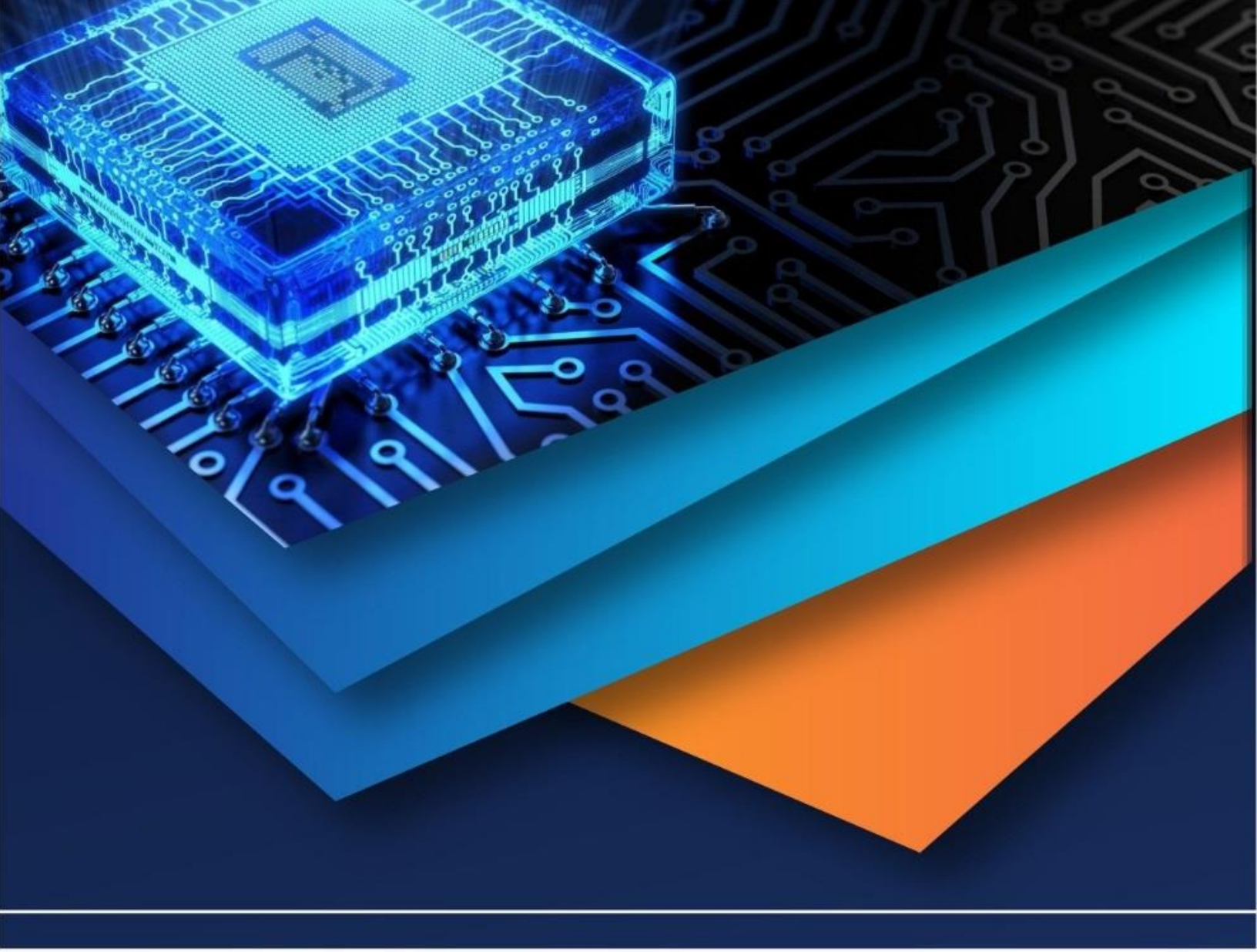

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