

Drug Addiction among Children: An Emerging Threat to the front-line community of Poonch District of Jammu and Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

Drug addiction among children is a growing concern that poses a significant threat to society. Children are increasingly exposed to drugs, which can lead to addiction and have a negative impact on their physical, mental, and social well-being. The consequences of drug addiction among children can be severe, including impaired cognitive and social development, increased risk of criminal behavior, and a higher likelihood of long-term substance abuse. The purpose of the study is to examine how drug abuse contributes to the alarming rise in juvenile crime and its negative impact on society in Poonch District. This study is based on the Qualitative method, which includes secondary data and observation of the researcher. This study reveals that factors such as peer pressure, family dysfunction, and lack of parental supervision can contribute to drug addiction among children. As children represent the nation's future, it is inevitable that drug addiction will have a negative effect on society if it continues to spread. Destruction in terms of economics, culture, and morality is also brought about by it, specifically to the individual and generally to the community. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, early intervention, and effective treatment. Public awareness campaigns, education programs, and support for families are essential components of such an approach. Effective strategies to combat drug addiction among children are crucial to ensuring the safety and well-being of future generations.

Keywords: Drug Addiction, Drug Abuse, Children, Society and Frontline

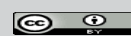
The future of any nation lies on his Teenagers but unfortunately the future of the border of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) youth is going to the Dark Age due to the increased of drugs activities along the LOC.

In contemporary society, we are confronted with an increasing number of challenges, such as economic hardship, corrupt practices, begging, backwardness, and joblessness, amongst others; each of these issues makes a contribution to the formation of a new challenge, which is one of the most rapidly expanding problems; that problem is the addiction to drugs. As time has gone on, the number of drugs that people abuse has grown to an alarming level. Drugs like narcotics, opiates, heroin, brown sugar,

pethidine, cocaine, amphetamines, depressants like alcohol, barbiturates, and diazepam, hallucinogens like LSD, mescaline, phencyclidine, psilocybin, and cannabis like *ganja*, *Charas*, hash oil, etc. One can say that a person is addicted to drugs if his or her actions are heavily influenced by the ease with which they can get and use chemical substances that are detrimental to the user, others, or both. Addiction often begins with occasional drug use in social situations and progresses to more regular use

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over time (Murray, J.B. (1967). Addiction to other drugs (particularly opioids) often begins with their use medically Drug use and misuse lead to the Substantial amounts of lost employment, destroyed property, and ruined number of productive lives, resulting in enormous social and economic expenses for both the person and society Substance abuse activates a “brain switch” that forever alters brain systems (Volkow, N.D. (2005) Opiate usage causes neuro adaptation, which is a phenomenon with varying consequences influenced by social environment. Addiction is a social issue that is particularly frequent in communities with “many aspects of structural deprivation (Acker, C.J. (2010). Drugs are destroying our communities, fueling the growth of violent crime and communicable illnesses like AIDS, and wiping off the next generation. It’s not just young people who are falling prey to drug abuse; the entire culture is in its grip. A large variety of compounds have been tried to treat disease throughout history, although only a small subset of these medicines had solely direct impacts on the signs of disease other lead to more health problems in the society (Khanam, S. 2008). Knowledge of Drug Addiction o f first year MBBS Students of selected Medical College in Dhaka. The negative effects of drug usage on people’s health, relationships, finances, mental well-being, and safety at home and in the community make it one of the most alarming problems we face today. Abuse of drugs is now widespread everywhere, including homes, public places, places of employment, parks, slums, marketplaces, and even academic institutions, and this problem exists in both urban and rural locations (Feroz, Z. and Alam, R. 2012). Alcohol, drugs, hallucinogens, and psychomotor stimulants are all very different and are linked to different kinds of violent and aggressive behavior in different ways. It has number of effects on the economy, society, and family as well as individual’s physical and mental health. Addiction to drugs may lead to all sorts of health problems since it creates a consuming obsession. As a result of their altered conduct, they engage in criminal acts including hijacking and extortion as well as theft and robbery. Cross-border conflict and displacement have disrupted the daily lives of residents, especially the education of children, compelling them to seek safety in camps or with relatives, thereby

interrupting their academic continuity (Aziz and Alyas, 2023). Family conflict is one of the most significant indicators of commencement of alcohol use, indicating that adolescents from households with more disputes are more likely to acquire the substance use problem (Livingston, M., Laslett, A.-M. and Dietze, 2008). Drug abuse problems may be very costly for families since they can drain resources and cause major financial hardship. There are significant gender variations in both the prevalence and usage of narcotics. The rate of drug usage among women is often rather high; women who are addicted to substances have limited access to treatment options (The Tribune). Drug misuse is on the rise and poses a major threat to every country because of the negative effects it has on people’s health, their ability to work, their relationships with others, their sense of morality, and their ability to go forward as a society.

This research article examines the impact of drug addiction on Teenagers of Poonch district. District Poonch is one of border district of Jammu and Kashmir, also known as “Mini Kashmir”. The district is bounded by POK from three sides. Poonch has the rich history of flora and fauna which attracts the tourists to visit. It has its own culture and historical monuments. On the other hand, Poonch is facing various challenges in day-to-day life, drugs addiction is one of them. Drug addiction became major problem nowadays which is spreading very fast among the youth. Since it is a border district, in every new day drugs have been brought illegally from POK to Poonch district, which becomes a huge problem for the administration as well as the society of Poonch. People indulge in drugs addiction and drug trade as well in the society that ruined many youngsters’ lives in the area. In addition to explore the challenges faced by local administration and give appropriate insights to the policy-maker. In this article, the researcher provided an insightful suggestion to the administration to overcome the challenges of drugs addiction in the region.

Objectives of the study

- ❑ To examine the impact of drugs addiction on the society,
- ❑ To find out the administrative efforts to deals with the social evil of drugs.

Methodology

In this study, the researcher applied the Qualitative research approach, followed by exploratory research design. Data has been collected through secondary sources such as, newspapers, published and unpublished govt. reports, journals articles, and books. The researcher used content analysis method to analyze the data for getting appropriate results.

Authorities Ramp up Efforts against Narcotics Trafficking in Poonch

Nowadays Drugs addiction becomes a global phenomenon. Almost each and every nation is suffering with this fatal disease, which is spreading very fast throughout the world. The problem of drug addiction in the Poonch district is an emerging challenge for the administration as the district is bounded by POK from three of its sides; smuggling of drugs from POK to Poonch District has become a common thing in recent past that became a major challenge for the local administration. On March 2023 the J&K police raided a drug dealer's residence along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Poonch district and seized 7 kilograms (kg) of heroin and approximately, 2 crores (INR) in cash from the site. District police and Indian Army jointly launched a search operation in the Balakote area of tehsil Mendhar in which they recovered fifteen packets of narcotics from drug peddlers (Service, 2022). The J&K Police and Indian Army launched screening after getting specific input about the importation of drugs in the Balakote area of district Poonch, during the screening of vehicles and common man they found four kilograms of heroin and 1 lakh rupees in a commercial van (Generator, M. (n.d.)).

On the suspicious ground, Intelligence authorities apprehended a Class X student near the LOC, during the inquiry authorities recovered 400 grammes of narcotic powder from her possession. According to Lt. Col. Davinder Anand, in a massive combined search operation of the Military and the J&K Police, in which they found 31 kilograms of narcotics near to frontline. The Jammu and Kashmir police seized 12 kg of heroin and 11 lakhs in cash from the drug peddlers. The authorities believed that the material was dropped through a drone from POK to this location (The Real Kashmir News). Jammu and Kashmir police nabbed a leading drugs

smuggler during an anti-drug operation in the Mendhar region of the Poonch district.

A drug dealer possessing illegal opium (Charas) was apprehended by police in Surankote of Jammu & Kashmir's Poonch district. According to local police, the drug dealer also carried one kilogram of a chemical similar to Charas (Early Times Newspaper Jammu Kashmir). Mendhar sub division of Poonch district police apprehended one bootlegger, seizing 52 bottles of whisky, and foiling an attempt of smuggling. Whereas, two bootleggers were apprehended and 45 quarters and 50 bottles of booze were recovered by police in the Mendhar sub division of Poonch district, foiling an attempt of illegal liquor smuggling. Poonch police arrested a resident of the Dungas area for smuggling 23 alcohol bottles. According to police, they have input on the illegal shipment of alcoholic beverages to other areas in the region in order to sell the mat higher rates, particularly to young people and to addict them.

The growing prevalence of drug usage among young people is a source of concern for the people who live in Poonch. As reported by Early Times, the locals have leveled accusations against the police, saying that they promote addiction and encourage drug smuggling. The locals claim that if a drug dealer is captured, police instantly release the dealer and his vehicle, as they have good liaisons with police authority. Moreover, the residents claim that due to this behavior of police, drug addiction raised the day-to-day loss of many lives.

This is very unfortunate that the youth of Poonch District is becoming the prey of drug addiction day by day. The poor parents are helpless, they love their children even though they are drug addicted, but now when they have seen their children destroying themselves completely, they ask themselves, why they gave birth to the children. This is the story of every parent in the Poonch Districts.

Overall, in Jammu and Kashmir, according to Observer Research Foundation the insurgency that was funded by Pakistan continues to lose ground, the security authorities have shifted their attention to narcotics traffickers. In 2022, the J&K police arrested 1700 drug dealers and reported 1,021 offences under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Of those,

138 were considered to be the most infamous drug peddlers. Over the same time period, the security authorities were successful in seizing significant quantities of illegal goods, including 4.355 tones of poppy straw, 13 kilos of brown sugar, 4.355 tones of Charas, and 56 kilograms of heroin.

DISCUSSION

Administrative authorities in the Poonch District of Jammu and Kashmir have achieved tremendous progress against drug trafficking by means of a series of coordinated operations. Multiple arrests and the recovery of significant quantities of illegal narcotics have resulted from the different crackdowns, indicating a coordinated attempt to stop the flow of drugs in the area.

These arrests serve as an indication of the continuous attempts made by local law enforcement to foil the narcotics networks that are present in the area. The rapid and aggressive measures adopted by law enforcement are indicative of their dedication to protecting communities against the negative consequences of drug trafficking. The spread of illegal narcotics presents a variety of obstacles, from social instability to health issues for the general population.

Every organization involved, including law enforcement, governmental organizations, and local communities, must work closely together to pursue a society free of drugs while the investigations into these instances are ongoing. The worldwide problem of drug trafficking may be faced and conquered with persistence and unshakable resolve, opening the door to a better and healthier future for all. The destructive spread of drugs knows no geographical boundaries and leaves a path of destruction in its wake, ranging from major metropolitan areas to isolated rural villages. The Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir is one of the areas dealing with this disaster; there, the issue of drug addiction has become a significant concern for the administration of the area.

Critical Analysis

The above data presents a concerning situation of drug addiction in the Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir. The district is located near the Line of Control (LoC), which has made it vulnerable to drug smuggling from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir

(PoK). The data includes several incidents where law enforcement agencies have seized significant amounts of drugs and cash from drug peddlers in the region.

Data indicates that the problem is not limited to a specific type of drug, as various types of narcotics such as *heroin*; *opium*, *charas*, and illegal liquor have been seized. The authorities have also found evidence of drones being used to transport drugs from PoK to the Poonch district. The data also highlights the involvement of young people in drug addiction, as a Class X student was caught with narcotic powder in her possession.

The researcher observe that drug addicts become involved in a number of anti-social actions to earn money and their aberrant behavior becomes the reason for many problems in our daily life and creates hindrances in our socioeconomic, and cultural growth and development.

The researcher also observes that the drug trade is a lucrative business, and it attracts many people who see it as a means of quick money. The demand for drugs is also high in Poonch district, which has led to an increase in drug addiction and related issues, such as crime and health problems.

The data also reveals the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies in addressing the issue of drug addiction. The locals have accused the police of promoting addiction and encouraging drug smuggling. The residents claim that the police have good liaisons with drug dealers and instantly release them when caught. Such allegations suggest corruption and a lack of accountability on the part of law enforcement agencies.

The data highlights the devastating impact of drug addiction on families in the Poonch district. Parents are helpless as they watch their children become addicted to drugs and destroy their lives. The problem of drug addiction is a significant concern, and it requires a multi-faceted approach that involves law enforcement agencies, healthcare professionals, and the community at large.

The data suggests that there is a need for increased awareness and education on the harmful effects of drugs and the importance of prevention and treatment. Healthcare professionals and social workers can play a critical role in educating the public and providing support and resources to those struggling with drug addiction.

Finally, the data highlights the need for a more effective law enforcement strategy to tackle drug trafficking and smuggling. The authorities need to take a more proactive approach to identify drug smugglers and dealers and hold them accountable for their actions. The involvement of the community and the public in reporting suspicious activities and providing information can also be instrumental in curbing drug addiction and related criminal activities.

CONCLUSION

Drugs are tearing apart our societies, increasing crime, and spreading diseases such as mental disorders, asthma, cancer, lung diseases, damaging kidneys, etc. drug addiction is a kind of poison that is taking the precious lives of the youth in the present time and in future as well if it is not eradicated from the society. Drug addicts lose their identity and dignity in society and gradually indulge in criminal activities at the same time they drop out from the schools, colleges and lose their relationships, jobs due to irregularities. Drug abusers in society are spreading this addiction among other youngsters and involving them in the trading of drugs, which will be a negative impact on the future generation. Findings show that drug addiction has clutched not only the youth but society as well. Moreover, it rapidly decreases the cultural, educational, moral and family values of the community. In border districts like Poonch, the incidence of drug addiction is increasing day by day due to the importation of drugs from PoK. To overcome this problem the administration needs to conduct sports events, career counseling, cultural events and awareness programs among children, parents, youth, and civil society. Further, the administration needs to reach out to the masses residing along with LOC and aware them of the harms of drug addiction. Government must involve the Panchayat Raj institutions to eradicate this evil from the society. Education is the primary aspect which helps to understand people about the impact

of drug addiction on a happy life. Thus, there is a need to include the specific topic on harmless of drug addiction to aware the student from early childhood. The proliferation of drug addiction in Poonch district has cast a dark shadow over the community, ensnaring individuals from all walks of life in its grip of dependency and despair. From youth seeking solace in substance abuse to families torn apart by the ravages of addiction, the impact of this epidemic reverberates far and wide, leaving a profound mark on the fabric of society.

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