



## PERCEPTION ON DRUG ABUSE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SALEM DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU – A STUDY

### Sociology

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### ABSTRACT

Drug abuse is one of the serious problems in India. The numbers of drug abusers are increasing day by day. It is an urgent need to control the problem of drug abuse because it not only kills the abusers but it also makes bad impact on the family and society at large. Before studying the prevalence of the drug abuse among the said population, it is important to study their perception about drugs and drug abuse. Therefore in the present study the researchers studied the perception of university students on drug abuse and abusers. The results show that government must strengthen the present legal mechanisms for controlling the drug abuse.

### KEYWORDS

Drug Abuse, Perception, Counseling and Legal Measures.

### Introduction

The problem of drug abuse in India has become a matter of serious public concern, especially on account of its increase among the youth in various socio-cultural and economic strata. Although there are no definite figures to show the actual extent of the problem, yet the rising number of drug addicts approaching the countrywide drug Counseling and de-addiction centre's indicates the increasing level and extent of the problem. There are many factors, which have contributed to this situation in India. Some of these factors are far reaching social and institutional changes in the wake of industrialization, impact of urbanization and industrialization on the consciousness of man, rapid developments in science and technology particularly in the field of chemical processing, ready availability of abuse able drugs and the geographical location of India. Since India is geographically sandwiched between the two chief sources of opium derivatives in the world (the golden triangle and the Golden Crescent), it has easily become a transit country for the westward movement of these drugs. Nepal, which is situated on the northern borders of the country, has been and continues to be a major source of cannabis, herbal, and to some extent, cannabis resin. India is directly connected with these source areas and has land borders with Pakistan, from where the traffickers have easy access into the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat. The states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar has borders with Nepal. State of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram have borders with Burma. These borders are land borders with populations living on both sides culturally very similar. There is traditional trade and commerce of the local people with those on the other side of the border from times immemorial, particularly across the Nepal, Bangladesh and Burma borders. The task of enforcement agencies to check the traffic of drugs therefore has become very difficult. One of the major consequences of the drug abuse is dependence and addiction, characterized by compulsive drug craving seeking behavior and use that persist even in the face of negative consequences. These changes are maladaptive and inappropriate to the social or environment setting, therefore may place the individual at risk for them. Experimentation with drugs during adolescence (11-25 years) is common. At this stage, they try to so many new things. They use drugs for many reasons, including curiosity because it feels good, to reduce stress or to feel grown up.

Adolescents start on drugs for several reasons, from curiosity, recreation for pleasure, and as a need to cope with stress (Patel and Greydanus, 1999). In India approximately 5500 children and adolescent start using tobacco products daily, some as young as 10 years old (Naskar et al. 2004). Sarangi et al. (2008) and Bansal et al. (1993) revealed that in most of the cases (75.5%) friends were providing the substances. From the above review, it is clearly indicates that the adolescent and youth period are crucial period for initiation of the consumption of drugs. Before studying the prevalence of the drug abuse among the said population, it is important to study their perception about drugs and drug abuse. Therefore in the present study the researchers studied the perception of university students on drug abuse and abusers with following objectives.

### Objectives

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of the students who are studying in the Periyar University.
2. To find their perception on various issues of drug abuse.
3. To know their opinion about the existing laws are effective to control the problems of drug abuse.

### Methodology

The present study is conducted among the students who are studying in the Periyar University, Salem. The Periyar University is consisting of 27 departments which comprises of eight clusters. From these 27 departments, the researchers selected 57 respondents by accidental sampling method. The respondents were asked about their socio-economic conditions, perception of drug abuse, impact of drug abuse on the social relationships, perception about ready to give counseling to the drug abusers, laws related to controlling the drug abuse and whether any one of the family members are using the drugs. These questions were measured with appropriate scales and options. The respondents' responses were analyzed with percentile score.

### Results

As far as the sex of the respondents, 52.64 per cent are males and 47.36 per cent of the respondents are females. With regard to age of the respondents, 56.14 per cent belongs to the age category of 20-25 years, 33.33 percent are aged between 26-30 years, 8.78 per cent are aged between 31-40 years and only 1.76 percent of the total respondents belong to the age group of above 40 years. While considering the education level of the respondents, 43.85 per cent are studying their Post-Graduate programme and 12.28 per cent are perusing M.Phil course and less than half of the respondents that is 43.85 per cent are doing their Ph.D programme. As far as the community of the respondents, 49.12 per cent of the respondents comes under the category of OBC community and another 22.80 per cent of the respondents don't to mentioned their community, 19.29 per cent of the respondent belong to SC community and remaining 8.78 per cent of the respondents are from ST community. While considering the marital status of the respondents, 5.97 per cent are unmarried and the remaining 14.03 per cent are married. With regard to religion of the respondents, 71.92 per cent belongs to Hindu religion, 19.29 per cent belongs to Christian religion, 7.01 per cent belongs to Muslim and remaining 1.75 per cent doesn't want to mention their religion.

The respondents are also asked about the reasons behind for the initiation of drug abuse by the youth, among the total respondents 54.39 per cent thinks that the youth used drugs for having fun followed by 29.82 per cent believes that youth used drugs because of overwork/learning, 28.07 per cent believes that the youth initiate due to social/peer pressure, 14.03 per cent thinks that because of parental influence the youth are initiate the drug consuming behavior and remaining 10.52 per cent said that the youth used drugs because of lack of role in society/school. With regard to the side effects of drug addiction on the users, 35.08 per cent mentioned that drugs abuse causes ill health followed by 22.80 per cent reported the drug abuse

brings depression among the users, 17.54 per cent revealed that it causes tiredness, remaining respondents mentioned the negative effects of drugs on individual are bad temper, anxiety/fear, disturbed sleep and failure to do well at school/work. The respondents are also asked about the negative impact of drugs on the users' family, 47.36 per cent of the respondents revealed that illicit drugs break down the family relationship, 22.80 per cent mentioned it causes quarreling in the family, 14.03 per cent caused loss of confidence on the child/children, remaining respondents replied the negative effects of drugs on family are disgrace (8.78 %) and anxiety/fear (7.01 %). As far as the respondents' responses on the negative impact of drugs over the friendship, 56.14 per cent of the respondents mentioned it break down the relationship, 29.82 per cent revealed it causes quarreling between the friends and remaining 14.03 per cent revealed it brings anxiety/fear in the friendship circle.

With regard to respondents' responses on the negative impact of drugs over the society, 47.37 per cent replied that the usage of drugs brought violence in community/society, 19.30 per cent reported that it increases crime in the society, 17.54 per cent said that usage of drugs increasing accidents, remaining respondents the negative effects of drugs in the community are break down in work relationship (8.78 %) and ill health (7.01 %). Among the total respondents, 92.99 per cent of the respondents responded that using of drugs is increasing nowadays among the youth and remaining 7.01 per cent of the respondents expressed their negative opinion about this statement. When the respondents asked about their satisfaction over the role Government to control the drug addiction, 77.20 per cent are not satisfied with the Government Programme to control drug addiction, 22.80 per cent are satisfied with the Government Programme to control drugs. While considering the respondents responses on their willingness to give counseling to the drug addicts, 71.92 per cent said they are willing to give counseling to drugs addicts and the remaining 28.07 per cent are not willing to give counseling to drugs addicts. As far as the respondents responses over to allow the drug addicts to stay nearby, 54.39 per cent respondents said they still accept drugs users to stay nearby, 45.61 per cent of the respondents express their feelings that they hesitate to stay nearby drugs addicts.

The respondents are also asked about whether the society is given a fair chance to the drug addicts to get involved, 70.18 per cent of the respondents said drugs addicts are not given a fair chance to get involved in our society and 29.82 per cent of the respondents replied our society still give chance to involves in different activities to drugs addicts. Among the total respondents, 63.16 per cent of the respondents mentioned that the present legal mechanism is not sufficient to control drug abuse and 36.84 per cent of the respondents accepted that the present mechanism is enough to control drug abuse. Around one-fifth of the respondents (19.30 %) revealed that any of their family members have the habit of drug addiction, 80.70 per cent of the respondents mentioned that none of the family members use the drugs.

### Conclusion

The above results shows that 78 per cent of the respondents are not satisfied with the government programmes to control the drug abuse and similarly 63 per cent of the respondents are not satisfied with the present legal mechanisms to control the drug abuse. Hence it is concluded that government must punish severely the drug smugglers without any bias and also the government should conduct more awareness programmes regarding the impact of illicit drugs in various places where the drug abuse is taking place.

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