

Original Research Article

## Drug Addiction Causes and Awareness among people of Pulwama District of Jammu and Kashmir State

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**Abstract:** Drug addiction also called substance use disorder is a major preventable cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. Pulwama 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 Pulwama district of Kashmir valley. 400 persons 200 male and 200 female selected at random from different areas of district Pulwama 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, youth, Kashmir, drug abuse, Awareness, Drug Addiction, Substance abuse.

### INTRODUCTION

Kashmir valley is thought to be one of the hardest hit places with drug use and the scenario worsened by the prevailing turmoil. In today's world we are facing more challenges like unemployment, poverty, corruption, begging, underdevelopment etc. and all these problems contribute to form a new problem and that is one of the fast growing problems that is, Drug addiction in Kashmir valley. Any substances that make you crave it when you start using it is an addictive agent; a person who succumbs to feeding the craving is an addict. Drug addiction is fastest growing problem among youth in developing countries and in developed countries. As the time passes through the range of drugs increased to alarming level, drugs like Narcotics, brown sugar, opium, morphine, depressants, alcohol, charas and many more are frequently used by people of Kashmir valley. It is reported that tobacco, cannabis (charas), alcohol, benzodiazepines (sleeping pills, like alprax, valium), opiates (like codeine, heroin, morphine), brown sugar, Inhalants (like Fevicol SR, glue, paint thinner, petrol, shoe polish etc) are the major drugs of abuse in the state of Jammu and Kashmir [1-4]. Kashmir valley has been a witness to the conflict over the past couple of decades and estimates put the number of casualties at one hundred thousand. Everybody knows the situation through which the Kashmir's have been going through for the past 25 years or so. Since the people are more sensitive they were the most harried

lot. In order to get out of the mental block these people would visit the medical shop in their vicinity and the person sitting there would prescribe some medicines to them giving them temporary relief. The geographic location of Jammu and Kashmir is such that the transit of drugs is easily possible across the state. In addition the prevailing turmoil is claimed to have worsened the drug abuse problem alongside an unusual increase in other psychiatric disorders in Kashmir. According to [5] million heroin addicts are registered in India and unofficially there are as many as 5 million[2].

According to a survey conducted by United Nations Drug Control Programme (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[3].

Drugs *et al.* [6] 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 [7] 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 the ongoing violence which leads them drug addiction. Nadeem *et al.* [8] 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.

**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 400 people, 200 male and 200 female from district Pulwama of Kashmir valley. The data collected at random from district Pulwama was carefully analysed using

appropriate statistical tools with the help of Statistical Package MINITAB.

**RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in awareness between male and female respondents selected for study from Pulwama district of Kashmir valley.

In order to test the hypothesis, we use chisquare test and Mann-Whitney U test.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The data presented in Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents Male (50.5%) and Female (53.5%) respondents from Pulwama district agree that cause of drug addiction among people is bad company. Further, 22% Male respondents agree that cause of drug addiction is chance use, 14% think unemployment, 9% think frustration and 4.5% think people take drug for fun. Similarly, on examining the response of Female respondents, it has been observed that 15.5% think unemployment, 13% think chance use, 9.5% think for fun and 8.5% think people take drug because of frustration. Statistically, there is a significant association in opinion between male and female respondents (p<0.05).

**Table-1: Cause of Drug abuse among people of Pulwama district**

Respondent	Unemployment	Frustration	Bad Company	Chance Use	For Fun
Male	28 (14%)	18 (9%)	101 (50.5%)	44 (22.0%)	9(4.5%)
Female	31 (15.5%)	17 (8.5%)	107 (53.5%)	26 (13.0%)	19 (9.5%)
Chisquare = 8.554, P>0.05					

The data presented in Table 2 depicts that majority of the male (47.5%) 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 (45.5%) not believe and female (44.5%) respondents believe that smoking is a door to drug addiction. Statistically, opinion and gender is significantly associated (p<0.01). The results obtained in this our study are in agreement with the earlier studies [9,4].

**Table-2: Awareness of drug addiction among People of Pulwama**

Question Asked	Type	Male	%	Female	%	Chisquare	P-value
i) Age at which you believe people become drug addicted	<20 yrs	72	36.0	92	46.0	14.459	<0.01
	20-30	95	47.5	59	29.5		
	30-40	24	12.0	32	16.0		
	>40	9	4.5	17	8.5		
ii) Do you think that smoking is a door to drug addiction	Yes	53	26.5	89	44.5	19.841	<0.01
	No	91	45.5	52	26.0		
	Not Sure	56	28.0	59	29.5		

The data presented in Table 3 reveals that in response to the questions asked to the male and female respondents both highly agree. However, statistically,

there is a significant difference (p<0.01) between the opinion of two study groups i.e., male and female respondents.

**Table-3: Measures to Reduce Drug Addiction among people**

Question Asked	Male Median	Female Median	P-value
i) Govt. Should strictly Ban Smoking/Drugs and its sale	4.182	4.281	<0.01
ii) Religious Leaders should aware people that smoking is haram/harmful	4.591	4.631	<0.01
iii) Elder Family Member should aware all family members about the problems	4.612	4.713	<0.01
iv) By involving drug addicts in games and hobbies we can overcome this bad habit	4.720	4.711	<0.01

The data presented in Table 4, reveals that 14.5% 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 (52.5%) believe that all the three reasons are the effects of drug. Further, in case of n female respondents 17.5% believe

that effect of drug is loss of health, 22% believe that loss of social status, 16% believe that loss of wealth and majority of respondents (44.5%) believe that all the three are the effects of drug. Statistically, there is a nonsignificant difference between the opinion of respondents ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Table-4: Effects of Drug abuse on people**

Respondent	Loss of health	Loss of social status	Loss of wealth	All
Male	29 (14.5%)	48 (24.0%)	18 (9.0%)	105 (52.5%)
Female	35 (17.5%)	44 (22.0%)	32 (16.0%)	89 (44.5%)
Chisquare = 5.976 , $p>0.05$				

## CONCLUSION

This study conducted in Pulwama district of Kashmir valley tries to look at the crucial aspect of drug awareness and vis-vis treatment of drug addiction. The study reveals that 94.17% 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 5.4% respondents know about the drug de-addiction centre(s) present in Kashmir valley. There is a great need for creating awareness about drug abuse among people. In Kashmir valley 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 Kashmir Valley is very poor. In rural Kashmir, families are unaware if a drug is being abused in their midst. "The womenfolk don't know that the man of the house is an addict. They think he's taking medicines. In that case, how can they help him? Kashmir used to be a low drug addiction zone. But 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 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 against such a problem.

## Suggestions

- Department of psychiatry, Government Medical College, Srinagar should take a lead by conducting awareness and intervention programs in major districts of Jammu and Kashmir State. Further, more drug dependence treatment and counseling centers be formed at all district levels.
- Elders, Religious leaders should come forward and support all people who want to eliminate drug abuse from the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

## Acknowledgement

The authors are grateful to Professor M. H. Balkhi, Dean Faculty of Fisheries, SKUAST-Kashmir for his help, and the people who participated in this study.

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