

Understanding the Role of Jammu and Kashmir Police in Eradicating the Drug Nuisance in Kashmir: A Synoptic View

Sheikh Mohd Shafi

Jammu and Kashmir Police
E-mail: smshafi74@gmail.com

Abstract—In the contemporary times drug abuse has been emerging as one of the most eminent threats to the well-being of human society. In the pursuit of physical and psychological pleasures, considerable proportions of the human populations have been found embracing drug addiction. Particularly conflict hit regions in the world have been found ideally supporting grounds for the propagation of drug trade. Spread and influence is such that the drug mafia has become a well-organized industry. It has been proliferating by leaps and bounds aiming to engulf the whole humanity in near future. Kashmir, which once was regarded as the drug free region with agony free atmosphere, is nowadays worst hit of drugs, affecting its youth population and derailing them to embrace devastation relentlessly. For the last three decades, the region has been passing through the worst phase, full of mental agony and physical torments, due to the political instability in the region. Taking wrong advantage of the situation, drug mafia proliferated spontaneously across all the folds of Kashmiri society. It has attained such a stage which has been sabotaging socio-religious and socio-economic aspects of the region ruthlessly. Sustained efforts and attempts are afoot to counter the drug tendencies by all means and among main stakeholders are Police, civil society and NGOs. Police has been on forefront to mitigate the threat through law enforcement and community policing tactics. Besides apprehending drug peddlers, Jammu and Kashmir Police has been treating drug addicts at its drug de-addiction centers. Efforts/attempts are well organized and the issue has been taken up as a special project by the most enterprising police force of J&K UT to end this menace and to make the region a special and drugs free place to live in the near future. The present study is based on the content analysis.

Keywords: Drug addiction, Drug Mafia, JKP (Jammu and Kashmir Police), Kashmiri Society.

1. INTRODUCTION

Kashmir was once believed to be a place free from all nuisances prevalent in the other parts of the country and the world. Usually people praised this region for the unique and simple life styles of the local population besides the natural beauty of the region. Social values were being observed and followed like any other strong belief, drugs were hardly being used by the ailing people as there used to be the indigenous healthcare practices like treatment with herbs and shrubs

which were locally available and had no contraindications like addiction or dependence. People had low resistance levels so could be treated with simple medicines in small doses within short span of time, thereby minimizing the chances of abuse of any drug or substance. So there were no such gateways which could lead to addiction or dependence on drugs, although cigarettes and pipe smoking were prevalent in those times but were confined to old age people mostly and most of the youth refrained from such habits due to strict family and social controls, but with the advent of pleasure filled facilities and exposure to the advanced and advancing societies, things changed radically. External exposures, no doubt brought lots of advantageous changes in the lifestyles of the people, but it also proved to be the harbinger of many evils as well. Alcohol and cannabis were such gateway substances, which found their way into the region through high end tourists & visitors and these substances stayed here forever. Primarily these two substances formed the basis for drug addiction in the region. Although laws are in place to prosecute abusers, but the legally accepted quantities of alcohol are such aspects, which reserve the scope for the alcohol abuse undoubtedly; and also use of cannabis and cannabis products by many faith healers ('malangs'), Hindu sadhus and their followers gives fresh lease to the existence and the longevity of these psychoactive substances in the society. Likewise availability of Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS), sedatives, hallucinogens, inhalants and certain other substances in the open market supports phenomena of substance abuse to proliferate day in and day out. Visiting certain sites on internet, which have the content related to substance abuse, serves the purpose of inducing new and innovative practices of substance abuse. This is one perspective of the drug menace, and the another perspective is prevailing situation, full of uncertainties, due to three decade long period of turmoil, which gave rise to manifold problems, coupled with agonies and torments, seen in the form of frequent violences in the valley of Kashmir. The worst hit proportion of the population has been the youth population, which suffered bitterly in the field of education, carrier making, job finding and recreation.

Due to these reasons physical and mental health of these victimized youth got affected horribly which prompted them to seek some alternative for relief. This urge for seeking relief took them to the proximity of drugs/substances. According to recent studies, steep rise has been seen in the number of drug addicts in the valley and the most of them are youths and the youths who live in the company of addicted ones are highly vulnerable to these psychoactive substances.

As per the most recent National survey report on Magnitude of Substance use in India 2019-reg. Survey conducted by Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment GOI, in the erstwhile state of J&K, shows prevalence of current Alcohol use (10-75 years), has been found in 3.5%-7.4% males; Charas/Ganja (10-75 years), has been found in 0.7% males, Harmful use/Dependence on Opioids (10-75 years), has been found in 1.50% males, while as sedatives (10-75 years) in 0.29%; And inhalants, current use & harmful use, Dependent use, children (10-17 years)- harmful/Dependent use 0.37%, while as current use in 2.09% children. Studies conducted by United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) in 2008, reported that around 70,000 people are drug addicts in the Kashmir valley alone among which 4000 are females. Dr. Mushtaq Margoob, a Psychiatrist, delineates in his book "Menace of Drug Abuse in Kashmir" that most of the substance users in Kashmir were males (99.5 %) among the age group of 26-35 years (57.2%). A 2019 survey by AIIMS, New Delhi reported that 0.8% of the erstwhile states population (10-75 of years of age) needs intervention by service providers in view of opioid use.

Use of psychoactive substances has harmful effects on physical and mental health of a person, it perturbs the home environment, turns family life miserable, muddles relationships, causes financial crunches and also affects emotional flows, which can be chronic and long lasting. The consequences of substance abuse are quite evident which could be seen in the shape of broken families, ailing youth, starving and plundering goons, mischief mongers, psychopaths and hardcore criminals committing heinous crimes like murders, rapes, loot and dacoity. Although substance abuse is one such crime which the accused commits against him/herself primarily but in the aftermath of commission of crime s/he impacts others as well. In brief, substance abuse is a multi-mouthed demon engulfing everything whatever comes in his way, if not curbed, it has the potential to destroy whole world.

Contemplating the possible dangers, Jammu and Kashmir Police took hard stance against the drug nuisance and despite of all challenges started a too pronged project on war footing basis- one against drug peddlers by apprehending them and prosecuting them under the relevant provision of NDPS, (Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances) laws 1985; and another for de addiction of addicted ones, on voluntary basis. Cracking the drug modules and initiating criminal proceedings against the culprits, besides counseling and treating the drug

addicts and vulnerable youth, has been such an initiative which attracted the attention of dormant stakeholders and wooed them to contribute their efforts for the betterment of society. Launching of such a challenging project by the J&K Police in contemporary times, is the most daring and herculean task. Every year large number of drug modules are being cracked by J&K police and a large number of culprits are being booked to be punished. Whole hierarchy of officers of the J&K Police are much concerned about the drug nuisance and its spread. Special teams have been constituted by all district police chiefs to deal the matters related to drugs specifically and proceed on in a time bound manner to curb the drug menace at gross root level. Routinely surprise and snap nakas and raids are being conducted to nab the peddlers effectively. Progress has been quiet healthy and fair factor has been in play at full swing to eradicate the drug nuisance and uproot the whole drug mafia in the region. Since the public awareness with regard to the drug nuisance is at its bloom, hence maximum public support has been pouring in continuously, to mitigate the drug threats and its spread. On the dead diction front J&K Police has taken unique initiative on a large scale to cover the whole population of the region, it has opened 10 dead diction centers in the different districts of the UT of J&K. As per the ex- IGP Kashmir zone, Shri Swayam Prakash Pani-IPS, "The De-addiction Centre at Srinagar has been started with the twin purposes-

- a) To help those youngsters whole desired to be treated and rehabilitated and
- b) To prevent vulnerable youngsters from getting addicted to drug abuse.

The main among those de-addiction centers are:

1. Police Drug De-addiction and Rehabilitation Centre Srinagar and
2. Police Drug De-addiction and Rehabilitation Centre Jammu.

The Srinagar based drug de addiction center was established in 2008 with a capacity of 5 beds and gradually the capacity of the center was increased to 25 beds. In view of flow of patients the capacity was increased to 50 beds with numerous state of the art ancillary facilities have been established near Eidgah Srinagar. At present the centre has a team of qualified and motivated professionals including consultant clinical psychologist, medical officers, counselors, social workers, pharmacists, yoga therapists and other supporting staff working with the patients and their families. The centre has a dedicated ambulance service and telephone facility. Consultancy services offered by visiting psychiatrists of the J&K Health Department are also available. Since the establishment of the centre, 20570 patients have been counseled and treated in the OPD till the end of 2018. Similarly 2116 patients were admitted and rehabilitated in the IPD during this period.

As per the observation of Dr. Nagarajan, Director (NIMANS) Bengaluru, "J&K Police is the only police force doing such work in the entire country but we need to take de-addiction services closer to the community". Former Principle/Dean GMC Srinagar late Dr. Girja Dhar, expressed her views as, "I am surprised to see drug de-addiction services being rendered by J&K Police in such a professional manner at Drug De-addiction Centre, PCR Srinagar". More or less similar views are of Ms. Saiba Verma, Research Scholar, Cornell University, USA, as per her, "during my fifteen months stay in Kashmir, I have very closely seen the functioning of police Drug De-addiction Centre, J&K Police has been pioneer to start the drug de-addiction services and the services are unique in its emphasis on holistic approach which includes individual and family counseling, group psychotherapies of recovering and recovered patients and their families and community rehabilitation". Dr. Gaurav Dutta, a Post-Doctoral Researcher in Neuro Sciences at the University of North Dakota, USA, says that, "the Centre is unique in its approach with more focus on narratives and psycho social counseling. The environment of the center is patient friendly"... (Published in, "Academic compilation on Drug De-addiction and rehabilitation of youth by Police Drug De-addiction and rehabilitation Centre Kashmir Zone-2019).

These are the evidences which reflect the level and quality of reputation of drug de-addiction initiatives taken by J&K Police, among scholars and visionaries and same is the story of reputation of drug de-addiction initiatives among the general public of the region. Keeping in view the popularity of these projects, public approaches voluntarily for the purpose of treatment of their affected wards. Processes is on its full bloom and the efforts of the police have begun to bear the fruits and the future seems much improved.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Present study is intended to understand the role of J&K Police in curbing the drug menace besides exploring opportunities and avenues to generate awareness among general public with regard to drug menace & possible ways to eradicate it.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on content analysis and data has been collected from systematic review of relevant literature. Also the study is based on secondary data which has been collected from various sources like books, journals and survey reports containing data related to the drug nuisance and its eradication. The study presents the discussion and understanding with regard to the substance abuse and the role of various stakeholders in eradicating it. The study suffers limitations in the presentation of earlier/past data on the theme due to the unavailability of systematic survey reports and documentation. Also in the wake of implementation of J&K Re-Organization Act 2019, crime records related to criminal

proceedings against the drug peddlers could not be obtained from the concerned quarters.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Arthur W. Blume in Wiley series on treating drug addiction (2005: 5, 6, 21 and 22) describes causes and types of drug problem as:

Drug problems likely have multiple causes. To begin with, drug problems seem to be rooted in biological processes. Psychoactive drugs influence neurochemistry in such a way as to stimulate the pleasure Center of the brain. In this way, drug problems are biologically based. Many researchers are also searching for possible genetic links that may place a person at risk for developing a drug problem.

However drug problems also have psychological and social factors that seem to contribute to the development and perpetuation of the problem. Researchers refer to this as a biopsychosocial model since biology, psychology and social /environmental factors are all important for understanding and treating a drug problem. Not only do these factors influence a drug problem, but the drug problem can influence these factors. Psychological factors may include personal variables such as the way a person behaves, thinks and feels. Social factors often are related to personal interactions but also can be related to environmental factors. The social and psychological factors are very important to understand in the development and perpetuation of drug problems because these are the areas that we will most likely be able to intervene upon and possibly change. We have not determined how to change biology yet, although some progress has been made in pharmacotherapy.

Within the broad categories of biological, psychological and environmental processes, researchers have identified certain factors that seem to increase the risk of experiencing drug-related problems. There are several different categories of risk factors that tend to cluster together. However, many of these risk factors influence each other, so it is difficult to talk about one without remembering the others. For the purpose of simplicity, I will classify the risk factors in biological, environmental, behavioral, cognitive and emotional categories, although it should be understood that these risk factors may interact with one another.

Drug problems are often typified by what has been called the three Cs (compulsive use, loss of control and continued use despite adverse consequences). Although some people who have drug problems experience all of the C's there are many who do not. However, a person with a drug problem will likely have experienced at least one of them, so assessing for them is quite useful when evaluating for a drug problem.

The three 'Cs' and what may contribute to them:

1. Compulsive use, and it may be related to...Reinforcement, Cravings and Habit

2. Loss of control, and it may be related to...Drug induced myopia, Cravings and Beliefs that the person will lose control
3. Consequences...Types of consequences can vary from person to person, consequences can vary in importance from person to person and consumption and personal beliefs can contribute to consequences.

Abuse, Division of Epidemiology, and Research (2003) observes that the child is more vulnerable for drug addiction if s/he is kept in condition where more risk factors (that is, the factors associated with greater potential for drug abuse) prevail. Study suggests that, research based preventive programmes can intervene early in the child's development to strengthen protective factors and reduce risk factors. The study has also suggested some preventive measures for drug abuse both at the family and at the community level.

Margoob and Dutta (1993) suggested that most drug abusers were males and their main substance of abuse was cannabis followed by heroin. Study was conducted on the sample of an age group of 26 to 35 years, which is considered as an adolescent age.

Rao and Vasudevan (1980) in their study have shown that most of the drug addicts nearly 80% get addiction before the age of 30.

Drugs et al. (2002) suggests that religion plays a major role in shaping the individuals worldview and existential understanding. Alcohol, cannabis, nicotine, opium and mushrooms have been used for rites in many cultures. The association that evolved through the years has been well engrained in people's minds, and can be observed even today in rural and tribal areas. Cannabis has many religious associations in India. Among Hindus, kinship and caste are two basic elements of social organization. The use or non-use of a particular drug depends on the individual's membership in a Varna and caste. The use of ganja, charas and Bhang is associated with Hindu religious and social ceremonies. It is believed that the god Shiva was very fond of hemp drugs; these drugs are still offered to Shiva in temples on the night of Shivratri, the anniversary of Shiva's marriage, as the "food of the god". Bhang is poured on Shivalinga, a metamorphical image of male and female genitals, and people consume cannabis as an expression of happiness.

Sudan (2007) observed in his study that, "the youth are at the forefront of violent conflict, often fighting without a choice."The study further that long drawn turmoil in the valley has serious psychological and social impacts on the youth which has given rise to feelings of hopelessness and profound social alienation among them. Most of them try to overcome their disappointment, stress, depression by shifting to different drugs.

Nadeem et al. (2009) have mentioned in their study that changing cultural values, increasing economy stress and

dwindling supportive bonds are leading to initiation into substance use. The study has also reveals that cannabis, heroin and Indian produced pharmaceutical drugs are the most frequency abused drugs in India. The study has further revealed that the process of industrialization, urbanization and migration has led to the loosing of traditional methods of social control, rendering an individual vulnerable to the stresses and strains of modern life.

As per the latest National Survey conducted by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Government of India, on the magnitude of Substance Use in India 2019, the use of mood-altering psychoactive substances has been part of human civilization for millennia. In India, a variety of psychoactive substances, like alcohol, cannabis and opioids have been used for hundreds of years. In modern times, however, the pattern and dimensions of use of such psychoactive substances has assumed pathological proportions.

5. DISCUSSION

As a result of long drawn conflict in the region, social changes and global influences have given rise to drug nuisance in the valley. Due to rise in psychological disorder, as a result of fear-filled environment in the valley, most of the youth have become drug dependents to seek mental and physical relief.

The substances which are mostly abused include tobacco, cannabis, alcohol, benzodiazepines (sleeping pills, like Alprax, valium Gardenal), opiates (codeine, heroin, morphine), brown sugar, inhalants (Fevicol SR, Glue, paint thinner, petrol, shoe polish, etc.). (Margoob, 1993; Naqshbandi, M, 2012; Pirzada, M.A, 2013; Bilal, Manish & Sheema 2013; Bilal et al. 2016).

Rise in the number of addicts is quite steep which is an alarming situation and attracts interventions from all stakeholders.

National Survey report on Magnitude of Substance use in India 2019, establishes that, "a substantial number of people use psychoactive substances in India, and substance use exists in all the population groups, but adult men bear the brunt of substance use disorders. This survey also indicates that there are wide variations in extent and prevalence of use across different states and between various substances".....

Among known addicts, most addicts are youngsters making non-addict youngsters quite vulnerable to drugs. Ongoing turmoil has been fueling the situation considerably. There are certain stakeholders who have taken an early call on the issue, among those pioneer stakeholders is J&K Police. On one hand J&K Police has been fighting drug peddlers and on the other hand it has been engaged with the dead diction of addicted youth. As many as ten de addiction centers have been started by J&K Police in various districts of UT of J&K for maximum public outreach for the treatment and awareness among general public with regard to drug addiction. The main drug de addiction centers are located in the Srinagar and Jammu cities. Drug de addiction Centre at Srinagar comprises 50 bed intake

IPD capacity, besides having healthy OPD counseling sessions on daily basis. Results are quite splendid and future prospects are vivid. Via Civic Action plans/projects, J&K Police has been generating mass awareness programmes at college, school and community levels, with regard to drug nuisance and its eradication. These projects have been undertaken to run a powerful campaign against drugs and drug peddlers. It is pertinent to mention here that many locally constituted NGOs have come forward to cooperate and contribute on the work front of de addiction aspect and the tie up has shown splendid results so far. However popular public support is much awaited to integrate the giant leaps towards success.

Public, on one hand is much concerned about the spread of drug menace but on the other hand, is reluctant to extend substantial and active support to help Police in eradicating the menace. Reasons could be due to the fear of attacks from the drug mafia or otherwise. This stalemate has been encouraging the miscreants to create more and more fuss. Religious institutions are required to take a call on the issue, although many religious preachers have been putting in efforts to highlight the problem but adequate and sustained efforts are still awaited from them and from their other associates. Educational institutions show least interest in the resolution of drug problem, they don't go beyond conducting a seminar once in a year on the topic as a formality rather eyewash. Families have got a crucial role to play in curbing the menace. Families are first responders and main stakeholders, their wards are at stake, their slightest carelessness can spoil family welfare easily. Ranging from the detection of problem to the treatment of the problem, whole responsibility lies on family. Families must come forward to face the challenge openly for the sake of their future generations. Society as a whole should take drug nuisance as a big challenge and should fight it at all the fronts fearlessly. Sporadic nature of drugs could be fought only by virtue of collective efforts and on war footing basis. Any progress in the direction of corrections is unlikely until holistic support of the society. Department of health and family welfare has got the pioneer role to play in generating awareness and treating the drug ailments. Although contribution has been there, but scope for more efforts and initiatives is also there for a better tomorrow. In brief there is lots of scope reserved for all the stakeholders to take on the challenges with regard to the eradication of drug nuisance in future for the sake of conservation of future generations.

6. SUGGESTIONS

National Survey Report 2019, on Magnitude of Substance Use in India, highlights the need to conduct the survey as, "in the absence of reliable and in-depth estimates of population affected by drug use problems, it has a challenge to formulate and implement the policies and programmes to address drug use. Consequently, it is imperative that evidence on the extent of use of such psychoactive substances (or drugs in popular parlance), is generated and such evidence informs national policies and programmes. Given the federal nature of

governance in India, and considering that addressing drug problems needs a multi-stakeholder mechanism, it is important that such estimates are available at the national level as well as at the level of each state or Union Territory (UT) of the country. Thus the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, commissioned the 'National Survey on Extent and Pattern of Substance use in India' in the year 2016.

The survey report further recommends that, "Considering the enormous challenges of substance use disorders in the country, there is an urgent need of policies and programmes which can bring relief to the large number of affected Indian citizens. It is imperative that these policies and programmes are based upon the scientific evidence and take into consideration the local, socio-cultural context. Substance use Disorders are clearly a significant public health concern in the country, as evident by the findings contained in this report. Various measures which must be undertaken to enable the country deal with the concern are as:

- Scientific evidence- based treatment needs to be made available for people with substance use disorders.
- Evidence- based substance use prevention programmes are needed to protect the young people.
- A conducive legal and policy environment is needed to help control drug problems.
- The approach of generating and utilizing scientific evidence must continue.
- Harm reduction needs to be embraced widely as a philosophy to deal with substance use.

Mass media has got a pivotal role to play in running campaigns against the substance abuse. TV, Radio, Newspapers, journals, special supplements, internet, etc. have maximum public outreach besides having their influence on the common people, can help to improve the condition by generating awareness among public.

7. CONCLUSION

Drug addiction is one of the alarming threats for the wellbeing of human beings and humanity in the contemporary times. It has been spreading by leaps and bounds to have adverse effects on whole society. Youngsters are most vulnerable to the devastating effects of the drugs. Besides trendy and routine gateway drugs, many other substances are being abused by the drug addicts. Present prevailing situation, full of uncertainties, has been the main cause of substance abuse in the valley. People in order to seek refuge from the torments and agonies, take the support of drugs. Among most of the stakeholders, J&K Police has taken substantial steps to fight the drug menace. It fights on two fronts against the demon of drugs, one at the prosecution level to get the peddlers punished and another at the clinical level to treat the drug addicts. Police has

opened ten de addiction Centers in various district of J&K UT. Main among those Centers are in the Srinagar and Jammu cities. De addiction Centre at Srinagar has 50 bed intake capacity IPD Centre. Progress of the work at those Centers has been tremendous and further scope for working is being explored by all the stakeholders associated with the project. Many local NGOs have come forward to share their efforts in this direction. More and more awareness is required to be generated at all levels to see the evil vanishing from this region. Collective efforts are required to be taken by all the stakeholders to have an integrated approach for eradicating the evil. Least but not last, Government should formulate strategies to fight this menace on war footing basis on scientific lines.

8. IMPLICATIONS

Present study is simply an iceberg of the whole- sum, and shows efforts aimed to understanding the role of various stakeholders in the eradication of drug nuisance and exploring further possibilities in this direction. However tremendous scope for further researches is still reserved for scholars, NGOs and other interest groups in this direction.

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