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Factors Causing Drug Addiction Among Youth in Balochistan: A Case Study of Quetta District

By

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Abstract:

Drug addiction is the most perilous social evil in any society and a serious challenge for the modern world to tackle with. It is the most lucrative business in the world after weapons industry and sex trade. This study analyzed the “Factors causing drug addiction among youth in Balochistan; A case study of Quetta”. The descriptive type of research was adopted for the study. The data was collected from 150 admitted drug addicts through questionnaire in the government rehabilitation centers in Quetta city. The books, journals, research articles and reports of different international, national organizations and government departments were studied to have in-depth understanding of the issue under study. Data was analyzed through SPSS applying the frequency distribution test to know the significant factors. The findings of the study exposed that 95% of the respondents were suffering psychologically. Similarly, the results also showed that 81% respondents had easy access to drugs. Moreover, significant number respondents 54% had drug addict friends and 51% of them were offered drug by their friends. To eliminate the concerned issue, the government and other stake holders are required to adopt strict preventive measures to curb this curse.

Keywords: Drugs, Addiction, Quetta, Youth, Narcotics, Development, Society, Etc.

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Introduction:

Drugs, those are not legally available and purchased with a purpose of having feeling of change and getting relaxed (Caplow, 1971). Similarly, Drug addiction is defined as chronic, relapsing and brain disease. It is considered a brain disease because it changes the function and structure of brain. These changes may be long-lasting and can lead to many harmful diseases (San, 2014). According to world drug report 29.5 million people worldwide suffer from the problem drug addiction and 0.6% adult population is involved in problematic use opiates is most dangerous drugs and 70% of negative health also related to drug addiction. 1.6 million are suffering with HIV and 6.1 million are suffering with Hepatitis-C and 1.3 million Drug users are suffering from both HIV and Hepatitis-C all over the world (UNODC, 2013). Pakistan has 6.7 million drug addicts amongst the higher number for any country in the world and more than 800,000 Pakistanis aged between 15 and 64 use heroin regularly and up to 44 tons of practiced heroine are used annually in Pakistan. Cannabis is a most commonly use Drug in Pakistan (UNODC, 2013). Quetta is the largest city of Balochistan and the provincial capital. Quetta division comprises the Quetta district, the Chaghi district, Pishin district, Qila Abdullah district and Nushki district. The Quetta district is the hub of all administrative, political and economic activities of the province which is also called the fruit garden of Pakistan. Quetta district in accordance with the census of 2017 was 2, 275, 699 (Directorate General Anti-Narcotics Force, 2018). Due to the enormous population and its economic plus administrative facilities, the entire provincial youth is attracted to this city. Mostly, the youth from the far flung areas come to Quetta for educational purposes and become easily prone to drugs. Living far away from their families, they get easily fooled by their friends who persuade them to start with the softer drugs in order to release their study stress. The youth of Quetta city have plunged into the mire of drug addiction in figures of hundreds of youth. To make it further precise, they are a burden on the society because they are so heavily addicted that they cannot live on their own. In order to make money for the daily dose of the drugs, they either torture their family members or they resort to illegal means of earning like theft and other street crimes. If this malice is not stopped on the right time and the right

moment, it can engulf more of the youth causing a serious social crisis for the people of Quetta. Most of the addicted youth can be seen lying on the corners of the gutter-lines and streets. They are also a major cause of spread of the HIV in the city. They use different injections which are contaminated and contain different virus and other diseases (Farrukh, 2018). The factors that trigger the large scale of drug addiction among the youth in the city of Quetta are the overriding poverty of the people, the uncertain future of the youth in spite of getting higher education and higher degrees, the depression caused by a dark future, the close associates who drive the youth toward drug addiction and the easy and cheap access of the drugs in the city.

Major Factors Drug Addiction among Youth in Quetta:

The city of Quetta at the moment is facing an acute threat of drug addiction among the youth which is growing in its intensity in the quantitative manner as well as the qualitative manner with the passage of time. Following are the main factors that are driving the youth of Quetta towards drug addiction at a massive scale. There are many factors, but following are the most common and most threatening factors behind this menace.

Uncertain Future and Depression:

Uncertainty of the future is a steering factor that pushes the youth to the tight corner and compels them to switch to addiction in order to emancipate them from the miseries, but here they make the wrong choice. They consider the drugs as a source of emancipation, but in actuality, it is the poison that destroys their lives (Malik & Sarfaraz, 2011). The country is undergoing a massive scale of economic recession where the inflation is in double digits, it is touching its highest peak and the foreign investment has increasingly declined. The price hike has taken the purchasing power of the people to unprecedented lows and the ratio of employment is also on a decline. The private sector is on the verge of collapse and the public sector is facing a serious economic crunch. The private sector and the entrepreneurship is somewhat average in other provinces, but in Balochistan it is the shabby conditions. The major NGO's have closed or not operational. There are only a few industrial chains to speak of and the average income of the people is not up to the mark to start a personal business. Amid these circumstances, the youth of Balochistan, especially, of Quetta cannot find jobs as per suited to their skills and interests, therefore, an uncertainty of a bright future is

prevalent among the youth faction (Baloch, 2019). Thousands of youth every year do their masters from different universities of Pakistan and Balochistan and many more graduate each year from Quetta. Given this scenario, the main purpose of their degrees is to seek an honorable job and status in the society. The need for employment in the public sector is more crucial because the private sector has not boomed to its full blossom in the province, therefore, the only hope the youth have for an employment opportunity is toward the government. What makes the situation quite depressing is the fact that the government is not in a position to offer jobs at a large scale. The provincial government can hardly meet its current expenses and for more funds, it looks toward the federal government. More interestingly, the federal government too is not economy in a strong position and it looks toward the foreign loans and organizations like that of IMF and World Bank (Sardar, 2016). Under these circumstances, the province of Balochistan cannot offer new jobs to a large scale for the thousands of youth who graduate every year. The ultimate result of this uncertainty of the future is the frustration of the youth who have associated their dreams and aspirations to the government and the government dashes their dreams on the ground. There is uncertainty of the future among the youth at the moment. Thousands of youth who are not in a position to make a business of their own are waiting for the government to offer them jobs in return of their skilled services, but the government has failed to do so. The youth are frustrated and many of them have shrouded into deep depression and anxiety. This depression and anxiety kills all the dreams and hopes of the youth and they try to find ways to sooth themselves from this pain and they end up using drugs. Since the age of youth is the most sensitive age of the persons, they are quite delicate in their behavior and thinking (Sajjad, 2018). They can easily be persuaded for the bad things. They start with the smaller and lesser harmful drugs which more likely are the sleeping pills. A time comes when they get so much used to the pills that their soothing effect fades away and they begin the search for stronger doses and like this, they come in contact with the most obnoxious drugs like poppy, heroin and crystal. Once they get to these drugs, they cannot come out of them because they are so intoxicating and so poisonous that mingle with the bloodstream and make the person habitual to it. They get into the habit of drugs under compulsion, but once they get into it, they cannot come out of it.

The overriding urge for more drugs slides them into fully addicted people. Thus, uncertainty of future is truly a major cause that triggers addiction among the youth who finding no hope for a bright future cling to drugs and then get consumed by the drugs (Karr, 2014).

Poverty:

Poverty is the most spoken factor that drives the youth toward many ill-conceived activities and drug addiction is among them. There is no denying the fact that the poverty is the biggest cause of all social evils. Hence, it is also the biggest cause of drugs addiction. Poverty is behind all the major socioeconomic problems of the youth of Quetta in the modern day. Had the people been enough facilitated and had enough wealth to meet their basic necessities for a happy living, the people would not go for indulging in the obnoxious activities and the society would never go out of its track. But, much to the chagrin of the people of Quetta in particular and of Balochistan in general, poverty is hovering over most of them. Balochistan is the poorest province of Pakistan in spite of being the richest in terms of resources (Kabeer, 2011). Where its natural resources remain either untapped or misused, there the manpower resources too are not fully incorporated into the mainstream of development. Most of the people are living either below or on the poverty line which makes it the poorest province in the country and the poorest region in the entire world. The youth in spite of being talented are either pushed away by the settlers in the employment opportunities or the provincial government of Balochistan is unable to provide them employment opportunities due to the financial constraints it is facing. The people are living in quite miserable conditions. The facilities of basic life like that of health, education, easy access to freedom of speech and the right to employment are seriously compromised. Being poor, the people cannot rely on their resources for a fully functional business and look toward the government to come to their rescue (Samad, 2016).

Drug Addicted Associates:

Wrong choice of the friends, close associates, colleagues or the drug addicted family members is a highly alarming factor that drives the youth toward addiction at a rapid scale in the city of Quetta. Since the age of youth is the most sensitive age of the persons, they are quite delicate in their behavior and thinking. They can get addicted through friends, through the colleagues,

through the relatives or close family members. Most of the times the frustration ridden youth are persuaded by their friends to relieve their pain and they start with the sleeping pills or other lighter drugs like smoking. Since they are in depression and the depression is killing them from inside, they search for ways to soothe them and to relive their pain, therefore, they readily embrace the idea of the friends (Usman & Khan, 2013). Through, they start with the smaller and lighter drugs which are as well cheaper, the effect of soothing soon disappears and they begin to search for stronger drugs to satisfy their thrust. They, eventually end up with the deadly drugs like heroin and crystal. These drugs kill the people in a couple of years once they come in contact with them. Therefore, the close associates, especially, the friends are a major factor behind pushing the youth toward drugs addiction in Quetta.

Cheap and Easy Access to Drugs:

The easy access of the drugs in every nook and corner of the city of Quetta is an alarming factor in the anti-narcotics department along with the help of the coast guards is doing its duty and confiscating the properties and narcotics of all that kind which the government has banned, yet an overwhelming amount of the drugs make their way to the black market. As long as they continue to reach the black markets, they will be easily accessible to everyone (Maqbool, 2016). This makes the supply and demand in balance which allows the youth to purchase the daily doses on cheap prices. If the prevention strategies are made too strong, the supply and demand chain will be disturbed making it quite hard for the youth to purchase the daily doses. As long as the drugs continue to pour in the city of Quetta, let alone the old ones, the fresh youth who had started with weaker drugs can easily switch to the deadly drugs as the drugs are in easy access to them. The police teams sometimes carry on crackdowns against the drug mafia and they disappear for a few days and then again come to commence their business. Sometimes the policemen are bought by the drug mafia through bribery to let them continue their business of death. The youth can find money through family pressure and through street crimes and get to the secret shops where the daily doses of all the notable drugs are available. They are in easy access of the public and they operate without any check and balance (Zafar, 2013).

Methodology:

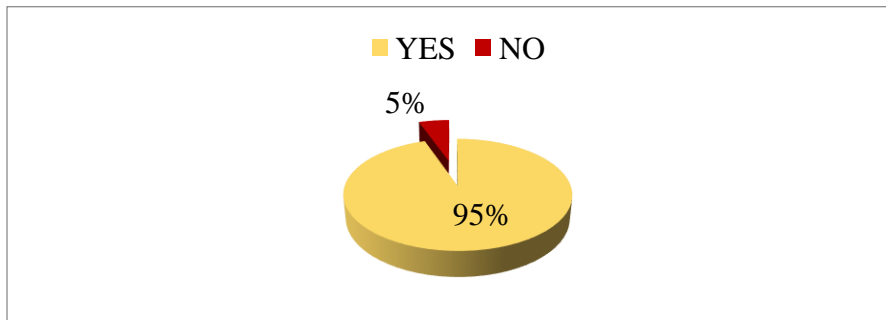
A descriptive type of research was applied for this study and both qualitative as well as quantitative methods were adopted for research. Quetta city was selected as study area. Moreover, the registered drug addicts in various treatment and rehabilitation centers were the respondents and sample random sampling used in this research. The total population of the registered drug addicts was 1000 according to the records of treatment centers. However, there was no exact data of drug addicts available in the city. In addition, 150 respondents were randomly selected and interviewed for project. Results were analyzed through SPSS. Frequency distribution test was applied to draw conclusions.

Results:**Socio-economic Conditions of Respondents:**

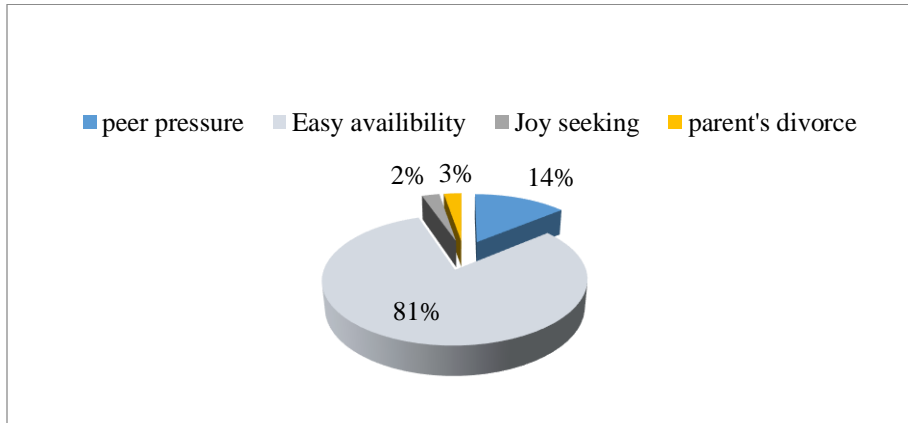
The findings of the research revealed that 138 respondents were male and 12 females. The results showed that 22% of were illiterate 16% had primary education while 37.33% of respondents has completed secondary education, intermediate 24%, and only 6% were Graduated. Similarly, the results of the study revealed that 54% of respondents were single 27.33% married, 8% divorced, 8.66% separated and only 2% of respondents were widowed. Furthermore, the professions of the respondents according to the findings of study were 22.66% students, 12% government servants, 40.66% self-employed, and 24.66% were daily wages laborers. Moreover, the results also revealed that an overwhelming proportion 68.66% were living with family 11.33% with friends and 20.66% were living on the street.

Social Factors/Causes of Drugs:

The social causes of drug addiction include the literacy rate, poverty, easy availability of drug, peer pressure, parents' divorce, joy seeking, addicted friends. All these have great significance on use of drug among the respondents of this research.

Figure.1 Psychological factors for drug usage (n=150)

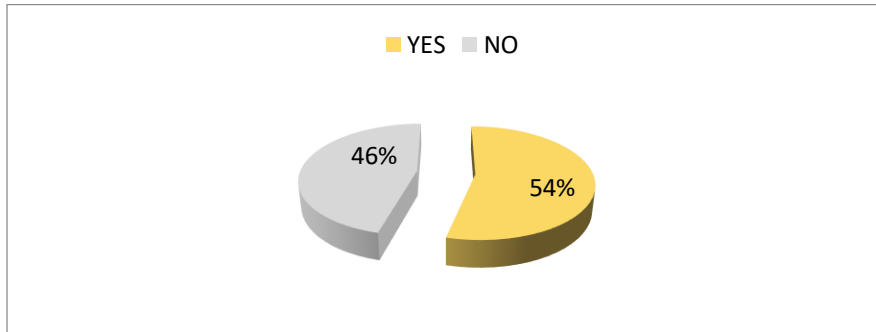
The results indicate that most of the respondents 95% said that they were somehow suffering psychologically while only 5% of the respondents answered negatively. Majority of the respondents said that they had societal pressures; such as poverty, failure in life, family problems, phobia and depression which push them to take drug (figure.1).

Figure. 2 The Causes of Drug Initiating (n=150)

The findings of the research revealed that 81% of respondents said that they easy availability is the reason behind their drug use where as 14% said that

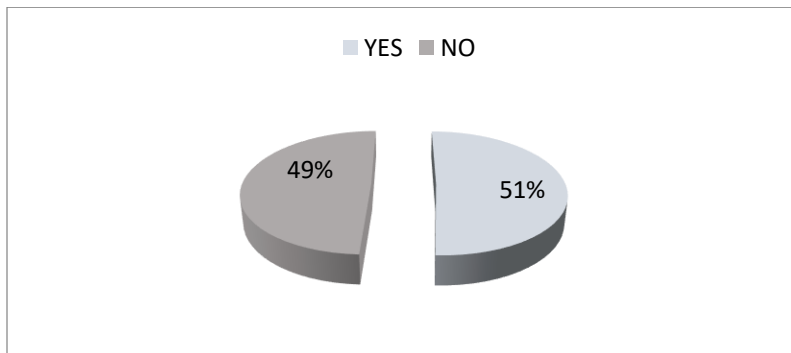
the peer pressure had compelled them to initiate drug use. While 2% and 3% of the respondents said that joy seeking and parents' divorce were responsible respectively (figure.2)

Figure.3 Having Drug Addict Friends (n=150)



The results showed that 54% of the respondents said that their friends do use drugs which means either they got this addiction from their friends or vice versa. While 46% of respondents said that they do not have drug addict friends (figure.3).

Figure. 4 Friend Offered Drugs (n=150)



The results of the study also indicate that 51% of the respondents said they were offered drug by their friends while 49% said that they did not experienced such things. It means the group dynamic has great significance in our social life. It plays not only a vital role in the molding personalities but also decide the future of individuals (figure.4)

Discussion:

Indeed, addiction is the most dangerous issue that threatens the stability of our society today which has also been proven by the results of the tables which had been distributed among 150 drug addicts. These drugs addicts are under treatment at the rehabilitation center of Quetta and they are with the best efforts of the center soon going to be ready to join the society with a new purpose and fresh zeal. However, the results of the tables show that the major factors behind the drug addiction of them are the poverty, mental depression, addicts' friends and family members and easy access of the drugs to them. The addicted friends of the youth offer them drugs and convince them that they will relieve their pain. Youth being fed up with the struggles of life get convinced soon and they begin to consume drugs. Thus, the close associates are a leading and notable factor in the spread of drugs addiction among the youth of city of Quetta. The easy availability of the drugs, as mentioned by the majority of the respondents shows how poor the police and narcotics network in Quetta is. Their operations and efforts to prevent drugs from entering the city fail every time and the drugs find their way to the black market of Quetta. The youth are prone to it because they are available in every nook and corner of the city. Poverty is another major factor that drives the youth toward many ill-conceived activities and drug addiction is among them. Youth will much aspiration for a bright future study with zeal and devotion, but they end up at the long line of unemployment, eventually, that culminates in a long lasting depression. Finding no other alternates, they take the support of drugs. The provincial government has failed to satisfy the growing needs of the youth and has failed to adjust them in the mainstream of the development. They are the future of the nation who can shoulder the responsibilities of the society, but their skills and lives are being wasted. Without any shadow of doubt, it has emerged as the single most prevalent

threat to the society today. If the youth continue to fall victim to drugs at such a pace, they can alarmingly cause a serious social crisis which will generate more panic and frustration among every faction of the society. They are the saviors of our future; therefore, they must be saved from this deadly social evil that haunts them.

Conclusion:

It is quite unfortunate that the youth being the torch bearers of the future generations and their development are falling victim to drugs addiction in Quetta at a rapid scale, the prevention of which is highly imperative to prevent the society from collapsing. The addiction of the youth either out of poverty or frustration is pushing the entire social fabric of the society on the brink of a grave peril. The factors that lead to this menace were; poverty, easy availability of drugs, peer pressure, joy seeking, parents' divorce and the consequences of the given factors have also been mentioned within those points. It is quite ironic that yet this alarming situation has not been noticed. Neither the civil society nor the academia has pointed out this problem as a potential threat to the development of Quetta in the near future. Most of the youth have either committed suicide due to depression or fallen victim to drugs addiction.

Recommendations:

The government is required to keep in consideration the following recommendations to curb drug addiction among the youth once and for all.

1. The government can play a vital part in exterminating the addiction of drugs from the society. Since most of the affected people from this obnoxious social evil are the youth and most of them are qualified and skilled, the government if cannot afford to provide job opportunities to all of them, it can attract or restore the private sector in the province.
2. The private sector needs the partial support of the government which will be in the shape of aid in the initial stages, but once the private sector is on a strong footing, the government can withdraw the funds and allow the private sector to boost on its own.
3. The private sector can adjust more of the youth than the public sector can, which will bring a tremendous and radical change in the employment ratio of the people of Balochistan as well as of Quetta. Once the people get the

opportunities of jobs and the means to their survival, their depression will fade away naturally which will bring the society on stability once again.

4. The government must also bear the responsibility of controlling the ingress and egress of the narcotics in the city of Quetta without any check and balance. The easy access of the drugs is what pushes the youth toward addiction at the first place. There is no denying the fact that the anti-narcotics department along with the help of the coast guards is doing its duty and confiscating the properties and narcotics of all that kind which the government has banned, yet an overwhelming amount of the drugs make their way to the black market from where they are supplied to the city and they are sold to the youth on cheap prices which attracts more addicts to join them.

5. The government must ascertain that the entry of the drugs in the city of Quetta is made impossible and the youth cannot easily access it. If some amount of drug enters the city, it will be too costly for the jobless and poor youth to purchase it.

6. The rehabilitation center of Quetta has been formed for the given single purpose of treating such people who due to any reason have sled to drugs addiction. The center treats them freely and then rehabilitates them to become responsible citizens. The family members of the drug addicts must fulfill their duty by bringing the addicts to this center for treatment so they can rejoin the society with better purpose of life.

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