

STUDY ON DRUG ABUSE IN PUNJAB (INDIA)

KULDEEP SINGH

Department of Public Administration, Punjabi University,
India
Email: kuldeepsingh0113@gmail.com

Abstract - Though drug abuse is a global problem now, but Punjab is facing this at alarming level. Due to its geographical location, de-industrialization, lack of jobs, easy availability of drugs, Punjab has become one of the top state having the problem of drug abuse. This paper deals with the problem of drug abuse in Punjab. Also, the initiatives taken by the government and role played by Punjab Police in preventing the drug abuse.

Keywords - Drugs, Drug abuse, Prevention, Punjab.

I. INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse has become a global public health and social concern today. It has received greater attention in recent times due to the increasing magnitude of the problem and the changing trends in usage of drugs mostly among the children, adolescents and young adults. It creates a vast burden for survival, protection, growth and development of healthy individuals. Protecting youth from drug abuse is being considered the most essential and urgent need of the society today.¹ Drug abuse is the self-administration of a drug for non-medical reasons, in quantities and frequencies, which may impair an individual's ability to function effectively, and which may result in social, physical and emotional harm. World Health Organization (WHO) defines drug abuse as 'a state of periodic or chronic alcoholism debt rental to the individual and society produced by repeated intake of a drug. Drug abuse therefore refers to a condition of drug use that causes physical and mental dependence among the users for the drug. This dependence is reflected in user's disturbed social, psychological and physiological behavior when such a drug is no more constant by the user. The difficult reaction of body and mind of the user on termination of abused drug are called 'removal indications'. These indications vary from violent and thoughtless behavior to physical reactions like shaking of, pains, colic etc. Basically, drug abuse is a serious problem not only due to its adversely affect the body but also society, Nonsocial and anti-social behavior of drug abusers is an disturbing situation which no society can afford to develop.²

We know what can and needs to be done to help reduce the burden of psychoactive substance use. Therefore, WHO is committed to assisting countries in the development, organization, monitoring and evaluation of treatment and other services.³ The

harmful use of alcohol results in 3.3 million deaths each year.

- Less than half the population (38.3%) drinks alcohol, this means that those who do drink consume on average 17 liters of pure alcohol annually.
- At least 15.3 million persons have drug use disorders.
- Injecting drug use reported in 148 countries, of which 120 report HIV infection among this population.

Punjab is one of the most prosperous state of India. It is known as Nation's Bread Basket. The fact that it is surrounded by the Golden Crescent (This space overlaps three nations, Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, whose mountainous peripheries define the crescent), Charas and hashish producing Himachal Pradesh, and Opium and Poppy husk producing areas of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. As per the statistics, nearly 90% of Heroin available in the world is produced in Afghanistan and it is also the leading producer of Hashish (UN Drug Report). Thus the 553 KM long border of Punjab with Pakistan makes it prone to Golden Crescent's drug supply. This approximately to major drug producing areas makes it one of the most geographical favorable locations in India. Drugs such as heroin, smack, charas, opium, pills are being routed to other parts of India or the world through this state only.

Many reasons can be stated for growing dependency on drugs in Punjab like militancy, poverty, frustrations in career and so called Anti-farmer Government policies etc. Punjab was always prone to addiction. Punjab became the transit route for drugs sometime around 300 BC. Since it fell on the Silk Route, like all other merchandise, opiates also landed first in Punjab," he says. He further explains that When the invaders came from Central Asia, they brought large population of people addicted to opium. Later, when militancy gained ground, terrorists attacked liquor shops and drinkers, so injecting drugs bought illegally became safer. The smugglers turned their attention towards porous borders in Punjab, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir. Peddling drugs

from Indo-Pak border became a lucrative profession. Smugglers earned handsome amount of money for one consignment or per kg of heroin. In the meanwhile, locals too started consuming it. This created the real problem. On one hand farming is getting unprofitable and on the other, poor quality of education fails to incentivize youth to get enroll themselves in higher education and even the educated youth fails to get decent paying job, which results in frustration and thus the support of drugs comes in to play.

According to a Punjab Government survey, and as per an affidavit filed by the Government of Punjab and Haryana High Court, 66 per cent of the school-going students in the state consume gutkha or tobacco; every third male and every tenth female student has taken drugs on one pretext or the other and seven out of 10 college-going student's abuse one or the other drug. Punjab alone accounts for roughly over one-fifth of the total recoveries of heroin in the country. The drug traffickers use the cities of Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn., Ferozepur, Kapurthala, Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, Patiala as well as Chandigarh to smuggle the narcotic substances through Punjab.

Ravinder Singh Sandhu (2006) conducted a sociological study on "Drug Addiction in Punjab" report that majority of drug addicts (47.8%) use two more drugs in combination. Bhukki was mainly used in Malwa and use of alcohol was more in Majha and Doaba. Synthetic drugs were used mainly in Amritsar rural followed by Jalandhar. He further said that 58% drug addicts take drugs in the company of friends or other fellow addicts and this practice is more among ruralites as compared to urbanites. The illiteracy, unemployment, an easy availability of drugs, Government/Police and greed of traffickers are the main reason for drug addiction in Punjab.⁴ Opiates, their derivatives and synthetic opiate drugs are used by 70 per cent of the addicts, followed by a combination of opiate and other sedatives, including morphine.

- Extent of drug addiction in Punjab is 70 per cent. Household survey indicates that there is at least one drug addict in the 65 per cent of families in Majha (Spreads over 4 districts: Gurdaspur, Pathankot, Amritsar and Tarn Taran) and Doaba (Covers 4 districts: Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur and Nawanshahr) and 64 percent families of Malwa (cover the largest part of Punjab and covers 14 districts: Ferozpur, Faridkot, Fazilka, Bathinda, Barnala, Sangrur, Mansa, Patiala, Mohali, Moga, Muktsar, Ludhiana, Rupnagar and Fatehgarh Sahib).

- Tarn Taran is the most affected rural district and Amritsar is the most affected urban district in Punjab. Per head consumption of alcohol is the maximum in Punjab and Tarn Taran district tops the list. In border areas, the extent of substance abuse is

70-75 per cent in the age group of 15-25 years and up to 40 per cent in the age group of 35-60 years. Over 16 per cent population is addicted to hard drugs.

- Being a border state, with 550-km international border with Pakistan, Punjab has become a major transit and destination point in international (coming from Afghanistan and Pakistan) drug trafficking.

Keeping in view the gravity of problem related to drug abuse in India and specifically in Punjab, Government took many initiatives to prevent drug abuse, which includes different policies and through government agencies. Punjab Police has played very important role if preventing drug abuse problem in Punjab.

II. MAJOR GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO PREVENT OF DRUG ABUSE

2.1 THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the nodal Ministry for drug demand reduction. It coordinates and monitors all aspects of drug abuse prevention which include assessment of the extent of the problem, prevention action, treatment and, Ministry provides community-based services for the identification, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts through voluntary organizations.⁵

2.2 NARCOTIC DRUGS & PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES ACT, 1985

The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, were passed inter alia, to control drug abuse. Section 71 of the Act (Power of Government to establish centres for identification, treatment, etc. of addicts and for supply of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances) provides that the Government may, in its discretion, establish as many centres as it think fit for identification, treatment, education, social rehabilitation of addicts and for supply, subject to such conditions and in such manner as may be prescribed by concerned Government.

2.3 NARCOTIC DRUGS & PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCE POLICY (NDPS POLICY), 2012

Ministry of Finance in consultation with all stakeholders including the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has brought out Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substance Policy (NDPS Policy). It aims to;

(a) Spell out the policy of India towards narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; (b) Serve as a guide to various Ministries and organization in the Government of India and to the State Government as well as International Organizations, NGOs, etc.; (c) Re-assert India's commitment to combat the drug menace in a holistic manner.

2.4 RELEVANT UN CONVENTIONS

India is a signatory to three United Nations Conventions, namely:

- (i) Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961;
- (ii) Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971; and
- (iii) Convention against illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.

2.5 SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE FOR PREVENTION OF ALCOHOLISM AND SUBSTANCE (DRUG) ABUSE

For drug demand reduction, the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has been implementing a scheme of Assistance for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse since 1985-86. Under this scheme, financial assistance up to 90% of the approved expenditure is given to the voluntary organization and other eligible agencies for setting up Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts (IRCA's). In the case of North- Eastern States, Sikkim and Jammu & Kashmir, the quantum of assistance is 95% of total admissible expenditure. The Scheme provides financial support to NGOs and employers mainly for the following items:

- (i) Awareness and Prevention Education
- (ii) Drug Awareness and Counselling Centres (CC)
- (iii) Integrated Rehabilitation Centres for Addicts (IRCA's)
- (iv) Workplace Prevention Programme (WPP)
- (v) De-addiction Camps (ACDC)
- (vi) NGO forum for Drug Abuse Prevention
- (vii) Innovative Interventions to strengthen community based rehabilitation
- (viii) Technical Exchange and Manpower development programme
- (ix) Surveys, Studies, Evaluation and Research on the subjects covered under the scheme.

2.6 NATIONAL POLICY FOR DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION

This Ministry has formulated a National Policy for Drug Demand Reduction. The Cabinet Note for the Policy had been circulated to concerned Ministries/Departments, Cabinet Secretariat and the PMO. Presently, the Policy is being examined by the Group of Ministers headed by Hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs.

III. ROLE OF PUNJAB POLICE ADMINISTRATION TO PREVENT DRUG ABUSE

Police is a state agency that plays a crucial role to keep peace and stability in the state. The primary duty which has been furnished to police is to maintain proper establishment of law and order in the state.

The emergence of Punjab Police as a single association is a post-1861 change which took residence after the British occupation of Punjab in 1849. During this long time of its presence, the Punjab Police took politely approved complete several difficult phases of history including partition of Punjab in 1947. It also successfully moved serious challenges of terrorism in the state during 1981-1994, notwithstanding certain shortcomings; Punjab Police has also been appreciated many times for Lendable work done by it. It has performed discouraging task to sustain watch and objectivity in the civil society of Punjab that have cross sections during and after 1984 disturbances and after difficult times. Functions of Punjab Police to Prevent drug abuse (i) Controlling the supply of drug:

- (ii) Nabbing the smugglers and drug
- (iii) Taking preventive action against the smugglers.
- (iv) Checking smuggling across the borders.
- (v) Countering demand side:
 - Bringing the drug addicts bad to the mainstream of society.
 - Spreading awareness amongst the society. Public meeting, plays, Sports events etc

The major operation that is under taken up by Punjab Police is to block the supply line of drugs. This involves blocking the supply line across the international and National border. Punjab has a long stretch of border of sharing with Pakistan, which is the part of Golden triangle. Although it is the BSF that vigils the international borders, the Punjab Police is always at its back to check the international many a times both the forces has collaborate or indecently seized big consignment of drugs and many prominent smugglers for cheeking posts are also established to cheek the inflow of drugs from within country has Punjab shares its borders with Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. Large quantities of traditional drugs like chars, Gaja, poppy-husk and opium are recovered at state borders.

CONCLUSION

Drug addiction in Punjab state is increasing day by day, which leads to increase in crime rate. The focus of the paper is to analyse the gravity the problem and different initiatives of government to prevent drug abuse in Punjab. There is a strong association between illicit drug use and criminal activity, however, the relationship between drug use and crime is complex and dynamic, often associated with entrenched social and health problems such as unemployment, socio economics inequality, and poor mental health. Furthermore, the complexity of the relationship further develops with the links being neither simple or linear, nor universal across offending. The demographic of drug addicts in Punjab

represents an anomaly when framed within the wider context of drug in India.

REFERENCES

- [1] Madhu Bala, Thesis, Drug De-addiction and Rehabilitation Centers in Malwa Region of Punjab, P.1(2016)
- [2] Uma Handa, Community Health Nursing, New Delhi : School of Health Sciences IGNOU Publication, p.5 (2001)
- [3] World Health Organization Report, 2016. (accessed on 12 May 2018)
- [4] R.J. Sandhu, A Report on Drug Addiction in Punjab, 2006
- [5] www.theministryofsocialjusticeandempowerment(accessed on 6 april2017)
- [6] Sandhu RS (2006). "Drug addiction in Punjab: A Sociological Study", Department of Sociology, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.
- [7] Guideline for the Implementation of the Project Awareness and Education for Prevention of Drug Abuse & Alcoholism in Punjab, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, Ministry of Social
- [8] Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India.
- [9] <http://www.nyks.org/Drug%20Abuse%20Punjab%20Eng.pdf>
- [10] WHO (2006-2007) Biennium Project Report. Drug Abuse Monitoring System Conducted by National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre, AIIMS, New Delhi.
- [11] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health:
- [12] Summary of National Findings. Rockville, MD (2013) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
- [13] Narcotics Control Bureau (2012) Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India. Annual Report.

★ ★ ★