

Factors Contributing to Drug Addiction: A Case Study on the Inmates of Central Jail, Faisalabad (Pakistan)

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Central Jail, Faisalabad to investigate the causes and implications of drug addiction. To explore these objectives, the inmates who were involved in drug addiction and admitted to jail were interviewed. A well designed questionnaire was prepared for conducting interviews. Personnel interview approach was employed for obtaining meaningful information from the inmates. Descriptive techniques were used to analyze the data. Majority of the inmates admitted to jail were with the allegation of possessing drugs more than 100 g. Majority of the inmates in the jail belonged to poor families, addicted to opium and supported by their mothers inside the jail. The prisoners of age group 20-30 years were most vulnerable (55%) to addiction.

Key Words: Drug; Addiction; Causes; Impacts

INTRODUCTION

In medical terms, a drug is any substance that may modify one or more of functions of a living organism. Drugs can provide temporary relief from unhealthy symptoms and/or permanently supply the body with a necessary substance which the body can no longer make it. Almost all the drugs produce unwanted side effects. In large doses, all drugs are toxic. Some drugs lead to an unhealthy dependency that may be physiological and behavioral. Whether a person is genetically or bio-chemically predisposed to addiction or alcoholism is a controversy that has been debated for years within the scientific community.

One school of thought advocates the “disease concept”, embracing the notion that addiction is an inherited disease, and that the individual is permanently ill at a genetic level, even for those experiencing long periods of sobriety.

The fact remains that there is scientific research to support all of these concepts. The question of whether addiction is genetic, behavioral or biochemical does not have an absolute answer. The distinguishing feature of the condition commonly referred to as addiction is the ability of the drug to dominate the individual’s behavior, regardless of whether physical dependence is also produced by the drug (Anonymous, 1994)

Pakistan is an important country in South-Asia, situated at a junction having a substantial effect on drug trafficking. In North-West of Pakistan, Afghanistan is situated, having worldwide fame in drug production. Almost all the contacts of Afghanistan with outside world are through Pakistan. Moreover, in Northern areas, Pathan tribes exist, where there is no restriction on coca production.

About 33 million people (2.21%) are drug addicts but

NGO’s estimate this figure as 4.5 million, among which about 25% are heroin addict. Among the drug addicts, 80% have age ranging between 15-30 years. This problem is increasing day by day in our homeland presenting an ugly and dreadful picture. Drug addiction is the biggest problem of the third world for example; Maldives, Thailand, Burma etc; and illiteracy, poverty, and unemployment are among the major causes of drug addiction (www.heroinaddiction.com/research_overview.html).

The present research was planned to explore the causes and impacts of drug addiction with a view to suggest some measures for controlling it in Central Jail, Faisalabad–Pakistan.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Central Jail, Faisalabad was selected for the present study because the jail has been declared as a centre for the confinement and treatment of drug addicts and T.B. Centre. In this study, 700 inmates were interviewed to know the causes of drug addiction and its adverse effects. The following aspects were taken into consideration while interviewing the drug addicts (inmates):

1. Quantity of drug recovered when captured,
2. Family background,
3. Type of addiction,
4. Poverty level,
5. Conviction rate,
6. Causes of addiction,
7. Connection with family after being admitted to jail,
- and 8. Confession rate

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Drug addiction is a curse and its multiplier increase can be attributed to illiteracy, smoking, poverty, bad company, family background, psychological problems and many others.

Table I. Family background and type of addiction in inmates of Central Jail, Faisalabad

No of cases	Family back ground					Type of Addiction			
	Poor	Middle	Rich	Wine	Heroin	Chars	Opium	Bhang	
700	630	65	5	160	30	57	433	25	
Percentage	90	9.29	0.71	22.86	4.29	7.57	61.86	3.57	

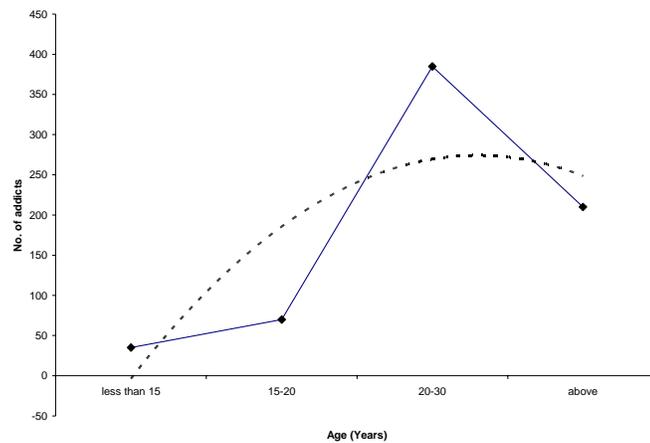
Table II. Causes and connection with family after admission of addicted inmates of Central Jail, Faisalabad

Causes				Connection with family after admission				Age			
Death	Poverty	Domestic	Company	Father	Mother	Voluntary	Others	< 15	15-20	20-30	Above
64	182	81	373	156	544	210	490	35	70	385	210
9.14	26.00	11.57	53.28	28.29	77.71	30	70	5	10	55	30

It was found that majority (544/700; 77.7%) of the inmates possessed more than 100 g of drug at the time of arrest. Further investigations after arrest, however, revealed that the drug recovered from the inmates at the time of arrest was less as claimed to strengthen the case by the authorities concerned. Moreover, 672 out of 700 inmates (96%) were smokers prior to addiction with a drug. Smoking has, therefore, a positive correlation with drug addiction. So in this study, it is very clear that smoking is a root cause of introducing young ones to addiction. It was found that 35 out of 700 inmates (5.1%) were literate, only 5% were above the primary school level. Literacy level was, therefore, also of significant importance (Kinney, 1999). The family background and type of addiction of the inmates of Central Jail, Faisalabad has been presented in Table I. It was found that majority of the inmates (90%) belonged to poor families. In case of type of addiction, 160 and 433 prisoners were addicted to wine and chars, respectively (Table I). Similar results have also been reported previously (Royce, 1989). A man is known by the company he keeps. Bad company was the key factor responsible for their addiction. Company plays a pivotal role in character building of a person. Now-a-days, young ones are proud to be smokers and in advance they inhale or use drugs for sexual power/worldly pleasures/temporary escape from problems which ultimately lead to their permanent drug addiction. Majority (n=373) of the prisoners were of the view that bad company was a major factor responsible for their addiction (Table II). Like previous study by Sher (1991), it was found that more drug addicts had age ranging from 15 to 30 years (Table II).

Poverty is a social evil. In a society where a majority is living a substandard life, no one can think of relief and peace. Poverty is the mother of many problems and to escape these problems people seeks relief in drugs (Table II). The conviction rate after case trial was 95%. Out of 95% convicted, 40% was due to confession. During the proceeding of the cases most of the addicts complained of delayed proceedings and only 280 (40%) were satisfied that

Trend of Drug Addiction in various Age Groups



they were meted out with justice. Inside jail, majority of the addicts were supported by their mothers, which was mainly due to maternal love and affection (Table II). This situation is quite different from those of western countries.

In short, it was concluded that illiteracy along with unemployment, bad company and smoking was the major leading factors, which were responsible for their addiction along with, some other minor factors.

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