

## DRUG ABUSE IN RURAL HYDERABAD: COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND RESPONSE

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### ABSTRACT

*The drug abuse is a serious community issue where awareness and responsiveness are critically linked to prevention and control of the abuse and addiction. The problem of drug abuse has variety of reasons, perspectives and paradigms. Drugs are abused by individuals due to personal failures, frustrations, disputes, immaturity, broken domestic bond, bad parenting, peer role, defective learning and social structures. Community, media, government and civil society can play pivotal role in preventing the menace. The above causative factors need to be intervened systematically through combination of multiple approaches and strategies. The drug abuse problem is understood and tackled through community role. This study endeavors at primary data, international research and local studies relevant to the topic. The study was conducted to identify awareness of the community on the issue and gauge their responses. A non-random sample of hundred respondents including twenty women was selected. This paper attempts to explore the issue in the context of Differential Association model, Anomie theory and Bonding and Development perspectives.*

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**Key words:** Drug abuse, Community, Rural Hyderabad

### INTRODUCTION

Drug addiction is a serious social problem of Pakistan in general and Sindh in particular, where it has become a culture and many people of all ages are observed indulging in it. On the one hand, the problem is inexorably increasing its scale despite governmental endeavours and many ventures of NGOs combating the menace; while on the other, the community seems totally inactive, irresponsible and unaware towards the issue to the extent that the drug addicts resort to crime for generating income for the purchase of narcotics. The situation is becoming serious due to the number of heroin addicts in the country. An alarming rate of increase of 100,000 addicts per year is highly dangerous to society (The Paris Pact Initiative, April 2008:7). These drug addicts are affecting

nearly 20 million dependents and family members with psychological, social, and economic repercussions in the country (Hussain and Naqvi, 2007). This article attempts to identify awareness of the rural community of Hyderabad-Sindh on the issue and gauge their responses.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There are different perspectives and approaches to define and explicate the issue of drug abuse. The anomie theory posits that individual moves towards drugs due to meaninglessness resulting from gap between social goals and legitimate means (Merton, 1957). The interactive theorists believe environment and individual factors combine alluring individuals into the problem. The individuals who fail to delay immediate gratification, with low-esteem and depression, fall prey to addiction (Ausubel, 1961). There are individuals who are obsessed with the definitions favorable to violation of law than with the definitions unfavorable to violation of law, hence are more predisposed to deviate and involve in criminality (Sutherland and Cressy, 1966). The weakening of family bond also detaches a child who may involve in the drug addiction (Hirschi, 1969). Mothers that are unconventional and not focusing on their children increase risk factors for their children developing addiction (Brook *et. al.*, 1990).

The development theorists believe that role of family is critical in determining addiction of the youth. The role of father who is detached from his son plays crucial role in making his son an addict (Seldon, 1972). The problem of drug abuse can be attributed to several factors. The social learning is elementary in it, because juveniles and adults learn drug abuse through the social company they keep and the environment where drugs are routinely abused. The differential company which already uses drugs also plays key role in creating drug addicts. Thus, the drugs are reinforced through supportive drug-availability (Akers, 1973).

Evidently, drugs are abused by individuals who are frustrated and seek relief. They are in depression, anxiety and need agents to change their mood (Milkman and Frosch, 1973). Drugs are abused to alleviate human tensions generated by inter-personal disputes and conflicts (Lettieri, 1978). In this regard, the availability of

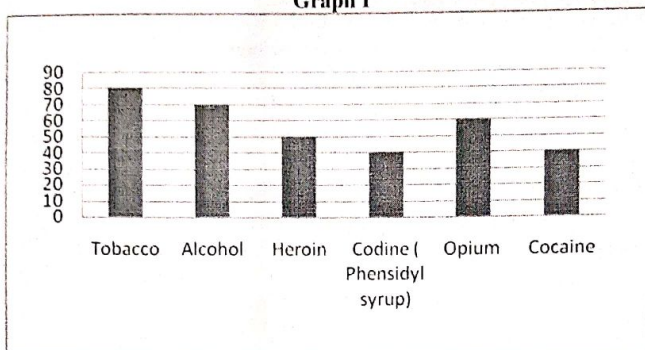
drugs and peer pressures are causal links to abuse and addiction (Lindesmith, 1974). Kendel (1975) found that drugs are used in a sequence, low-to-higher order form in progressive manner and follows definite pathways. The hierarchy of drug usage starts with legal drugs (tobacco or alcohol) and proceeds to illegal (marijuana, cocaine and heroin etc.).

The drug abuse patterns can also be determined by supply and demand factors. The cheap and easily available drugs are frequently abused because of their local production or easy access (Denise, 2002). The youngsters involve in addiction due to bad peer influences, failure in accomplishing objectives, loss in goal achievement, family-disruption and family dispute (Nazli, 1985). The doctoral research work of Dr. Ghulam Muhammad (2003) analyzing the causes and consequences of drug addiction in the context of Karachi, has laid a rudimentary base for social scientists and others interested in research, policy issues and social development.

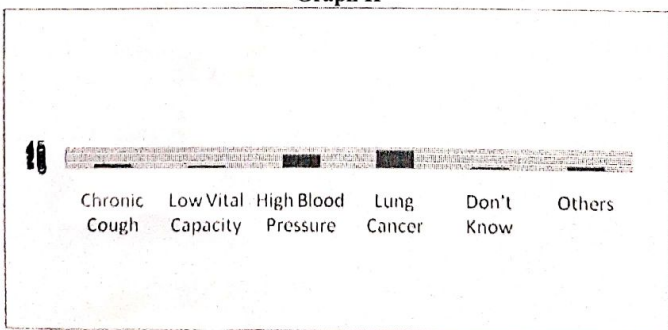
"The majority of respondents (86%) were unaware about negative effects of drugs, however they (88%) knew that their physical and mental health have been impaired due primarily to addiction. Though unhappy with drugs and disposed to give up the habit but had no support for rehabilitation. Peculiarly, the sample studied contained more of the respondents aged below thirty whose parents were illiterate or semi-literate than the older ones. The friends of this particular age group were addicts too" Muhammad (2003).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is primary in nature and a non-random survey of the rural community was conducted. A sample of hundred respondents was selected for interviewing to estimate the awareness of the respondents toward drugs, their perceptions regarding harmful effects and the causes of the abuse of drugs in the context of the rural community of Hyderabad.

**RESULTS****1. Familiarity with drugs:****Graph I**

The graph I is showing the familiarity of respondents with various types of drugs and substances. It depicts that 80% respondents were familiar with tobacco being common substance. Notably in some areas 70% respondents were aware of alcohol, while 60% about opium, 50% about heroin (Brown Sugar) and 40% about both Cocaine and Codine.

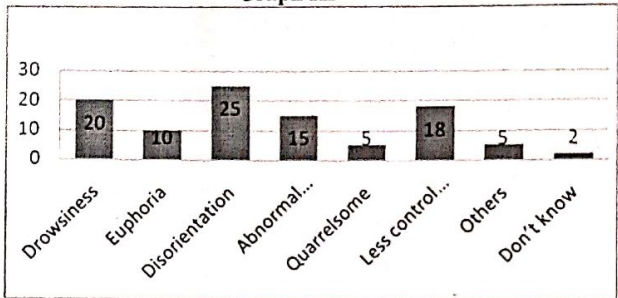
**2. Harmful Effects of Tobbacco:****Graph II**



The graph II shows that 40% respondents perceive that tobacco is major cause of lung cancer, while 30% believe that high blood pressure is due to tobacco, 10% said that it may cause chronic cough, 5% believe on low vital capacity, and 10% said other causes (mouth disease, dental problems, etc.).

### 3. Harmful Effects of Substances:

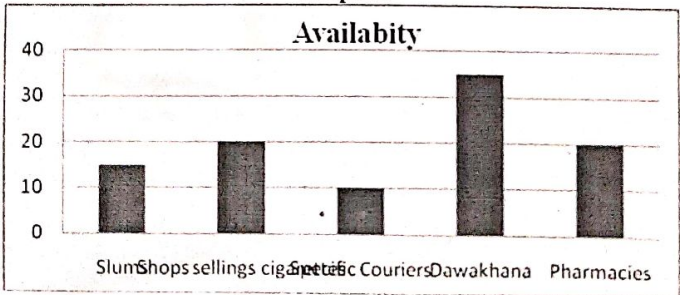
Graph III



The graph III is showing perception regarding harmful effects of substances/drugs. 25% were aware about disorientation, 20% drowsiness, 18% less control on emotions, 15% abnormal behavior, 10% euphoria and 5% about quarrelsome while 2% were unaware about side effects and 5% aware of other effects (vomiting, changing in pupil condition, loss of senses).

### 4. Substance Availability:

Graph IV

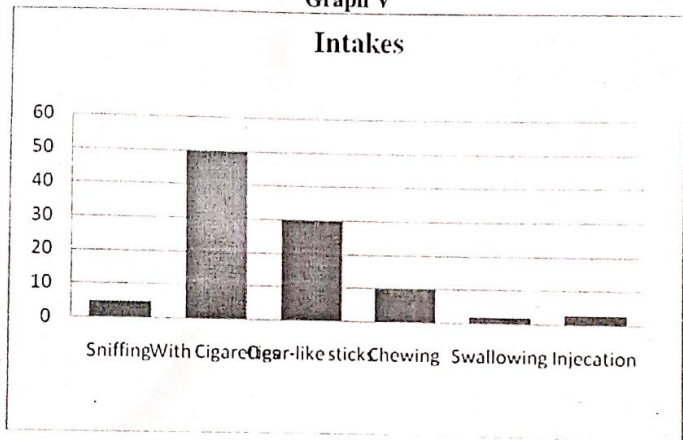


The graph IV is showing awareness of respondents about availability centers of substances. 35% replied at *dawakhanas*, 20% know about both shops selling cigarettes and pharmacies while 15% replied substances are available on slums and 10 knew about specific couriers.

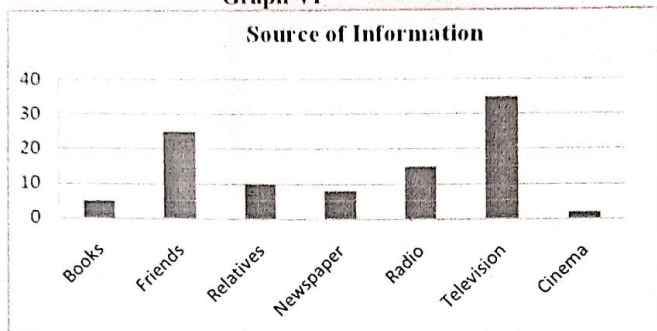
## 5. Intake

Graph V

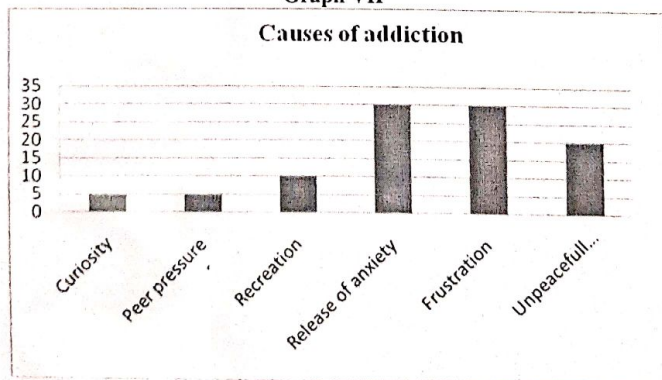
### Intakes



The graph V is showing general knowledge of respondents regarding intakes of drugs/substances. 50% believe intake with cigarettes, 30% cigar like sticks, 10% chewing, 5% sniffing, 3% with help of injection and 2% swallowing.

**6. Source of information:****Graph VI**

The graph VI is indicating the access of respondents to substances. The majority of respondents 35% secured information from Television, 25% from friends, 15% radio, 10% relatives, 5% from books and only 2% took information from cinema houses. This is clearly indicating the influence of media.

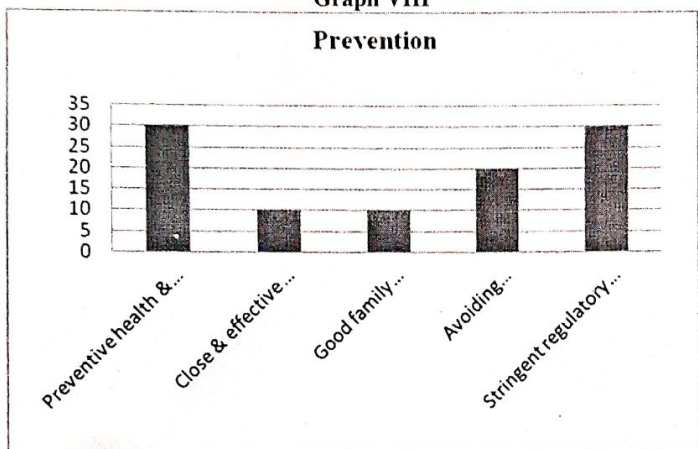
**7. Causes of Addiction:****Graph VII**

The graph VII is indicating the causes of addiction. 30% respondents feel that people indulge in addiction to release anxiety and frustration, 20% feel disruptive family behavior, 10% recreation while 5% feel for peer pressure and curiosity.

#### 8. Prevention:

Graph VIII

Prevention

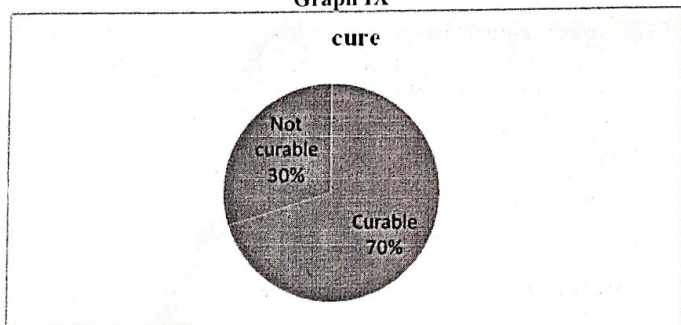


The graph VIII is showing the perception of respondents about prevention from drug/substance use. 30% feel that both the preventive health with social awareness education and the stringent regulatory measures can help, 20% feel that avoiding physical/mental punishment and 10% feel that both the good family environment and the close and effective parental supervision may prevent from using contrabands.



## 9. Cure:

Graph IX



The graph IX is showing the perception about cure. 70% respondents believe that it is curable while 30% think it is not incurable habit. The perception about incurability is probably built due to re-lapse of addicts to same substances.

**FINDINGS**

The study was conducted on one hundred community people to assess their awareness and responses regarding the drug problem in context of rural Hyderabad. The background information about respondents indicates that 60% were below thirty years, 30% below 45 years and 10% above 46 years old. The 80% subjects were male and 20% female. The 40% of respondents were illiterate and others were educated up to graduation.

The eighty percent respondents were familiar with substances like tobacco, opium 60%, and heroin 50%, cocaine and codeine both 40%. Regarding harmful effects of tobacco, about half of the respondents opined that tobacco causes lung cancer, besides 30% believed it causes high blood pressure. The effects of substance abuse reveal that 25% of subjects knew it causing disorientation, 20% drowsiness, 18% less control on emotions, 15% abnormal behavior, 10% euphoria and 5% aware about quarrelsome. The major source of easy availability of drugs is *dawakhanas* (stores) that do not need license and are not properly checked by routine

drug inspectors. The highest percentage of substance abuse is administered through cigarettes. The television (35%) and friends (25%) are major sources of information regarding drugs. People indulge in drugs mainly to release frustration and tension and overlook family disputes. The majority (30%) wants to prevent and control the menace through strict regulation policies/measures. The highest number of subjects (70%) believed drug problem is curable and 30% thought it incurable.

The awareness and proactive-responses can play important role in preventing and controlling the menace.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study was geared to assess awareness and response levels of the community about drug abuse/addiction problem in rural background of Hyderabad. The perspectives on the drug abuse are variegated. People abuse drugs due to personal failures, poor social conditions, bad parenting, broken homes, frustration, domestic disputes, peer pressures and differential learning.

The study concluded that significant majority of community subjects (80%) were familiar with the drugs commonly abused and they (40%) were cognizant of the fact that tobacco use would cause lung cancer. Nevertheless, the greatest volumes of substances are abused/ administered through cigarettes. Perhaps, friends and media entertainment play informative and causative role in addiction. It is duty of the health department, media and other related organs of the state to prepare laws, enforce them properly, besides proactive role of media and community leaders.

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