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CORRELATIVE STUDY ON THE DRUG ABUSE IN HIGH AND HIGHER SECONDRY SCHOOLS IN DISTRICT SRINAGAR

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ABSTRACT
The present study aimed to explore the reasons for students resorting to drug use, the effects arising from its consumption, and to examine drug abuse awareness among secondary and senior secondary school students in relation to their gender, locale, socio-economic status, and educational stream (arts/commerce/science). 3100 students from 9th to 12th class were randomly selected out of 7552 enrolled students. Data were collected using questionnaires for students, teachers, and heads of institutions (HOIs). The collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software and presented using both qualitative and descriptive methods. The results revealed that girl students were less aware (50%) about the causes and consequences of drug abuse, whereas boys (68%) were more aware. The responses also showed that 53% boys and 41% girls from uptown and 58% boys and 48% girls from downtown were aware of drug and substance abuse. Science students [boys (37%) as well as girls (26%)] are more aware of the causes and consequences of drug abuse compared to students from humanities and commerce.

Keywords:
Drug Abuse, Schools, Socio Economics, SPSS, Substance Abuse, Data

INTRODUCTION

The term drug is defined as any substance that when absorbed into a living organism may modify one or more of its physiological functions. The term is generally used in reference to a substance taken for both therapeutic purpose and abused substances (Kwamanga, Odhiambo&Amukoye, 2003). It is a psychosocial lifestyle disease with many symptoms, and hence, can also be termed as a syndrome. This syndrome in recent times has become a universal social and public health problem and no nation is immune to the horrendous consequences of illicit drug use and unfortunately this is more common among young children and adolescents, where they are about to begin their career but get involved in these problems due to various reasons.

According to a report from National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) (2018), drug addiction is a chronic disease characterised by compulsive drug seeking and use, making it difficult to control despite harmful consequences. Repeated use of drugs leads to changes in the brain that challenge an addicted person's self-control and interfere with their ability to resist intense urges to use. The menace of drug addiction is increasing in our society with every passing day, and the major concern is that children seem to be targeted as the new market for drug industry globally NACADA (2012).

Poverty encourages drug use among students (Adelekan, 1998). Absenteeism and idleness resulting from lack of school fees and parental carelessness contribute to the high prevalence of drug use among students aged between 14 and 24 years. School factors have also been observed to affect students (Ngesu*et al*., 2008) and high school is often the first time that students encounter illicit substances, with their curiosity frequently provoked. Moreover, school management practices may contribute to drug abuse, consequent to heavy-handedness, lack of freedom, and failure to address student concerns, which generally create stress leading to abuse of drugs (Kingala, 2000).

Adolescent youth encounter numerous distinct challenges and considerations. This is a period filled with many difficulties, such as the stress of physiological and physical change, academic and social competition, generation gaps, and exposure to an often unjust and harsh world, among other problems. Psychologically, adolescents face serious developmental tasks, such as peer identification and individuation from their family. Sexual identification, as well as societal and vocational role identification, and negotiating issues of authority, power, and independence are primary (Oketch, 2008).

The studies conducted in recent years have shown an alarming shift in the pattern of substance use in terms of rise in the number of female users and decreasing age at first-use. Not only are youth consuming deadly drugs

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such as brown sugar and heroin, but the use of cannabis (charas), medicinal opiates, inhalant like Fevicol SR, paint thinner, shoe polish etc. is also on the rise at an alarming pace. The Drug De-addiction and Treatment Centre (DDTC), at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education & Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, has earlier reported the abuse of several newer drugs over the past 20 years, such as buprenorphine (Basu*et al*., 1990), carisoprodol (Sikdar*et al*., 1993) codeine-containing cough syrups (Matoo*et al*., 1997), inhalants (Basu*et al*., 2004; Kumar *et al*., 2008), dextropropoxyphene (Basu*et al*., 2011), and even opium-containing Ayurvedic and Unani herbal medicines (Basu*et al*., 2009).

The conflict-ridden valley of Kashmir has seen a tremendous rise in substance abusers over the past many years. Several studies conducted in the valley reveal that youth particularly between the age group of 15-30 are involved in this menace of drug addiction. The alarming rate of this menace in Kashmir leads the academicians and experts like

Dr Dabla say, "We have lost one generation to bullets and we may lose another generation to drugs". The drug abuse menace has gripped the youthful population — both students and non-students — reducing them to shadows of their former selves and wasting their lives at the age when they are most needed by society (Ngesu*et al*., 2008). Although several researchers have suggested preventive measures, these efforts have not effectively led to the desired results of curbing the menace of drug and substance abuse among school children. This is because apart from the youth facing a lot of challenges as individuals, the family, society, religious institutions, and schools have not collectively come forward to initiate adequate methods of helping young people. There is always a conflict of interest on who has the upper hand in helping the youth and unfortunately the efforts of law enforcing agencies to deal with the problem of drug addiction in Kashmir have not been adequate so far. The situation is likely to worsen further if adequate measures are not taken by clearly identifying and helping vulnerable groups. The Jammu and Kashmir Government had introduced a drug de-addiction policy in the President's rule in January 2019. It provided for the staff of 15 departments to work in coordination to uproot the menace of drug addiction. While Police, Narcotics and Excise are required to reduce availability of drugs through various measures including crackdown on the supply chain, the departments of Education, Information & Broadcasting and Social Welfare are supposed to lessen the demand. Also, the local administration had promised to crackdown on drug mafia post the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, but the reality gives contrasting signals as the drug lords continue to operate with ease and assurance.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The present research was an awareness study, descriptive and correlational in nature. In light of the available evidence, objectives, and hypotheses, the descriptive survey method was employed.

Target Population

For the current study, the target population comprised students from classes 9th -12th class students, their respective guidance and counselling teachers, and Heads of Institutions/Principals from ten (10) Secondary and ten (10) Sr. secondary Schools of District Srinagar,

Study Area/Location

The study was carried out across all 8 Zones of District Srinagar, selecting one secondary and one Higher Secondary school from 6 Zones (Nishat, Rainawari, Zaldagar, Hawal, Iedgah and Gulabagh) and two secondary and two Hr. Secondary schools from 2 zones (Srinagar and Batamaloo) as these two zones contained double the number of schools compared to the other six zones. During sampling, it was decided to select one boys' school and one girls' school from each zone, so as to ensure representation from each specific area.

Sample Design / Size

The total student population was 7552 in the 20 sampled schools. Random sampling was used to select students from classes 9th to 12th class student and out of the total of 7552 students, 3100 were sampled. This was based on a table designed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) cited in Mulusa (1988). For the Head of institutions and guidance and counselling teachers, purposeful random sampling was used. In this connection all 20 School Heads, and 40 guidance and counselling teachers (two from each school) were sampled to participate in the study.

Instruments/ Tools of the data collection

Questionnaires were administered to collect data for this study. A questionnaire on drug abuse awareness was prepared for students, teachers, and head teachers, and was designed to measure the extent and degree of awareness among heads of institutions, teachers, and various categories of students regarding drug abuse. The questionnaire was prepared by the researcher after consulting experts to ensure content validity. These experts were professors and assistant professors from the fields of education, sociology, and psychology. Their

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suggestions were duly incorporated before the questionnaires were distributed to the students, teachers, and school heads.

Pilot Study

The relevance of the items in the questionnaire to the objectives of the study was assessed to ensure comprehensive contextual coverage. The set of questionnaires was administered to a sample of 30 students, 2 teachers, and 1 head of institution from a school not included in the main sample and the following areas were considered:

- the clarity of instruction on the questionnaires
- the simplicity and suitability of the language used
- the length and time taken by each respondent to complete the questionnaire

Procedure for data Collection

Data collection refers to gathering information aimed at producing or refuting some facts (Kombo *et al*., 2006). The investigator sought permission from the State Council for Educational Research and Technology (SCERT) to carry out the research. The researcher further obtained an introductory letter from the Principal of the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) to conduct research in the sampled schools of District Srinagar. Appointments with the school heads were arranged for the administration of research questionnaires to the sampled population. After randomly selecting the schools, the researcher visited the schools to conduct the research. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher, and respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the information they provided. In all there were 3100 students, including both boys and girls who participated as respondents in the present study. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather data that would identify the reasons why school children resort to drug use, and to assess drug abuse awareness among secondary and senior secondary school students in relation to their gender, locale, and educational stream. The information gathered was used to estimate the extent of awareness about use and abuse of drugs by secondary and senior secondary students.

Data analysis technique/ Statistics

The data collected was analysed using simple statistics. The questionnaires were checked for completeness, accuracy of information and uniformity. The questionnaires were checked to see if there were errors and omissions, adequate information and legibility and relevant responses.

RESULTS

The response rate, data analysis, and interpretations of the current findings have yielded results that can be utilised by school management and policymakers to formulate productive plans for curbing the menace of drug addiction.

Response Rate

Out of the 3160 questionnaires given to the student, teachers and Head teachers 3040 were returned making a 96.2% response rate. The response rate for guidance and counselling teachers was 40 and for principals it was 20, rating their responses at 100%. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) stated that a response rate of 50% is acceptable for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and above is excellent; therefore, the response rate in this study was excellent for analysis.

Instrument / Tool	Population Size (p)	Sample Size (s)	Number Returned (n)	Percentage (%)
Principal questionnaires	20	20	20	100
Teachers' questionnaires	40	40	40	100
Students' questionnaires		3100	2980	96.12
Total		3160	3040	96.20

Table 1 Response Rate

Gender wise Response Data

The students sample consisted of 1802 males (60.5%) and 1178 females (39.5%). The teacher sample consisted of 11 (27.5%) males and 29 (72.17%) females. The principal sample had 17 (85%) females and 3(15%) males. The disparity in administrative representation is attributable to the predominance of female heads of institution in most of the high and higher secondary schools. The higher proportion of boys compared to girls is attributed

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to the fact that in mixed schools (recently upgraded boys' schools), boys continue to constitute the majority of the student body.

Gender (Sex)	Students		Teachers		Head of the Institutions	
	Freq. (f)	Percentage (%)	Freq.(f)	Percentage (%)	Freq.(f)	Percentage (%)
Female	1178	39.5	29	72.5	17	85
Male	1802	60.5	11	27.5	3	15
Total	2980	100	40	100	20	100

Table 2 Gender Wise Response Rate

Age bracket of the students

As per the results in table 3 there were more girl students (31.67%) in the age group of 12-14 years compared to boys (11.65) and more than 50% of boys fell in the age group of 15–17 years, compared to girls (37.94%). There were no students above 19 years of age in any gender. The results confirm that all students involved in the survey were in their teenage years.

Girls	**Freq. (f)**	**Percentage (%)**
12-14 Yrs	373	31.67
15-17 Yrs	447	37.94
18-19 Yrs	358	30.39
20 years and above	0	0.0
Boys	**Freq.**	**%**
12-14 Yrs	210	11.65
15-17 Yrs	905	50.22
18-19 Yrs	687	38.13
20 years and above	0	0.0
Total	2980	100

Table 3 Age Bracket of the Students

School Category

Students from both boys' and girls' institutions were selected for the study. From high schools, an equal number of students from classes 9th and 10th classes were selected, and likewise an equal number of students from classes 11th and 12th belonging to different subject streams were selected for the study from Hr. sec. Schools.

School Category	High School	Hr. Sec. School			Mixed School			Total
Class	9th&10th	11th&12th			11th&12th			
		Science	Arts	Commerce	Science	Arts	Commerce	
Boys	210	371	544	172	181	252	72	1802
Girls	373	218	407	90	32	44	14	1178
Total	583	589	951	262	213	296	86	2980

Table 4 School and Class Category

Student's response on Awareness about Drug use and Abuse

According to the results in Table 5, a considerable number of both boy and girl students were well aware of the different types of materials used as drugs. Morphine, as drug was almost equally rated by both boys (30.41%) and girls (28.77%) followed by Cannabis and opium. In addition to the choices provided, students demonstrated knowledge of approximately 17 other items used as drugs that were not among the options listed in the questionnaire. Among those other drugs cigarette was rated almost equally by boys (53.99%) and girls (47.36%). A good number of girl students (33%) had the knowledge of chewing gum being used as drug and 28% girls indicated the use of correction fluid as drug. Nail paint, nail polish remover, Vicks Vapour Rub, and glue were also identified as drugs by a greater number of girl students than boys, whereas shoe polish, petrol, and kerosene-like items were identified as drugs by a greater number of boys than girls.

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Drug	Boys		Girls	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Sleeping pills	323	17.92	134	11.37
Hashish	158	8.76	72	6.11
Analgesics like ibuprofen "pills"	109	6.04	46	3.90
Antibiotics pills	72	3.99	58	4.92
Shireh (opium extract)	436	24.19	272	23.08
Morphine	548	30.41	339	28.77
Naas/Naswar	324	17.98	160	13.58
LSD	215	11.93	332	28.18
Heroin	278	15.42	112	9.50
Cocaine	275	15.26	210	17.82
Opium	437	24.25	262	22.24
Psychological medication (used for treatment of psychological diseases)	159	8.82	60	5.09
Cannabis /marijuana / Ganja	521	28.91	338	28.69
Others				
Alcohol	64	3.55	6	0.50
Cigarette	973	53.99	558	47.36
Petrol	121	6.71	57	4.83
Nail Paint	67	3.71	233	19.77
Shoe Polish	274	15.20	187	15.87
Barbiturates	88	4.88	14	1.18
Vicks Vapor Rub	197	10.93	252	21.3
Cycle Grease	254	14.09	116	9.84
Chewing Gum	179	9.93	389	33.02
Correction Fluid	234	12.98	337	28.60
Patch	156	8.65	89	7.55
Transparent crystals	137	7.60	0	0.00
Powdered sugar	189	8.65	23	1.95
Glue	156	7.60	87	7.38
Kerosene	134	10.48	65	5.51
Nail polish remover	49	2.71	258	21.90
Spirit	229	12.70	105	8.91
Smelly socks	79	4.38	0	0.00
No response	252	13.98	384	32.59

Table 5 Student's response on the knowledge about different types of Drugs.

Student's response on awareness about the causes and effects of drug abuse

According to Figure 1, fewer than 50% of high school students were aware of the causes of drug abuse, whereas students from higher secondary schools, particularly boys (68%), were more aware of the causes and consequences of drug abuse; only 12% were unaware about the problem and 20% were uncertain. The data indicate that more than 50% of students from high schools, as well as girl students from higher secondary schools, were unaware of the causes and effects of drug abuse. Consequently, the researcher recommended the organisation of drug abuse awareness programmes at the school level.

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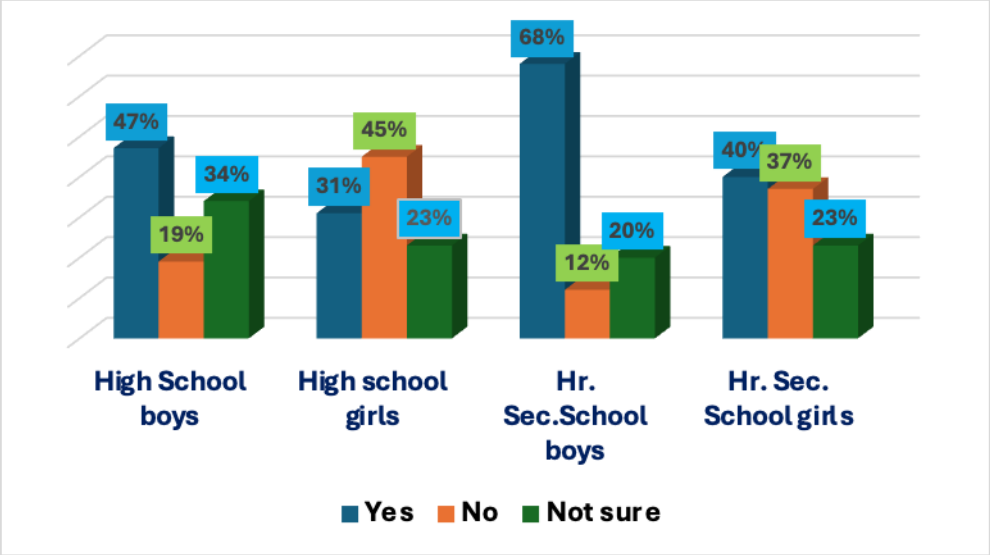

***Figure 1 Students'* response on awareness about causes and effects of drug abuse.**

Students' response on common Drugs abused by Students'

Table 6 presents the Students' responses to the various choices provided regarding commonly abused drugs. Among boys Tobacco was mostly abused drug with a frequency of (65.09%) followed by Morphine (45.06%), opium (40.84%) and bhang (34.4%). The responses from the girl Students' also indicated tobacco to be the most abused drug (47.36%) followed by opium (31.57%) and bhang (28.69%). The relatively higher use of tobacco (cigarette) among Students' may be attributed to the fact that cigarette smoking is culturally, socially, and legally tolerated in Kashmiri male society and is easily accessible. Additionally, the use of bhang and opium is attributed to their local production, which compounds the problem of drug abuse among the youth, including Students'.

Drug	Boys		Girls	
	Freq.(f)	Percentage (%)	Freq.(f)	Percentage (%)
Tobacco (Cigarette)	1173	65.09	558	47.36
Morphine	812	45.06	248	21.05
Bhang	621	34.46	338	28.69
Charas	592	32.85	256	21.73
Opium	736	40.84	372	31.57
Heroine	121	6.71	57	4.83
Nail paint	67	3.71	233	19.77
Correction fluid	234	12.98	337	28.60
Shoe Polish	374	20.75	167	14.17
Sleeping pills	388	21.53	401	34.04
Chewing Gum	198	10.98	313	26.57

Table 6 Students' response on common Drugs abused by Students'.

Causes of drug abuse as stated by Students'

As shown in Figure 2, boy Students' from both high and higher secondary schools reported peer pressure (46% and 68%, respectively) as the primary cause of drug and substance abuse, followed by factors like curiosity (28% and 46%, respectively), thrill-seeking (26% and 32%, respectively), and a considerable number of Students' (21% and 39%, respectively) stated that lack of parental care also leads to drug abuse among Students' ; some Students' (12% and 28%, respectively) attributed it to academic pressure, and others (6% and 17%, respectively) cited overly strict parents.

Girl Students' from high and higher secondary schools (38% and 43%, respectively) also reported peer pressure as the primary cause of drug and substance abuse, followed by academic pressure (32% and 39%, respectively). A considerable number of girl Students' (28% and 33%, respectively) attributed drug abuse to overly strict parents.

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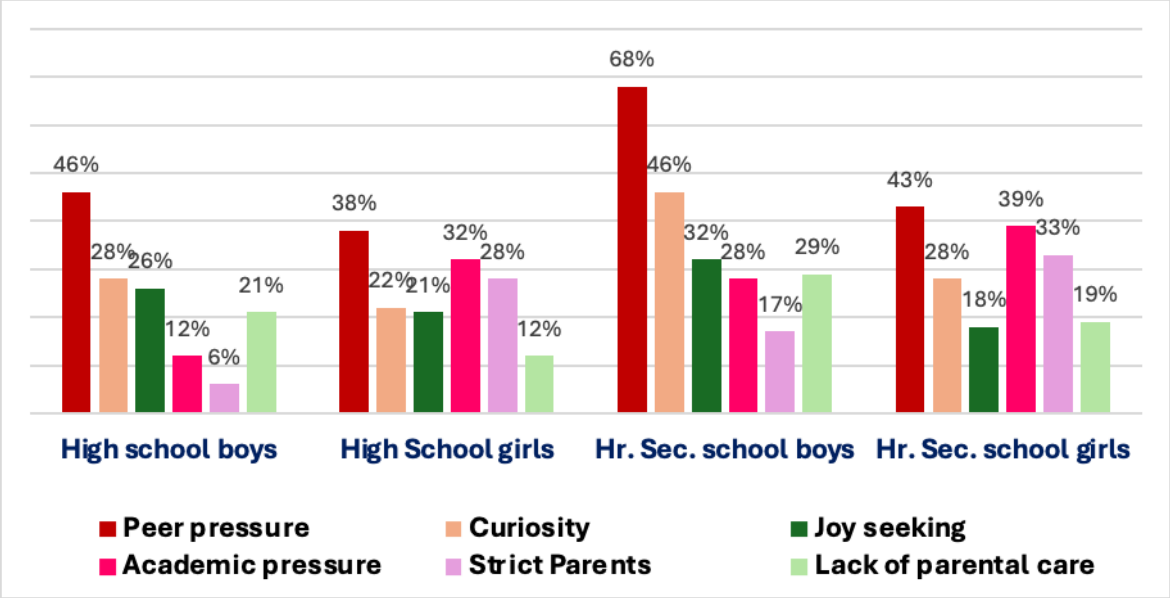

Figure 2 Causes of drug abuse as stated by Students'

Student's Knowledge about the complications of drug use

According to Figure 3, a considerable number of Students' were aware of the complications of drug abuse, with both boys and girls responding similarly regarding dependence on drugs (48% and 43%, respectively) and anxiety and depression (41% and 39%, respectively) as the principal complications. Among boys, approximately 12% responded that drugs cause sleep disorders, and 16% agreed that aggression is one of the effects of drug abuse.

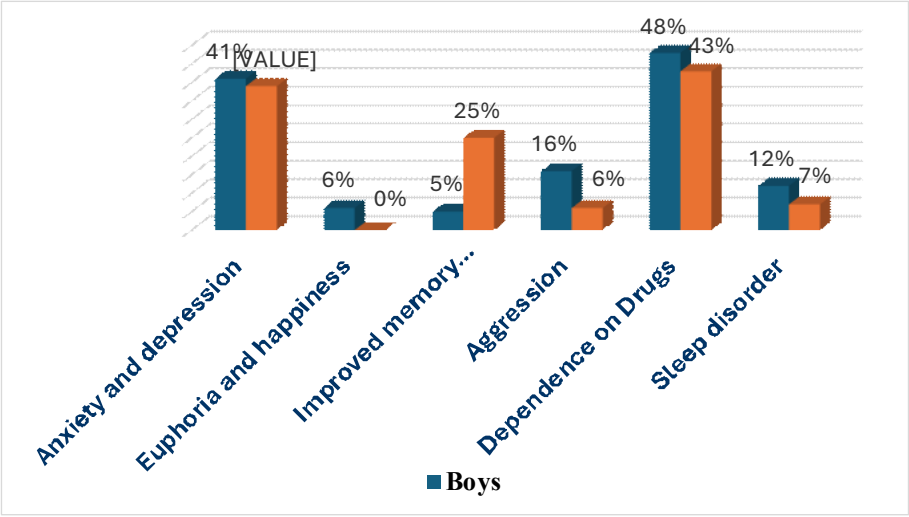

Figure 3 Students' Knowledge about the complications of drug use.

Influence of locale/residence on the awareness of drug and substance abuse among Students'

According to Figure 4, there is no substantial difference in the responses of uptown and downtown Students' regarding awareness of drug and substance abuse. The responses indicate that 53% of boys from uptown and 58% of boys from downtown were aware of drug and substance abuse. Similarly, 41% of girls from uptown and 48% of girls from downtown were aware of drug and substance abuse. The study establishes that
Drugs continue to ruin the lives of thousands of young people in Srinagar District, irrespective of locale.

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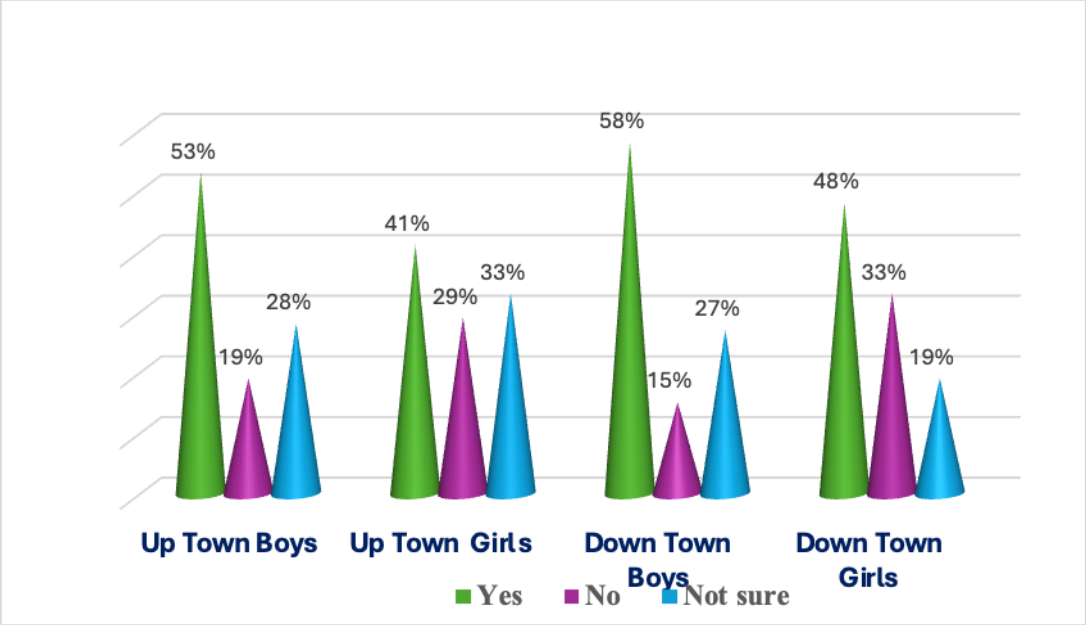

Figure 4 Influence of locale on the awareness of drug and substance abuse among Students'.

Influence of Educational stream of Students on the awareness about causes and effects of drug and substance abuse among Students'

The analysis of Figure 5 indicates that science Students' (both boys and girls) are more aware of the causes and consequences of drug abuse compared to Students from humanities and commerce. The higher awareness rate among science Students', both boys and girls (37% and 26%, respectively), may be attributed to the inclusion of topics on health and well-being in the biology syllabus for classes 11th and 12th. The findings lead the researcher to recommend that targeted drug-related awareness programmes be organised in schools with a greater proportion of Students' belonging to the humanities and commerce streams.

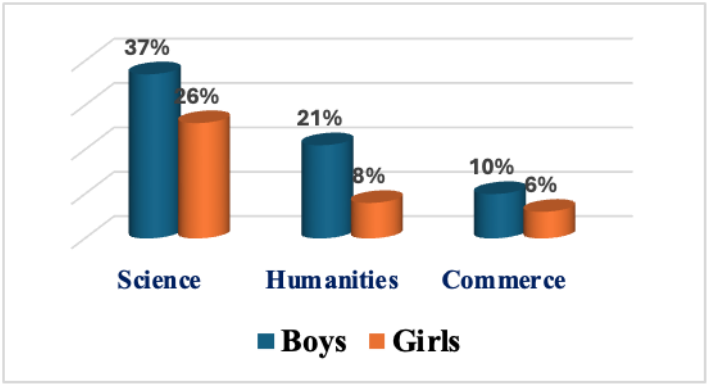

Figure 5 Causes and effects of drug and substance abuse among Students'.

Students' awareness about the availability of the organisations and agencies associate with the treatment / rehabilitation of the drug addicts.

As per the Figure 6, the majority of Students' — both boys (69%) and girls (74%) — are not aware about the availability of any the organisations or agencies associated with the treatment / rehabilitation of the drug addicts. This finding motivates the researcher to advocate for the organisation of awareness seminars and programmes at schools, in collaboration with entities such as drug de-addiction centres in hospitals, police control rooms, and psychiatric and psychological counsellors, so as to assist school authorities and Students' in addressing drug-related problems.

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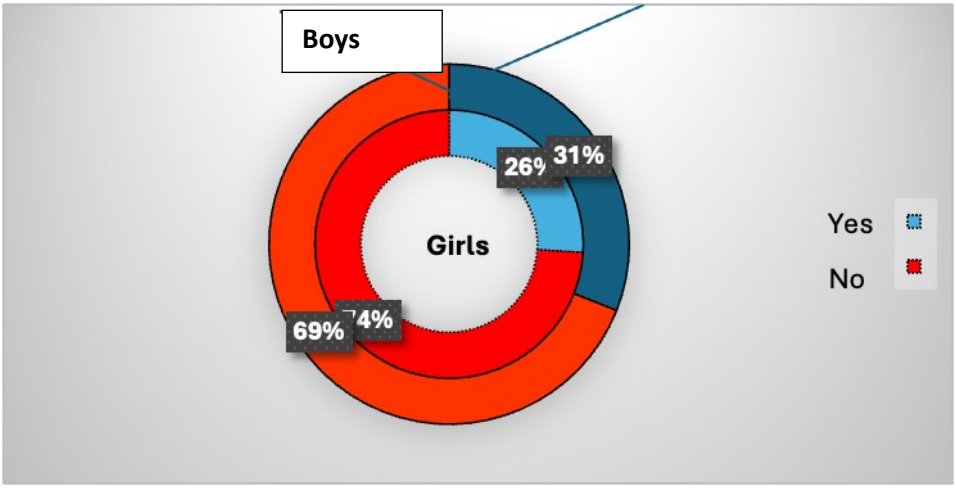

Figure 6 Students' awareness about the availability of the organisations and agencies associated with the treatment / rehabilitation of the drug addicts

DISCUSSION

These findings are in agreement with those of Chadda and Sengupta (2002) who reported that in India about 20 million children of age ranged from 10-14 years were estimated to be tobacco addicted. Similarly, a study carried by Singh *et al*., (2006) in Jaipur, on Students' of classes 9-12, aged between 13-18 years reported that Cigarette smoking was found in 72.8% boys and 50.0% girls. Cigarette smoking by the student community is also reported in the study by Bhat *et al*. (2016, 2017), who revealed that smoking often acts as a precursor to use of drugs. The findings are also in agreement with Dar *et al*. (2018), who in a study on Kashmir student community found that among Students', 14.1% were as ever smokers, 4.1% were ever tobacco chewers, 11.94% were exclusive smokers and 3.5% were exclusive tobacco chewers. 19.3% of these children belonged to families affected by unrest and those who suffered economic loss due to the turmoil in the valley.

The use of drugs like morphine, charas, opium, and bhang by Kashmiri adolescents has been reported by Mushtaq et al. (2004), who reveals that opiate preparations including heroine abuse has become the most serious problem in Kashmir over the past few years. Similar findings have been reported by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) (2019), revealing that 4.6 % of the total population of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir use opioid drugs, while 80 percent of the drug addicts in Kashmir use heroin and morphine.

The use of drugs like substances such as nail paint, shoe polish, chewing gum, and correction fluid, as indicated by Students', is corroborated by the study of Dr Hussain, who reports that out of the addiction cases that are reported at the hospital, school-going children comprise 15-20 % of that population; and of this 2-3% are those who abuse solvents like polish and glue and drugs like Corex cough syrup, injectable Pentazocine, Benzodiazepines and SpasmoProxyvon .

These findings are in consistent with those of Kampala (2013), who established that adolescent Students' are the most vulnerable section of the population, who are mostly unable to withstand peer pressure and thus begin to experiment with drugs in or outside schools. Mushtaq *et al*. (2004) also supports the findings, reporting that the period of initiation of the drug in Kashmir youth is between the ages of 11- 20.

The majority of male Students' also identified curiosity as an antecedent of drug abuse. This is in agreement with Saini (2010), who while studying drug addiction in undergraduate Students' determined that Students' mostly take drugs to enjoy fun or out of curiosity. In addition to peer pressure, female Students' ranked academic pressure almost equally as a cause of drug abuse. According to respondents, Students' abuse drugs believing it provides the energy required to study for long hours and perform well in examinations. This exemplifies the intense pressure felt by Students' to excel in their studies, arising from highly competitive academic environments and from the expectations of teachers, family, and friends. As per the records from Police control room Srinagar (PCR) (2019), out of 1978 drug linked cases registered, 81% were males and 19% females, signifying that the number of female drug addicts, too, is on the rise in the otherwise conventional society

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CONCLUSION

The current study draws attention to the increasing problem of drug abuse among high school and higher secondary school students in District Srinagar, underscoring the complex and pervasive nature of the problem. The study shows that although a large number of students have general knowledge about drugs, there was a considerable lack of awareness about the causes, effects and rehabilitation facilities. It also highlights the impact of gender, stream, and academic exposure on level of awareness, with science stream students and male students exhibiting better awareness than others.

The study reveals that peer influence, curiosity, stress, and insufficient parental support are the major factors that lead to substance abuse, suggesting a multi-pronged approach to intervention. This study also highlights the concerning availability and acceptance of substances like tobacco and localised drugs among teenagers.

Based on the study findings, it is crucial to develop extensive school-based awareness programs, establish counselling services and promote coordination between schools, parents and society. This knowledge can inform policy and preventive measures to address drug abuse issues and protect the lives and futures of our young students.

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