

## FROM CAUSES TO CONSEQUENCES: THE REALITY OF DRUG ABUSE IN FAISALABAD, PAKISTAN

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**Abstract**

Drug addiction cannot simply be regarded as a result of weak willpower or moral failure; rather, it is a complex health disorder that requires consistent and long-term treatment similar to other chronic illnesses. For individuals who have never experienced substance abuse, it is often difficult to comprehend why someone would intentionally expose themselves to harmful substances. However, there are multiple underlying factors that push individuals toward drug use, and the consequences are often devastating, leading to severe social, psychological, and physical damage. Substance abuse has emerged as one of the leading causes of preventable deaths, illnesses, and disabilities worldwide. In this context, the present study, "Causes and Consequences of Drug Addiction among College Students," seeks to explore the major factors contributing to drug addiction.

**INTRODUCTION**

To put it simply, medications are chemical molecules that alter human behavior. Drug misuse occurs when people use illegal drugs for purposes other than medical therapy and experience altered states of consciousness (Haveles, 2014). According to medical authorities, any chemical can alter a person's mental or physical state. When used continuously, abnormalities can occur. Medical drugs can also be abused by taking them without a legal prescription (Nessa et al., 2008).

Addiction has devastating consequences. Symptoms include anxiety, paranoia, racing thoughts and a flushed face. They are clumsy, uncoordinated and forgetful because they have consumed too much alcohol. Someone who is addicted to them cannot

function normally without them and is unable to control their use. It has a negative impact on their brain as well as their personal and professional relationships. Because their mental cognition is impaired, they make rash decisions, forget things easily and have difficulty retaining information. Among their reckless behaviors are crimes such as stealing and drunk driving. They also have irregular sleep schedules spend a lot of money despite not having the means and ensure a consistent supply. When it comes to college management and administration, one of the most vexing and widespread issues is drug and substance abuse. The students will suffer catastrophic and terrible consequences. University students have been

corrupted as a result of accelerating societal and technological shifts, exacerbating the problem. Everyone is vulnerable to the effects of drug abuse, from students and parents to schools and economies. Nations all over the world rely on promising young people who are squandering their potential due to drug abuse. The global epidemic of drug and substance abuse among adolescents shows no signs of abating (Hurst, 2019).

Drug addiction has run parallel to human history throughout our species' existence. Drug use is not inherently evil. Medication administration has been a boon to medicine. Plants with medicinal properties include pain relievers and disease controllers derived from herbs, roots, bark and leaves. In contrast, drug abuse has spread at an alarming rate over the last several decades reaching every corner of the globe. Numerous research have been conducted to investigate the causes of drug usage and addiction in order to create effective therapies and preventative techniques. According to the study the different foundations of the problem include family concerns such as mother-father relationships, parenting methods and family poverty, as well as community variables such as illegal meeting places, erroneous or harmful morals and neglect. The people with whom teenagers associate are another aspect that influences their behavior. Teens who hang out with drug users are more likely to develop an addiction. Friends are frequently the ones who introduce others to drug use (Laoniramai, 2005).

The drug epidemic is permeating all strata of society, affecting people from all socioeconomic backgrounds in every corner of the country. Everyone is aiming for our young people, specifically those aged sixteen to thirty-five. Adolescents have low self-esteem, a desire to try new things and a willingness to take risks, such as with inhalers and other substances. Half a million Pakistanis use heroin, with an additional 125,000 injecting drugs. In Pakistan, forty thousand drug-addicted street children live in just four major cities. Pakistan has 7.6 million addicts with an annual increase of 40,000. Men account for 78% of the addict population, while women make up 22% (Shadman, 2017).

When a young person starts college, they enter a golden age because they are no longer under the

control of their parents and can join new groups. During this time, he is free to engage in officially prohibited activities and embark on adventures. Curiosity, friendship and peer pressure push him over the edge into drug abuse. The three main causes of drug abuse are peer pressure (96%), academic stress (90%) and natural curiosity (88%). According to one study, 28.8% of all tobacco users in India were smokers while 37.5% chewed. The results show that there were more users among boarders than among non-boarders (Puthiaet al., 2017).

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, South Africa is not immune to the global epidemic of teen drug abuse. The majority of adolescents begin using drugs at a young age (DeMiranda, 2020). Cannabis, alcohol and tobacco are the most commonly used substances due to their abundance (Madu & Matla, 2003). Male students who light up and daggga on school grounds are a common occurrence in the majority of high schools. Some of these men may be inebriated when they arrive at school. Teenage substance abuse is associated with a wide range of risky behaviors. Some teenagers engage in risky behaviors such as hanging out with criminals, having sexual relationships without protection, being violent with others, causing property damage and failing to perform well in school, all of which can have serious consequences for their health the economy and society as a whole (De Miranda, 2020).

### Research Methodology

The study was carried out in District Faisalabad, focusing on college students as the population. A multistage sampling technique was employed for data collection. At the first stage, two tehsils were randomly selected out of six. At the second stage, four colleges (two from each selected tehsil) were chosen randomly. Finally, a sample of 240 students (60 from each college) was drawn through convenience sampling.

Data were collected using the survey method with a structured interview schedule designed in accordance with the study objectives. This approach ensured accuracy, reliability, and relevance of the responses to meet the research objectives.

**Results and Discussion****Distribution of Respondents according to their Age Groups****Table 01: Respondents in the age group**

Age ( years )	Frequency	Percent
18-24	28	20.0
25-30	35	25.0
31-35	47	33.57
36 and Above	30	21.43
Total	140	100.0

Table 01 shows that 20% of the respondents were in the age group of 18-24, 25% were in the age group 25-30 years, 33.57 percent in the 31-35 years of age and 21.43 % were in the age group of 36 and above years. The age range of 25–30 was represented by 25% of the respondents, on the other hand. Approximately 21.42 percent of those who participated were 36 and up . Results had linked with the study conducted by Bloom and Canning (2014) who defined population of youth or young people as the opportunity for making over a time

period of about forty to fifty years during which, the proportion of dependent children is reduced and the population with the age of labor force significantly increases. As a result, opportunities of increasing per capita output are grown directly and indirectly. The above data shows that majority falls in the working group and makes the demographic dividend situation in the country. So, that finding reveals that Pakistan is facing the situation of demographic dividend. The unused of such youth create problems.

**Educational Level of Respondents****Table 02: The respondent's frequency and percentage according to their education**

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent
Intermediate	55	39.28
ADP	43	30.71
BS	42	30.01
Total	140	100.0

Table 02 presents the distribution of respondents according to their educational background. The findings reveal that the highest proportion, 39.28%, were enrolled at the intermediate level, followed by 30.71% pursuing ADP, and 30.01% undertaking BS degrees. These results align with Geol (2007), who emphasized that education significantly shapes human life by guiding individuals to think critically and make informed decisions. Education is considered essential for a nation aiming at growth and development (Geol, 2007). Similarly, Khan (2008) and Amir (2003) highlighted that education serves as a process of bringing positive behavioral changes in individuals. A well-trained person tends

to be logical, innovative, and motivated to succeed. Training, therefore, becomes vital for achieving progress in life. Furthermore, education is a purposeful activity that influences people both individually and collectively. This study identifies the economic and social contributions of education, such as employment opportunities, enhanced awareness, improved income, better healthcare, and knowledge of rights. It is recommended that the state increase investment in education to maximize economic benefits alongside social gains. Ultimately, education is the only pathway through which Pakistan can achieve prosperity, peace, and sustainable development.

**Distribution of Respondents according to their family type****Table 03: Respondents' frequency and percentage according to their family type**

Family Type	Frequency	Percent
Joint	73	52.1
Nuclear	41	29.3
Extended	26	18.6
Total	140	100.0

Table 03 shows the respondents' frequency and percentage according to their family type. The majority, 52.1% of respondents, had a joint family. 29.3 % of the respondents belonged to nuclear family, and 18.6% of the respondents belonged to an extended family. The results are closed linked with Batool (2010) concluded that family is a close group of people who are attached emotionally and biologically to each other. Pakistani and western

families are different in their stricture, living style and culture as well. There are different common types of family structure existing in Pakistan such as joint, nuclear, and extend. But joint and nuclear families are the most common types of families existing in Pakistan. The majority of the people in Pakistan live in a joint family system, but the trend is changing gradually towards a nuclear family system due to urbanization and modernization.

**Table 04: various impacts of drug abuse that affect the behavior and well-being of the youth.**

Statement	1		2		3	
	Agree		Neutral		Agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Loss employment	81	57.8	19	13.5	40	28.5
Relationship Loss	88	62.8	21	15.0	31	22.1
Financial Troubles	78	55.7	40	28.5	22	15.7
Homelessness	99	70.7	20	14.2	21	15.0
Risky sexual behavior	67	47.8	23	16.4	50	35.7

The above table 04 explains the various impacts of drug abuse that affect the behavior and well-being of the youth. Findings reveal that the majority of the respondents, 57.8 percent, agreed that loss of employment is the function of drug abuse, 13.5 percent of the respondents showed neutral opinion in this regard, and 28.5 percent of the respondents disagreed that loss of employment was associated with drug abuse.

Another repercussion of drug abuse is the dissolution of relationships. The majority of respondents (62.8%) agreed that drug abuse leads to relationship breakdowns, with 15.0 percent

undecided and 22.1 percent strongly opposed. Furthermore, 55.7% of respondents thought that drug use is linked to financial difficulties, 28.5% were unclear, and 15.7% disagreed.

Drug abusers face the problem of homelessness because their families are not accepting them. Findings show that a huge majority, 70.7 percent, agreed that drug abuse faces the problems of homelessness, 14.2 percent reported a neutral opinion, and 15.0 percent disagreed with the statement. Moreover, 47.8 percent of the respondents agreed that drug abusers show risky sexual behavior towards their partner, 16.4 percent

had no opinion in this regard, while 35.7 percent of the respondents disagreed that drug abusers had any risky sexual behavior towards their partner. Loveena et al. (2017). Moreover, despite the country's strict prohibition on narcotic narcotics and psychotropic substances, drug control laws in India have not been fully enforced. Despite its reputation for success in the green and white revolutions, modern Punjab State, India, is experiencing a myopic development predicament, which this study examines. It claims that systemic concerns such as youth unemployment, poverty, and a lack of positive role models have contributed to a substance abuse epidemic in the Indian state of Punjab. Substance misuse has far-reaching implications that must be acknowledged if individuals, families, and communities are to be protected. Punjab's strategic location on the border between Pakistan and India has made the state more vulnerable to drug trafficking. The global drug network is based on Punjab, and India serves as a hub for this network. The drug trade and substance misuse have intensified as a result of the porous border between Pakistan and India, which has harmed the social fabric of border towns and jeopardized national security.

Shagufta et al. (2017) addiction to uploads, as well as other illicit drugs, is a chronic, relapsing multifactorial brain illness that can lead to serious medical, social and economic consequences if left untreated. Drug usage is one of the world's most serious health problems, with an alarming annual growth in heroin addicts in Pakistan. To investigate the socio-demographic risk factors that contribute to increased heroin addiction susceptibility in Pakistani communities. Information was acquired on critical characteristics that influence heroin addiction such as age and ethnicity, communal domain, education level, employment position and demographic factors (drug route, drug dose). The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Early onset of addiction, poor literacy rate, peer pressure, occupation type, and stress are all risk factors in our study group that increase vulnerability to heroin addiction. Under the influence of environmental risk factors, drug usage that begins at a young age appears to trigger the shift to heroin addiction.

## Conclusion

Substance misuse is a silent destroyer that can claim lives before individuals even recognize its grip. What may begin as a casual activity can gradually dominate one's existence, reshaping it entirely. However, drug addiction does not have to define or end a person's journey. The right time to seek recovery and sobriety is now, and countless opportunities exist for those willing to take the first step. The path to overcoming addiction is rarely straightforward, but every person already carries the potential to live a healthier and more fulfilling life. Healing is possible, one day at a time, no matter how long or difficult the road may seem. Combating this issue requires collective effort, with both families and governments working hand in hand to shield young people from falling into substance abuse.

Young people, especially children and adolescents, face a critical stage in their development. Alongside physical changes, they must navigate social expectations and family pressures. External influences—such as media portrayals and the behavior of role models—can strongly shape their decisions. Without adequate preparation for these transitions, many may feel confused, stressed, or overwhelmed. In such circumstances, some teenagers turn to alcohol or drugs as a coping mechanism, unintentionally putting their health, safety, and future at risk.

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