

Illicit drugs & indiscriminate proliferation: The consequential and discourse analysis of substance abuse

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Abstract

Drugs and illicit substances have resulted in obliterating effects over the social structure throughout the globe. This study is an attempt to illuminate the socio-economic and psychological impacts of substance abuse on the abusers. The study has been approached through literary, secondary and theoretical information that are further analyzed and applied in the area under study. In addition, the problem of substance abuse in this study is accessed through discourse analysis (elaborations of social learning theories), content analysis (in-depth study of the illicit substances i.e. alcohol, heroine, barbiturates) and framed under the theories of social process, learning and labeling. The study reflects and declares substance abuse, its production and selling as criminal conducts that are worth retribution and punishment.

Keywords: illicit drugs, addicts & co-addicts, criminality, retribution

Background of the study

International tensions are augmenting with a rapid pace through variety of social and economic evils predominantly including the trafficking, supply and use of illicit drugs. The origins of some of these tensions are clear: rapid changes in political alignment, reduced family and community cohesiveness, increased unemployment, economic and social marginalization and increased crime (UNDCP, 1995:3). Whatever the reason in a given country, the lack of economic progress has put such countries in a financial bind and frequently placed severe restrictions on government services available to the most vulnerable segments of the population. In this context, both the nation State and its individual citizens have become more vulnerable to the temptations of money from illicit drug production and trafficking and to the acceptance of illicit drug profits by financial institutions or as direct investment (UNDCP, 1995:5).

Estimates and information of illicit drug production come from several sources primarily comprising of satellite mapping, ground surveys, agronomic characteristics or consumption figures and political factors

(Tullis, 1993:1). Although we have estimates of illicit drugs' production, yet the production figures for opium-heroin and coca-cocaine are not precise, rather gross amounts produced in various countries are estimated. Based on the integration of information from nine country studies, an expert Tullis (1993:12) has noted that 3045 tons (estimated) of opium is produced in nine countries where variables detract from the precision of attempt at assessment. Besides, this is not considered an estimate of world production for two reasons: (a) some countries have not been included in these estimates (Afghanistan, for example, had an estimated cultivation of 19,470 hectares in 1992 and produced 640 tons of opium that year according to the United States Department of State (INCS Report, 1994:2); and (b) many unexamined assumptions have been made in preparing these estimates.

In contrast to opium production, coca leaf and cocaine production take place in relatively few countries. The estimates made by the above-cited commentators are not highly divergent from those provided for coca and cocaine by the Department of State. The approximate total for the three producer countries (Peru, Bolivia and Colombia) are coca leaf, 330,000 tons, and cocaine, 322 tons. Several features of this picture are noteworthy: (a) the major production sources of drugs are quite varied, not limited to one or two producer countries or simply one region of the world; (b) according to 1992 GNP per capita data (World Bank Report, 1994:18), major production of opium and coca takes place in less developed countries, many of which have considerable economic, agricultural, political and social problems; and (c) according to all estimates, the total amount of production is extremely high. If alcohol and tobacco production amounts were added to those of opium, cocaine, cannabis and psychotropic drugs to form an aggregated estimate of addictive substances production, the picture that emerges is one of the enormous supplies of these substances. One commentator has described the illicit drug industry during the production phase, as "labor intensive, decentralized, growth-pole oriented, cottage-industry promoting, and foreign exchange earning - desirable features of rural development in economically stagnating areas" (Tullis, 1991: 57).

There were also major regional gaps in information in official reporting with respect to the nine-year period 1983-1991. The average percentages of countries actually reporting over this nine-year period were as follows: in Europe (74%), the America (51%), Middle East (46%), Asia and the Pacific Region (40%) and Africa (37%) (Report of United Nations

Secretariat, 1993:4). In the African region, only one-third have reported six or more times in the last nine years, which makes the region more susceptible and more prone to the evils of drugs because of difficulty in identification of drug related curses.

The mentioned facts evidently express that the whole world is exposed to the threats of substance abuse where the developing countries are among the worst victims including Pakistan. In this context, Pakistan's geographic location next to Afghanistan (the world's largest producer of illicit opium producer) places the country in a vulnerable position in terms of drug trafficking and abuse. Patterns of illicit drug production, distribution and abuse are variant due to social, economic and political developments. Such changes underscore the necessity of analysis and research on drug trends in the country and region as a crucial step in terms of policymaking and drug interdiction efforts.

Statement and objectives of the study

This research study aims to enhance the understanding of drug trends in Pakistan in order to place it within the wider context of global drug developments. The report of UNODC (2008:6) places Pakistan among the severe victims of drug availability, use and addiction, where a variety of substances in shape of opium, heroine, hash, cannabis and others are frequently used by masses. Resultantly, such use of different substances has adverse impacts over the social and psychological well-being of the users that need proper consideration.

The study is planned under a specific objective that elaborates the overall destination of the study:

This research study intends to investigate and highlight the consequences of substance abuse in terms of social and psychological well-being of the users that explicitly comprise of educational apathy, mal-health, financial loss, emergence of criminality, familial breakdown, mental feebleness, personality disorganization and anomic reclusion.

Procedural process and theoretical approach of the study

The study is predominantly based on secondary information collected through library sources, internet, and reports of the organizations (UNODC, UNS, UNDCP, INCS) working in the field of drugs and substance abuse. The literary information is framed qualitatively (that provides description of events and facts (Babbie, 2004) in relation to the

impacts drawn over the users. In addition, the problem is approached in historical context showing the production of illicit drugs in global context, which is further analyzed in Pakistan.

The term substance abuse and the production-distribution of illicit drugs are taken as the criminological actions that are jeopardizing the global community. In this connection, criminological theories of social process (social learning, social control & social reaction theories) are taken into consideration. The social learning theorists believe that crime is a product of learning norms, values and behaviors associated with criminal activity (Seigal:2007). In addition, the “Differential Association Theory” by Edwin Sutherland (1939), reflects that the criminal behaviors are learnt and is a by-product of interaction while it occurs within intimate groups through learning the techniques of crime that vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity, which is ultimately the expression of general needs and values (Sutherland:1939). Further, under the umbrella of social learning, the “Differential Reinforcement Theory” by Ronald Akers and Robert Burgess expresses that the deviant and conventional behavior is learnt where people learn to be neither “all deviant” nor “all conforming” but rather strike a balance between the two opposing poles of behavior while this balance is usually stable, but it can undergo revision over time (Akers:1977). On the other hand, the social control theory believes that youth with poor self concepts are the ones most likely to engage in delinquent behavior, successful participation in criminality actually helps raise their self-esteem (Kaplan:1978;1980).

In such a run, the social reaction theory is worth-mention that emphasizes over labeling where the negative labels like trouble maker, mentally ill and stupid – help stigmatize the recipients of these labels and reduce their self-image while those who accept such labels are more prone to engage in delinquent behaviors than those whose self image has not been so tarnished (Adams et al; 2003). Such theories best exemplify and justify the objective of this paper that the nuisance of substance abuse is a learnt behavior (Differential Association and Differential Reinforcement theory) while these miscreants are also labeled in the society, who repeat their actions and become a threat for the society as a whole (Social Reaction or Labeling Theory).

Besides, the data sorted in the current paper is based on secondary data and empirical findings have been derived for the purpose to provide policy guidelines for policy makers and relative organizations working for

detoxification, rehabilitation and reintegration of the addicts. In order to clarify and make the secondary information more understandable; the researchers have drawn-out the impacts that are more prominently evident. In this regard the coming passages comprise of the impacts that are divided in various categories:

Substance abuse and its general consequences

The use of drugs has a long history, which has numerous impacts over the users. With the passage of time drugs tended to change which altered the impacts as well. The famous physicians and Hippocrates (460-370 B.C.) recommended mandrake, taken with a little wine to relieve depression and anxiety (Blum et al. 1969). Further, the Chinese emperors recommended Marijuana as good for female weakness, gout, rheumatism, malaria, beri-beri, constipation and absent mindedness (Ray, 1978:392). In addition it has also been recommended by Spanish on their arrival to South America who found that the natives chewed coca leaves for stimulating effects of Cocaine (DeRios and Smith, 1977). Substance abuse as a social evil interferes in person's health, economic or social functioning upsetting a significant number of people (Henslin, 1996: 101).

Tolching (1988) reveals that the Surgeon General of US concluded after reviewing 2000 scientific articles that nicotine is as addicting as heroin. To justify such notion and draw the conclusion, Buerger's disease should be considered, which shows that:

...the blood vessels become so constricted that circulation is impaired whenever nicotine enters the bloodstream. When gangrene sets in, at first a toe or two may have to be amputated at the ankle, then the leg at the knee., and ultimately at the hip. Somewhere along this gruesome progression gangrene may also attack the other leg. (Brecher et al. 1972:216).

In the light of sociological analysis; the functionalist perspective emphasizes over physical or social dysfunction. Different drugs have different impacts whereas Nicotine causes dysfunction of lungs and other vital body organs; alcohol abuse leaves behind a trail of impaired health, poverty, broken homes, and smashed dreams while heroin, the barbiturates, and other addictive drugs create severe problems for addicts and co-addicts (Henslin, 1996:106). Furthermore, the dysfunctions also involve drug-related crimes, such as burglaries and muggings and to support addiction; unemployment (a result of the loss of job or not finding the job); extensive

medical costs due to illness and diseases; the spread of AIDS among addicts who share needles; the harm done to innocent victims of automobile accidents; and the loss to society of a vast reservoir of human potential as people retreat into drugs (Henslin, 1996).

Keeping the sociological analysis continue, the theoretical approach of the sociologist Andrew Karmen reflects drugs as social pacifiers and argues that:

... Since narcotics pacify those who suffer most from mental and physical degradation, it's likely that some state members of the ruling circles have decided its benefits outweigh its costs (Karmen, 1980:174).

Drugs as a multifunctional phenomenon have diverse effects that vary from person to person in relation to the type of drug used by him/her. In this regard Ray (1978) and Zablocki et al. (1991) express that there is no such thing as the drug experience, which do not simply “excrete” experiences rather, what a person experiences from a drug depends on several factors. Besides, Becker (1967) studied LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) use, reports how expectations shape the content of hallucinatory drug experiences. He was of the view that when LSD first began to be used, new accounts frequently reported cases of psychotic reactions and suicide.

In addition, human psychology is always exposed to threats of drug use. It is earlier noted that alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents claim about 15000 lives every year by male drunk drivers. Here a question arises that why these accidents do not include young females or the elderly? Psychologist Peele (1987) points out that male culture views alcohol consumption as macho: a symbol of male potency, manliness and expression of bravado. In agreement to him the social Geographer Ronald Snow and sociologist Orville Cunningham (1985) suggest that excessive drinking among young males is related to their developing sexuality. Relationally, Katzenstein (1994:13) and Stipp (1994) express light drinking of alcohol greatly reduces the likelihood of heart attacks and aids the recovery for those who have them, but on the contrary, the heavy alcohol consumption increases a person's chance of a heart attack and of having problems with the endocrine, Metabolic, immune and reproductive systems.

Heavy drinkers also run a higher risk than non-mouth, esophagus, larynx, stomach, liver, lung, colon and rectum while people who both

smoke and drink multiply their risk of developing cancer (Seventh Special Report 1990) while the use of cocaine cause impotency (Inciardi, 1986). More alarmingly, drugs use also lead to death of the user where the ratio increase with the excess in use (James, 1994:5). In addition, the recent informal estimates reflect that 200,000 drug-injecting-related deaths occur per annum based on the estimated size of the current world population of injecting drug abusers of approximately 5.3 million (WHO, 1993; & Frischer, 1994:4).

Social Impacts

Augmentation in crimes

Drugs production, preparation, use, selling and purchasing are in itself are criminal actions in most of the social structures of the world whilst it lead the users to indulge in further anti-social activities. Drugs like alcohol, cocaine and Narcotics have key role to affect the users as well as the society in the lager spectrum where narcotics are used for beneficial purposes like pain killing and curing the different diseases. It is a known fact that narcotics cause crime, prevent people from working and destroy health where Crack cocaine is a notorious example. Sociologists James Inciardi and Anne Pottieger (1994:273-292) studied Miami crack users found that the average crack use had committed 6000 crimes, just in three months where 98 percent crimes were illegal drug sales.

Besides, the research of Johnson *et al*, (1988) who interviewed 105 drug addicts, found that during 24 hours, the group had committed 46 robberies, 18 burglaries, and 41 thefts, and earned 7771 dollars out of which 75 percent of the amount went for buying drugs. The average street addicts conduct 150 non-drug crimes a year and inflict thousands of dollars of losses on victims (Johnson et al. 1985:185). On the contrary, the research of Winick (1961) reflects that the use of Narcotics is not the cause of these crimes nor do narcotics make people unproductive citizens, or destroy their health. Winick herein justifies his argument through exemplification of physician narcotic addicts whom do not mug, commit burglaries, prostitute themselves, neither stop working nor does their health deteriorate more than usual.

While in agreement to Winick, a physician Jerome Jaffe (1965) also argued that narcotics do not drive people to crimes, while some characteristics are common among street addicts, which are not the

consequences of narcotics. Jaffe studied physician addicts and concluded that

The addict who is able to obtain an adequate supply of the drug through illegitimate channels and has adequate funds, usually dresses properly, maintains his nutrition, and is able to discharge his social and occupational obligations with reasonable efficiency (Jaffe, 1965).

Relationally to the contrary arguments of Johnson *et al* and Winick, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD, 1994) reflect that there is obviously a relationship between drug consumption and crime, although it is often not clear which is cause and which is effect. In principal consuming areas such as North America and Western Europe, psycho-pharmacological effects, economic-compulsive drives and systemic violence are considered the principal components of the drugs-crime link added by irrationality, excitement, agitation or impulsivity and corruption-criminality (UNRISD, 1994). In addition, users may become unable to control their anger and express it in the form of physical assault, including homicide while nearly half callers to a nationwide cocaine hotline in the US report the commission of violent crimes or aggressive acts like child abuse, murder, robbery, rape and physical assault (UNRISD, 1994).

Besides physical and psychological dimensions of criminality through drug use, the most of the property crimes have strong relation with substance use. Douglas and Speckard (1988) determine that after the addiction occurs, property crimes increase and narcotic use is further increased, which is justified as:

...periods of curtailed narcotics-use produced by treatment, property crime levels are significantly reduced and become extremely low after termination of the addiction career (Douglas and Speckard, 1988).

Substance abuse and familial-educational disruption

Substance abusers lead their primary relations to co-addicts that draw adverse effects on their familial and educational well-being. According to the study of UNDCP (United Nations Drug Control Program, 1995) the fast-paced social, economic and technological changes present a challenge to the stability and influence of the family where family is source of protection for weak members, releasing tension and problems and provides a mechanism for social interaction. It is explored that such

functions and remunerations of the family and community are affected adversely by the use of drugs inside the family (UNDCP, 1995). Furthermore, Denise Kandel (1973) reflects that friends are more similar in their use of marijuana than the attitudes of parents. He observed that peer and parental influences are synergistic, with the highest rates of marijuana use being observed among adolescents whose parents and friends were drug users while the threat of addiction increases when parents abandon their traditional supervisory roles (Blum et al, 1972).

Besides, education is the principal means of preventing drug abuse and contributing to the learning and socialization of individuals (UNDCP, 1995). It is worth mention that use of drugs and specifically the cannabis which is the most widely used illicit drug (Tullis, 1991) has devastating consequences on educational status of the users. It is reported through researches that chronic or acute use of cannabis may result in preoccupation with the immediate present, an impairment of short-term memory and other mental functions, impaired tracking ability in sensory and perceptual functions added with adverse emotional and social development and impaired classroom performance of individuals (Thomas, 2003). It can be explicitly concluded that substance abuse can decrease cognitive operations, making it difficult for the youth to develop a functional set of values and ideals.

Impacts on employment and economic well-being

Substance abuse marginally affects the employability and economic well-being of the users and co-addicts which reflected in the report of UNDCP in 2002 that the economic cost of drug abuse to the United States was 180.9 billion dollars (National Drug Intelligence Center, 2006). Alcohol clinches the top rank in most expensive drugs which hands 16 billion dollars a year medical expenses (Seventh Special Report, 1990) leading to the loss of employment, reduced productivity and alcohol-related crime, social welfare, that costs more than 100 billion dollars (Winslow 1995).

Besides, the most manifested effects of substance abuse are reported on health of abusers including suffering from hepatitis and HIV/AIDS through sharing the needles while injecting the drugs. It is identified that in 2004 over 3.5 million individuals aged 18 and older admitted to having injected an illicit drug during their lifetime (National Drug Intelligence Center, 2006). In addition, the effects of substance abuse on employability are obviously significant where many of the drug users are unable to attain

or hold full time employment and those who do work put others at risk particularly people working as airline pilots, air traffic controllers, train operators and drivers, where a minor degree of impairment could be catastrophic (NDIC, 2006). In this regard, the diagnosis of NDIC (2006) conducted a test which reports 5.7 percent of the drug tests of individuals involved in an employment related accident in 2004 were positive. Furthermore, businesses often are economically affected by substance abuser who sometimes steal cash or supplies, equipments, and products that can be sold to get money and buy drugs. Moreover, absenteeism, lost productivity and increased use of medical and insurance benefits by employees who abuse drugs affect business financially (NDIC, 2006).

Psychological Impacts

Human psychology is undoubtedly regulates, stabilizes and adjusts human in society, which is notably more prone to external forces including substance abuse. Since very long, human is persevering to keep her/himself psychologically stable, for which s/he offers tactics, which sometimes lead the wrong direction as the world is a supermarket of psychoactive substances or drugs. Some of these drugs are legal, others are illegal, some are used recreationally, others are medically, some are safe if used correctly and dangerous if not, some people use drugs because their friends do or because their parents tell them not to, like wise some are seeking pleasure; they are seeking inner truth or escape (Rathus, 2008)

Drug addiction is not only the misery of developing or third world countries rather developed and civilized countries are also among the victims of such abuses which are affecting their function and smooth running. According to Wills et al., (2002) for better or worse, drugs are part of American life where young people often involve in substance abuse that impairs their ability to learn at school and are connected with reckless behavior. Further, it is indicated that alcohol is the most popular drug on high school and college campuses and more than 40% of college students have tried marijuana, and 1 in 6 or 7 smokes it regularly (Johnston et al., 2003).

According to the American Psychiatric Association (2000) that substance abuse has both behavioral and biological aspects where behavior is often characterized by loss of control and their dependence is typified by intolerance. Furthermore, substance abuse and dependence usually begin with experimental use among adolescents that bring catastrophe to the

users' social, economic, spiritual and more prominently the psychological well-being (Chassin et al., 2000:223-231; Lewinsohn et al., 2000).

Conclusion

Recreational drug use especially of synthetic or toxic drugs, is increasingly common that notably marginalizes the users, abusers and non-abusers in multi-aspects. The literary information emphasizes and illuminates that the substance abuse has become a nightmare and has got the shape of nuisance in the social order. This study in the light of literary evidences endorses that the substance abuse is alarmingly high throughout the globe and as a result the substance abusers are socially marginalized, economically deprived, educationally hampered, physiologically paralyzed and psychologically disabled.

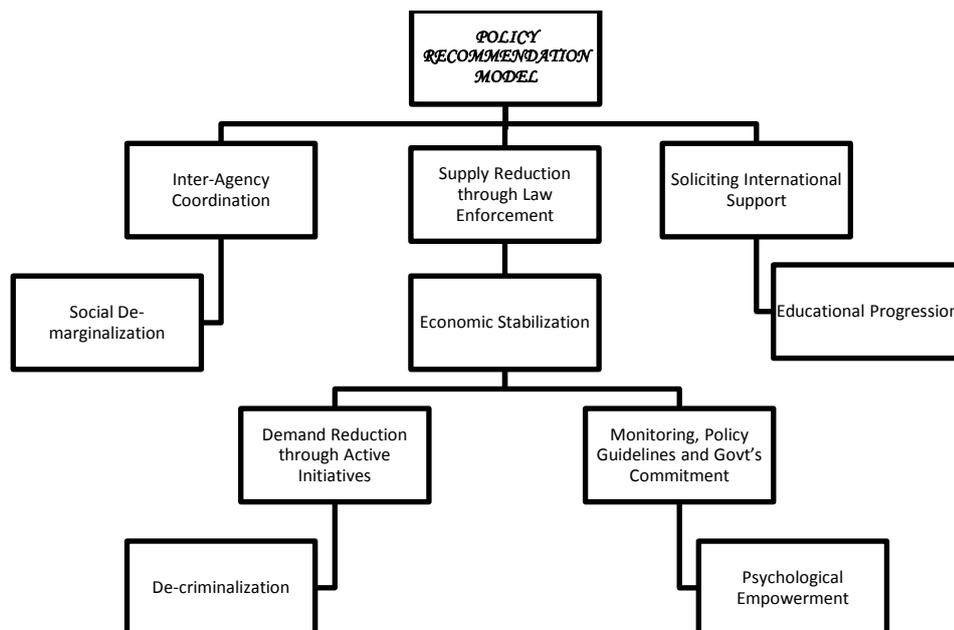
Although, the substance abuse has hundreds of impacts on the abusers a society, yet this study has focused on the social, economic and psychological consequences. In this connection, the study reveals that human status is highly stigmatized after dependence over illicit substances and the expected role is hampered. The educational well-being of the abuser is directly affected and most of the abusers usually drop-out in the earlier or medieval stages of their education. Besides, substance abuse bring havoc to the economic status of abuser and the authorities are compelled to spend extra amount on policy measures for hindering the drugs' proliferation, curing the health hazards produced by drugs and expenditure by the abusers.

Conclusively, the substance abuse directly targets the human psychology and makes the abusers insane and mentally feeble that further inclines them to indulge them in anti social activities. Criminological enterprises are emphasizes over the strong relation of substance abuse, mental feebleness and criminal conducts. In the nutshell, it is reflected that substance abuse is lying as a threat on the roots of development and advancement and hinders the individual and society to stabilize, strengthen and progress with elegance.

Policy Recommendations

This study extends and suggests the following policy recommendations:

- Primarily, Pakistani borders needs sealing, proper check and retribution on producers and sellers because the law enforcement in Pakistan are not yet successful to control the supply of illicit drugs.
- The Role of Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) is inevitably significant that needs empowerment and technology to identify the illicit drugs and clean-up the environment.
- Drug proliferation and its increasing havocs are the outcome of unawareness among the masses. In this regard, the awareness workshops, seminars and gatherings may bring intimation among the masses about substance's abuse its havocs.
- Religion plays a significant role in bringing social order and social control in society. The religious leaders should understand and play their due role to manifest the religious interpretations in terms of drug use, production, and selling.



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