

DRUG ABUSE

1. INTRODUCTION:

Since the commencement of life, it has been the desire of man to enjoy peace and avoid what is tumultuous and tedious in order to get peace of mind and tranquility. There are legal means for this but the hazard of ignorance leads a frustrated soul to adopt what is injurious to self-health first, and then, pestilence to the whole society. Drug abuse is a worldwide phenomenon. It is wide spread in our society and has affected Pakistan in many ways. It contributes to crime, adds to the cost of our already over burdened health care system and to the financially strapped social welfare system. It is also a serious threat to one's health and also causes violence and mass crime in a society. High profitability of opium crop combined with low risk of cultivation is the major factor for its growth. There is a very astonishing fact that the drug trade is second to the trade after armament in the world and yet the UN budget for drug control activities is equivalent to the value of a suitcase full of heroin.

2. SITUATION IN PAKISTAN:

According to the National Assessment Study on Drug Abuse in Pakistan 2000, there were about 500,000 chronic heroine users including 60,000 drug injectors in the age bracket of 25-35 years, which is an alarming high rate by international standards. In order to update data regarding drug addicts, a new project called National Assessment Study 2006 of problems of Drug Abuse in Pakistan is in pipeline and will be completed shortly. For the prevention of the Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse, effective and meaning full steps have been initiated.

It is a matter of great concern that Pakistan should be witnessing a resurgence of poppy cultivation in areas bordering Afghanistan which is expected to produce a bumper crop this year. Government officials often try to convince the people that the acreage under cultivation is on the decrease, as Minister for Narcotics Control Ghous Bux Mehar did the other day. However, with no end in sight to the opium problem in Afghanistan, Pakistan has no option but to work harder at removing the scourge from its territory. Poppy cultivation in Afghanistan witnessed a drastic reduction under Taliban rule, a fact that no doubt helped Pakistan earn the - poppy-free - label in 2001. But with the ongoing war on terror and the increasing lawlessness in Afghanistan, where the procurement of illicit arms depends heavily on the narco-trade, poppy cultivation has assumed unprecedented proportions. For Pakistan – a major transit route for narcotics from Afghanistan – the spillover has been inevitable in areas that share a similar terrain with bordering Afghan villages. Political unrest, especially along the border, has compounded the problem, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to crack down on those growing poppy.

In Helmand province of Afghanistan, according to the UN and American official an estimated 1,00,000 to 1,25,000 acres of poppy were planted in 2005 out of some 260,000 poppy acres nation wide. The governor, Akhundzade, known to be involved in the drug trade was removed last year in December under the international pressure but was then made a member of the Afghan parliament's upper house. His successor is said to be honest but the ex-governor's brother continues to be the deputy governor, and he had inevitably involved in the drug trade.

The drug trade under the Afghan warlords and police chiefs has become organized, those involved in it are well armed and is allied with insurgents such as the Taliban. There are ugly rumours vehemently denied that, warlords and officials apart, even President Karzai's own brother is involved in the drug trade. In this context, President Karzai has to keep in order his own house rather than blaming Pakistan for cross-border interference as let not the pot call the kettle black.

3. FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR DRUG ABUSE:

- I. Afghan war.
- II. Poverty.
- III. Unemployment.
- IV. Easy availability.
- V. Organized gangs of drug mafia.
- VI. Corruption among the government agencies responsible for checking smuggling.
- VII. Lucrative business.
- VIII. Easy money.
- IX. Political instability, poor law and order situation and social backwardness.

4. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- I. Give rise to crimes and violence.
- II. Bad image of the country.
- III. Less investment.
- IV. Breakup of social bindings.
- V. A threat to cultural heritage.
- VI. Educational institutions are being affected.
- VII. Youth would be the ultimate target.
- VIII. Corruption in the government agencies.

5. PRESENT GOVERNMENT STRATEGY:

The Drug Abuse Control master plan (1998-2003) is being extended by the Ministry to meet its objectives. Under this plan, the Anti narcotics Force (ANF), a Law Enforcement Agency Under the Ministry is being strengthened to control the trafficking of narcotics drug effectively. Similarly, the farmers of Poppy growing areas are being provided with alternate source of income. The development projects currently under implementation in the poppy growing areas aims to bring a decrease in the poppy growing/cultivation areas. Four-area development project one each at Dir, Bajaur, Mohmand and Khyber Agency areas are being implemented. Two model Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers i.e., one at Islamabad and other at Queeta have been started by ANF. Both the centers have started functioning and drug addicts are being provided free treatment, medicine, food and stay at the centers. The total cost of both the projects is Rs. 44.304 million. Beside these treatment and Rehabilitation centers, two other projects i.e., NGOs Support Program in Treatment and Rehabilitation, focused drug abuse prevention for high risk and marginalized group in Pakistan costing 55.7 million are also being implemented.

The aim of these projects is to create awareness amongst the masses particularly high-risk group and involve the civil society in prevention as well as treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts. Regarding kind and quantity of different drugs such as Opium, Heroine and Hashish, the total number of the cases reported during the year 2005-06 are 31150 and the total number of defendants are 31435 .A massive drive against drug traffickers taken during the period 2005-06 has resulted in the seizure of 75985.500 kgs.