

Identification of causes and effects of drug usage in Kuchchaveli DSD of Trincomalee District

Lakshana Yugarajah¹ & Fareena Ruzaik²

lakshiyugan17@gmail.com , fareena@geo.cmb.ac.lk

Independent Researcher ¹ and Senior Lecturer, Department of Geography, University of Colombo.

Introduction

Drug trafficking is a mass level business operations in the contemporary world, irrespective of developed and developing countries. Drug usage has become a major threat to the global economy, in terms of medical and welfare cost. In addition, this is a major factor for determining the ratio of birth and death. According to Hannah Ritchie and Max Roser, (2017);F the alcohol and drug usage are important risk factors for early death. Approximately, 11.4 million people die prematurely, because of this habit annually. Further, over 350,000 people in the world die per annum, consuming overdoses of alcohol and illicit drugs. Similarly, in Sri Lanka; annual death record due to the usage of multiple drug varieties is a-remarkable amount, such as tobacco-15,521, alcohol-6,150 and illicit drug consumptions-748.

Use of Psychoactive substances (or Drugs) is a known phenomenon in Sri Lanka, since the ancient time, which was traditionally used for medicinal purposes in the ‘Ayurvedic’ system of medicine until recent times. With the gradual development of domestic tourism, it was used for recreational purposes, especially cannabis and opium. Thereafter, its usage exceeded the limit, with the arrival of synthetic and potent drugs (heroin) into the country in early 1980’s onwards, among the youth (NDDCB-2018).

Eventually, Sri Lanka has become a one of the target markets and is used as a platform for transmitting drugs to South Asian and Australian countries by mass level drug dealers. Gradually, this has become an acute social problem in Sri Lanka, obstructing individual’s development and sustainability of our nation. 81,156 persons have been arrested, due to usage of drugs in the year 2017, which is 2% increase compared to the previous year (NDDCB, 2018). Sri Lankan Government spends approximately LKR 212 billions to overcome multifarious health related issues, caused by the usage of various drugs. Moreover, a death toll of 47,000 people were recorded in 2017 (ADIC, 2017). According to the statistical Handbook of Trincomalee District (2017),

approximately 1,151 people were addicted with drug usage in the Kuchchaveli DSD. This has become a recurring issue in the study area.

Objective

The main objective of this study is to identify the causes and effects of the increasing trend of drug usages in Kuchchaveli DS Division in Trincomalee District.

Sub-objectives

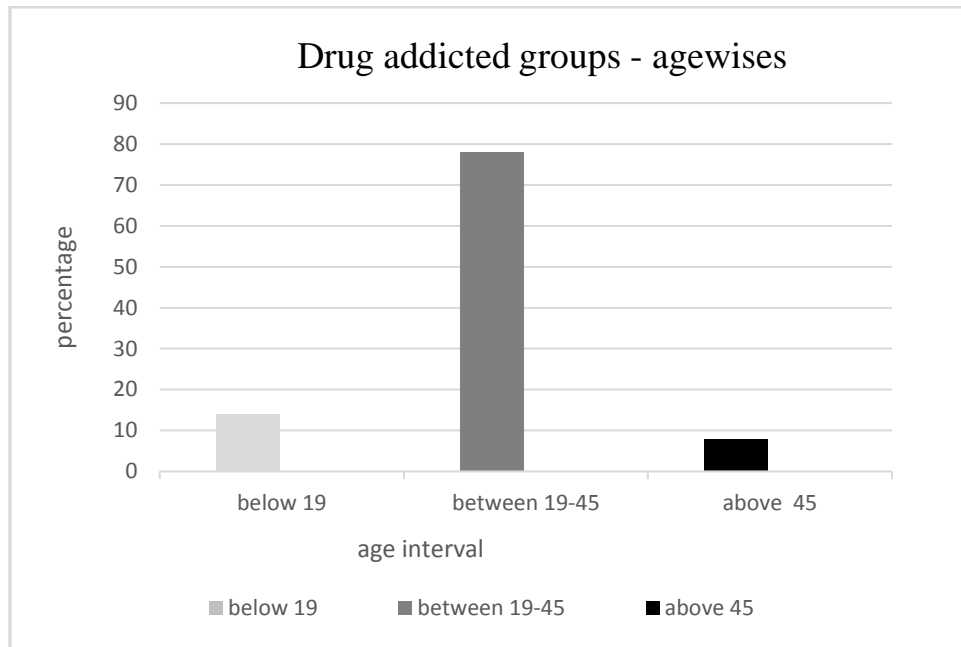
1. To investigate the increasing trend of drug usage in the Kuchchaveli Divisional secretariat area.
2. To identify the social, environmental and cultural factors, caused for drug usages in the study area.
3. To examine the strategies to mitigate such causes and its effects in terms of individual development.

Methodology and data analysis

The both primary and secondary data are used for this study. The snowball random sampling technique was used to collect primary data, based on the identified, 70 effected households, distributing structured questionnaires among them. In addition, interviews, discussion with focus groups and direct observation were carried out to collect the field data. Further, the researcher have learned that there are groups, whose drugs consumption patterns are differed, in the context of its volume and type, due to their income level, education background and cultural forces. Moreover, the direct scene observations to collect data on routine life of the society, social status, civic system, life style, cultural and economic status. Further, the environmental scenario, landscape, vegetation cover, natural resources and weather situation has also been notified through direct observation. The key information was collected from Officers of relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations. The secondary data were collected, using existing policies, handbooks, maps, websites, police reports and scholarly articles. The collected quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed, using the GIS, SPSS, MS-Office software and percentage analytical techniques and presented using the charts, and diagrams.

The major reasons for increasing trends of drug usage in the Kuchchaveli DSD are its environmental and social factors, such as its geographical location, coastal area, Kokilai lagoon, spread of natural resources, eco-tourism activities, poor income, literacy level, mindset of area people, post-war circumstances and enrichment of fish and biggest plateau landscapes *etc.* Most of the drug edicts are somehow involved in illegal activities.

Below **figure-2** shows the badly drug addicted people between 19 to 45 years of age group.



Source: - Field study, 2018.

Mostly, all the drug edicts have somehow associated with disorder(s) in terms of physical, physiological, mental health effects. Risk level are varied, depending on the type, frequency and volume of the drug that they use. Some drug addicts suffer from chronic diseases too. In general, in Kuchchaveli DSD ,the child birth ratio shows a decreasing trend, whereas death ratio is showing an increasing trend. Similarly, the cultural demolition, increase of crimes and illegal offences, economical handicapped, social changes during the tenure of tourism development in the study area, backward in school education, increase in school drop ratio, malnutrition, manpower wastage, changes in fine arts, smoking causes inconvenience to himself and others, sabotage of social development, unemployment, and hunger and starvation *etc.* are some other direct and indirect negative impacts caused by the drug usage.

Conclusion and recommendations

Kuchchaveli DSD in Trincomalee District is identified as a highly vulnerable area for drug usage, especially in the Kumburupitiya East Gramasevaka Division. These habits have led to various health impacts of the inhabitants of the study area. The major reasons behind this issue are environmental and socio-economic factors. Kuchchaveli DSD surrounded by marine resources and wild resources, so its geographical locations provides room for smuggling and transportation of drugs. In addition, unemployment, poor income and illiteracy level are mainly identified as the human factors for the increasing trend of drug usage. Hence, public awareness, education and strictly implementing existing laws are major remedial measures that could be implemented to reverse this situation.

Further, establishment of drug counselling centers; extending drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programmes; using religious places to preach on adverse impacts of drug usage; and participate all stakeholders to evacuate and mitigate this habits from the inhabitants are more essential. A collective responsibility is required to overcome adverse impacts, reduce the numbers of users and to restrict new entry for using drugs will facilitate to make Kuchchaveli DSD as a drug free area.

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