

Examining the Societal and Legal Landscape of Drug Abuse Awareness: A Comprehensive Survey among University Students

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ABSTRACT

A recent study of 51 university students from the Central University of Punjab revealed a growing global trend of reliance on pharmaceuticals. The study aimed to assess drug addiction awareness among students and found that while some were aware of the negative impacts on physical and mental health, there is still room for improvement. Socio-cultural factors such as familial background and media portrayals of drug use were found to influence students' knowledge of addiction. Legal issues, such as opinions on law enforcement activities and understanding drug-related laws and regulations, were also examined. The study highlights the need for continuous improvement in drug addiction awareness among university students, taking into account socio-cultural and legal contexts.

Keywords: Drug Abuse Prevention, Legal Aspects, Societal Elements, Strategies for Intervention, Survey Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Substance misuse continues to be a significant global public health problem that has far-reaching effects on people, families, and communities. It leads to several health risks, societal repercussions, and legal complications creating difficulties in human life. Social pressure, academic stress, and newly discovered independence make college students especially susceptible. Considering university students' understanding of drug addiction in relation to society and the legal framework is crucial in developing prevention and intervention initiatives.

Experiences in the institutes of Higher Education hold major significance in the transitional phase of young adults as it shapes their ability to manage personal autonomy alongside academic and social responsibilities. Within this context, there exists a potential interrelationship between these factors and the occurrence of drug usage or experimentation. Numerous studies indicate that drug addiction, encompassing various substances such as alcohol, marijuana, stimulants, and prescription drugs, is more prevalent among university students than the general population (*World Drug Report 2022*).

In order to assess the effectiveness of current initiatives and identify areas where legal measures can be strengthened to support prevention efforts and safeguard the well-being of university students, it is crucial to gain a comprehensive understanding of the legal landscape. The legal system and cultural influences play a pivotal role in shaping individuals' knowledge and responses to drug usage. Different countries have distinct laws and regulations concerning drug possession, distribution, and treatment, and many universities and institutions have their own rules and penalties in place. By comprehensively grasping the legal environment, we can better evaluate existing initiatives, identify potential areas for improvement, and ensure a holistic approach to drug addiction prevention and student well-being.

This study aims to investigate the impact of societal and legal factors on university students' awareness of drug abuse. It seeks to understand how variables such as societal norms and legal frameworks influence the level of awareness among students regarding drug abuse issues. By examining these factors, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the

complex relationship between societal and legal variables and the awareness levels of university students regarding drug abuse.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives are the focus of the study:

- Analyze the awareness of drug abuse among university students.
- Analyze the connection between societal influences and awareness of drug abuse.
- Examine the effect of legal factors on public knowledge of drug abuse.
- Analyze the prevention and intervention strategies to prevent drug abuse.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a cross-sectional survey to examine drug abuse awareness among the student of Central University of Punjab. Google Forms was used as the primary data collection tool, ensuring cost-effectiveness, standardised data collection, and participant anonymity. A sample of 51 students was chosen from a total population of 2156 for representativeness. A thorough literature review guided questionnaire development, pilot tested for clarity. Data collection involved participant recruitment, informed consent, questionnaire completion, and data management. Ethical considerations were addressed, and the study obtained the necessary ethical approvals.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, was established to combat drug abuse, regulate the medical use of narcotics, and address the illicit production and distribution of psychoactive substances. This treaty provides a global framework for addressing drug usage and developing comprehensive solutions. It underscores the importance of nations working together to tackle drug-related challenges. By implementing the provisions outlined in the convention, countries can effectively regulate the availability and misuse of narcotic medicines while ensuring their appropriate use for medical and scientific purposes (*Single convention on narcotic drugs, 1961*, 2011). Similarly, The Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971, is a significant international agreement that focuses on the regulation of psychotropic chemicals. Its primary objective is to control drug production, distribution, and use to prevent drug abuse and diversion. The treaty aims to balance maintaining access for legitimate medical and scientific purposes and preventing misuse. The convention restricts their manufacture, sale, and use by classifying psychotropic drugs into different schedules (*Continent* 2020). Addressing drug trafficking and related crimes, The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988, is another important international convention. This agreement strengthens global cooperation in the fight against illegal drug production, sale, and money laundering. It recognizes that drug trafficking threatens international security and has significant societal, economic, and public health implications (*United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*, 2013).

In South Asia, The SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1990, aims to combat drug abuse and trafficking. This regional agreement seeks to regulate illegal narcotics' production, sale, and use. It emphasizes the importance of regional collaboration, coordination among law enforcement agencies, and mutual legal assistance to address drug-related concerns effectively. By promoting cooperation among member nations, the convention strives to protect public health and jointly address the challenges posed by drugs in the region (Rehman et al., 2020). Addressing drug abuse and trafficking continent-wide is a priority outlined in the African Union's Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2019-2023). This strategy aims to enhance regional collaboration, capacity building, and data collection to effectively address Africa's drug-related concerns. The plan emphasizes prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation while respecting human rights and improving public health. Through implementing this plan, African nations aim to strengthen their responses to drug-related problems, foster collaboration among member countries, and develop comprehensive policies that address the diverse demands and challenges related to drugs on the continent (*African Union Plan of Action*

on *Drug Control and Crime Prevention 2019-2023*,). The European Union (E.U.) Drug Strategy (2021-2025) sets out objectives to tackle emerging drug challenges, reduce drug demand and supply, promote public health and social inclusion, and enhance international cooperation. The strategy integrates gender and human rights perspectives into the development and implementation of drug policy. It focuses on prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and law enforcement strategies to address drug-related issues (*EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025*).

These programs and approaches highlight the complexity of drug abuse and trafficking, requiring comprehensive and well-coordinated responses at regional and global levels. These initiatives aim to mitigate the adverse effects of drug abuse, protect public health, and uphold human rights by addressing specific regional challenges, incorporating gender perspectives, and promoting international collaboration. Countries can cooperate to enhance drug control and prevention strategies by implementing these ideas and conventions.

The Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940 is the regulatory framework governing the import, production, distribution, and sale of medications and cosmetics in India. Its primary objective is safeguarding public health by ensuring drug and cosmetics' efficacy, safety, and quality. This legislation establishes guidelines to regulate their manufacture and sale, ensuring compliance with predetermined standards and minimizing consumer risks. It empowers regulatory agencies to conduct inspections, enforce adherence to specific requirements, and take appropriate action against violations (Kondal et al., 2015). To prevent potential harm caused by untrained individuals practising pharmacy, The Pharmacy Act of 1948 was enacted by the Indian Parliament. This legislation establishes the Central Council of Pharmacy and Provincial Pharmacy Councils to oversee pharmacy education and practice. It sets educational requirements for pharmacists and maintains a registry of qualified practitioners. The act also grants provincial governments the authority to restrict the dispensing of medicines without a licensed pharmacist, thereby safeguarding public health and promoting ethical pharmacy practice by ensuring that only qualified and competent professionals dispense medications (Malhotra et al., 2013). The Drugs (Control) Act 1950 governs the possession and sale of drugs in India. Under this statute, the Chief Commissioner is authorized to control medicine sales, supply, and pricing. It also includes provisions for penalties, including imprisonment and fines, for violations of the act. Authorized officials can conduct premises inspections, perform searches, and seize relevant items within their jurisdiction. This legislation grants the central government the authority to establish regulations subject to legislative review, ensuring oversight of the drug trade, adherence to legal standards, and prevention of illicit drug activities (Sharma Bora, 2019).

India's drug and psychoactive substance laws are consolidated and amended under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act 1985. This comprehensive legislation establishes stringent control and regulatory measures, including provisions for confiscating property associated with illicit drug use. It incorporates international agreements on psychoactive substances and drugs of abuse, reflecting India's commitment to preventing drug misuse and combating the illicit drug trade. The NDPS Act is crucial in reducing drug-related crimes, protecting public health, and ensuring compliance with international drug control treaties (Malhotra et al., 2013).

The Punjab Excise Act 1914 and The East Punjab Drugs (Control) Act 1949 are legislations designed to regulate and govern the manufacturing, distribution, and sale of alcoholic beverages and medicines. These acts establish the consequences for non-compliance with the law and outline the requirements and procedures for obtaining permits to manufacture, distribute, and sell alcoholic drinks. The primary objectives of these laws are to ensure effective regulation of the alcohol industry, promote public safety, and generate revenue for the state (*The Punjab Excise Act, 1914*). Similarly, The East Punjab Drugs (Control) Act 1949 governs the region's regulation and oversight of drugs and medicines. It empowers authorities to license and inspect pharmaceutical establishments, monitor the quality of pharmaceuticals, and enforce penalties for any violations. The emphasis is on safeguarding public health and safety by setting stringent standards for the manufacturing, marketing, and distributing pharmaceuticals (*Control of Narcotic Drugs 1949*). Recognizing the significant issue of drug misuse in the province, Punjab enacted The Comprehensive Action Against Drug Misuse law in 2018. This legislation is designed to combat drug abuse by providing a comprehensive framework for prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and enforcement measures. It adopts a multifaceted approach to address drug-related issues, including raising awareness, assisting individuals affected by drug addiction, establishing specialized courts to handle drug-related cases, and implementing

effective drug control legislation. This legislation aims to protect public health and promote a drug-free society in Punjab by addressing the various aspects of drug use (*Comprehensive Action Against Drug Abuse, 2018*).

These laws and regulations form the legal framework in India for the manufacturing, selling, and using of medications, cosmetics, and pharmaceutical products. Their primary objective is to safeguard public health, ensure the efficacy and safety of drugs, and prevent illicit drug activities. Regulatory agencies work diligently to foster an environment that encourages ethical behaviour, protects consumers, and upholds the integrity of the pharmaceutical sector by enforcing these rules and regulations.

University Perspectives

To maintain a secure and orderly atmosphere, the Central University of Punjab has posited several best practices to guarantee its students' safety and moral behaviour. One such procedure is the creation of the Pre-Game Evaluation Committee, which imposes heavy punishment on anyone detected utilizing illegal substances or steroid use. This committee has the right to expel students who engage in such behaviour, underscoring the university's zero-tolerance policy on substance usage (*Best Practices of Central University of Punjab, 2020*). A specific policy is in place that forbids the use and possession of drugs, alcohol, and gambling at the university's hostels. In order to successfully execute this policy, a special committee is tasked with looking into any rule infractions.

The Central University of Punjab has devised a disciplinary structure with graded punishments to dissuade students from participating in such activities. INR Five Hundred fine is assessed for the first infraction, and INR 1,000 penalty is assessed for a second offence. Expulsion from the university may result in cases of persistent violations. The institution wants to emphasize the danger of substance misuse and deter students from engaging in it by implementing this graduated system of punishments. The university places significant emphasis on promoting ethical conduct among its students and provides a Handbook of Code of Ethics to outline the expected standards of behaviour. This code prohibits students from engaging in harmful behaviours, including using drugs or cigarettes. The institution prioritizes adhering to these guidelines to maintain a safe and conducive learning and personal development environment (*Handbook of Code of Ethics for Students (Central University of Punjab)*).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Age and Gender Wise Distribution of the Respondents

The study examined the distribution of respondents across different age groups, revealing a wide range of ages among the participants, with a notable concentration between 21 and 30. Majority (17.64%) being students under the age of 21 (See Figure 1).

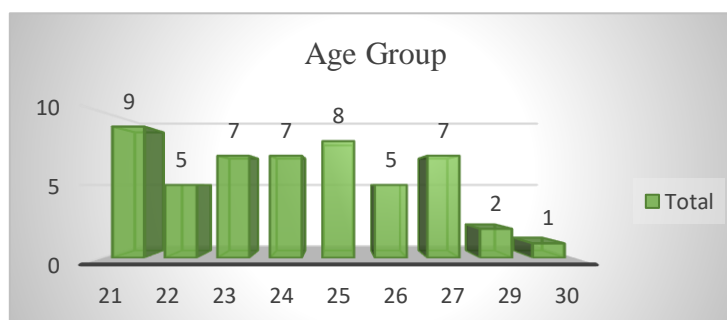


Figure 1: Age-wise Distribution

On the other hand, students over the age of 30 had the lowest response rate, accounting for only 1.96% of the total responses. The age distribution of the participants indicated that the majority fell within the 21-27 age range, demonstrating a fairly balanced distribution within this group. However, as the age increased beyond 27, there was a noticeable decline in participation, as evidenced by figure 1.

The study's findings revealed a gender distribution among respondents, indicating a higher representation of male students compared to female students (See Figure 2).

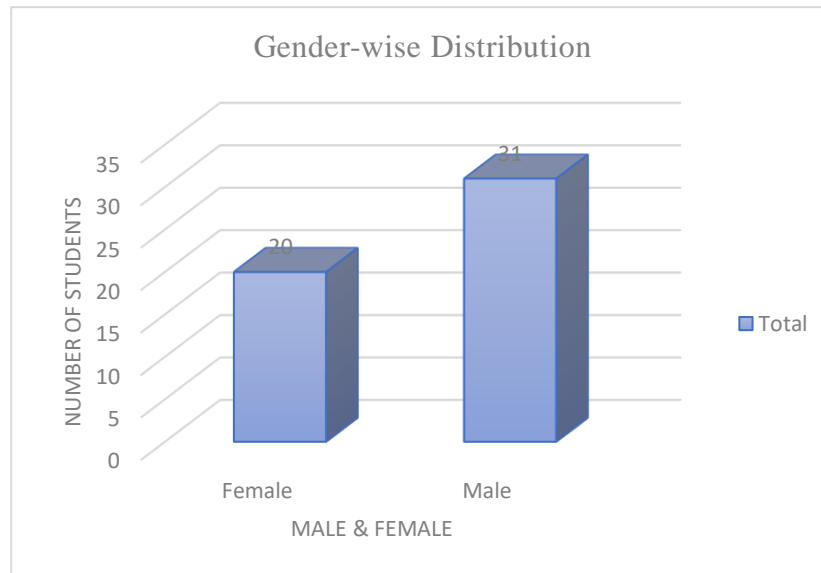


Figure 2: Gender-wise Distribution

The male respondents accounted for 60.78% of the total sample, while female respondents accounted for 39.22%. These results indicate a greater participation of male students in the study compared to their female counterparts in figure 2.

Objective-based Analysis of the Data

Objective 1: Analyze the Awareness of Drug usage among University Students

The study sought to assess the level of understanding among university students regarding the immediate and long-term effects of drug addiction on physical and mental health. Based on Figure 3, 41% of students demonstrated a solid comprehension of these consequences.

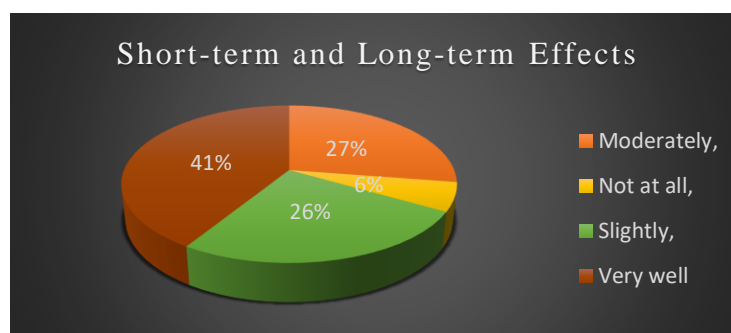


Figure 3: Short-term and Long-term Effects

An additional 27% of students acknowledged having some level of understanding of the short- and long-term impacts, while 26% stated they had only a limited understanding. It is noteworthy that a small proportion, specifically 6% of students, reported a lack of understanding regarding these impacts in figure 3.

The study aimed to gauge university students' knowledge about drug addiction prevention and treatment programs offered on campus or in the local area (See Figure 4).

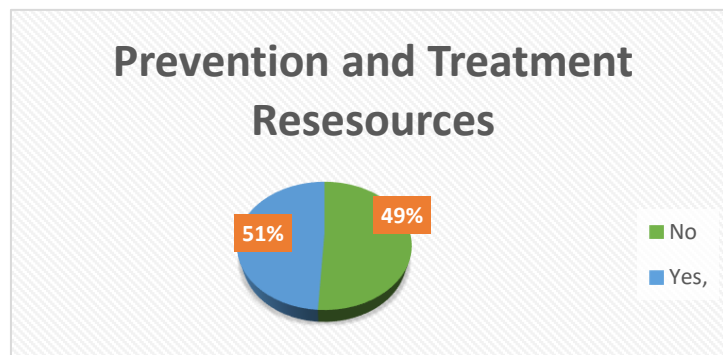


Figure 4: Prevention and Treatment Resources

According to the statistics in Figure 4, 51% of students did not know about any such services. In comparison, only 49% of students claimed to be aware of the options for drug abuse prevention and treatment accessible on their campus or in their local area in figure 4.

According to Figure 5, a significant majority of students, 65%, agreed that drug use affects them. Furthermore, 29% of students moderately agreed that drug abuse has an adverse effect on their academic performance and general well-being.

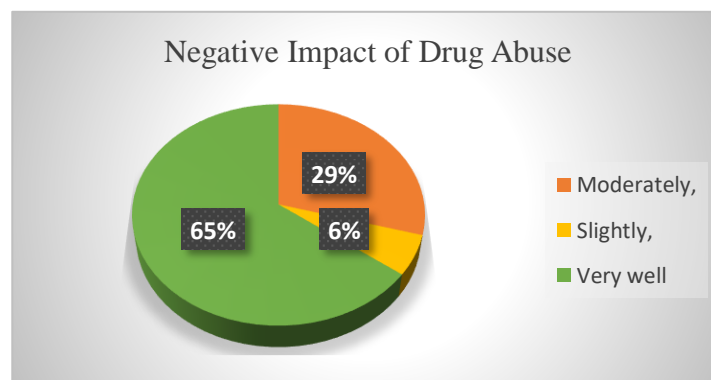


Figure 5: Negative Impact of Drug Abuse

Interestingly, only a small proportion, 6% of students, disagreed with the notion that drug addiction detrimentally affects their ability to succeed academically and their overall well-being. This indicates that there may be a few students with differing opinions or who are unaware of the risks associated with substance use in figure 5.

According to the findings in Figure 6, a sizable percentage of students i.e. 76.47%, felt that educating university students about drug addiction and its impact is crucial. This shows that students have a high level of understanding of the value of raising awareness among their peers about the dangers and repercussions of drug addiction.

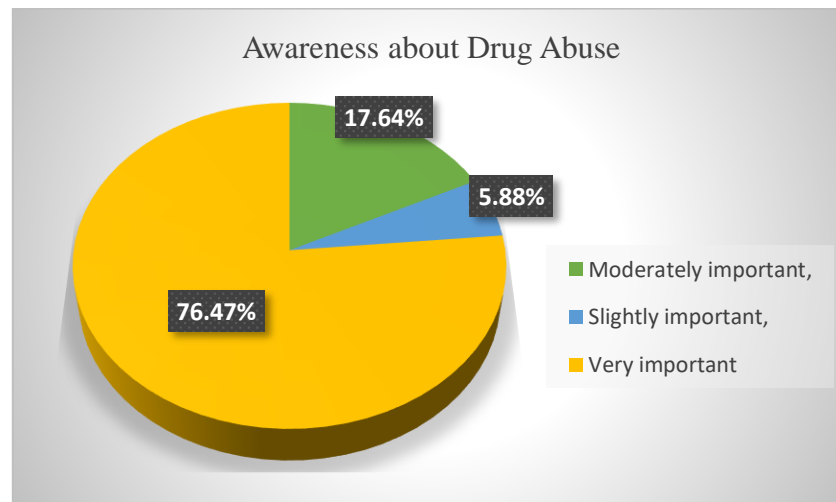


Figure 6: Awareness about Drug Abuse

Furthermore, 17.64% of students indicated a moderate level of agreement, demonstrating that they understand the value of increasing awareness but may place different amounts of emphasis on it. Interestingly, just 5.88% of students thought that its unnecessary to spread knowledge about drug addiction and its effects in figure 6.

Objective 2: Analyze the connection between Societal Influences and Drug Misuse Awareness

Based on the statistics presented in Figure 7, it is evident that a majority of students, approximately 74.50%, never experience peer pressure to use drugs. This indicates a positive trend where a significant number of students are able to resist temptations from their peers to engage in drug use.

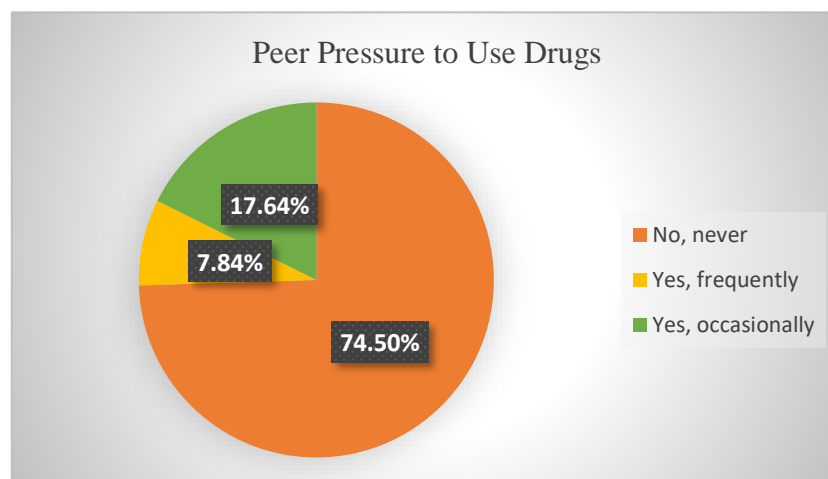


Figure 7: Peer Pressure to Use Drugs

However, it is important to note that a smaller proportion of students, roughly 7.84%, admitted to usually experiencing this pressure. Additionally, a notable portion of students, approximately 17.64%, reported infrequently feeling peer pressure to take drugs. These findings highlight the need to address and support students who may occasionally encounter such pressures, while recognizing the encouraging trend of a majority of students being able to resist peer influence related to drug use in figure 7.

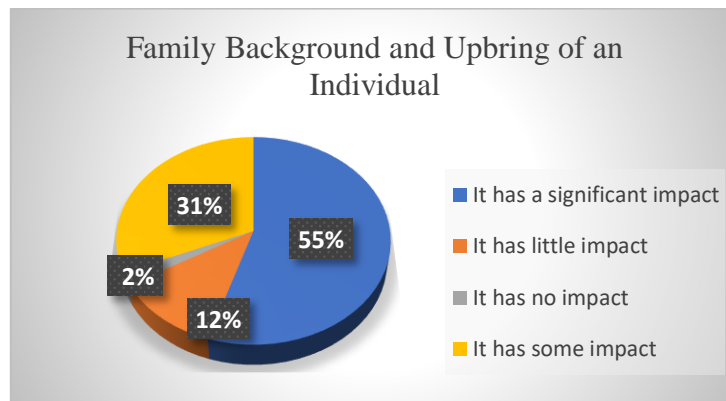


Figure 8: Peer Pressure to Use Drugs

According to the findings in Figure 8, a sizable majority of students, or around 55%, think that a person's family history and upbringing affect their knowledge of drug abuse. This result demonstrates the growing awareness among students that upbringing and family values significantly impact how they interpret drug misuse and its effects.

Additionally, 31% of students said that family background and upbringing might occasionally affect a person's consciousness. Notably, just a small proportion of students (around 2%) believed that family history and upbringing have no impact on one's ability to succeed in figure 8.

Based on the research findings, a notable percentage of students, approximately 37%, recognize the significant influence of media portrayals on people's attitudes and awareness regarding drug abuse. This suggests that students are aware of the substantial impact that media has on shaping societal views and perspectives on drug usage (See Figure 9).

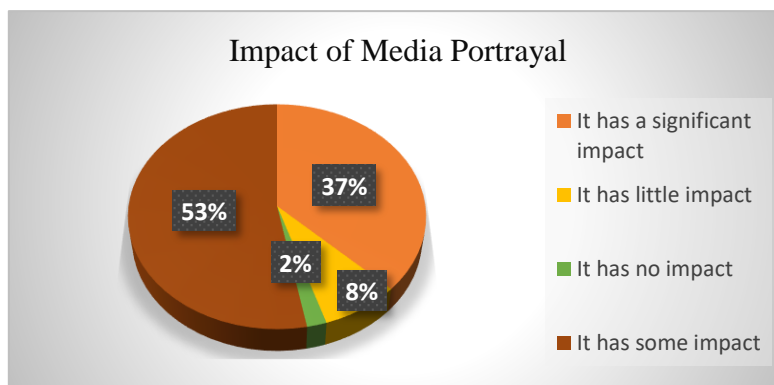


Figure 9: Impact of Media Portrayal

However, it is important to highlight that a majority of students, around 53%, believe that media representation has some consequences but may not exert a significant influence. It is noteworthy that only a small proportion of students, approximately 2%, do not perceive any impact of media portrayals on people's attitudes and understanding of the drug abuse issue. These findings indicate the varying levels of awareness among students regarding the role of media in shaping perceptions related to drug use in figure 9.

A majority of students, approximately 47%, recognize the significance of community outreach programs and educational activities in preventing drug misuse. This indicates that students are aware of the potential of such programs to increase awareness, disseminate knowledge, and promote healthy lifestyle choices. (See Figure 10)

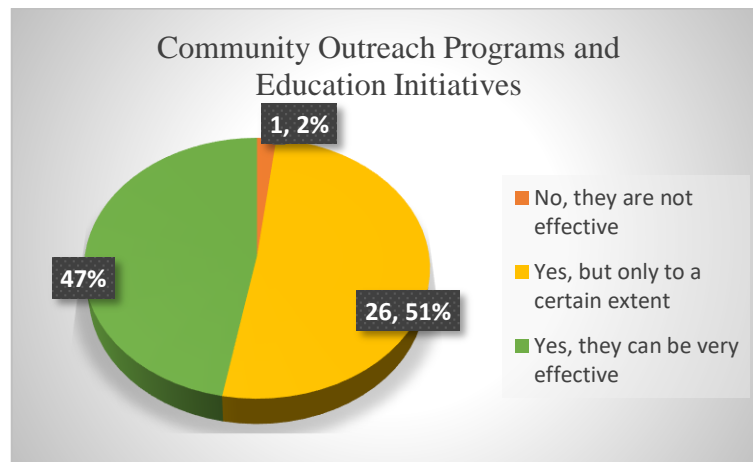


Figure 10: Community Outreach Programs and Education Initiatives

Notably, only a small minority of students, around 2%, believe that these programs have no impact on reducing drug consumption. This finding is encouraging as it demonstrates a general acknowledgment among students of the positive influence that community outreach and education can have in combating drug misuse in figure 10.

A majority of students, approximately 52%, recognize the significance of counseling services as the most beneficial option for individuals struggling with drug abuse. This reflects students' awareness of the critical assistance, guidance, and treatment that professional counseling can provide to those dealing with drug misuse. (See Figure 11)

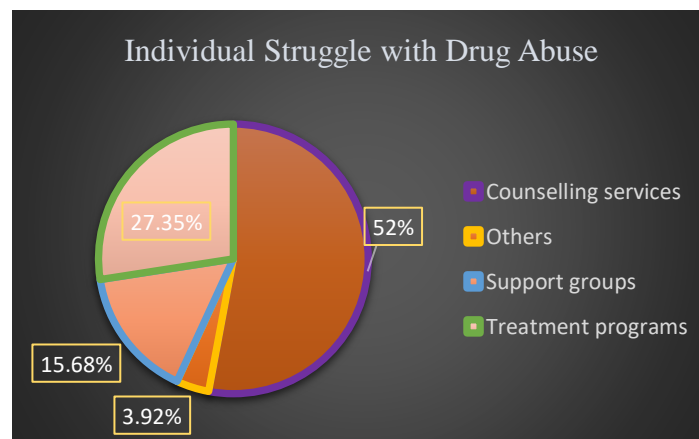


Figure 11: Individual Struggle with Drug Abuse

Additionally, 27.35% of students identified treatment programs as the most helpful resource, highlighting the need for comprehensive treatment strategies that address the psychological, social, and physical aspects of addiction. The fact that 15.68% of students rated support as the most helpful resource emphasizes the value of peer support groups and community services in aiding individuals on their path to recovery. These findings underscore the recognition among students of the importance of counseling services, treatment programs, and support systems in assisting individuals struggling with drug abuse in figure 11.

According to the statistics presented in Figure 12, a significant majority of students (82%) demonstrate awareness of the various approaches that university students can employ to support local initiatives aimed at preventing drug misuse. These

approaches include planning events and campaigns, promoting healthy behaviors, and advocating for drug laws prioritizing public health.

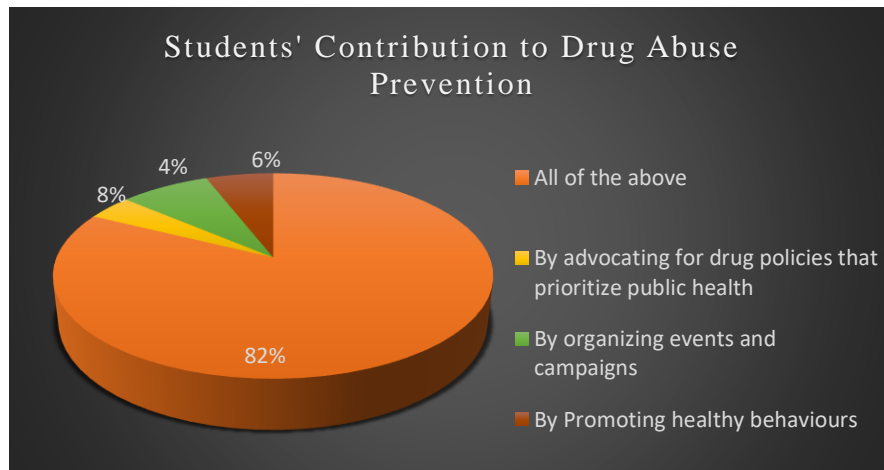


Figure 12: Students' Contribution to Drug Abuse Prevention

Notably, 4% of students believe that organizing events and campaigns alone can effectively help prevent drug abuse, highlighting the effectiveness of raising awareness and educating the public. Additionally, 6% of students emphasize the importance of encouraging peers to make positive decisions and modeling healthy behaviors. Over 8% of students highlight the significance of promoting drug legislation and prioritizing public health in reducing drug misuse within communities, indicating an understanding of the role systemic issues and legislative changes play in successful prevention efforts (See Figure 12).

Objective 3: Examine the Effect of Legal Factors on Public Knowledge of Drug Misuse

Based on the statistics presented in Figure 13, approximately 10% of students have a clear understanding of the drug-related laws and regulations in their respective areas. The fact that 6% of students admit to not knowing about these rules further underscores the need for increased education and awareness in this domain.

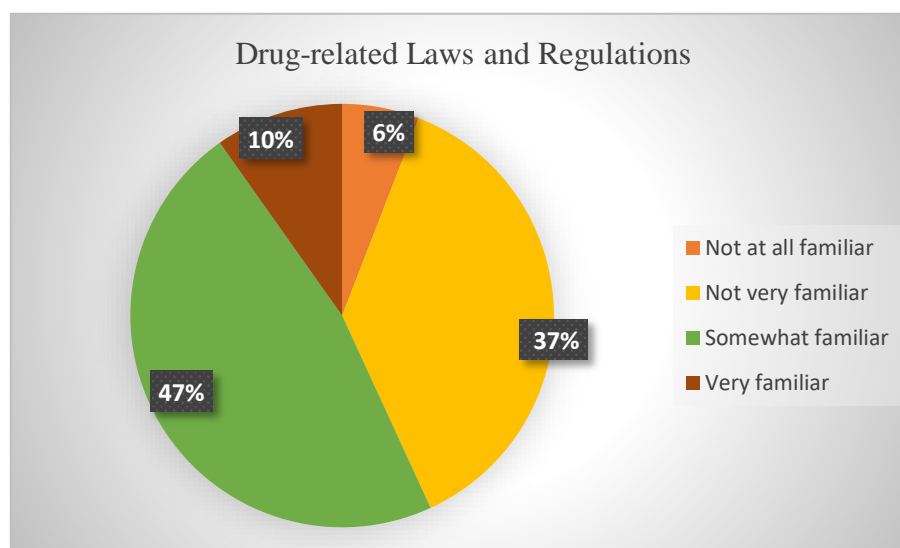


Figure 13: Drug-related Laws and Regulations

On the other hand, a higher percentage of students, around 47%, have some level of awareness regarding drug rules and laws. Lastly, 37% of students claim to be unfamiliar with drug-related rules and regulations. This highlights the importance of enhancing knowledge and comprehension of drug-related laws among students to promote informed decision-making and adherence to legal requirements in figure 13.

It is clear from the statistics that students have different perspectives on the efforts made by law enforcement agencies to combat drug abuse in their community. More than 24% of students believed in law enforcement's ability to fight drug abuse (See Figure 14).

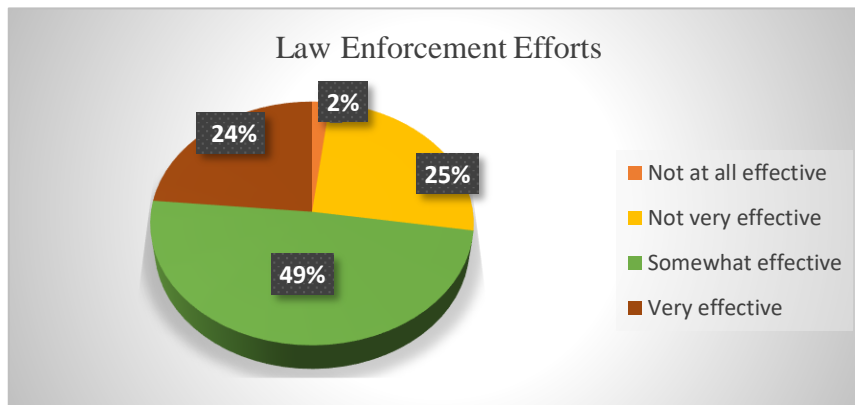


Figure 14: Law Enforcement Efforts

In addition, 49% of students said law enforcement was “somewhat effective,” indicating that even while there may be space for improvement, they still understand law enforcement's need to combat drug misuse. It is crucial to highlight that about 25% of students expressed that local law enforcement efforts to combat drug misuse in their neighbourhood were unsuccessful in figure 14.

The data from Figure 15 reveals that the majority of students (65%) have not directly participated in any drug prevention or intervention programs, but they still acknowledge the value of such initiatives for student involvement.

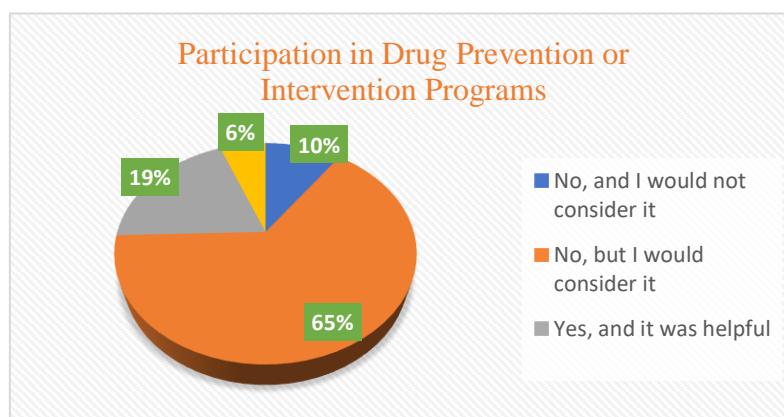


Figure 15: Participation in Drug Prevention or Intervention Programs

However, a small percentage (6%) of students who have participated in such programs did not find them helpful, highlighting the need for ongoing program evaluation and development to ensure they meet the participants' needs. Additionally, 10% of students who have never participated in drug prevention programs expressed skepticism about their

potential benefits, indicating a potential area for further education and awareness-raising to underscore the significance and potential advantages of these initiatives in figure 15.

It is clear from the data in Figure 16 that university students believe a mix of techniques can successfully avoid peer drug use. 35% of students, or the majority, think counselling and therapy services are essential.

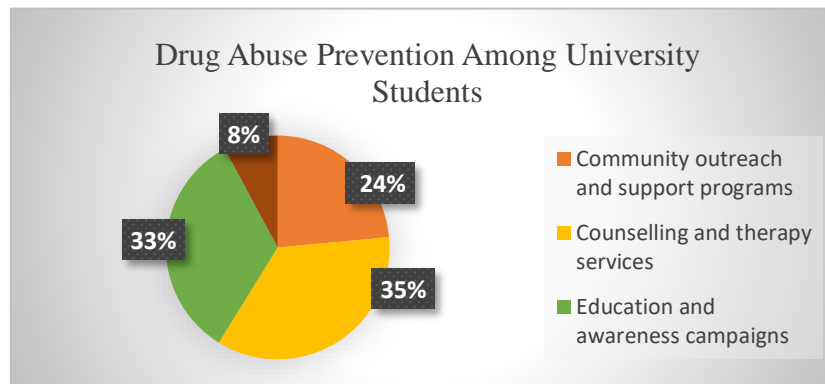


Figure 16: Drug Abuse Prevention Among University Students

Furthermore, 33% of students underline the value of awareness and education efforts. This emphasizes how crucial it is to impart correct information, increase awareness of the dangers and effects of drug misuse, and encourage healthy behaviours and decision-making among college students. Additionally, 24% of students agree that community outreach and support initiatives are essential for reducing drug misuse. Around 8% of students think criminal justice and legal repercussions help prevent drug misuse. This implies knowledge of the potential deterrent power of enforcement actions and the significance of upholding a secure, drug-free school environment in figure 16.

Based on the statistics presented in Figure 17, the majority of students (53%) agree that counseling services are the most beneficial resource for individuals struggling with drug abuse.

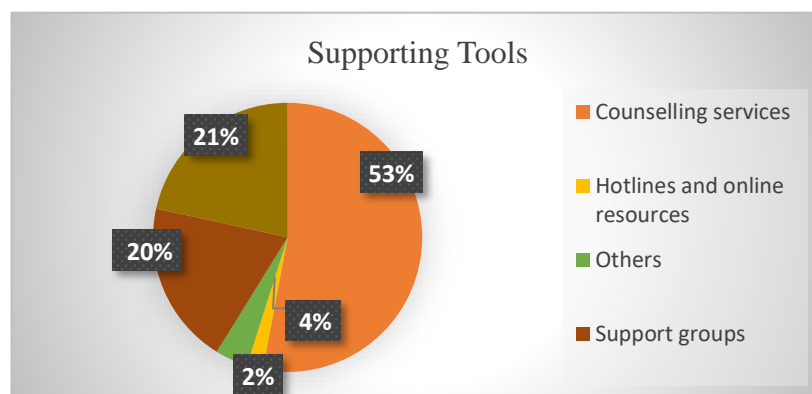


Figure 17: Supporting Tools

Notably, a small percentage of students (around 2%) perceive hotlines and internet services as beneficial, emphasizing the need for comprehensive and ongoing support. Additionally, 20% of students acknowledge the potential benefits of support groups, which offer a sense of belonging, peer support, and a platform for sharing experiences and learning from others who have overcome similar challenges. Furthermore, 21% of students identify treatment programs as the best option for individuals battling drug use, whether in an inpatient or outpatient setting, as these programs provide comprehensive support, counseling, and a structured environment for healing (See Figure 17).

Objective 4: Analyze the Prevention and Intervention Strategies to Prevent Drug Abuse

According to student perceptions and the statistics given in Figure 18, there are numerous approaches to enhance drug misuse prevention and intervention initiatives. First and foremost, almost 50% of students believe it is essential to spread knowledge and awareness about the risks of drug abuse. This underlines the need to impart correct knowledge, increase awareness, and educate people about drug addiction's dangers and repercussions. (See Figure 18).

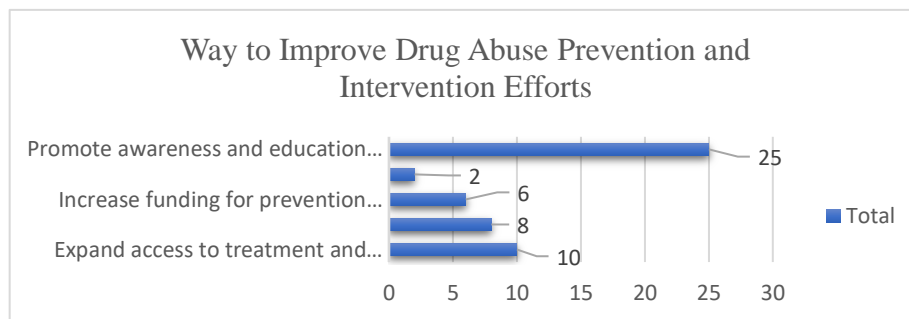


Figure 18: Way to Improve Drug Abuse Prevention and Intervention Efforts

19.60% of students believe improving access to treatment and support services is essential for development. This emphasizes how crucial it is to guarantee that people who abuse drugs have easy access to effective treatment programs, counselling services, and support networks to aid their recovery. 15.68% of students believe enacting harsher drug usage rules and restrictions are crucial. Furthermore, 11.76% of students feel more financing for preventative and intervention programs is essential. Initiatives focused on preventing drug usage and offering vital help to those afflicted might be more successful and effective in their scope if they have access to enough resources and funding in figure 18.

Based on the findings presented in Figure 19, a majority of students (47%) believe that universities should offer counseling and therapy services.

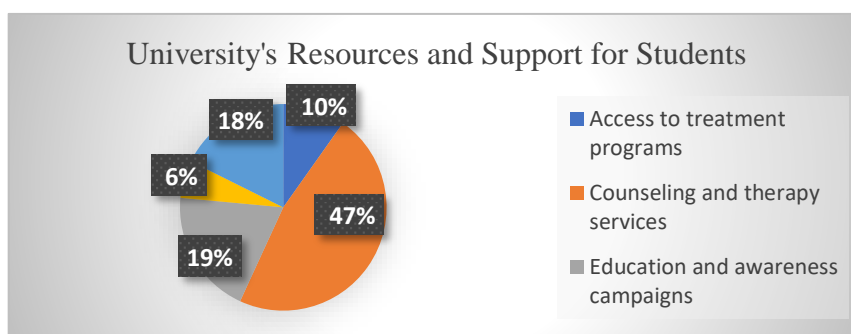


Figure 19: University's Resources and Supports for Students

Additionally, 19% of students emphasize the value of awareness and education efforts, while 18% acknowledge the potential benefits of peer mentorship programs and support groups in fostering a sense of belonging and providing a platform for exchanging knowledge and experiences. Approximately 9.80% of students express support for universities expanding their access to treatment programs. Lastly, 6% of students suggest that colleges should provide more resources and support, indicating an understanding of the need for diverse and specialized approaches to address the unique needs of students struggling with drug abuse (See Chart 19).

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The survey findings underline the heterogeneity of drug abuse knowledge among university students. While a substantial number demonstrate awareness of drug abuse's immediate and long-term ramifications, a significant proportion remain oblivious to available prevention and treatment services. The consensus among students regarding the criticality of raising awareness aligns with their understanding of how drug abuse detrimentally affects their academic performance and overall well-being. Peer pressure to engage in substance use is not prevalent, and students recognize the impact of familial background on drug abuse awareness. The media's portrayal of drug abuse significantly shapes attitudes and comprehension of the issue. Implementing effective preventive and intervention measures necessitates community outreach campaigns, educational initiatives, and comprehensive counselling services. Students advocate for universities to provide counselling, support services, and initiatives that foster a drug-free campus environment. Familiarity with drug-related legislation is limited, and perspectives on law enforcement interventions are divergent. A considerable number of students have actively engaged in initiatives to prevent or intervene in drug abuse. These findings underscore the imperative of augmenting knowledge, ensuring accessible services, promoting community involvement, and employing efficacious strategies to address drug addiction among university students.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study aimed to assess university students' level of awareness and comprehension regarding drug addiction, taking into account societal and legal factors. The results provide valuable insights into the current status of awareness among university students regarding drug abuse, as well as effective preventive and intervention strategies. The results indicated that despite many students knowing about drug addiction's immediate and long-term effects on physical and mental well-being, there remained room for further enhancement. The necessity for improved communication and dissemination of information was highlighted due to a lack of awareness among students regarding the resources and opportunities for drug abuse prevention and treatment that are accessible both on campus and within their local communities. The comprehension of drug abuse among students was impacted by various societal factors, including but not limited to peer pressure, familial background, and the portrayal of drug use in media. The prevention of drug usage among university students was deemed to have been achieved through community outreach initiatives and educational endeavours. Furthermore, it was observed that students demonstrated a clear comprehension of the importance of their involvement in initiatives to advocate for drug regulations, organize events, and promote behaviours conducive to good health. The study also investigated the efficacy of law enforcement operations and the understanding of legal considerations about drug-related matters. The survey findings revealed a range of perspectives among students regarding their comprehension of drug-related legislation and their evaluations of law enforcement efforts. The survey results showed that the students exhibited relatively limited engagement in drug prevention or intervention initiatives, highlighting the necessity for enhanced awareness and active participation. The significance of counselling and therapy services, fostering a drug-free campus environment, and implementing educational and awareness campaigns were emphasized by students in addressing the needs of individuals grappling with drug abuse. Universities have been regarded as significant establishments that provide resources and assistance to students who engage in substance abuse.

Based on the study's findings, the following suggestions may be made:

- **Increased awareness:** Educational institutions should concentrate on increasing public understanding of drug abuse, its effects, and the resources that are accessible through campaigns, workshops, and information sharing.
- **Boost preventive efforts:** Universities should implement comprehensive drug abuse prevention programs that feature community outreach, education, and awareness campaigns. Programs for peer mentorship might be designed to assist students in choosing healthy options.
- **Enhance support services:** Universities should offer counselling and therapy services for drug-abusing students. Support groups and peer mentorship programs can create a supportive atmosphere for needy people.
- **Collaboration with law enforcement:** To guarantee that drug-related laws and regulations are effectively enforced, educational institutions should work with law enforcement organizations.

- **Increase participation in prevention programs:** Universities ought to promote student involvement in initiatives to prevent and treat drug usage. This is possible by actively promoting, rewarding, and incorporating these initiatives into the curriculum.
- **Continuous evaluation and improvement:** The efficacy of drug abuse prevention and intervention initiatives should be regularly assessed to find gaps and opportunities for development. It is important to get student feedback to ensure these activities are adequate and relevant.

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