

2.12 Impact of Drug Abuse of Youth on Development (A case study in Gampaha district)

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ABSTRACT

Usage and addiction of dangerous drugs which have been identified as Narcotics, Depressants, Stimulants, Hallucinogens and Cannabis (Dharmapriya, 2001), in various countries has been a recent trend in both developed and developing countries specially among the youth. They get adverse effect on physical and mental conditions through continued usage of drug. Throughout the human history, people have been using some kind of stimulants in the form of alcohol or drugs for one or other reasons. However in the recent past with the introduction of narcotics it has been spread throughout the world very fast and millions of people and their families have made suffered.

In Sri Lanka historical report say that even in seventeenth century Dutch rulers had to impose laws to prohibit trafficking of opium (proclamation in 1675). During the colonial time alcoholism and drug addiction among Sri Lankan people gradually developed (Arukoda, 1969). During the last two decades drug addiction has been a growing phenomenon in Sri Lanka due to a multitude of factors.

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of drug addiction among the youth with reference to the development of the country. The sample was thirty (30) youths (Age group between 18-30) selected from the youth who are being treated in 'Miduma' rehabilitation centre in Wattala. Sample of youth were residents in Wattala Divisional Secretarial area, selected by stratified sampling method. Major finding of this study revealed four prolonged impact of drug usage; Personal development, family development, social development and economic development are major areas where the impact could be measured and identified.

Majority of the youth revealed that drug abuse and its recurrent health effects caused loss of employment at the beginning and mental disorders and physical damages has been in continues effects on them. Study highlights that these youth who are meant to contribute for the national development of the country have been marginalized and left as dependents. A low resistance to normal prescriptions for diseases among them has further led them to use strong drugs even for minor ailments.

Among the major actors who have introduced to the youth use of drugs were their close kins particularly the family members. Therefore the study revealed that the prevention of drug abuse among the youth involves a complex process covering whole society.

KEY WORDS: Drug abuse, Trafficking