

Drug abuse and drug addiction among students of University of Rajshahi

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Abstract: Objectives: The aim of this study was to investigate the actual condition of the students of University of Rajshahi (RU) regarding drug abuse and addiction. Using case study method the research was conducted with four objectives: (a) to find out how respondents began drug abuse; (b) to discover the causes of their drug addiction; (c) to understand the process of their drug abuse; and (d) to find out the economic, social and health effects of drug abuse. Methods: Case study method was used in this research. Through snowball sampling 18 drug- addicted students of RU were selected as respondents. In-depth interview with a schedule was used to collect data from the respondents in January 2019. Results: Findings of the study show that the causes of drug addiction included curiosity, frustration, friends' request, neglect from family and friends etc. The drugs which they usually abused were Yaba, Phensydyle, Ganja (Weed), *Chuani* etc. Their average monthly expenditure for collecting drugs was in between Taka 8,000-10,000. They collected those drugs from rickshaw pullers at different points within the campus and from Mizaner Mor, Budhpara slum and other places outside the campus. The respondents opined that drugs were available if sufficient money could be spent. The respondents had senior and junior fellow students and local boys as companions while taking drugs. Most of them faced physical problems after taking drugs, and some of them tried to get rid of this curse of drug addiction. Conclusion: The findings of this research show that the rate of drug addiction among the students of RU was quite alarming. Therefore, all stakeholders including the students, guardians, teachers, university authority, the law makers and law enforcing agencies, researchers, civil society, NGO's and the state must come forward together to combat this formidable foe.

Key Words: Drug, Drug abuse, Drug addiction, University of Rajshahi, Awareness

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Background: Addiction is a disease that affects brain and behavior of a person. When people become addicted to drugs, they cannot resist the urge to use them, no matter how much harm the drugs may cause. Drug abuse occurs when a person uses legal or illegal

substances in the ways he shouldn't. Addiction refers to that stage when he cannot stop taking those substances.

Students who are addicted to drugs and abuse those substances cause great harm to themselves and also to the society.

There are some specific Acts passed in Bangladesh in order to control the abuse of drugs. *The Drugs Act, 1940* is one of those. The main objective of this Act is to regulate the import, export, manufacture, distribution and sale of drugs¹. According to *section 37* of this Act, any person who does not sell the patent or proprietary medicines or pharmaceutical specialties according to this Act and sell drugs in public street etc. shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

The Drugs (Control) Ordinance, 1982 is an ordinance, which was declared in order to control, manufacture, import, distribution and sale of drugs². Recently, *Narcotics Control Bill, 2018* has been passed in parliament. This bill has been passed with a provision of death sentence or life imprisonment as punishment for producing, trading and using 200 grams or more ‘yaba’ or more than 25 grams of ‘heroin’ and ‘cocaine’. If a person carries, trades, stores or processes ‘yaba’ weighing less than five grams, he or she could be sentenced to five years in jail and fined. One could be sentenced to death for carrying, trading, storing or processing ‘yaba’ weighing over five grams according to this bill. People in possession of less than 25 grams of ‘heroin’ and ‘cocaine’ could be punished with two to ten years’ imprisonment. If they have more than 25 grams, the punishment could be death or life imprisonment. In the existing law, there is no provision for death sentence or life imprisonment for offences related to heroin and cocaine. The maximum punishment is 15 years³.

In spite of these Acts and the punishments for the offence of drug abuse, the threat of drug addiction is spreading all over the country day by day. Peace and tranquility of the society is hampering greatly by the curse of drug. Students, as well as people of ages and classes are facing the adverse situation.

This research tried to find out drug abuse and drug addiction among the students of Rajshahi University.

Definition of Terms:

Drug: Drug is a medicine or other substance which has a physiological effect when ingested or otherwise introduced into the body. *The Drugs Act, 1940* gives the definition of drug. In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context (a) “the Board” means the Drugs Technical Advisory Board constituted under section 5; (b) “drug” includes-(i) all medicines for internal or external use of human beings or animals, and all substances intended to be used for or in the treatment, mitigation or prevention of diseases in human beings or animals, not being medicines and substances exclusively used or prepared for use in accordance with the ayurvedic, unani, homoeopathic or biochemical system of medicine, (ii) diagnostic, abortive and contraceptive substances, surgical ligatures, sutures, bandages, absorbent cotton, bacteriophages, adhesive plasters, gelatin capsules and antiseptic solutions, (iii) such substances (other than food) intended to affect the structure or any function of the human body or intended to be used for the destruction of varmits or insects which cause disease in human beings or animals,

(iv) any substance, mentioned as monograph in any of the editions of the British Pharmacopoeia or the British Pharmaceutical Codex or the United States Pharmacopoeia or the National Formulary of the United States or the International Pharmacopoeia, whether alone or in combination with any substance exclusively used in the unani, ayurvedic, homoeopathic or biochemical system of medicine and intended to be used for any of the purposes mentioned in sub clauses (i), (ii) and (iii), and (v) any other substance which the Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, declare to be a “drug” for the purposes of this Act.

Drug Abuse: Drug abuse refers to the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain.⁴ **Drug Addiction:** Addiction is defined as a chronic relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences. It is considered as a brain disorder because it involves functional changes to brain circuits involved in reward, stress and self-control and those changes may last a long time after a person has stopped taking drugs⁵.

Review of Literature: As far as I have gone through, there has not been any research conducted specifically relating to drug addiction and its abuses at University of Rajshahi. However, findings of the studies that I have found to be concerned with the present study in one way or another are summarized below:

The Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act, 2005, as amended by the

Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) (Amendment) Act, 2013, is the principal law governing tobacco control in Bangladesh. The Act is comprehensive and covers smoke free policies; tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and packaging and labeling of tobacco products, among other areas. The Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Rules, 2015 are the implementing rules of the Act and provide further details regarding many provisions of the law⁶.

Chloe C.Y. Wong, Jonathan Mill and Cathy Fernandes in their article “Drugs and Addiction: An Introduction to Epigenetics” defined addiction as a deliberating psychiatric disorder, with a complex etiology involving the interaction of inherited predispositions and environmental factors. In this article the authors discussed various drugs of abuse⁷.

In her book *Like a Diamond in the Sky*, explored the reasons for which the youth in Bangladesh are feeling alienated. She also tried to find out the factors that led to their addiction and drew a picture of how they were constantly blamed by the government, parents and friends, which make the addicted person more frustrated⁸.

In the book of *Anxiolytic Drugs: Dependence, Addiction and Abuse*, showed the abuse of benzodiazepined and flunitrazepam as drugs in the UK. He showed that the main cause of taking those drugs regularly in high doses was physical dependence as manifested by a withdrawal syndrome on discontinuation of the drug⁹.

Harris Isbell and HF Frazer pointed out the causes of drug addiction, such as, personality disorder, frustration, curiosity and crave for pleasurable feeling in mind. He also noted that physical dependence is not entirely due to the changes in the autonomic nervous system¹⁰.

Mark A.R. Kleiman, Jonathan P. Caulkins and Angela Hawke in their book *Drugs and Drug Policy: What Everyone Need to Know* pointed out the relationship between drugs and crimes. According to the authors drugs lead people to commit crime because:

1. drug use makes them act irrationally;
2. they need money to buy drugs; and
3. because they get involved in the violence that surrounds the business of producing and dealing in drugs.¹¹

Marina Barnard in her book titled *Drug Addiction and Families* records the effects of drug use on family dynamics and relationship including possible social and emotional costs. Its impact on the physical and mental health is also discussed¹².

Robert T. Ammerman, Peggy J. Ott, Ralph E. Torter in the book *Prevention and Societal Impact of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* brought substance use and abuse at the forefront of the social problems. They also paid attention to the progress that has been made in explicating the impact and consequences of the substance use and abuse¹³.

M. Hepburn in “Drugs of Addiction” identified the increase of drug addiction among young women in Britain. He also

highlighted the problem of drug abuse during pregnancy¹⁴.

L. Kovatsi, D. et al. in the article ‘Drugs of Abuse: Epigenetic and Mechanisms in Toxicity and Addiction’ discussed the abuse of substances such as ethanol, cocaine, heroin, and the toxic effects of these drugs on almost every system of the organism. They also identified the lacking remaining in the strategies to decrease the toxicity of these drugs on human body¹⁵.

The edited book titled *Drugs and Youth: The Challenge of Today* by Ernest Harms took note of the increase in the use of drugs by teenagers during the 1950s. He unearthed some unknown facts on the issue and considering its magnitude proposed to call it an ‘epidemic’¹⁶.

Research Gap: From the review of literature by the researcher, it is found that the concept of the actual condition of drug addiction among the students of Rajshahi University is missing. The researcher found out this gap and tried to explore the cause of drug addiction of the students of RU, the percentage of the addicted students, their level of addiction and also the awareness of the administration or RU in this regard. Mainly, the limited information on the addicted students of RU is the research gap in this study.

Research Questions:

1. How do the students become drug addicts?
2. What are the causes of their drug addiction?
3. Who are the suppliers? Are they students of RU or not?

4. What are the harmful effects they are facing after becoming drug addicts?
5. Is the administration of RU concerned enough about drug abuse?

Objectives

1. To find out how the respondents began drug abuse;
2. To discover the causes of their drug addiction;
3. To understand the process of drug abuse;
4. To find out the economic, social and health effects of drug abuse.

Methodology: Case Study was the method used for this study. The study locale was the University of Rajshahi (RU). The students of RU were the population of this research. The total number of the students studying at RU is around 37,000. Among them 18 drug addicted students, who agreed to participate in this study were selected as respondents. Case study method was used in this research. Through snowball sampling 18 drug-addicted students of RU were selected as respondents. All of the respondents were male. The researcher was not able to find any female drug addicted student who agreed to take part in the study as a respondent.

Type of the Research: The research is qualitative in nature. Data have been collected from 18 drug addicted students through in-depth interview.

Sources of Data: The sources from which data have been collected can be classified into two types-- primary and secondary.

Primary Sources: The data and information about the abuses of drug in RU, directly collected from respondents are the primary data used in this research.

Secondary Sources: The data and information which were collected from books, articles, study reports etc. are the secondary data collected for this research. The researcher used various information provided in many books articles, records etc.

Sampling Design: It is not easy to reach drug addicted students and to convince them to participate as a respondent in a research. Snowball sampling was used to select the respondents for this study. In snowball sampling the researcher gathers information the information given by the first few respondents the researcher succeeded in collecting data from 18 drug addicted students of University of Rajshahi. She took information from only those who were willing to be respondents for this research. In this manner the researcher was able to collect data from 18 students.

Data Collection Method: In-depth interview using a schedule was employed to collect data from the respondents in January 2019.

Data processing and analysis: The data were processed manually and simple statistics e.g. frequency distributions and percentages were used to analyze data.

Research Findings: In this section data collected from the students of RU are presented using simple statistical tools e.g.,

frequency distribution and measures of central tendency.

Information presented in this section has been collected from the addicted students, who were 18 in number.

Most of the respondents had a single earning member in their families (n=8, 44%). Thirty-three per cent of the respondents had 2 earning family members while 17 per cent of them had 3 earning members in their families. Only 5 per cent of the respondents had more than 3 earning members in their families (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Number of Earning Members of Family

Number of Earning Members	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	8	44
2	6	33
3	3	17
More than 3	1	5
Total	18	100

Table 3.2: Whether the Respondents have their Own Earnings or not

Whether the Respondents have their Own Earnings or not	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yes	5	28
No	13	72
Total	18	100

Among the respondents, 72% didn't have any source of income of their own. Twenty-eight percent of them had their own sources of income (Table 3.2).

Most of the respondents (78%) opined that the earning of their family members was enough to meet up their necessities. But 22% of them told that the earning of their family members was not enough to satisfy their needs (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Whether the Earning of the Family Members of the Respondents is Enough to meet up their Needs

Whether the earning of the family members of the respondents is enough to meet up their needs	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yes	14	78
No	4	22
Total	18	100

Table 3.4: Satisfaction of the Respondents regarding their Academic Results

Satisfied or Not	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yes	6	33
No	12	67
Total	18	100

Thirty-three percent of the respondents were satisfied with their academic results. But Most of them, about 67% were not satisfied with it (Table 3.4).

Table 3.5: Opportunities for Sufficient Recreation

Gets enough opportunity for recreation	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yes	5	28

No	13	72
Total	18	100

Most of the students opined that they did not get proper opportunities for recreation (72%). Twenty-two percent of them said that they got enough scope for recreation (Table 3.5). The respondents consumed different types of drugs. All of them consumed Ganja. Yaba was consumed by 15 (83%) drug users. They also consumed local liquor which was also called as ‘*chuani*’ (n=14, 78%) and phensydyle (n=16, 89%) as drugs. Eleven percent of the respondents used other drugs (Table 3.6).

Of the respondents, 67% collected their drug materials within RU campus and 89% of them collected those from outside of the campus(3.7).

Table 3.6: Names of Drugs Consumed by Respondents

Names of Drugs	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yaba	15	83
Ganja	18	100
Local Liquor (<i>chuani</i>)	14	78
Phensydyle	16	89
Others	02	11

(Multiple response)

Table 3.7: Place of Collecting/Buying Drugs

Places	No. of Respondents	Percent
Within RU campus	12	67

Outside RU campus	16	89
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(Multiple Response)

Among the respondents, 67% bought drugs from other drug addicted students. Fifty percent of them collected drug from the tea and cigarette sellers. Eighty three percent of the respondents bought drugs from rickshaw pullers and 89% of them managed the drugs from the outsiders (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Drug Selling Agents

Agents	No. of Respondents	Percent
Drug addicted students	12	67
Tea and cigarette sellers	09	50
Rickshaw Puller	15	83
Outsiders	16	89

(Multiple Response)

Table 3.9: Availability of Drugs

Availability of Drugs	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yes	14	78
No	3	17
No Response	1	6
Total	18	100

Among the respondents, 78% thought that drugs which are consumed by them were sufficiently available. Seventeen percent of them opined that those were not always

available. Six percent of the respondents did not answer this question (Table 3.9).

Of the 100 respondents, 5% opined that their monthly expenditure of money for drugs was less than 5000 Taka. Fifty percent of them told that the amount was around 5000-10000 Taka on their part. Forty four percent of the respondents answered that their expenditure was more than 10000 Taka per month for the purpose of drugs (Table 3.10).

Table 3.10: Amount of Money Spent for Drug Consumption (per Month)

Amount of Money (Taka)	No. of Respondents	Percent
<5000	1	5
5000-10000	9	50
>10000	8	44
Total	18	100

Table 3.11: Availability of Drugs at Residential Halls for Students

Availability of Drugs at Students' Halls	No. of Respondents	Percent
Easily Available	8	44
More or Less Available	6	33
Scarcely Available	4	22
Total	18	100

Among the respondents, 44% thought that drugs were 'easily available' at the students' halls of RU. Thirty three percent of the

respondents thought that the drugs were 'more or less' available at the halls. Twenty two percent of the respondents opined that drugs are 'scarcely' available at the halls (Table 3.11).

Table 3.12: Whether Wants to Come Out of Drug Addiction

Whether Wants to Come Out of Drug Addiction	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yes	15	83
No	3	17
No Response	00	00
Total	18	100

Among the respondents, 83% expressed their willingness to come out of drug addiction. Seventeen percent of them were not willing to come out from this curse (Table 3.12).

On the question whether the respondents took drugs alone or in a group, 25% stated that they took drugs alone. Fifty three percent of the respondents opined that they maintained groups while taking drugs. Twenty two percent of them remained silent.

As regards the question about the group members of the addicted students, 58% answered that they were their university friends, 33% said that the group members were their roommates, 18% opined that they were their seniors of the university. In the opinion of 7% of the respondents, their companions were their juniors and 24%

expressed that the group members were their local friends.

While answering the question on their sources of earning which they used for collecting drugs, 28% opined that they earned that money by themselves and 72% said that the money came from their family or other sources.

Of the 18 respondents, 56% opined that they faced physical complicity after being addicted to drugs. Twenty two percent of them said that they did not face any physical difficulties and another 22% of the respondents remained silent in this regard.

Among the respondents, 36% informed that they were involved in other illegal activities after becoming addicted to drugs. Sixty four percent of the respondents responded that they were not involved in any such activities.

Among the respondents, 15% informed that their families were informed about their addiction to drugs. Sixty seven percent of them said that their families were not informed about this and 18% of them did not answer this question.

On the question, whether the respondents have taken any steps to come out from drug addiction, 27% replied in the affirmative, 51% replied in the negative and 22% of them remained silent.

Case Studies: This section presents five cases of drug addiction using pseudonyms of respondents. The researcher interviewed in an in-depth manner 5 addicted respondents to

obtain the case studies from the 18 addicted respondents. This interview deeply focused on the beginning of their drug addiction, reasons behind their addiction, the drugs which they usually take, whether there is specific reasons on their choosing these drugs or not, the places from where they collected these drugs, their monthly expenditure for the purpose of drugs, their opinions about the percentage of addicted students in RU and whether they tried to come out from the curse of drug or not.

Case 1: Rakib Hasan (pseudonym), a 4th year student of University of Rajshahi, is addicted to drugs since the last 3 years. He started to take drugs through his friends and finally became fully addicted. He is addicted to more or less all kinds of drugs. But, most of the time, he takes yaba and phensydyle. He has some specific reasons for choosing these drugs. He opined that, 'yaba' makes the body and mind energetic and it makes the mind more attentive. The body feels light after taking 'Phensydyle'. He collects drugs from some rickshaw pullers, who pull rickshaw around the RU campus, the bank of the River Padma, various slums including the slum of 'Budhpara'. His expenditure in drugs is not the same every month. He gets this money from his family and other sources. His level of taking drug depends on his financial situation. Rakib thinks that at least 15% of the student of RU are related to drugs through taking or dealing in those drugs. He didn't ever try to get rid of drugs.

Case 2: Nafis Ahmed (pseudonym), a 3rd year student of RU, has been addicted to drugs since last 4 years. He is involved in

politics and his starting of taking drugs was through his political colleagues. It became extensive after he was admitted to RU. Now he takes drugs regularly. He is a chain smoker and he takes more or less all sorts of popular drugs including yaba, phensydyle and ganja. He thinks that drugs have different effects on human body and mind. And when he felt these types of effects by taking drugs, he became addicted and wanted to feel that same feeling again and again. He mainly collected drugs from the political personnel who came from outside the campus. He also said that drugs were available in 'Budhpara' and 'Mijaner Mor'. He spent about 20,000 Taka every month for the purpose of consuming drugs. He earns some money through his political activities and in maximum cases those activities were illegal. He took money from his family by telling lies. He used this money for the purpose of drugs. He thought that at least 8%-10% of the students of RU were addicted to drugs. He never tried to get rid of this curse of addiction. But he wants to recover from it. He already had to drop a year for the adverse effect of drug addiction. So, he thinks that he should leave this addiction as soon as possible.

Case 3: Mahin (pseudonym), a 4th year student of RU became addicted to drugs after he got admitted to the University of Rajshahi. He belongs to an upper class family. He didn't take any drugs before. But, now he is fully addicted to drugs. He is also addicted to gambling. When he wins in gambling, he uses that money for the purpose of buying drugs. When he is defeated in gambling, he manages the money for drugs at any cost. He usually takes 'yaba' and 'ganja' as drugs.

Together with his friends, he takes 'phensydyle' and 'chuani'. He takes these drugs to get the pleasant feeling derived from taking those. He collected these drugs from the other gamblers and drug addict students. He could easily get these drugs from them. His expenditure for the purpose of drug consumption was about 20000--25000 Taka per month. He has no specific idea about the percentage of addicted students in RU. Mahin never tried to get rid of the curse of this addiction. But he wanted to come out of it, though he thinks that he has to face various problems if he tries to do that.

Case 4: Sakib (pseudonym) is a student of 3rd year in RU. He was a smoker from class 9. After being admitted to college, he started taking ganja. His addicted life started mainly after his entrance to the university. There was none to make him refrain from such activities. He started to take 'yaba' and 'ganja'. He mainly started taking drugs to satisfy his curiosity. Now he was used to with 'ganja', 'yaba', 'phensydyle' and 'chuani'. He mentioned some specific reasons for his choosing these drugs. After taking cigarette, when one takes ganja, he feels energetic. Yaba brings a pleasant feeling in body and it increases the sexual excitement of a person. Phensydyle makes a person more attentive to his works. So, Sakib has chosen these drugs. He collects the drugs from 'Budhpara', 'Mijaner Mor' and various places of RU. His monthly expense for drugs is about 10000-15000 Taka. He takes this money from his family by telling lies and sometimes he gets involved in 'seat business' in the halls of RU to earn money. He thought that about 10-12% students of RU were addicted to drugs.

Sometimes, he feels that he should leave his addiction but he never tried to get rid of it.

Case 5: Ashik (pseudonym), a 2nd year student of RU, became addicted to drugs after admitting to RU. He is involved in politics. He was influenced to take drugs by his friends. He mainly consumed ‘ganja’ and ‘yaba’. Besides, he took ‘phensydyle’ and ‘*chuani*’. He thought ganja makes the body feel light. Yaba makes mind and body refreshed and it increases attraction to the people of opposite sex. And so, he has to involve in more illegal activities. He collects these drugs from various places of RU and the rickshaw pullers help him a lot in finding those drugs. He does not have any specific rate of expense for the purpose of drugs. He himself was involved in dealing drugs. He collected drugs from drug peddlers he was acquainted to at a low price and sold those to the students at a high rate. And thus, he earned a lot of money. He used this money to buy drugs for himself. He did not have any specific idea about the percentage of the addicted students in RU. He never tried to come out of this curse of drug addiction.

Discussion: In this research, the researcher found out the answers to some important questions about drug addiction through the respondents. From the information collected from students in general (both drug addicted and non-addicted) the researcher found that most respondents (36%) knew more than 30 drug addicted students at RU. In response to the question on whether the respondents were smokers or not, the researcher found that, 47% respondents were addicted to cigarette. Though smoking is not normally treated as a

form of drug addiction, still it works as a gateway to the addicted life of the students. From the survey it is found that, 18% of the respondents were addicted to drugs. This is quite an alarming situation. Most of the addicted students took yaba, ganja, phensydyle and “*chuani*” as drugs. In maximum cases, university friends and local friends of the respondents played the significant role in their drug addiction. The main reasons for their drug addiction were frustration, not being satisfied with their academic results, family problems etc. Here, the researcher found that most of the drug addicted students collected drugs from the other drug addicted students of RU, rickshaw pullers around RU and the outsiders. Most of the students opined that drugs were ‘more or less’ available at the halls of RU. In case of monthly expenditure for drugs, most addicted students informed that the amount was within 3000-7000 Taka. Drug addiction has brought about a severe harmful effect on the economic, social, physical and mental condition of the students.

Conclusion: Findings of this research clearly show that drug abuse has already immersed as a threat among the students of RU. The researcher found that, drugs were quite easily available to the students at RU. If students have enough money, they can easily buy drugs. This availability of drugs increased the rate of drug addiction among the students. The rickshaw pullers, who pull rickshaw within RU campus were considered as a great source of drugs. They supplied drugs to the students of RU and gave them information about drugs. Sometimes, students become drugs dealers. They collected drugs from their known peddlers at a low rate and sold

those to the other addicted students at a high price. Thus, they earned a lot of money by drug dealing and used that money for collecting drugs for themselves. An alarming information found from the research is that drugs were quite easily available in the halls of RU. So, it is clear that the students and other staffs of the halls were involved in drug dealing. This caused high risk to the non-addicted students, because there is every chance for them to become addicted. There are some specific places, where the addicted students gathered together for taking drugs. They chose the field of “*Iblish Chattar*”, roof top of “*Shiraji Vaban*”, Charukala, RU rail line area etc. as the perfect place for their consumption of drugs. Students in general faced awkward situations by the activities of the addicted students. The availability of drugs in RU is increasing addiction day by day among the students. It is undoubtedly a risky condition for the safety of the students as well as the peaceful environment of the university. Drugs are being abused indiscriminately, therefore, all stakeholders including the students, guardians, teachers, university authority, the law makers and law enforcing agencies, researchers, civil society, NGO’s and the state must come forward together to combat this formidable foe.

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