

A Criminological Study of the Impact of Heroin Use on Problems Associated with Urban Poverty in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Drug abuse has caused a lot of personal and social problems globally. In almost every country in the world, offences related to drugs are considered illegal behaviours, and related punishments have been established. However, laws and regulations related to intoxicants vary from country to country. Misbehaviour related to the use of drugs in Sri Lanka has also been defined as illegal behaviour. This study is very important from a criminological and social science point of view on how heroin use affects urban poverty. Colombo City is unique among the urban areas of Sri Lanka, and it is evident that a large number of low-income urban communities around the city are living without very minimal facilities. One of the main factors affecting their poverty is the use of heroin by the people living in those families. Among those arrested for drug-related offences in the year 2021, most were arrested for heroin-related offences. In the five years since that year, the number of arrests for heroin offences has increased every year more than for other drugs. The methods of interview, questionnaire, and observation were used to collect the primary data for the research. Accordingly, fifty people prone to heroin use who live in shacks and apartment complexes in the district's low-income community were used as the sample. Data analysis was conducted quantitatively and qualitatively. In terms of ethnicity, Sinhalese nationals are the most arrested for heroin-related offences. The percentage is 50% arrests among Sinhalese, 30% among Muslims, and 20% among Tamils. Age-wise, the age groups with the highest number of arrests are 16–20 and 31–35. The great majority work as labourers or in hired jobs, and the majority have low levels of education. Families face many problems as a result of heroin usage and related offences. Economic problems, family disputes, leaving families, the tendency to commit other crimes, health problems, legal problems, problems in the socialisation of children, and many other personal and social problems have arisen due to this. These problems are directly linked to urban sprawl.

Keywords: Criminology, Drugs, Heroin, Poverty, Sri Lanka, Urban poverty

INTRODUCTION

Drug use has grown into a social problem that affects almost every society in the world. This has affected not only the developing countries like Sri Lanka but also the developed countries of the world, resulting in the occurrence of various problems. Drug use has had a huge impact on the individual as well as society, both biologically and sociologically. Accordingly, it is clear that this problematic situation caused by the use of drugs and their negative effects is not limited to only one geographical country in the world. In addition to the physical and mental effects of drug use on a person, it also affects multiple aspects, such as the family, the economy, etc. When talking about the use of drugs, heroin can be said to be a leading drug that is destroying mainly the youth of the world as well as other communities. Currently, many people are addicted to this poisonous drug. The danger here is that it is highly addictive and difficult for a person to relapse.

Drug abuse has a very long history. Critics opine that “it is as old as people's faiths and beliefs” (Rasnak, 1992). Heroin, a highly toxic drug, was sold as a medicine under the name Heroin by Germany's Bayer Company for the first time (Rathnapala, 1986). Thus, the use of heroin and other drugs spread rapidly around the world. According to the data estimated by the United Nations Office on Drugs (UNODC) in 2015, the population of the world who uses illegal drugs is 255 million. And 29.5 million people are prone to

problematic drug use. Among them, it is estimated that 35 million people use cannabis, 17 million people use cocaine, 37 million people use amphetamines, and 21 million people use ecstasy. UNODC estimates that 12 million of the world's drug users inject drugs; 1.6 million are infected with HIV; 6.1 million are infected with hepatitis C; and another 1.3 million are infected with both HIV and hepatitis. (National Board of Control of Dangerous Drugs, 2020). Thus, it is clear that the world situation regarding the use of drugs is very dangerous.

It seems that the problem related to the use of heroin in Sri Lanka has evolved in the past. Currently, heroin is widespread in almost every province and district of Sri Lanka. The spread of heroin can be seen, especially in the urban areas of Sri Lanka, and a special distribution can be seen in the Colombo district of the Western Province. For crimes related to heroin, the number of arrests in Sri Lanka from 2017 to 2021 was 51788, 40998, 45923, 41080, and 50412 respectively. Apart from the number of people arrested for drug use in 2021, 46% will be reported for heroin offences. (National Dangerous Drugs Control Board, 2022). Our attention should be drawn to the fact that such a large number of heroin users have been arrested in the respective years. Because the use of heroin is a contributing factor to urban poverty in Sri Lanka, It is a remarkable situation that a large number of people have been arrested due to this practice, even during the time of the spread of the coronavirus.

Considering the provinces of Sri Lanka, most of the arrests for the use of heroin in the five years from 2017 to 2021 are in the Western Province. Those numbers are 21595, 29758, 26171, 25142, and 31431, respectively (National Dangerous Drugs Control Board, 2022). It is also very important to get an understanding of the number of people arrested at the district level regarding the use of heroin. Accordingly, the number of people arrested for heroin-related offences from 2017 to 2021, according to districts, is shown in the table below.

Table No. 1: Number of people arrested for heroin-related offences according to districts

District	Year				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Colombo	13862	19322	15941	12990	19944
Gampaha	6419	9030	8449	9029	8632
Kalutara	1314	1406	1781	3123	2855
Galle	1102	638	1076	3581	2276
Matara	561	485	1045	1774	1841
Hambantota	381	770	978	71	1097
Puttalam	705	1465	1466	2692	2275
Kurunegala	1527	2934	3257	4081	2179
Kegalle	351	462	898	1074	744
Ratnapura	304	291	1021	1444	1378
Kandy	1224	2042	1896	3029	2286
Nuwara Eliya	60	110	66	119	60
Matale	435	459	719	1136	153
Badulla	295	500	638	820	606
Monaragala	14	35	157	267	211
Anuradhapura	297	450	506	2656	2030
Polonnaruwa	196	163	102	634	485
Ampara	27	73	140	3099	294

Batticaloa	34	89	149	241	332
Trincomalee	58	81	186	450	105
Jaffna	65	132	318	1398	273
Mulathiu	05	01	03	21	00
Mannar	14	34	110	180	176
Kilinochchi	01	10	19	134	29
Vavuniya	37	55	367	350	151
Total	29288	40998	40970	51603	50412

(Source - National Dangerous Drugs Control Board, 2022)

Accordingly, based on the above data, it is clear that heroin has spread in the urban areas of Sri Lanka. Among these, the Colombo district has a leading position. Although there is less information regarding the use of heroin in rural areas, it is heard that heroin and other similar drugs have been spreading in rural areas recently. The use of heroin has more or less spread in almost all areas considered urban areas of a country, and the youth living in rural areas as well as people who are interested in the use of heroin have migrated to urban areas for this reason. Because of this, heroin has been identified as a leading type of toxic drug that spreads mainly in urban areas. This situation can be seen in the same way in Sri Lanka, and in the early days, this drug spread mainly around the city of Colombo. Statistics show that more people use heroin in the urban and tourist areas of Colombo city, such as Negombo, Halawatha, Puttalam, Kalpitiya, Hikkaduwa, Galle, etc.

The largest urban population in Sri Lanka lives in the Colombo district, and the low-income earners living in the city has turned to the use of drugs, including heroin, so they have become urban poor. Most of Sri Lanka's factories, commercial centres, and economic centres are located in Colombo, and the majority of the business community lives here. The urban poor live in substandard housing in the city and often earn money in the above workplaces or other informal jobs or through anti-social and illegal means. Most of the money earned is spent on drugs. Currently, the number of poor people in the city is increasing, especially in the slums of Colombo. There is a huge gap between the low-income shack, slum, and apartment dwellers living in the city and the urban upper-class and middle class. One of the main reasons for this is that low-income people tend to use heroin.

This situation is most common in the low-income community living in the northern and eastern boundaries of the Colombo district. In these slums, slum dwellers reside near canals, swamps, factories, large-scale warehouses, garbage collection points and on the banks of the Kelani River. Heroin use as well as trafficking takes place in this community. Taking the city of Colombo, heroin is widely distributed in urban areas such as Kompanjaveediya, Maligawatta, Pitakutwa, Modara, Mattakkuliya, Grandpars, Kolonnawa, Kotahena, Wellawatta, Bambalapitiya etc. Out of these, heroin use and smuggling are also very high in Kolonnawa, Dematagoda, Modara, Mattakkuliya, Grandpars, and Maligawatta areas. The use and sale of heroin also takes place around Magazin and Welikada prisons. Areas with slums and slums in Colombo city are known as "Estates" and often these estates are identified by a number. Different names are also used to refer to estates. The use of heroin is very widespread in these plantations. Due to this, various problems have arisen in those areas. Apart from the above areas of Colombo city, heroin is spread in Maharagama, Nugegoda, Moratuwa, Dehiwala, Rajagiriya, Kirulapana, Galkissa etc. and the special feature that can be seen in any of these areas is that the majority of heroin users are urban low-income earners.

Thus, among the districts of Sri Lanka, Colombo city ranks first as the main district where heroin users and crimes occur. Heroin has had a strong impact in Sri Lanka. Among them, the widespread spread of heroin in the city of Colombo has caused many problems to arise in the city. In some major cities in the district, poverty has increased due to the widespread availability of heroin in slums and apartment complexes. Accordingly, heroin, which has spread in urban areas, has been able to create strong social problems and several other problems.

Problems such as poverty, heavy living burdens, unemployment, a widening gap, and inequality in income distribution have become more acute in the urban areas where they are located due to the deterioration of the economy related to slums. Due to economic poverty, which is a main feature of urban poor areas, people addicted to drugs such as heroin have been motivated to engage in various illegal activities such as crimes and abuses to earn money. Accordingly, many of the people who are addicted to the use of heroin engage in crimes such as theft, murder, robbery, etc. to earn the money needed for drugs. Especially since many of these low-income earners have received less education, they have not been able to get a formal job, and because of this, many of them are hired. Although this amount is enough to live normally, because of the temptation to use an expensive and addictive drug like heroin regularly, they have to spend more money on heroin than they earn. When the amount they earn is not enough, they earn money illegally through the previously mentioned illegal behaviour. However, it is noticeable that poverty has developed in the shacks and slums of Colombo due to the temptation to use high-priced heroin. Accordingly, drug use is affected by economic decline and collapse, health impairment, educational decline, the weakening of the workforce, the development of abusive criminal behaviour, and many other problems. Due to the use of drugs, individuals, society, and the country become poor.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in the Colombo district. Accordingly, fifty people prone to heroin use who live in shacks and apartment complexes of the district's low-income community were used as the sample. They belong to several estates located in the *Madampitiya Grama Niladhari* domain. According to this, the addicts involved in this sample live in *Henamulla Campwatta, 219 Watta, 169 Watta* and *Mihijaya Sewana, Ranmithu Sewana, and Sathiru Sewana* apartment complexes. Under purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method, amateurs were selected for the sample based on the knowledge and understanding of the researcher. Primary sources and secondary sources have been used to carry out the research. Data obtained from the field were used as primary sources and reports, statistics, journals, and documents with information published related to the research topic of the study were used as secondary sources. The methods of interview, questionnaire and observation were used to collect the primary data of the research. Data analysis was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Tables and graphs were created using Microsoft Excel software and the data contributors' feelings, opinions and attitudes were analyzed through qualitative analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Due to the prevalence of heroin in urban areas, some people living in those areas have been tempted to use heroin. The availability of heroin also makes it easy to buy. Accordingly, there is a reference to this regardless of age.

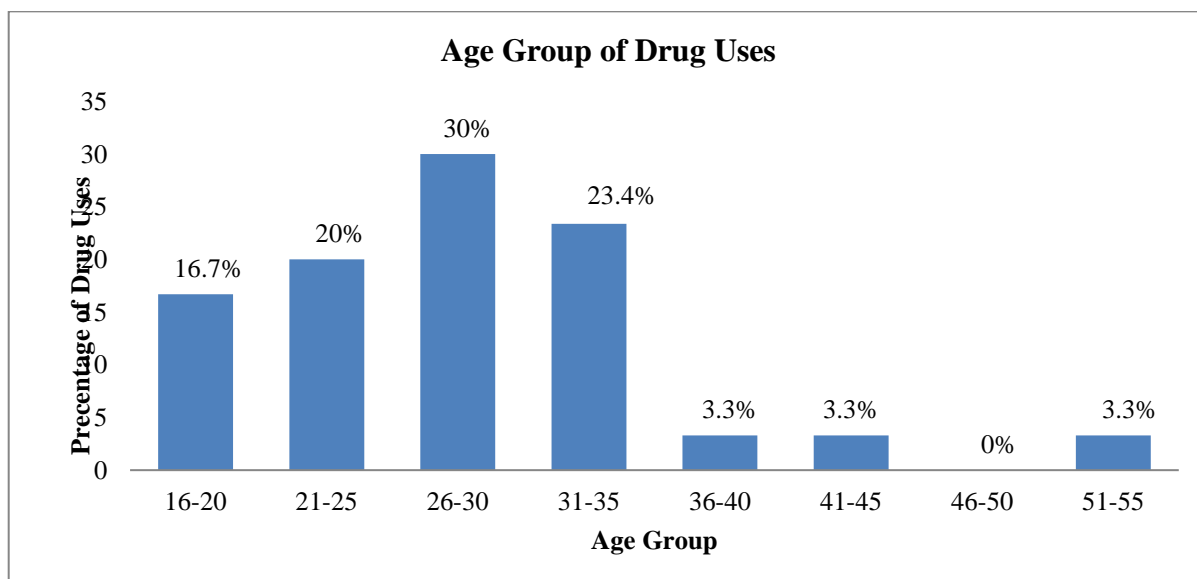


Figure 01 - Age groups of drug users

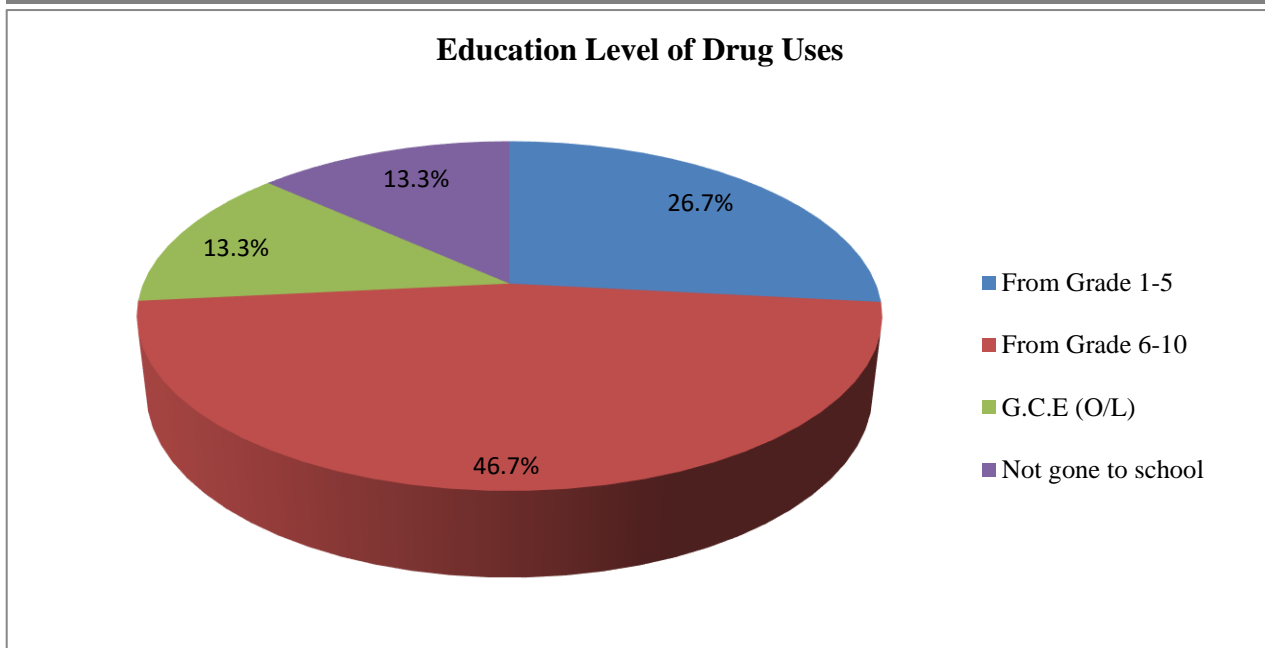


Figure 02 - Educational level of drug users

According to the field data, it can be seen that people belonging to the age group of 26-30 are mostly addicted to heroin use in the area. That percentage is 30%. Also, 23.4% between 31-35, 20% between 21-25 and 16.7% between 16-20 are tempted to use heroin. The total percentage of heroin users aged 16-30 is 66.7%. Accordingly, the vast majority of people who use heroin are young people, and it is an extremely tragic situation to have people belonging to the age group of 16-20. The youth workforce, which should contribute to the country's economic development, tends to use a highly addictive drug like heroin, which not only causes urban poverty but also hinders the overall development of the country.

It appears that people who use heroin in urban areas have a lower level of education. Sometimes, due to the early age of heroin use, education is stopped midway. The use of heroin by an adult in the family also has many direct and indirect effects on the educational performance of a school-going child. The highest educational level of data contributors in the field is G.C.E. (General Certificate of Education) Ordinary Level (O/L) up to. That percentage is 13.3%. Also, the highest educational qualification received by the majority of people is to study up to grades 6–10. That percentage is 6.7%. The percentage of those who have received education from grades 1–5 is as high as 7%. Also, the percentage of people who did not go to school is 13.3%. Facing economic problems, lack of interest, family disputes, peer group influence, and drug addiction are the factors that lead to low educational status. However, due to their lack of education and illiteracy, they have not been able to do formal and stable jobs, which have become a strong factor in causing economic poverty.

It is very important in the study of urban poverty to examine the employment status of people who are addicted to heroin. Occupation is extremely important in determining their economic status.

Table 2: Job category of drug users

Job category	Percentage]	No. of drug addictions
Private sector	6.9	2
Self-employed	24.1	7
Labourers	69	20
Total	100	29

The majority of the unemployed people are engaged in labour and hired work, which is 69% of the relevant number as a percentage. Of the data contributors, 24.1% are self-employed and the remaining 6.9% are

employed in the private sector. According to the above data, it seems that the majority of people are engaged in informal jobs.

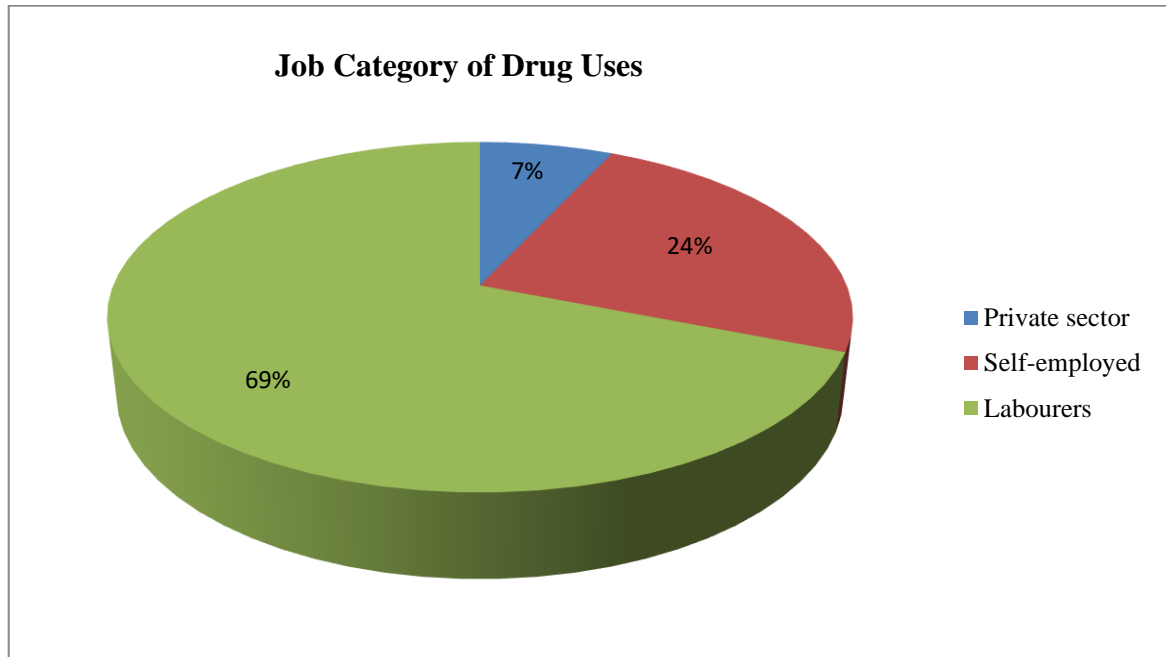


Figure 03 - Job category of drug users

Those working in the private sector are also self-employed and most of the self-employed are engaged in small businesses. Among these, the fruit trade, vegetable trade, plastic, and aluminium goods trade are the main ones. Almost all of the labourers and hired workers are factory workers, or the majority is engaged in jobs such as cart pushers and heavy lifters (*Nattami*) in Colombo fort, and nearby towns. They are always forced to work longer hours, and sometimes they work at night. This is done to earn more money for the use of heroin. Most of them say that they can work more after using heroin. Often, heavy lifters and cart pushers are paid by the amount of work done. Some people use heroin while working. 10% of them earn low income, 28% earn average income, 48% earn moderate income, and 14% earn high income. Regardless of which income category they represent, they spend a lot of money monthly and daily to use heroin. Sometimes this practice involves borrowing and theft to find the required amount. Also, 40% of families with addicts have no other contributors to the family economy. Also, 80% of dependents have one or more family members as dependents. 53% of these families who use heroin are in debt for various reasons. Due to these issues, the poverty of those families has reached an intense level.

Heroin is an expensive drug, and economic problems have been exacerbated by the fact that some individuals have been addicted to it for a long time

Table 3: Time period of Drug addicted

Drug-addicted time	Percentage]
Less than 02 years	6.7
01- 02 years	20
02- 03 years	6.7
03- 04 years	20
04- 05 years	10
More than 05 years	36.6
Total	100

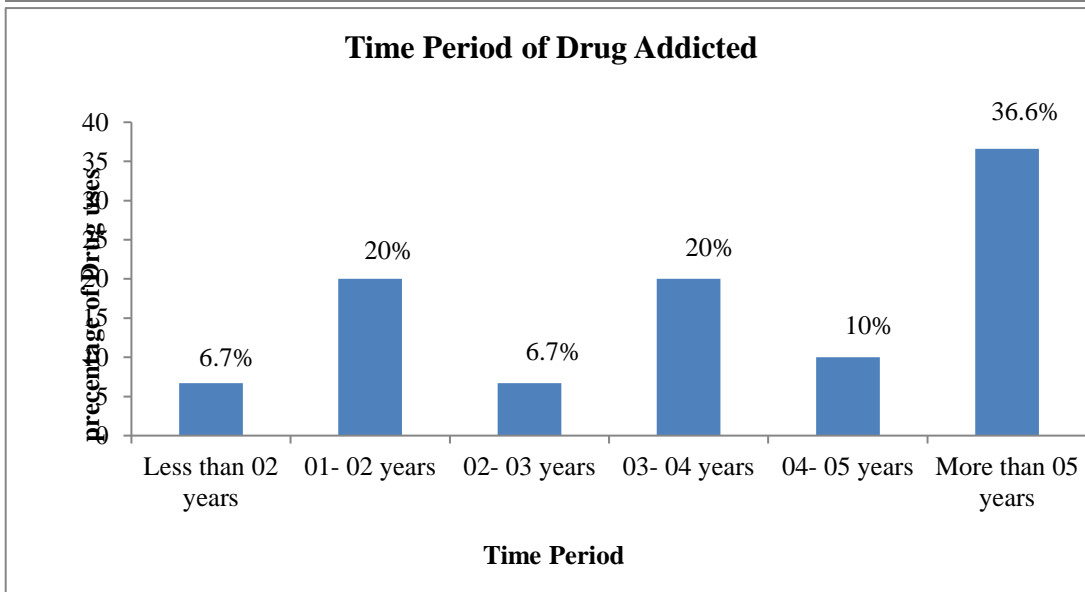


Figure 04- The period of a drug user's drug addiction

20% have been using heroin for 3–4 years, 10% for 4-5 years, and 37% for more than 5 years. When examining their addiction, 70% used it daily, 27% several times a week, and 3% once a week. 33% of daily users use it twice, 43% three times, and 24% more than three times. It costs a thousand rupees to use heroin at least once, and the majority, 70%, use heroin two or more times a day. For this use, they must spend two thousand rupees or more daily. Accordingly, the vast majority have to spend a lot of money on this every day. Also, 83% of them are tempted to use other drugs like cannabis (*Ganja*), cigarettes, and ice. They spend a lot of money on this. 73% use money from their jobs to buy heroin. Some people have used methods like asking friends or family. Accordingly, it appears that these families are living in severe economic poverty due to heroin and other drugs.

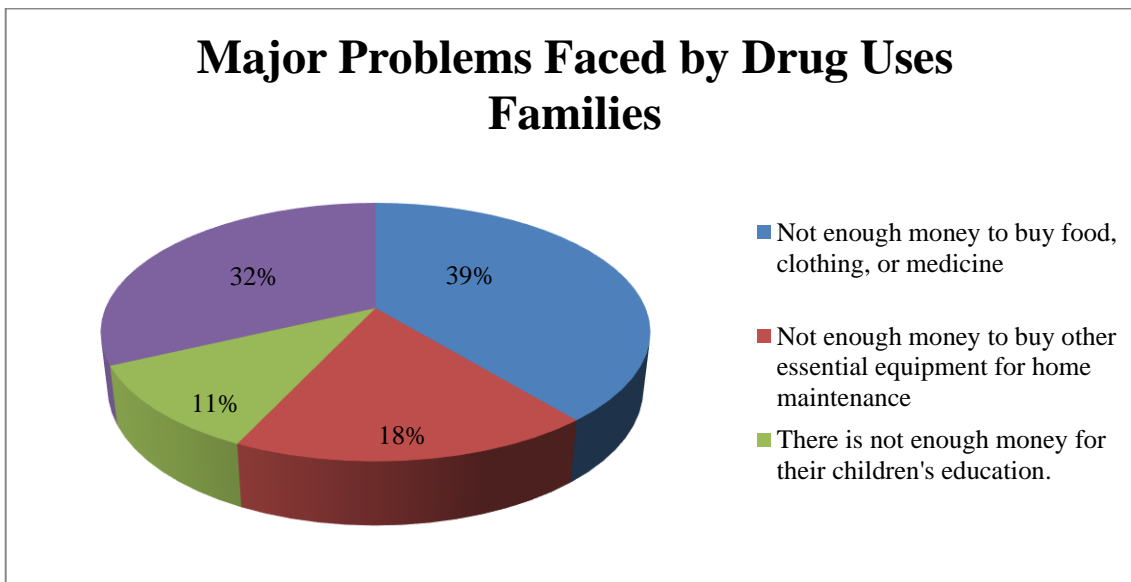


Figure 05 - Major problems face by drug uses families

It can be identified that the concerned families face several major problems due to the economic hardships they face due to the use of drugs.

Accordingly, 39% do not have enough money to buy food, clothing, or medicine. 18% have stated that they do not have money to buy other essential equipment for home maintenance. It has been shown that 11% of children do not have enough money for their education. 32% have said that they do not have enough money for all the above-mentioned matters. When asked about the ownership of the house where alcoholics live, only

47% of them own the house. This is also a remarkable state of economic recession. They are not able to support their families because they spend the money they earn on heroin, and this leads to many problems. Children's education is disrupted; wives go abroad; they have access to jobs such as prostitution; they are unable to feed their parents well or attend to the essential needs of their neighbours due to spending most or all of the money they earn on heroin use. The above problems have arisen in the low-income community of Colombo City, and whatever these problems are, the greedy person not giving up his behaviour has caused the problems to intensify. Because of this, a person who uses heroin in urban areas faces economic problems and several other related problems.

Accordingly, many problems have been faced under the categories of family problems, health problems, legal problems, economic problems, and social humiliation. The use of heroin has contributed to family disputes and a broken family background. Also, it can be seen that in the families of people who use heroin in the area, the husband-wife relationship and parent-child relationship have been affected. And the use of heroin has been able to cause many economic problems, not only for that person but also for the family he lives with. Sometimes, due to this situation, the person has not been able to fulfil even his basic needs.

More people have deteriorated in terms of health. They can't stop using heroin and can make a big difference in themselves physically and mentally when they don't. It is a disease. This condition can be seen in people who are more addicted to heroin. In terms of health, mental and physical health deterioration caused by the use of heroin can be seen more or less in them. And they have become a group of people who are despised and disliked by other people in society. People who use heroin face legal problems. Also, people who have committed other crimes due to heroin use are found in the study area. In this study, it has been found that 73% have been imprisoned for heroin-related offenses. 82% of them were imprisoned two or more times. The family's main income earner is thus incarcerated, leaving the household with intermittent or minimal income. Also, the family members have to spend a lot of money on legal matters. This situation is also a factor that influences the intensification of poverty.

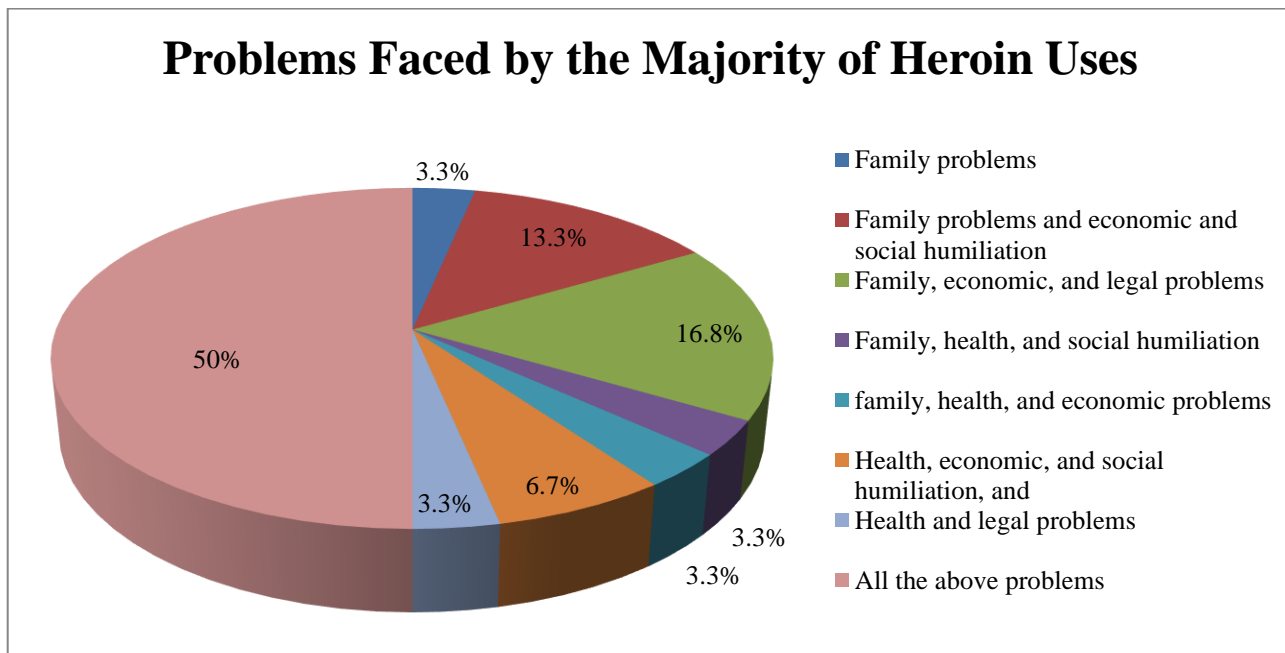


Figure 06 - Major problems faced by drug uses families

According to the research information, it is clear that the majority of heroin users in the study area have faced all of the above problems.

That individual percentage is 50%. Only 3.3% have faced family problems. Family problems and economic and social humiliation accounted for 13.3%; family, economic, and legal problems accounted for 16.8%; family, health, and social humiliation accounted for 3.3%; and family, health, and economic problems accounted for 3.3%. 6.7% under health, economic, and social humiliation, and 3.3% under health and legal

problems. Accordingly, it is clear that those addicts have faced a lot of problems due to the use of heroin in urban areas. In this way, due to the use of drugs, the person has to face various problems, such as physical, mental, psychological, sociological, and economic.

Legal institutions and the government also have to face several problems due to the widespread use of heroin in urban areas. Mainly because the youth of a country are tempted to use drugs, including heroin, the country is losing a viable workforce that is the forerunner of a country's development. Due to this, production is reduced, and new investments are not encouraged. This situation affects the development of the country and gradually drags the country into poverty. The legal institutions empowered by the constitutional law of a country also have to face many problems due to the use of heroin. Police, courts, prisons, and other legal institutions are facing problems related to this. Law enforcement agencies have arrested 50412 people for heroin use and related offenses in 2021. Most of these people have been arrested by the police department. Accordingly, the police have been given a great responsibility to control and prevent the use of heroin and its related crimes. Public welfare is also one of the main functions of the police. However, public relations and welfare activities have been distanced from the police due to having to spend a lot of time and a large number of officers on drug use and related offenses. In the face of this situation, the police have to face various problems at present. Also, the courts have mostly judged drug-related offenses. In the year 2021, only 51043 cases related to heroin have been referred to the court. Due to this, the judicial system is facing the problem of piling up cases. Likewise, the vast majority of inmates in prison are drug-related offenders. In the years 2020 and 2021, the number of innocent people imprisoned for drug offenses will be 9336 and 9344, respectively. Out of this, the number of those imprisoned for heroin offenses is reported as 7974 and 7094, respectively. This situation has led to an increase in the prison inmate population. It is a strong problem faced by these institutions that even after rehabilitation, they use an addictive drug like heroin and become criminals again. Also, for the maintenance of one prisoner, the government has to spend a considerable amount of money per day. The government and legal institutions have to face the above problems due to the use of heroin and related crimes.

Common people living in heroin-proliferated societies also have to face various problems. In this kind of society, the environment cannot be seen as favorable, and this causes mental confusion and an uneasy atmosphere in the individual. Also, when people who use heroin do not have the necessary money, they tend to commit crimes such as theft and robbery. Also, due to the use of drugs, there is a greater possibility of committing crimes such as child abuse, rape, etc. in these areas. Assaults and even murders can be seen in some urban societies. Crime and abuse are also major causes of moral decline in society. Also, other common people living in the area have to face various problems in socializing the children in such societies. Even their children may turn to heroin or any other drug if socialization fails. Especially in the above areas, it can be seen that even 12-year-old children are in the habit of using other drugs, including heroin, and this is a problem that has to be experienced due to the negative results of the above socialization process. Accordingly, the use of heroin has affected not only the addict but also other communities in society.

Due to the widespread use of heroin and related offenses in the urban areas of Sri Lanka, not only the addicted person but also their family, society, legal and other institutions, and the government have to face much economic, health, educational, moral, environmental, and social problems. It has been confirmed in this study.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A notable illegal behavior among the low-income poor people living in Colombo City is their addiction to drugs. A large number of people are addicted to heroin, and it is a major factor that has affected their poverty. The use of heroin has affected much economic, health, educational, environmental, and other social problems in urban areas.

It can be identified that the families of people who resorted to drug use have suffered a big economic collapse. A kilo of heroin costs as much as Rs. 18,000,000, and a lot of money is wasted due to its use. In order to use heroin, some people spend their entire daily earnings on it, and in some cases, they are tempted to use heroin by borrowing. Accordingly, this situation has affected not only economic problems but also many other problems. Due to the economic problems related to the use of heroin, not only the person but also his family have to face the problems of fulfilling their basic needs and several other problems as well.

The health condition of addicts has also deteriorated due to the use of heroin. This decline has occurred under the conditions of individual physical health and environmental health. It can be understood that people who use heroin are affected by several diseases that affect their physical health. Diseases related to the nervous system and mentally affected diseases are among them. In some people, due to this use, there has been a decline in intelligence, memory loss, and other mental disorders. Heroin is injected, and this is a major cause of HIV/AIDS. They are also suffering from asthma and heart diseases, which affect the body.

The environment they live in is also highly polluted. Environmental pollution has been affected by many different factors, including high population density and administrative problems. However, they do not make any attempt to leave that environment. Drug addicted people as well as other communities have adapted to that environment, and a few years ago they changed their residences to apartment complexes with great reluctance. Due to some major environmental health problems such as informal waste disposal, lack of adequate toilet systems, dirty canals, and drainage systems, infectious diseases such as dengue, malaria, and diarrhea are spreading rapidly in these areas. Although heroin use does not directly affect these problems, it does cause indirect effects.

The use of heroin has also affected the deterioration of education in that area. When we inquire about the educational status of the heroin-addicted person, it can be identified that they have a low level of education. According to that, the majority have less than a 10th grade education level. The percentage of people who did not go to school, the percentage of people who went to school up to grades 1–5, and the number of people who went to school up to grades 6–10 are very high. The percentage of drug addicted people who did not go to school is 13.3%, and the percentage who went to school from grades 1–5 is 26.7%. There are very few people who have studied up to the G.E.C. That percentage is 13.3%. Accordingly, it seems that the level of education of people who use heroin in the area is very low. Also, the education of children in families with people who use heroin has been disrupted. The father's drug use causes economic difficulties in the family, and due to this, the family also loses the money needed for the children's education. Also, the father's drug use also causes disputes at home, and this situation has had a strong psychological impact on the children. It also affects children's education. Accordingly, the use of heroin by people living in urban areas has led to less education for them and the people living in those families.

It is clear that the use of heroin has caused many problems in the families of those people. Especially the economic level of the family has caused damage to the children's education as well as the relationship between husband and wife and the relationship between father and children. Due to this, disputes in families have increased. Sometimes wives refuse to have sexual relations with homosexuals. In this study, it was reported that women were engaged in other sexual activities and in prostitution. These conditions have led to family abandonment and divorce. Because of this, the use of heroin has had a great impact on making it impossible to maintain a peaceful and good family environment.

The use of heroin has also affected social and cultural poverty in urban areas. A subculture has often developed among people who use heroin. This situation is well evident in urban slums, slums, and apartment complexes. Albert Cohen's subcultural theory points out that the people living in these subcultures are strongly attached to the values of that culture and are devoted to protecting them. He further points out that various crimes and abuses tend to occur within these gangs. Most of the people who live in the subculture are desperate and become addicted to heroin or any other drug. The language used in these subcultures is often vulgar and harsh. It is against the language of the great society. A lot of profanity is used. This leads to a cultural decline. Also, people who use drug like heroin cannot see values, etc. that are valued by society. They give priority only to their subcultural values. Religion is far away from them. These conditions are further developed by a broken family background. Also, when there is insufficient money to use heroin, there is a high possibility of committing crimes such as theft and robbery. There is also a greater possibility of sexual assault. Because of this, the common people living in such areas have to live in fear of crime. However, compared to rural areas, urban areas have naturally declined socially and culturally, and the use of heroin has contributed to the further development of social and cultural poverty in urban areas.

It was found that the community living in urban areas with low-income shacks and slums is living in the face of low infrastructure. Many of them have not received enough drinking water and electricity. Also, these huts

and slums are illegal constructions. Because of this, the community does not have a permanent plot of land or even a permanent house, and many people suffer from unemployment due to their lack of education. The majority of employed people are wage earners, laborers, and self-employed. The environmental condition in which they live is also very poor, and the risk of the spread of infectious diseases is high. Accordingly, the facilities available to the urban poor, who do not even have basic facilities in the main areas such as economics, education, and health, are in a minimal condition. Even if you feel the need to get rid of this situation, being addicted to the use of drugs, including heroin, has become a major obstacle to that. Accordingly, the use of heroin in Sri Lanka has affected economic, health, educational, social, and cultural urban poverty and the development of that situation.

According to the results of this research, it is clear that many problems have arisen due to the use of heroin in the study area. The following suggestions can be made to minimize and prevent these problems: Accordingly, it is expected to reduce and prevent the use of heroin and the resulting poverty. The measures that can be taken can be presented as measures that can be taken in the short and long term.

Short-term measures

1. Work to reduce heroin use and related crimes in the area by increasing police patrols and setting up a police checkpoint.
2. Identify all heroin users and refer them to rehabilitation facilities as soon as possible.
3. Reducing the use of drugs, including heroin, by expanding the role of the religious sector.
4. Work to reduce or prevent the use of heroin through proper enforcement of existing laws and regulations.
5. Making it more efficient to bring heroin traffickers to justice.
6. Employment of employable family members.
7. To maintain cleanliness of oneself and the environment as much as possible.
8. To raise awareness about the harmful effects and problems of heroin use through mass media, school-level, and other programs in the area.

The short-term measures seen above can be followed to reduce and prevent the poverty that has arisen in the study area, including drug use. These actions are very important in order to reduce the use of heroin in the area and other related problems.

Long-term measures

In addition to the short-term measures suggested above, the following long-term measures are also important in order to reduce and prevent the problems caused by the use of heroin in urban areas. It is clear that most of these actions are actions that the government can take. Formulation of new laws related to drugs, including heroin, and proper implementation of existing laws.

1. Implementation of comprehensive plans to prevent the importation of heroin into Sri Lanka.
2. Referring heroin users to rehabilitation facilities and providing effective rehabilitation services.
3. The government will create new job opportunities and provide adequate loan assistance to the people in the respective areas to do self-employment.
4. Providing prosperity grants and other reliefs to the people suffering from poverty.
5. Providing scholarships for the education of children from poor families and improving educational facilities.
6. Providing knowledge to school students about drug use, related problems, and other matters related to it by introducing them to the school curriculum.

Accordingly, it is very important to follow the short-term and long-term measures suggested above to reduce and prevent the effects of heroin use on the problems that have arisen in connection with urban poverty in Sri Lanka, and it will enable us to achieve more successful results. Overall, it was found in this study that the use of heroin by urban low-income people has directly and indirectly affected the occurrence of urban poverty.

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