

DRUG TRAFFICKING

Drug trafficking is a global issue that involves the illicit trade of substances such as narcotics, stimulants, and depressants across borders. It thrives on the demand for these substances, driven by various factors including addiction, economic incentives, and societal pressures. The trade not only poses significant health risks but also fuels organized crime and corruption worldwide. At its core, drug trafficking is a highly profitable business. The markup from production to street sale can be astronomical, making it an attractive venture for organized crime syndicates and individuals seeking financial gain. The market demand for drugs persists despite efforts to curb consumption through law enforcement and public health initiatives. The trafficking process typically begins with production in regions where laws and regulations are lax or where the terrain provides cover, such as remote jungles or mountains. Cocaine, for example, originates primarily from Colombia and Peru, while opium and heroin are cultivated in regions of Afghanistan and Southeast Asia. Marijuana and methamphetamines are produced in clandestine laboratories across various countries. Once produced, the drugs enter a complex distribution network. Traffickers use various methods to transport their goods, including land routes, maritime shipping, and increasingly, air travel. The sheer volume of global trade makes detection challenging for law enforcement agencies. Traffickers exploit vulnerabilities in transportation systems and border controls, often resorting to bribery and violence to ensure their shipments reach their destination. The consequences of drug trafficking are profound and multifaceted. First and foremost is the impact on public health. Drug abuse leads to addiction, overdose deaths, and a host of health problems, placing a significant burden on healthcare systems. Beyond health, drug trafficking destabilizes societies by fostering corruption and undermining the rule of law. In some regions, drug cartels wield considerable influence, challenging state authority and perpetuating violence. Efforts to combat drug trafficking span international cooperation, law enforcement initiatives, and public health interventions. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) coordinates global efforts to curb trafficking through treaties, intelligence sharing, and capacity building for law enforcement agencies. National governments implement policies ranging from stricter border controls to harm reduction strategies aimed at minimizing the health impact of drug abuse.

Despite these efforts, the drug trade persists due to its profitability and the insatiable demand for illicit substances. Criminal organizations continually adapt to law enforcement strategies, using technology and innovation to evade detection. Addressing drug trafficking requires a comprehensive approach that combines enforcement with prevention, treatment, and international cooperation. In conclusion, drug trafficking is a complex global issue with far-reaching implications for public health, security, and governance. Its profitability and the persistent demand for drugs ensure that combating it remains a formidable challenge. However, concerted efforts at the international, national, and local levels offer hope for mitigating its impact and reducing the harm caused by illicit drugs on individuals and societies worldwide.

Why do people treat a disabled person differently?

■ SURJIT SINGH FLORA

Because people can be narrow-minded, insecure, and selfish, people often fear and hate what is different from them or what they don't understand. Depending on your disability, the level of fear and hate can be mild to extreme. Secondly, because in the social hierarchy, people with disabilities are seen as the weaker ones, disability people have to experience and grow through so much that most people can't even imagine Some people believe that the disabled are worth less than themselves, and horrid people think this gives them a right to mistreat and abuse disabled people. In addition, instead of learning the meaning of love, some people see disability as a burden and would rather have an 'easy' life where they only have to think about themselves. Okay, that's a bit blunt, but I just feel that if everyone were kinder, the world would be a better place today. As someone who is autistic, I can tell you that abuse, and discrimination are genuine for those/ most of them on the spectrum. Many people have experienced bullying in different forms of discrimination and have even been raped or sexually exploited. There's a great deal of stigma and ignorance around disability. Also, as a society, we have certain stereotypes about how people should look, speak and conduct themselves, and we assume that people with disabilities have no passion, aspirations, knowledge, or skills. This needs to change through awareness campaigns and knowledge/ implementation of accessible environments. Not only that, but People also treat everyone differently. They treat women differently from men, black different from white, short different than tall and attractive different from none. Actually, people with disability need help with many tasks. Needing help always creates an imbalance in power that can be exploited. Yet, many people need help with their accounting. That does not mean any accountant (or even many) will exploit their need to be helped. But while fraud is a criminal offence, ableist language or making fun of people with disabilities, shunning them, giving them no jobs or good education, is - to a degree - socially accepted. A man making fun of disabled people and using ableist slurs on a daily basis can even get elected as the president of the United States.

How we are dealing with othering and power imbalance is cultural and social.

Those with no knowledge or experience with disabilities also don't know how to act.

They forget that you are a person first, and you just happen to have a disability that can create handicaps in your life. They just don't know what to do, oftentimes. They aren't sure whether to offer you assistance or if that might make you angry because here is a stranger assuming you can't do something for yourself just because you have a disability. Some people think that disabilities affect others in other ways like just because someone can't communicate like "normal" (for lack of a better term) people do, that they're somehow less intelligent... or that because someone is visually impaired, the rest of their senses are like superpowers. Also, older generations will treat you differently from newer generations because of how disabilities were viewed before 1965 versus nowadays. There is still a lot of progress to be made on full inclusion within the educational system, but at least now, children with disabilities aren't hidden away in institutions. This means that younger generations grow up together, disabled and non-disabled, and learn that they are all the same, some with different, specialized needs.

It takes education. I would say that you need to educate those around you. Some may be afraid to insult you, and some may be afraid because they don't know what's wrong with you. Open yourself up to those people who are curious. Invite them to ask questions, to educate themselves. Let them know how you want to be treated. Your limitations are, so they know when to assist you and when you shouldn't need it unless you ask. The more they know, the less "scary and unknown" you and your disability become.

If you ever see someone making fun of a disabled person, stick up for the victim, most of the time, they can't or won't fight back, sometimes they won't even understand. Think of yourself in their shoes, would you like to constantly be stared at and/or bullied? Of course not.

(The writer is a veteran journalist and freelance writer based in Brampton)

■ DR. PARVEEN KUMAR

Rightly called the devastating drug addiction menace as a national pain by Prime Minister of the country Narendra Modi, the menace is spreading its tentacles in every nook and corner of the country. India has now taken over from China as the most populous country of the world, but with the advantage that the country has largest no. of youth population. Youth is an asset for any country whose energy when channelized in a positive way can contribute to the progress of the nation. Unfortunately, in our country the youth is increasingly getting addicted to drugs. It is the tragedy of our days that millions of youths, the future citizens of India, fall victims to the habit of taking drugs. These addicted people are on the way to the steady and sure death. This social evil affects an individual as well as nation as a whole. Several states have high rates of drug use, including Punjab where nearly 75% of youth are addicted. A government survey found children as young as 9 are using drugs in Delhi. Every day India witnesses 10 suicides related to drug abuse.

What is drug addiction? Drug addiction refers to the condition of being addicted to a particular drug, particularly narcotic drugs. The most disturbing thing about drug addiction is that people in different countries of the world are becoming addicted to all kinds of drugs. Drug addiction is basically a brain disease that changes the functioning of brain. There is an uncontrollable desire to consume drugs, as a result of which addicted people engage in compulsive behaviour to take drugs. The addicts find it impossible to control the intake of drugs, as a result of which they fail to fulfill day-to-day responsibilities in an efficient manner.

Different Types of Drugs: There are different types of street drugs such as Cocaine, Heroin, Marijuana, Cannabis, Opiates and others. Heroin is one of the most dangerous drugs that suppress our heart's work. Drug addiction is referred as drug dependency, as the addict develops dependency for a particular substance.

Symptoms of Drug Addiction: These affect the mood and behaviour of a person. Those who are addicted to drug taking lose quickness of mind, sense of friendliness, warmth and social awareness. In the long run, they suffer from false beliefs with always being in an unorganized and agitated violent behaviour. They also develop tendency to commit suicide. Mostly the youth residing in hostels fall easy prey to drug addiction. Drug addiction may also have long term impact on life and one may develop severe symp-

■ G L KHAJURIA

Amidst lush green forest of deodar and other pines around 125 kms from Jammu and 19 kms from Patnitop is located Sanasar a wonder of wonders. This picturesque spot is akin to Gulmarg of Kashmir for its enchanting beauty, grandeur and glory where tourists in thousands throng in during peak summer spells for having a sigh of relief away from soaring temperature as well as to enjoy the dazzling natural beauty of this resort. Though the road lifeline from Patnitop to Sanasar is rugged and rough and is having serpentine twists and turns, yet the tourist inflow is ever-increasing year after year. The road link calls for improvement for the convenience of tourists influx. Even during winter, the tourists influx is undoubtedly unbridled and the visitors throng in heavy numbers to enjoy and cherish snowfall, when Kud, Patnitop, Batote and the areas in and around the vicinity is heavily snow-capped so much so that the National Highway oft-repeatedly gets blocked.

'Sanasar' is situated around 9500 feet from sea level and is termed as mini-Gulmarg of Kashmir. The picturesque spot is lapped all round with mystique of mystiques, bountiful engrossing lush greenery of pines, herbs, shrubs and abundant medicinal plants ranging from micro to macro flora coupled with the rich heritage of other flora and fauna. The natural springs yielding nectar-pious water are founheads at multihued places. Apart from scenic beauty, the place is a sanctum sanctorum from time immemorial as the land of 'Nag Rajas' in and around the vicinity of Sanasar itself et al 'Nag Raja' of Kasal is of immensive 'Shakti' where the visitors as well go for paying obeisance and obtain divine blessing. It is believed with oozing confidence that wishes made before 'Nag Raja' are fulfilled, though the photography of the temple and that of inside is strictly prohibited. These are miracles of 'Divine Shakties' in the modern age of most advanced Science and Technology (the writer has had his own experience, though not narrate able). At the peak of Patnitop enroute Batote, there is another 'Devsthan' (Shank Paul Shakti Devta) temple and is having equilising 'Shakti'.

Much water has flowed down Chenab; but ironically this picturesque spot has been least bothered for its developments. A short stretch of 19 kms that links Sanasar with Patnitop is in a very dilapidated condition. You cannot call it a pacea or a kacha road. The locals are deprived of the basic amenities, particularly when it is a heavy snowfall when the road remains cut off for days together and the electric supply creates the same sort of situation. This ever green cushioned spot is really a piece of heaven, the more you praise the less it is!! Sanasar

Drug Abuse: A National Pain



toms such as fatigue, trembling, depression, anxiety, headache, insomnia, chills and sweating, paranoia, behavior changes, dilated pupils, poor coordination problems etc.

A lot of people do not realize the damage caused by drug addiction because the short term effects are not apparent at first. The individual may feel quite invincible and unaware that drugs can actually affect almost every system in the body. The long lasting effects of drug addiction may not be known to the addict. If treatment is not sought in time, the physical and emotional health of that person will deteriorate.

Why peoples take to drugs? People usually take to drug abuse in order to curb the stress caused due to the family issues, pressure at work, growing competition in schools and colleges, relationship problems, financial issues or feeling of emptiness. Youths usually get involved in this out of curiosity or due to pressure from their peer group. Besides, it can also be a genetic problem. Whatever be the reason, it is essential to understand that drug abuse is a serious concern for not only for the addict but for all of us.

Drug abuse in Jammu And Kashmir: In recent years Jammu and Kashmir in India has seen an increase in the drug use. The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment in 1923 conveyed to the Parliament of India that approximately 14 lakh drug users are estimated to be in Jammu and Kashmir, with the majority falling within the age range of 18 to 75 years. The breakdown includes approximately 5.4 lakh individuals abusing opioid, 4.20 lakh using alcohol, 1.4 lakh consuming cannabis, and 1.35 lakh inhaling substances. As per a survey carried out by the Jammu and Kashmir administration last year;

over 52,000 individuals in Kashmir acknowledged their heroin usage. According to statistics compiled by the J&K government, in 2023 alone, 11,476 patients visited various drug de-addiction centres across J&K seeking treatment and counseling to combat substance abuse.

Findings revealed that, on average, a user spent approximately 88,000 rupees (\$1,063.54; £860) per month to sustain their drug habit. In Kashmir Division, the condition is also going from bad to worse. A 2022 study by the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences IMHANS, in Srinagar, observed an exponential rise in substance abuse in the Kashmir Valley. In 2023, a study conducted by this institute also revealed that the prevalence of Hepatitis C among drug abusers in Kashmir is 72 percent. The institute received 150 drug addiction cases per day. It also found that over 33 thousand syringes are being used daily for heroin injections. In the age group of 10 to 17 years, an estimated 1, 68, 700 children in Jammu and Kashmir are involved in drug use. The substances being used by these children include Cannabis, Opioid, Sedatives, Cocaine, Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS), inhalants, and Hallucinogens.

How to make Drug free society: It is wise to stay away from it. Those who are already a victim to this menace can seek expert guidance to overcome it. Proper medication, support from loved ones and strong will power can take one out of the dark world of drug abuse. The treatment for drug abuse is extended over a long period so as to ensure that the problem does not relapse. One of the key remedial measures is education. Schools and colleges should take the lead in educating students about the negative effects of

drugs and alcohol. Educational institutions should 2organize workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns that discuss the harmful impact of addiction on physical and mental health, relationships, and society as a whole. The stigma attached to addiction often discourages people from seeking help. To overcome this, it is necessary to create a supportive environment that encourages individuals to come forward and seek help.

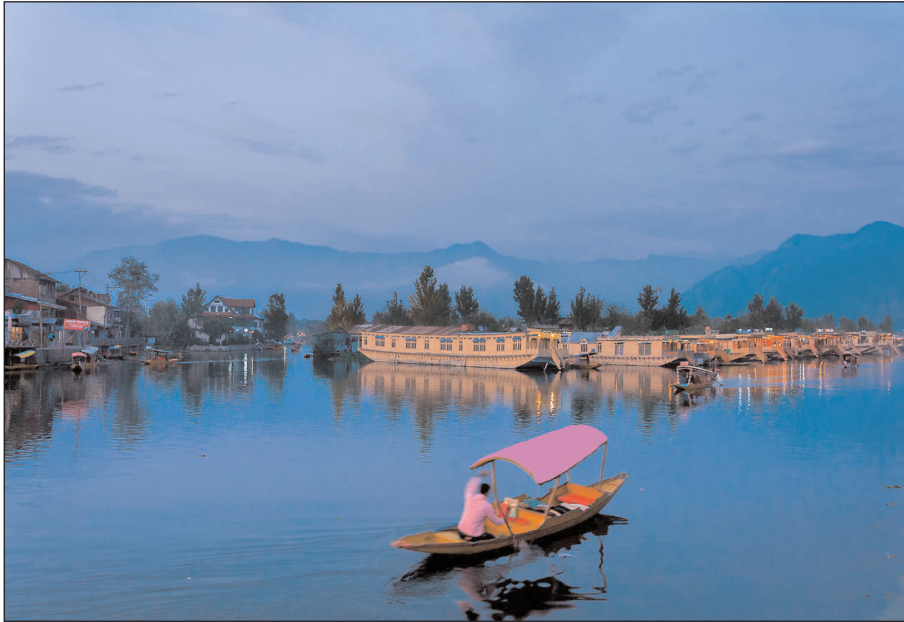
It is also essential to have strict laws and regulations in place to curb the production, distribution, and consumption of drugs and alcohol. The government can impose heavy taxes on such products, make it difficult for people to obtain them, and enforce stringent laws that deter individuals from engaging in these activities. Law enforcement agencies should work closely with community members to identify and address drug-related issues in their neighborhoods.

In conclusion, creating an India as dreamt by Gandhi requires a collective effort from all members of society. We need to recognize the dangers of addiction and take proactive steps to prevent it from becoming a widespread problem. By raising awareness, creating a supportive environment, and implementing strict laws and regulations, we can build a society that is free from the negative effects of drugs and alcohol.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has prepared a National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction for the period 2018-25. The plan focuses on Preventive education, Awareness generation, treatment and rehabilitation of drug dependent persons and training and capacity building of service providers through collaborative efforts of government and Non Government Organizations. A National centre for Drug Abuse Prevention has also been set up by the National Institute of Social Defence to provide technical support to the government on policies relating to substance abuse prevention and providing services for substance demand reduction. This centre also carries out programmes for capacity building and training personnel of de-addiction centres. June 26 every year is celebrated as International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking to generate awareness among the masses regarding the harmful effects of drugs. As the country is making all out efforts to weed out the menace of drugs, let us become a part of Nasha Muk্ত Bharat campaign since the evil can be eradicated from the society only with people's participation.

(The author writes on agriculture and social issues)

Sanasar- Serene and Scenic the wonder of beauty



meadow is a green carpet like ground and cushioned by silky soft grasses that glorify the resort. Add to it the small brilliant, refreshing fragrant flowers which add to the beauty of the spot. To lay to rest on this green meadow carpet is too comfortable and enchanting then that of confining oneself in the adjoining rooms constructed by various departments.

'Sanasar, over the years was a marvelous lake like that of ' Sruinsar' and 'Mansar' of Jammu district but ironically now stands dried almost due more to the seapage for the last around 60 years or so. However, as per estimates the lake had encompassed around 2500 kanals with its outer peripheral circumference rounding some 6 kms or so. The area was and is subjected to encroachment but the forest Department associated with revenue Department and law enforcing agencies are on the high and active surveillance to thwart any attempt to have an evil eye over the picturesque spot. In the version of L.P Rai (the then Addl. Dy commissioner, Ramban) thatas far as in the year 1992, he chanced upon to interact with the then, Director, Geology and Mining Department along with GREF agencies to survey the area and evolve strategy workable to restore to its pristine grandeur and glory and to analyze the root cause of its shrinkage and de-silting and in their ultimate analysis opined that the subtle cause being underground water flow down below Nashri Nallah, barely 8 kms on foot through the forest linking NH-1A. Further it was established that there are as many as nine springs underneath this Sanasar lake and at the same time, it was apprehended that lifting of silt to the extent of 20-25 feet may cause holocaustic consequences to the local inhabi-

tants together with their cultivated lands as well. The specialist further emphasized that the government should approach to the expert deptt. with enough expertise for the construction of a wall around 20 feet in the length and 8 feet in width and only then the silt of the lake can be lifted to bring back this heritage to its pristine beauty and grandeur. The survey together with workable strategy remained as a hanging fire till date.

There is an astonishing legend that it that the farmers of the locality were once ploughing the field in the vicinity of Sanasar lake and they took a break for the lunch leaving the oxen aside. In the meanwhile, a Sadhu appeared on the scene and he advised the farmers to yoke the oxen so that they may also graze and take rest. Instead, they aguishly said, "Who are you to advise us for yoking oxen? Within moments, the Sadhu eluded and it is said that a calamitous storm with whirlwind engulfed the sky coupled with whimper cloudburst which struck the area and everything swept away along with the farmers and oxen so yoked.

People of the locality and those of faraway places come to this temple for paying obeisance and obtain blessings from "Chouncer Nag Devta"- a miracle of miracles. Manzoor Ahmed Forest Guard posted at Sanasar forest has had a holy Darshan-of 'Nag Devta' while being on its routine movement in the forest- A nine feet long "Nag" with hairy skin.

The sacred temple of Nag-Devta of Sanasar is visited twice in a year in the form of Yatra and of which one is vegetarian and is celebrated with the offerings of sweet rice, whereas the other is non-vegetarian which is celebrated by the sacrificial of goat and is offered to the 'Nag Devta' . Two Bhandaras

are also held every year. Though many may not believe, but truthfulness and sanctity exists on the hilly areas of Sub-Himalayan regions like Bhaderwah, Kishtwar, Dudu, Basantgarh, Kud, Patnitop, Billawar, Bani, Basohli and many of its pious areas adjoining the state of Himachal Pradesh. During Governor rule in 1990 , a nine point gulf course plan was earmarked for Sanasar which too remained in the offing and till date there is no let up.

Some Suggestions: Improvement of road: A short stretch of 19 kms linking the road with Patnitop warrants improvement. This is pertinent in view of the present scenario as the soil texture is good and with black topping of this rough road is the need inviting government attention and allied agencies coupled with maintenance of side drains for disciplined outflow of water during weather conditions and even otherwise also this is the major bottleneck and once a healthy lifeline is established, this shall boost and ameliorate tourist influx.

*Beautification of The Road Link (Patnitop, Sanasar) Plantation of ornamental trees, shrubs alongside road link on the either side at equidistance shall expurgate the beauty of spot.

*De-silting of the lake area: This is necessary and demanding too, to restore back the lake area to its pristine grandeur and glory. This is no longer a single agency show but many departments al Geological and survey forest , soil conservation and other allied agencies connected with the restoration and reclamation need to be associated with to chalk out workable strategy for the formation of lake which will not only enhance the beauty spot for the preservation of the spot which is of a National Heritage.

*Development of meadows and golf course: The half way left over idea warrants proper shaping now onwards for years to come and here too many agencies shall to be associated with to chalk out workable strategies so as to attract the golf enthusiasts not only from the state but from India and abroad.

Accommodation: The tourism, the forest and allied departments have magnificently raised hutments to accommodate visitors, which do not demand its further exaggeration, else it would disfigure the beauty of spot .However, ' view points' on isolated spots shall further add beauty and grandeur to the area which are warranted to be constructor for the children to have an overview picture of the spot and its surroundings so may feel fascinating.

Mini-Creation Park: A mini re-creation park shall provide enchanting spell to the children and little kids who live in their own world. It shall as well feast and boost their excitements and merry making.

(The author is Former Dy. Conservator of Forest, J&K)