

THE KASHMIR

CONNECT

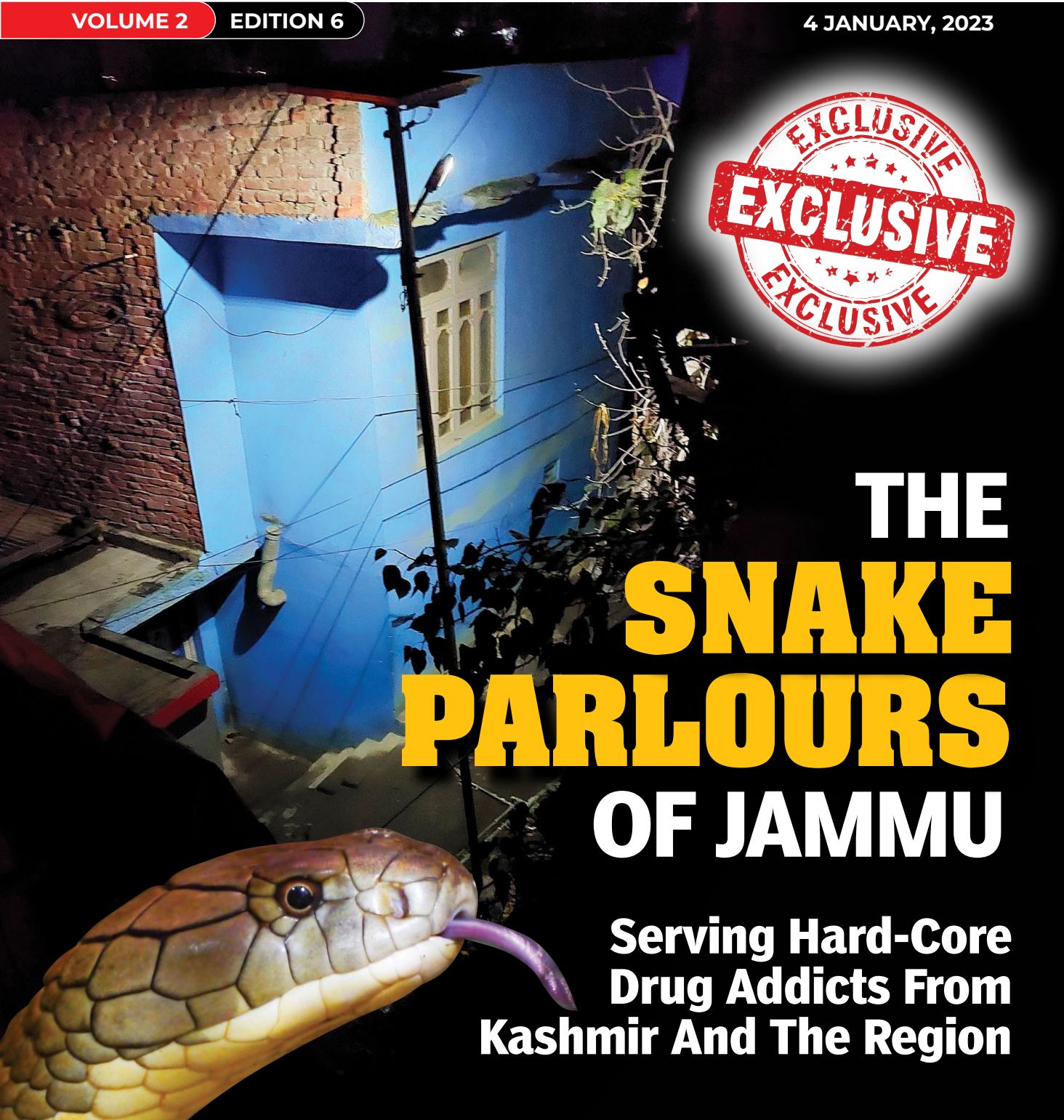
VOLUME 2

EDITION 6

4 JANUARY, 2023



**Menace Across
North India,
Cases At PGI
Chandigarh**



THE SNAKE PARLOURS OF JAMMU

**Serving Hard-Core
Drug Addicts From
Kashmir And The Region**



THE **KASHMIR**
CONNECT

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

We Shall Overcome

The attack in Jammu has jolted us. Pakistan is evidently disturbed by growing peace and prosperity in Kashmir. The Rajouri attacks are a clear attempt by Pakistan to target Hindus and create communal hate against Kashmiri Muslims.

We have carried this burden of communal hate on our back for far too long. It is time to shake off this monster and finish it. My heart cries for the victims of the savage attack in Jammu. In these times when the mind is disturbed by the Rajouri attacks, it shall be wise to remember the sage words of J&K LG Shri Manoj Sinha, published by The Indian Express on January 2. Shri Sinha said, "Even Valley people have been martyred. Don't look at killings on the basis of religion."

These words are a reminder of the values which must drive us. Pakistan wants Kashmiri Muslims working elsewhere in the country to be targeted as

an expression of anger against the attacks in Rajouri. If we fall into this trap, we shall serve Pakistan's interests.

It is important to remember that the terror ecosystem in Kashmir is shrinking. The number of active terrorists is now below 100. The Kashmiri people are working with the government and with the security forces to achieve these positive results.

The government's clear-cut policy of 'Don't Touch The Innocent, Don't Spare The Guilty' is yielding results. In each district, there is emphasis on good governance. I keep coming across instances of the DCs and SSPs of each district personally driving government policy with honesty and conviction.

In these testing times, let us stand together and remember the song that has inspired generations. We Shall Overcome..

GAYATRI MOHAN

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(HONORARY ROLE ONLY)

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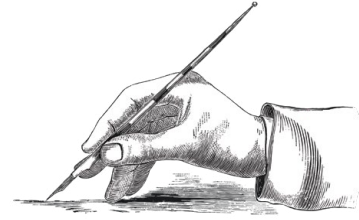
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THE KASHMIR CONNECT

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FROM THE DESK OF THE DEPUTY EDITOR

ABIDA WAR

KHOON KAHAN TAK BHAVALO GAY KAB TAK FALAK KO ROLAVO GAY KAH DOE ZARA AE ZALIMO KAB TAK INSANIYAT KO MITAVO GAY

My heart cries for the innocent people who died and who were injured at the recent barbaric attacks in Rajouri. The killers who attacked them claim to be acting in the name of the Kashmiris. They claim that they are militants representing the people of Kashmir.

No. This is not true. Across Kashmir, simple men and women were shocked at the inhuman attacks in Rajouri. These militants don't represent us. All across Kashmir, men and women are sitting with heavy hearts. They are saying – Not In My Name. Not In Our Name.

Let this message reach Pakistan. Let this message reach the militants. Let them hear the voices of the people who are saddened by the brutality at Rajouri. No. We don't accept this. These militants don't represent us.

The accompanying photograph is of October 2021. I have used this symbolic photograph because



this is what our hearts are crying out. Stop these mindless killings.

Pained by the attack, my heart cried out, *Khoon Kahan Tak Bahavo Gay*. Do these militants think that they shall be successful? No. Humanity and goodness shall always soar high. We, the people of India stand against this barbaric attack. We shall fight these toxic forces together Inshallah.

(Deputy Editor Ms Abida War has an honorary position with The Kashmir Connect)



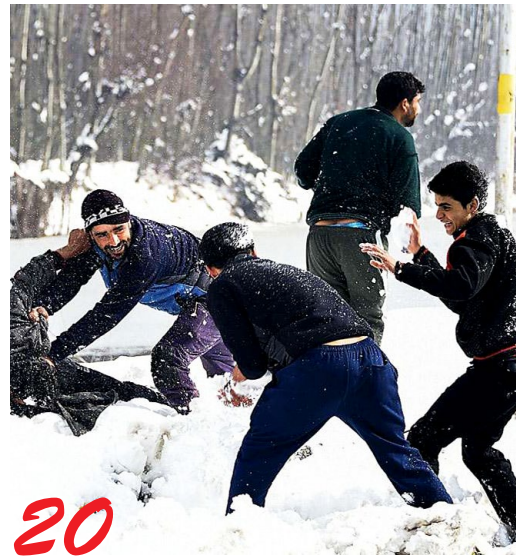
06



09



17



20

CONTENTS

06 | Why We Are Not
Revealing Location Of
The Snake Parlour

By Gayatri Mohan

08 | Drugs se Kashmir ka
kitna youth barbad ho
raha hai

By Al Muneeb Lone

16 | Snakebites For Drugs
High Is A Khatarnak
Network

By Sheikh Mudasir Hussain

20 | Yahan ke youth ko ho
kya gaya hai?
Ye generation kahan ja
rahi hai?

By Latief Geelani

23 | From Teenage Smoking
To Drugs, It's A Short
Road

By Misba Yousuf

WHY WE ARE NOT REVEALING LOCATION OF THE SNAKE PARLOUR

It Is To Safeguard Our Team From The Drug Mafia

by **Gayatri Mohan**

A few days ago, we saw a shocking news report on Kashmir's social media. The report said that Kashmir has left behind Punjab in drug abuse and is in the second slot after North East in terms of drug abuse. The report was based on a study conducted by the Psychiatry Department of Government Medical College. It said that heroin is used most commonly by addicts.

In a discussion over this news report, our Staff Correspondent Al Muneeb Lone said hard-core addicts had gone beyond the usage of heroin. He spoke about his childhood friend Mubashir

Mir of Baramulla who had been taking drugs for over six years. Heroin and other substances could not give him the kick that he sought.

Mubashir was then 21. He heard of the highly venomous snakebite high offered by the drug mafia in Jammu, and went to get it. The snakebite killed him.

It is said that a large percentage of drug addicts who seek snakebite high are not able to survive it. Some Kashmiri drug addicts who survived snakebite high but developed complications have taken admission at rehabilitation centers across the Valley.

Kashmir Connect Consulting Editor Sheikh Mudasir and Muneeb went to Jammu to investigate this deadly intoxication. Mudasir was able to procure the photograph of a house which some youngsters said used to serve as a snake parlour.

The youngsters who helped him procure the photograph are petrified of the drug mafia. They feel that their safety and also Mudasir's safety will be at risk if the location of the house and the operational area of the drug mafia is revealed. The house is in a low income group area, but it is protected by aggressive dogs and a CCTV network.

We are not revealing the location of the house or the major operational areas of the drug mafia to safeguard our team. Our objective is to save young blooming boys and girls from drugs consumption, and to caution them to protect themselves.

Snakebite High Services Common In North India, Cases Reach PGI

Jammu is not alone in offering snakebite high services. It is part of a wide network of these activities.

In 2018, addiction and toxin specialists at PGI Chandigarh studied two men who were addicted to snake venom for recreational purposes. The case history of the duo was published in the Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine. It was titled 'Snake venom use as a substitute for opioids: A case report and review of literature'.

In November 2021, National Center for Biotechnology

Information-National Institutes of Health (NCBI-NIH) of the US Government published a research study. It stated, "Even though the practice of snake venom addiction is relatively common in the Indian subcontinent, there are very few cases reported in the scientific literature".

The report also mentioned some cases where drug addicts had resorted to the bites of snakes in order to obtain the high sensation.

The incidence seems to be increasing. A larger number of people with substance abuse disorders are now seeking snakebite highs. This may have multiple negative repercussions for the society.

WHY SNAKEBITE HIGHS ARE OFFERED IN JAMMU, AND NOT KASHMIR

There seems to be logic behind why the circulating and mobile snakebite high services are offered in Jammu, and not in Kashmir. The temperature in Kashmir remains cold for most of the year. Rain is frequent. Even during summer or monsoon, the temperature can drop significantly if it rains for a day or more.

Snakes become sluggish when temperature drops below 16° C. In order to survive at this temperature, the snake slows down its body functions. Such a snake will not be active enough to bite and inject its venom. This is the reason why those who provide snakebite high services to hardcore addicts prefer to operate from Jammu



by Al Muneeb Lone

Staff Correspondent
The Kashmir Connect

Drugs se **Kashmir ka** **kitna youth** **barbad** ho **raha hai**

I am 22 years old. By this age, I have seen ki Kashmir ka kitna youth barbad ho raha hai. Their future is being destroyed by drugs.

Earlier, the future of 50 per cent of our youth was destroyed by Pakistan and Hurriyat. Now the number of those destroyed by Pakistan has gone down relatively. But our society is fighting with another curse. Now, drugs are destroying a large section of our youth.

It is not just the boys who are falling prey to drugs. Now, frequently on social media we get videos of Kashmiri girls also who are taking heroin, cocaine, brown sugar etc.

I was born in Kashmir, I have been brought up here.

It is with reason that I bring to you the story of my dear friend Mubashir. He was my friend from childhood, my yaar. But when we were about 14 years old, his drugs journey began. I tried to stop him but he did not agree. That is when I distanced myself from him.

Mubashir had dreams for himself. He wanted to be a successful professional, gain some experience and join his father in business some day. When I and some friends made a group for network marketing in 2019. Mubashir joined our group in 2020. We couldn't do much because of Covid. And Mubashir slowly separated from us because his journey into drugs became more severe.

My heart cries for my childhood friend and his poor parents, who have been left behind. In the pages that follow,



Earlier, the future of 50 per cent of our youth was destroyed by Pakistan and Hurriyat. Now the number of those destroyed by Pakistan has gone down relatively. But our society is fighting with another curse. Now, drugs are destroying a large section of our youth

you will read his story. I pray that vulnerable children and youth who are falling into the cesspool of drug abuse are cautioned by Mubashir's story and they stay away from this curse. May the Almighty give them wisdom and protect them all. Ameen

The Story Of Mubashir Mir Of Baramulla

At Age 21, **Mubashir** **Died** of **Snakebite** at Jammu, Taken For **Drug High**

by Al Muneeb Lone

From my childhood, I had a . His name was Mubashir. He also lived in Baramulla. He hailed from a rich family of our town. His father was a government contractor with a flourishing business.

When we were in Class 8, Mubashir started taking Cool Lip. He used to keep it in his mouth, within his lip. I asked Mubashir what is this? Why have you started taking it?

Mubashir Mir
Born 2001
Died Jan 2022

Everything Nice



Mubashir with his friends who formed a networking business group in 2020

He used to take drugs in his arms, in his feet. He told me what whichever place he used to inject drugs in his body, it used to get burnt. I was shocked to learn that at times, he used to take drugs in his private parts also. He was so far gone, I didn't know what to say to him

He said to me, *is se mera dimag thanda rehta hai*. I am able to think and concentrate. I still remember the words that he used. *Mujhe is se full tower aate hain*. He was talking in terms of full mobile phone towers. I got to know later that Cool Lip is a tobacco product.

Mubashir Became Chain Smoker, Started Using Drugs at Age 15

Within six months, Mubashir became a chain smoker. In Class 9, our teacher told the

other boys to stay away from Mubashir. He said that if you stay in Mubashir's company, he will spoil your future also.

By Class 10, Mubashir was not content with smoking. He started using weed. He started moving around with boys who used to take bhang. I think they used to visit the jungles near our town. For about one and a half years, Mubashir used bhang.

Mubashir was in Class 12 when he started taking heroin. For many years, I had been very sad to see what was happening to my . He became very thin, very weak.

Drug Injections Used To Burn His Body Parts

Mubashir always used to get a good amount from his father as pocket money. He was the only son, with an elder sister. When his father came to know that he was taking drugs, his father

stopped giving him money.

But by this time, Mubashir was a drug addict. He stole the gold of his mother and sister from his house and sold it to buy drugs. Heroin, brown sugar, cocaine – he started taking all these things. I used to meet him in the town sometimes. I used to feel very sad for him. But his friends circle was different now. He used to move around with drug peddlers and drug addicts.

Once, I was in Baramulla town when I saw Mubashir. I spoke to him, I enquired about his well-being. Mubashir said that he was heavily into drugs. He told me that he had about 5 lakh rupees, but he used all of it for taking drugs. He used to take drugs in his arms, then in his feet. He told me what whichever place he used to inject drugs in his body, it used to get burnt. I was shocked to learn that at times, he used to take drugs in his private parts also. He was so far gone, I didn't know what to say to him.

Those friends who were still in touch with Mubashir told me that he used to lie to his parents. He used to tell them that he is going for overnight religious prayers. His parents used to tell him, it is good that you are praying so that you are protected and saved. But Mubashir didn't go for prayers. He used to go to Srinagar to have drugs all night with his friends.

Jan 2022, Mubashir Went To Jammu For Snakebite High

In January 2022, Mubashir told

his parents that he was going to Jammu in connection with some academic activity. He was just 21 years old at that time. But again he had lied to his parents. Mubashir had told his friends in Baramulla that heroin, cocaine etc were no longer giving him a high.

He told his friends here that he was going to Jammu for snakebite. He had learnt from someone that snakebite was a high kind of nasha. It would give him a high. Mubashir was very thin and weak by now. But he was ready to do anything to get a high. During this time, I was studying in Punjab. Sometimes some of our common friends used to speak about Mubashir.

So Mubashir went to Jammu to get a snakebite. He wanted to test whether snakebite would give him a high. Some friends later told me that he paid Rs 10,000 or Rs 12,000 for a snakebite.

They told me that getting

bitten by deadly and poisonous snakes to get a high was common in some circles in Jammu. But only about 10 per cent of those who took snakebite survived it. I wonder if anybody told Mubashir that chances of survival were 10 per cent only. I wonder if he even cared about it.

Snakebite Drug High Killed My Childhood Friend

Later I learnt that immediately upon getting the snakebite, Mubashir became unconscious. The boys panicked. They didn't know how to revive him. The boys said that his eyes bulged out. Foam kept coming out of his mouth. His tongue also got hard and came out of his mouth. The boys said that they tried to put his tongue back into his mouth but they were not able to do so.

The boys were still panicked by his condition. They got him back to his house in Baramulla.



Immediately after the snakebite, Mubashir became unconscious. The boys didn't know how to revive him. They said his eyes bulged out. Foam kept coming out of his mouth. His tongue also got hard and came out of his mouth. The boys tried to put his tongue back into his mouth but they were not able to do so

His family was totally shocked to see his condition. They did not know what was the cause. They took him to the hospital. His condition was like a terrible paralytic attack. After a few days, Mubashir died.

From our common friends, I learnt that the doctor who conducted the post-mortem on Mubashir said that the death was caused by severe poisoning. Some friends told me that according to the doctor, Mubashir *ka khoon jam gaya thha*. It was like blood stopped flowing in his body. His ears had gone black. His eyes had burst out. When his body was being prepared for the funeral, his eyes could not be closed.

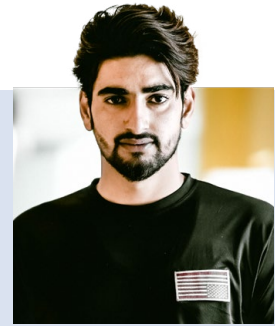
When Will The Curse Of Drugs End?

I cried and cried when I learnt what had happened to my dear friend in the end. Once I had

asked his sister, why didn't you stop Mubashir. She cried so much. She said that the family tried to stop him many times but he never listened to anyone. Mubashir's sister told me that he sold off her gold for his drugs. He used to buy two syringes for Rs 4,000.

For a long time after Mubashir's death, his father was not in a sound state of mind. He was not able to carry on his business as a contractor. He finally had to close down that business. His father incurred huge losses. He had to sell his land and some other assets. He started a fruit business, but he is so grief-stricken after losing Mubashir that he is not able to run his business properly.

His death still saddens me. It is still painful for me to accept that Mubashir is no more. We had been distanced for years, but still he was my childhood friend, with whom I had played



Mr Al Muneeb Lone

I am a Staff Correspondent with The Kashmir Connect. I also work with Peace Awareness Foundation, an NGO at old town Baramulla. We run a free coaching centre for school children. I believe that we must show the right direction to Kashmir's youth and children. We have to inculcate in them a constructive and positive outlook on how to build their future, how to be responsible citizens and responsible children of their parents

as a boy. Those memories of the innocent Mubashir haunt me. We are not able to save so many Mubashirs of our society. They die because they are supplied drugs and they fall into the trap of addiction. When will this curse stop?

‘Jammu mein ye kaam achhi tarah se ho raha hai’

Snakebites For Drug High

After my childhood friend Mubashir died of snakebite taken for a drug high, I was stunned that people can do something so horrific for their addiction. In the last week of December 2022, I again visited Jammu to make enquiries for this news report.

This is what a youngster told me about snake bite addiction in Jammu. He said, “Jammu mein ye kaam achhi tarah se ho raha hai.” He meant that there is good demand and supply network for snakebite services in Jammu for high-intensity intoxication.

No Fixed Point For Snake Parlours

In Jammu, because of police pressure, there are no fixed points for snake parlours. The drug network knows that if a specific place is provided, police will take immediate action. Many times, those who seek drug addiction are picked up from some specific location. Then they are taken to some secretive place.

The suppliers put a large board in some room so that the addict cannot see who is on the other side. A hole is made in the board where the addict puts his tongue. A youngster told me that some addicts may get the bit in their finger or in their toe.

The supplier is on the other side with the snake. He keeps the snake's head close to the tongue of the addict.

The supplier hits the snake with a blunt object in such a way that the snake moves forth and bites the tongue of the addict. Online reports and research papers say that a hardened drug addict who is used to snakebite venom may experience a high for several days. But this addiction can easily kill a person.

Youth Arrange For Snakebites Even In Hostel Rooms

Many times, the youngsters arrange for snakebites in their hostel rooms.

Jammu is not the only place where snakebite is taken for getting a high. When I was

studying in Punjab, I heard youngsters talking of these snakebite services in Zirakpur, a bustling town adjoining Chandigarh. I heard of the snakebite services in Mandi Gobindgarh, where many professional colleges opened some years ago.

The snakebite services are offered and taken in a very secretive manner. Those who offer these services are experts in handling the snakes. They keep the snakes in controlled temperature boxes, so that the cold weather does not impact the snake.

I have heard among the youth that the snakes that they keep are highly venomous, like King Cobra or Black Mamba from Africa. I heard of Black Mamba snakes for the first time when I heard of these snakebite services.

The boys who have heard of these services told me that the snake is fed the liver of a sheep or a goat. This makes the snake strong, and it is able to produce more venom. Then these snake keepers earn more.

NOTES FROM THE VALLEY



FROM THE CONSULTING EDITOR'S DESK

SHEIKH MUDASIR HUSSAIN



Snakebites For Drugs High Is A *Khataarnak* Network

The Drug Mafias Of Jammu

In the cities and towns across Kashmir, drug consumption is high. Many drug peddlers have nexus with policemen or police officials at lower levels, usually at the level of the SHO or below.

The local people know about the drug peddlers of their area. When the locals know it, how

come the police don't know them? Why don't the police arrest them and initiate suitable action against them?

The drug menace in Jammu and Kashmir is acquiring very dangerous proportions. Police don't arrest the big fish in this game, who deal in the supply of drugs in large quantities. Police only arrest the small players.

From where is all this heroin, brown sugar, cocaine etc coming? Who is supplying it here? Who is supplying it further in other states of the country? If these banned circumstances can be smuggled, then perhaps arms and ammunition can be smuggled with equal ease.

Drugs Network Flourishing In Many Mohallas, Colonies

Over the last few years, I have been observing how our youth are getting sucked into the drug network in Kashmir. When I visited Jammu in December, I was shocked to see the tentacles of this network in many mohallas, colonies.

I had come to know at Baramulla that some drug addicts who have taken snakebite for high intoxication come to the rehabilitation centers for treatment, or they are brought by their families. When I visited Jammu in December, I came to know how deep the drugs network is.

Young men casually talk about drug gangs operating in many colonies and mohallas. Most of them were afraid to talk about the snakebite venom network for getting a high.



The youngsters said that this is a very high-profile network. Very dangerous people are associated with it.

Mostly, these snake parlours are not made available at any fixed location. They keep changing their location. They provide service to hard-core drug addicts who take snakebite venom to get a high state of intoxication. Enquiries reveal that these are addicts who have been taking heroin, brown sugar, cocaine etc for a long time. These substances don't give them a high. So they get into snakebite addiction.

Snakebites For A High Are Expensive, Very Few Survive It

The youngsters informed that the fatality rate of snakebite addiction is high. Drug addicts who are weak cannot withstand the toxicity of the snakebite and they die, said the youngsters.

The youngsters revealed that only high-profile rich clients

can afford regular snakebites for intoxication, since these are very expensive. A youth told me that an average addict cannot afford a snakebite, and he will not be able to survive it also. "Very few people survive this kind of intoxication. The people who take it usually have a strong financial background. They take very rich food and diet so that their body stays strong to be able to survive snakebite intoxication," informed a youngster.

The youths who took us to some of these locations where drugs gangs are operational were very scared. They said that taking a photograph of any site in this area is very dangerous. They didn't even want to talk about it.

The youngsters said that there is heavy intensity of drugs mafias in these mohallas. The house profiled on the cover is into drug dealing. There are trained dogs at the house. It has CCTV cameras to track movement around it and within the house.

SOME OF THE REASONS WHY YOUTHS BECOME DRUG ADDICTS

by Mr Sheikh Mudasir

Most of the youth who start consuming drugs are in the age group of 15 to 25. Over the years, I have come across many cases of youth who started consuming drugs and then they died.

I also interacted with many youngsters who took to drugs consumption. I asked them about why they started consuming drugs. I learnt that here were some common factors which drove a youngster to drug addiction.

Broken Bond With Parents, Family

Some drug addicts said that their bond with their parents broke for some reason. When family communication ends, the youth is vulnerable. He or she bonds with whoever comes close.

Lack Of Communication With Parents, Siblings

Some parents don't communicate regularly with their children. They don't come to know when the child is stressed, when he is in tension. They don't respect the child.


When the child is sad about something, the parents should

come to know. If the youngster feels that he is not loved, he feels lost. When there are gaps within family members, the youngster is drawn to whoever offers him support. Then such a person can also lead the youngster in a wrong direction.

Liberty Of Money

There are some parents who treat their child as a laadla all the time. They give him lots of pocket money and don't keep track of where the child used the money. But in the world, there are many toxic people who are happy to prey upon youngsters or children who have lots of money. In their bad company, the child becomes habitual of seeking pleasure.

Sometimes such children



cross the limit of pleasure. I have seen many such cases where such children go astray. They become drug addicts.

Liberty Of Time

A child goes wrong when parents don't question him about when did he go out, when did he come back. Many times, parents are not aware of the friend circle of the child. If the son or daughter is not connected with the parent, then the child finds solace elsewhere. Parents don't keep nigrani, don't keep supervision, and that is a very dangerous thing.

Mostly middle and upper class children get caught in the trap of drugs. A poor man's son or daughter does not fall into this trap easily. Poor children have seen hardship. They know how to face tough times and challenges.

But many times, children of upper middle class or rich parents are brought up amidst excessive luxury. When these children face some challenge, they are unable to deal with it and start consuming drugs.

There are many elements in our society who provide free drugs to youngsters for some weeks to make them addicts. Once the youth becomes an addict, he is ready to beg, borrow or steal for his drug fix.

It is extremely sad that the system, the police have been unable to control this menace. Drug menace is a problem being faced locally, nationally and also internationally.

The drug menace in Jammu and Kashmir is acquiring very dangerous proportions. Police don't arrest the big fish in this game, who deal in the supply of drugs in large quantities. Police only arrest the small players

17-Year-Old Girls Seeking Drug De-Addiction

Recently I visited the drug de-addiction and rehabilitation center in Baramulla. I saw two girls there, aged about 17. They told the doctor that they have been taking drug injections for one and a half years. Then both decided to leave drugs, so they come to the rehabilitation center.

But there are many more girls who are ready to give up drugs, or who are not ready to reveal their addiction and seek treatment. Hence they stay in the same toxic circle of drugs.

Police must crack down on all the sources from where drugs are being supplied. If we don't take action against the source, this curse will continue.

At the drug de-addiction center, I met a woman from Watargam village near Handwara. She said that her son had sold off her gold and also his sister's gold to buy drugs. The woman said that now, she gets her son to the de-addiction center so that he can be treated. It is extremely sad that even at the de-addiction center, some low-level employees steal the medicines and sell it to the drug addicts in black.



Yahan ke youth ko ho kya gaya hai? Ye generation kahaan ja rahi hai?

by Mr Latief Geelani

**Our youth don't
have direction. That
is why they get into
wrong activities**

I feel sad to see that many youngsters of Kashmir seem to have no consciousness of the future. Youngsters from some other states are not confused like the youth of Kashmir. *Yahan ke youth fizool mein pareshan hain*

So often, I am pained to see the youth around me. They are not engaged in anything productive. Fortunately, there is still a small number of youth who get serious about studies. They get serious about studies, about academics or they begin something productive so that they are able to build their life, build their career.

Many of our brilliant boys and girls feel that they can't stay in the atmosphere that we have here. They go to other states.

Are The Youth Making Themselves Employable?

A large majority of our youth is not doing anything which will

build their life. They are not engaged with academics, or with sports, or learning any skills which will help them. We keep hearing the complaints about lack of employment. But how many of our youth are actually trying to make themselves employable?

The internet offers the youth so much scope for learning. Since the last three years, we don't have internet shutdowns also. Are the youth equipping themselves so that they gain employment, or they are able to start something of their own? But we all keep complaining that there is no employment.

Our youth don't have direction. That is why they get into wrong activities.

Yahan Ke Youth Fizool Mein Pareshan Hain

I feel sad to see that many youngsters of Kashmir seem to have no consciousness of the future. I have seen the youngsters from some other states. They are not confused like the youth of Kashmir. *Yahan ke youth fizool mein pareshan hain.*

Most of our youngsters rarely get involved in any gainful activities. Even if they have a family business, they will not get involved in it. Many of them get into drugs, or they get into guns. *Insaan pareshan hota hai. Yahan ke ladkon ko ho kya gaya hai. Ye generation kahan ja rahi hai?*

God helps those who help themselves. We all need to educate our youth that guns or heroin, brown sugar is not the solution. We all have to be

consistent with hard work, with patience we you want to achieve your goals.

We Need More Productive Campaigns For The Youth

We must seriously focus on the children who are in early teens or who are not teenagers yet. We have to tell them to focus on their development, on their responsibility towards the society and the nation. We have to take our society and nation forward. We have to produce scholars, scientists, mathematicians, musicians, thinkers.

The UT Administration must organize productive campaigns. We have to give direction to our youth. Many local neta do only bhashan baazi. They don't have any real roadmap for the youth. Our youth is vehla, whiling away their time.

They pick up charas, ganja. They pick up the gun. Drugs are cheap here. Everybody is getting into it. Some are users, some are suppliers. They think that drugs are life. Finally some of them end up saying – we will pick up the gun.

This is not how we are supposed to live. If you want to be king, you have to bring about positive changes in yourself to achieve what you want.

The Almighty has given us precious life. We must do something good with it. We haven't come only to make an Aadhar Card and one day leave this earth. We have to do some real good in life so that future generations remember us.

Pakistan Wants *Ki Yahan Ka Youth Charas Phoonkta Rahey, Azadi Azadi Karta Rahe*

Pakistan exploits our youth for their political benefit. If our youth study, they will be visionaries. They will become scientists, mathematicians, thinkers.

But Pakistan doesn't want that. Pakistan wants our youth to be engaged only with hartal, strike, stone pelting. The best way Pakistan can achieve this is if they keep our youth as fools who are not committed to anything constructive.

That is why Pakistan supplies drugs here. It is Pakistan's political policy. They want to paralyze the minds of the youth of Kashmir, so that they don't go towards education. They want ki yahan ka youth charas phoonkta rahey, azadi azadi karta rahe, hartal karta rahe.

I feel so happy and relieved when I see that that some of our youngsters are studying, or pursuing careers. Unfortunately, so many of them are taking charas, ganja. They have no vision, no ability to look at the future.

Now the mentality has become such. Take drugs, do pathar baazi. Our youth only want pleasure. They want hartals so that there are muft holidays and they can sit at home. Our children need counseling. They have to be told – you have to do something good in your life.

Why is Pakistan supplying charas here? So that they can keep telling our youth – tere par zulm ho raha hai, tu gun utha.



Mr Latief Geelani

I am Latief Geelani, a social and peace activist. I hail from Uri and I reside in Baramulla. I am the District Organiser and State Executive Member of the J&K Rehbar Taleem Teachers Forum

I work with local volunteer organizations like Student for Seva and J&K Women Empowerment Trust (JKWET)

I am a founding member of Panin Wath, an initiative by the Army in Baramulla for women's empowerment

I am an educationist. I organized the Tiranga Abhiyan Rally in Baramulla on 15 August, 2021. The rally was organized in the most sensitive areas of Baramulla district near the LOC

I was also part of the 100 feet Tiranga Rally from Gupkar Road to Lal Chowk in Srinagar on 15 August, 2022

I have organized many integrity sammelans with Kashmiri Pandit brothers. I try to stand by them in their pain and grief

On 26 January 2022, I conducted the Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan in adjoining areas

From Teenage Smoking To Drugs, It's A Short Road

by Ms Misba Yousuf

Staff Correspondent
The Kashmir Connect

A few days ago, I was talking to my cousin. She is in Class 7 and lives in Srinagar. I was asking her about her studies, about life. I was expecting that she will tell me of her studies and sports with her friends. I was shocked when she told me that some girls of her class smoke. They are only 12 years old!

This left me deeply disturbed. We expect 12-year-olds to be bothered about their studies, their games and gadgets. But at this tender age some of these children are smoking – even girls! If 12 year

olds can be smoking cigarettes, tomorrow in their late teens, they may start taking drugs.

Till now, we had heard that boys take to drugs. We had not anticipated that girls in our society will get into this cesspool. It is distressing that our children and youth are casually taking substances which can make them physically and mentally unstable. This is the reality of Kashmir, which we think is the land of the saints and pirs.

We need to wake up to the reality. Our youth and children are becoming prey for the curse of drugs.





THE YOUNG MAN WHO SNORTED DRUGS ON A BUS

by Ms Misba Yousuf

In December, I was coming in a bus from Srinagar to Baramulla. A young man, about 25 years old, sat on the seat next to me. He was continuously talking to someone on phone. He was talking in a strange manner. He did not seem to be in his senses.

When the bus reached near Baramulla, he said on the phone - I cannot come to the exact location where you are asking me to come, kyonki merey paas samaan hai. I was shocked. I thought perhaps he is saying that he has a gun. I felt very scared.

Till now, we had heard that boys take to drugs. We had not anticipated that girls in our society will get into this cesspool. It is distressing that our children and youth are casually taking substances which can make them physically and mentally unstable

Then he told the person on the phone – you please come and meet me halfway. Firstly, there is a police naka ahead. Second, merey baap ne mujhe paagal kiya hai. I have come out of the house secretly. My father is calling me again and again. I think my father has got suspicious that I use drugs.

Suddenly this man took out some bunched up aluminium foil from his pocket. There was some white powder in it. He did not bother that he is sitting in a bus full of people, and some of them are looking at him. He inhaled the powder as if he was sitting alone in that vehicle.

Watching him, I felt so panicked that I had goose bumps. I was shivering in fear. I thought that today, this man is taking drugs so casually in a full bus. Tomorrow, he can sexually harass a woman. He can even kill someone.

He got down at Khawaja Bagh. Many people in the bus were looking at his strange behaviour. I saw that two boys came on a motorbike and he went off with them.

The Disoriented Youth In My Class

I am currently teaching in a college in Srinagar. There is a boy in my class. He looks disoriented all the time. Sometime last month, I asked him aap kyon itne khamosh aur khoy khoy rehte ho. Aap class me kabhi participate kyon nahin karte. He said that Ma'am, I am disturbed due to some personal reasons.

Watching the youngster, I felt so panicked that I had goose bumps. I was shivering in fear. I thought that today, this man is taking drugs so casually in a full bus. Tomorrow, he can sexually harass a woman. He can even kill someone

I asked him, Where are your parents? He said that his parents are living in Australia. He stays here with his brother. I feel sad for him, because he seems to be in depression.

Parents play a very vital role in the upbringing of their children. They should not leave their children alone in this way. Then the children become vulnerable to many pressures, and they may adopt the wrong path or take drugs.

Need To Create Awareness

These are not just stories. These are ground realities. Every

individual needs to address these challenges facing our society.

We need to create awareness regarding why and how children fall prey to drugs. We need to make children aware about the risks that they face. We need to make parents aware that how their children can become victims of this cursed drugs network. It is not a healthy sign for a society that parents do not come to know that their child may be consuming drugs.



**NEED FOR
COLLECTIVE
RESPONSIBILITY**

We Need Action At Mohalla Level, Panchayat Level

by Ms Misba Yousuf

It is good to open drug de-addiction centers or rehabilitation centers. But before that, we must also have such awareness and counseling sessions at community centers at mohalla level, at Panchayat level.

We must start from our own neighbourhood. We must take the collective responsibility to identify whether there is any youngster in our own neighbourhood who has got involved in drugs. At least we all must take the responsibility for our own neighbourhood. We need to realize that once this problem reaches our neighbourhood, it can also reach our own house.

Sometimes, we see some incidents with our own eyes or we hear about them, on how our children are getting involved in youth. Such incidents make our soul shiver. Why is our youth getting into drug addiction so much? What is the reason that

they think drugs are the solution to the challenges that they are facing?

I have heard that drug peddlers identify such vulnerable people. They give drugs to them for free for a few days. After some days these people become dependent on drugs. We keep hearing on social media, on the news media channels or in the newspapers about the increasing drug menace. But have we ever tried to examine at ground level how many lives are being destroyed by this menace? Some real stories that I have seen myself or have heard of have shocked me that our society is being impacted so badly. It is tragic indeed.

The police should be very strict so that the supply of drugs can be controlled. We know that eradicating the drugs menace is a long process. It has many challenges. But it is not impossible.



Ms Misba Yousuf

I am Misba Yousuf. I hail from Baramulla. Currently I am working with the NGO Peace Awareness Foundation as a teacher. I have also worked as a teacher at Amar Singh College, Srinagar. I always wanted to be a teacher so that I can empower the society with education. Education empowers the society and strengthens the economy. I urge the youth of our society to teach poor children and build a positive chain. We must always serve the society and build happy, positive spaces

Why is our youth getting into drug addiction so much? What is the reason that they think drugs are the solution to the challenges that they are facing?



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