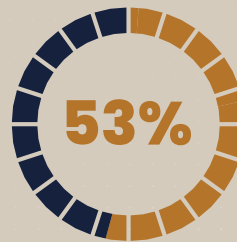


Drug use amongst juvenile detainees:

correlates of substance abuse
amongst under trial juveniles
in Sindh, Pakistan.



Pakistan is currently facing a massive rise in drug abuse particularly among the youth. A survey conducted by the South Asia Strategic Stability Institute concluded that



of the students in private schools were addicted to drugs.



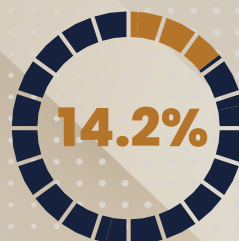
Juveniles across all the Youth Offenders Industrial Schools in Sindh make up



of the total prison population (Population Statement of Sindh Prisons, 15th March 2022).



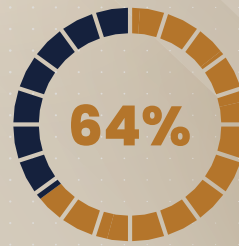
Of all the juveniles in YOIS across Sindh,



were imprisoned or are under trial for drug related crimes.¹

¹) The percentage of juveniles in drug related crimes was calculated by identifying the number of young offenders in each YOIS arrested for drug related crimes.

This ever-increasing rise in drug abuse is alarming for a country like Pakistan where youth (those aged under thirty) make up to



of the entire population (Ahmed et.al, 2020).

Little literature in Pakistan seeks to explore the social factors that correlate with drug abuse amongst juveniles, or the patterns/correlations between substance abuse and criminality amongst juveniles.



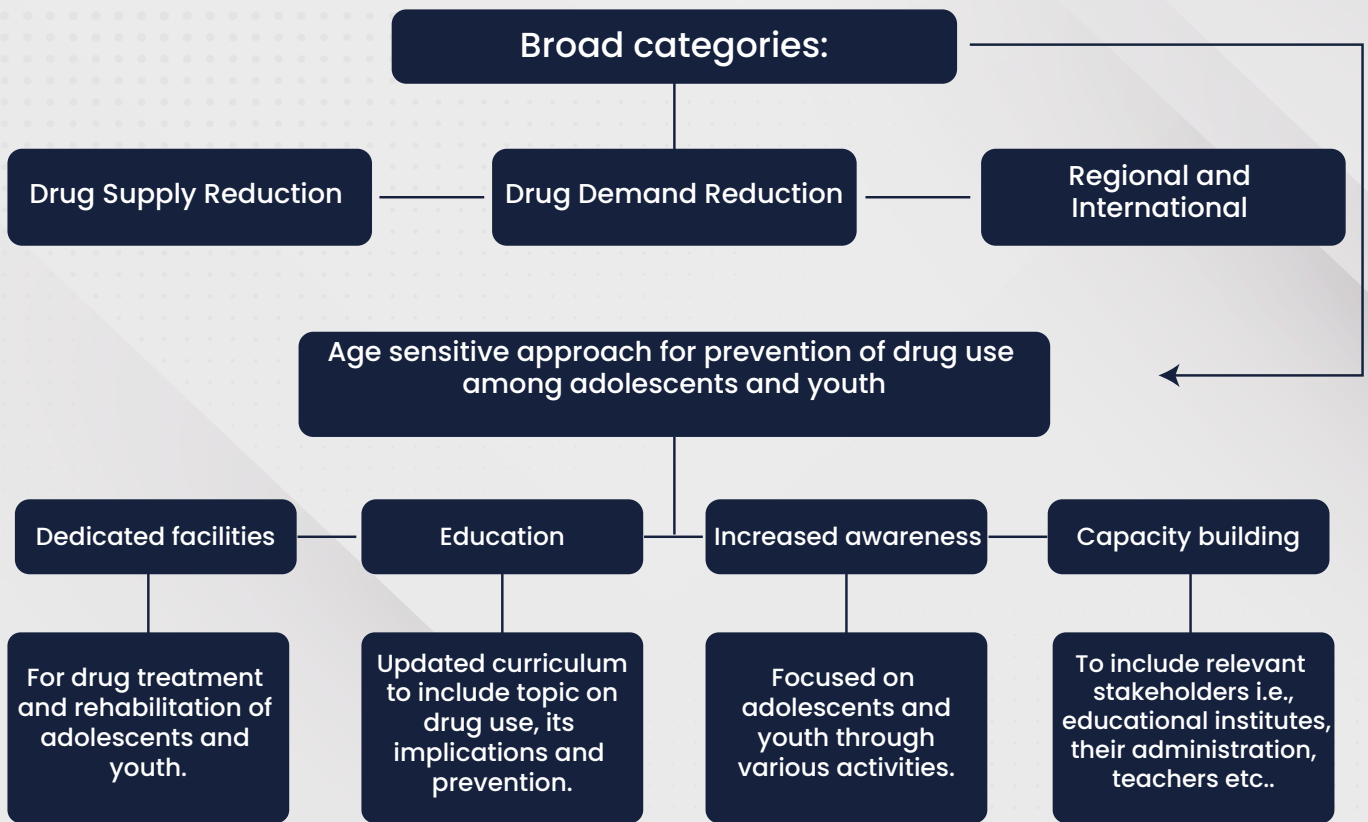
A large body of existing evidence suggests an intimate relationship between drug use and involvement in crime. Paul Goldstein proposed a conceptual framework to provide explanations for the connection divided into three categories: crime committed to support drug use, drug use leading to crime, and crime that occurs as a part of drug distribution and use (Bennett and Holloway, 2009).

Some other factors which are most commonly cited as contributing towards juvenile criminality are: broken homes, delinquent community environment, peer

influence, poverty and unemployment (Khurshid and Urooj, 2012).

There is a need for an enhanced understanding of the drug-crime relationship to identify patterns of delinquent and offending behavior to allow for better targeted interventions in the future. This brief examines data from the Case Management System maintained by the Legal Aid Office to explore patterns and correlations between drug use and criminality, and explore social factors which may have an impact on the use of drugs amongst juveniles.

Flow chart below summarizes general breakdown of the three categories of National Anti-Narcotics Policy 2019 to prevent drug use among adolescents and youth.



Age-sensitive approach taken by Anti-Narcotics Policy 2010 to reduce drug demand among youth.

Enhance demand prevention



Drug-free schools – through mass campaigns.



Curriculum against drugs.



Recreational facilities for youth.



Community mobilization and awareness campaigns.



Treatment centers for children.

Age-sensitive approach taken by Anti-Narcotics Policy 2019 to reduce drug supply and demand among youth.

Supply and demand reduction



Increased awareness and mobilization of youth.



Targeted drug prevention programs in educational settings.

Treatment, care, rehabilitation and social re-integration of drug addicts

Age-sensitive drug treatment, recovery, rehabilitation and re-integration services at all levels.

Increased number of age-sensitive drug treatment and rehabilitation centers in government hospitals.



Research Methodology

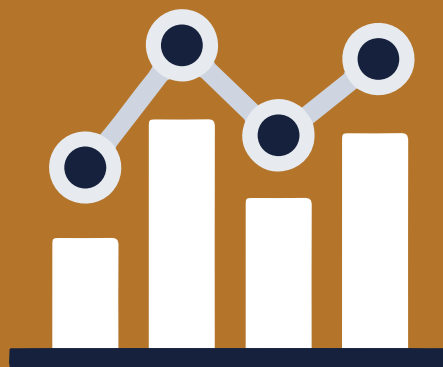


This study utilized a quantitative analysis of existing data on Under Trial Prisoners (UTPs) available on the Case Management System maintained by the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners - Legal Aid Office. For the purpose of this study,

data on young offenders (those under the age of 18 years) in Youth Offenders' Industrial Schools in Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Larkana from the year 2015 to 2022 was examined.



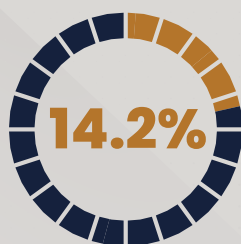
What our data suggests



Since the minimum age of conviction in Pakistan is **12 years**

for the purpose of this study all under trial prisoners who fell between age groups **12 to 17** were included. Data from 2,072 UTPs was examined and variables such as repeat offending, religion, and parental supervision were looked at.

Of the **2,072 juveniles**



were drug users. Drug use presented a positive relationship with repeat offending and absence of a father.

	 Using drugs	 Not Using drugs
Repeat offenders	 50%	 50%
First-time offenders	 25.99%	 74.01%

Table 1: Drug use and probability of repeat offences

Based on our findings, 50% of previously convicted young offenders reported drug use, compared to 25.9% of under trial prisoners who were convicted for the first time (refer to Table 1). Use of drugs and intoxicants show a significant and positive relationship with juvenile delinquency in Pakistan (Panzai et al., 2019). A recent survey conducted in District Jail Malir corroborates the close connection between drugs and crime.



The drug-crime link can be explained by Goldstien’s framework (Casavant and Collin, 2001). The framework particularly focuses on the following models to explain the link between drug use and criminality:

- (i) Psychopharmacological link
- (ii) Economic-compulsive link

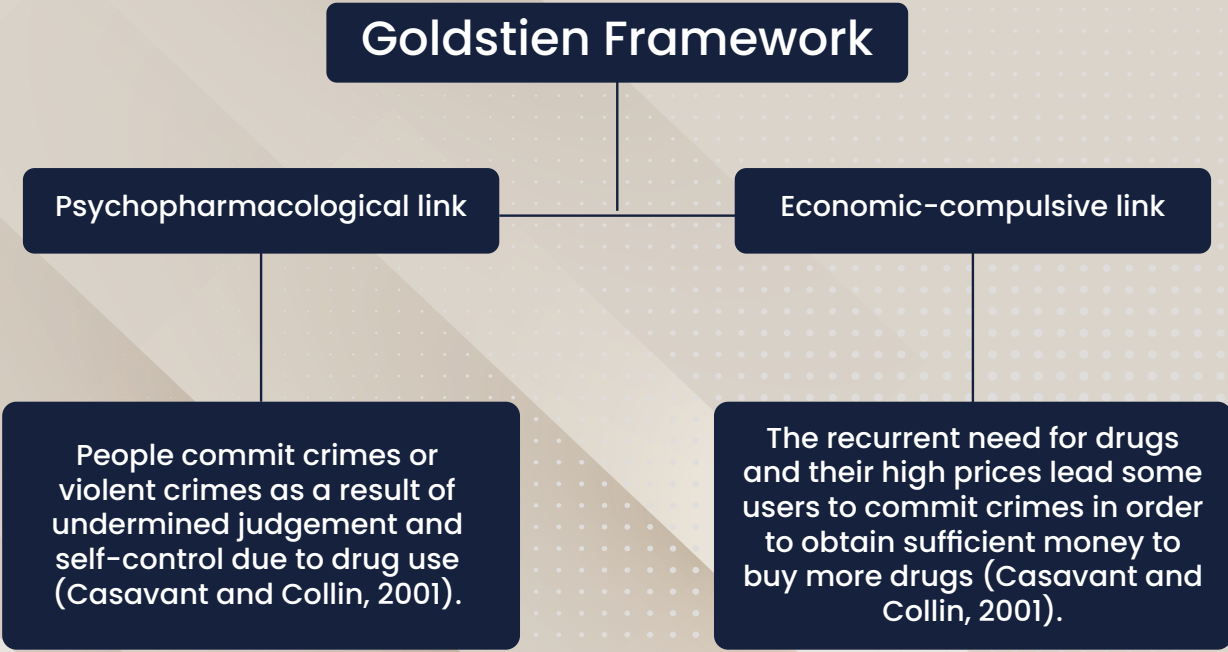
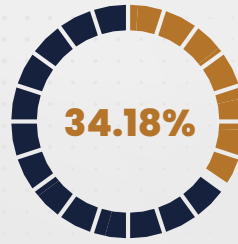


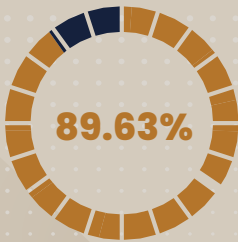
Figure 1: Goldstien Framework – the link between drug use and criminality.

Along with repeated drug use acting as a cyclical catalyst in drug-related crimes, our findings also corroborate role of family relations and family climate on illicit behavior such as crime and substance abuse among youth.

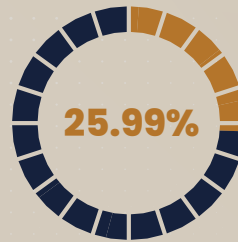
Results from our study indicate that under trial prisoners were more likely to be involved in drugs if their father had passed away.



UTPs whose father had passed away were involved in drugs.



UTPs engaged in drugs despite their mother being alive.



UTPs were found to be involved in substance abuse despite the presence of a father.

Trends show that UTPs are more likely to engage in substance abuse in the absence of a father figure. This link can be explained through a dualist phenomenon (refer to figure 2). Ample research has shown that single parent families, particularly mother-only families, increase the likelihood of delinquency and victimization simply by the fact that there is reduced supervision and surveillance (Nisar et.al, 2015).

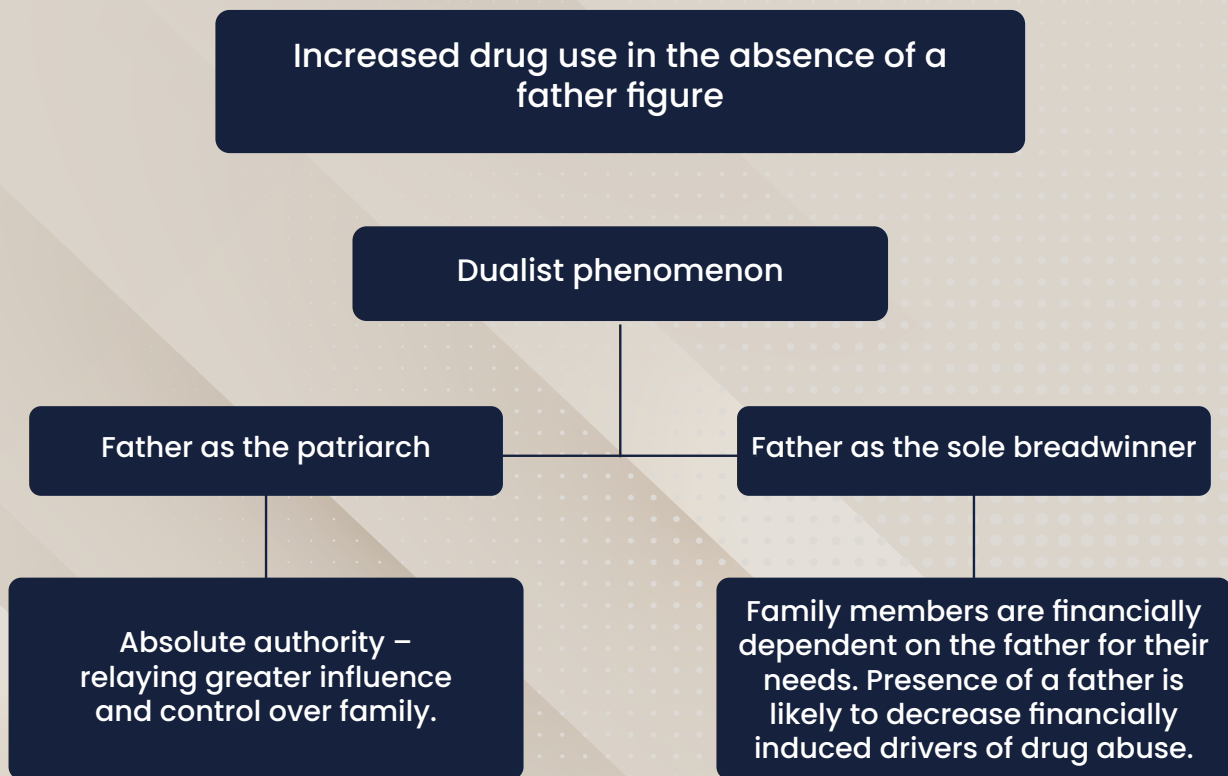


Figure 2: Dualist phenomenon – Increased drug use in the absence of a father

What can be done



Based on our findings, there is compelling evidence to prove the link between drug use and criminality and therefore an immediate need to put in place preventive strategies to decrease drug use among adolescents.

Recommendations



Preventative Policy Response

- Provision of treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts through establishment of treatment centers and free-of-cost first time treatments are detailed in the Control of Narcotic Substances Act 1997. The provisions, however, do not account for the specific needs of juvenile and adolescent drug users. In order for these provisions to be successful, they must include an age-sensitive rehabilitative approach including establishment of separate treatment centers for minors as mandated by rule 9 of Establishment of Centers for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Addicts Rules 2001.
- As mandated in Anti-Narcotics Policy 2010 and 2019, there is a need to revise curricula within educational setting to increase awareness and to mobilize youth against drugs. Within the criminal justice system, juveniles should be educated about drug abuse. This information can be delivered sustainably through prisoner led paralegal programs by introducing especially designed module on drug education.

- Findings from our study suggest that single parent household, particularly mother-only households, increase the likelihood of delinquency due to reduced supervision. Increased advocacy for financial inclusion of women and focus of financial programs such as BISP on single mother households can make for a better response mechanism and increased surveillance in households. There is also a need for increased awareness among mothers on drug abuse; this can be delivered through community network systems, workplace awareness sessions etc.

In prison response

- The existing rehabilitative approach within prisons lacks the understanding of particular prisoners needs. There is a need for effective and sustainable intervention based on thorough needs assessment while engaging stakeholders to provide support (Section 2, Prison Policy Act 2019).
- The new Sindh Corrections & Services Act and Rules 2019 propose prison reforms through Prison Policy Board, Prison Management Board, and Directorate of Corrections. These conduits for prison reforms however, are currently non-functional. The operationalization of these bodies should be prioritized by the Government to ensure the welfare and rehabilitation of prisoners as well as their reintegration into the society through reform programs (Section 2, Prison Policy Act 2019).

Rule 23, sub-sections 1, 3 and 4 mandate the following with Prison Policy Board:

- a)** Evaluation and review of prison infrastructure based on prisoners' rehabilitation as well as ensuring the availability of physical and mental health services to prisoners.
- b)** Development of a rehabilitation framework and policy which ensures responsive rehabilitation programs to particular needs of prisoners.
- c)** Design post-release plans for reintegration of prisoners. These plans should be implemented in collaboration with relevant government departments, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations.
- d)** Facilitate and coordinate with National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) to ensure prisoners have the legal identity documents required such as Juvenile cards to access post-release rehabilitation processes and programs.

All the measure mentioned about should take an age-sensitive approach and ensure availability of adequate physical and mental health facilities in Youthful Offenders Industrial Schools.

- A large number of drug users come in contact with the criminal justice system – our findings corroborate the positive relationship between drug use and juvenile delinquency. There is a need to develop treatment interventions within the criminal justice setting to reduce recidivism. Several contact points in the criminal justice system may be used as intervention opportunities such as:

a) Arrest: police working alongside drug treatment experts for proactive assessment and referral to treatment services at the time of arrest.

b) Custodial intervention: A detoxification and counselling program should be developed for young offenders in prison in consultation with relevant government departments i.e., social welfare department and health department, as well as drug treatment experts and NGOs.

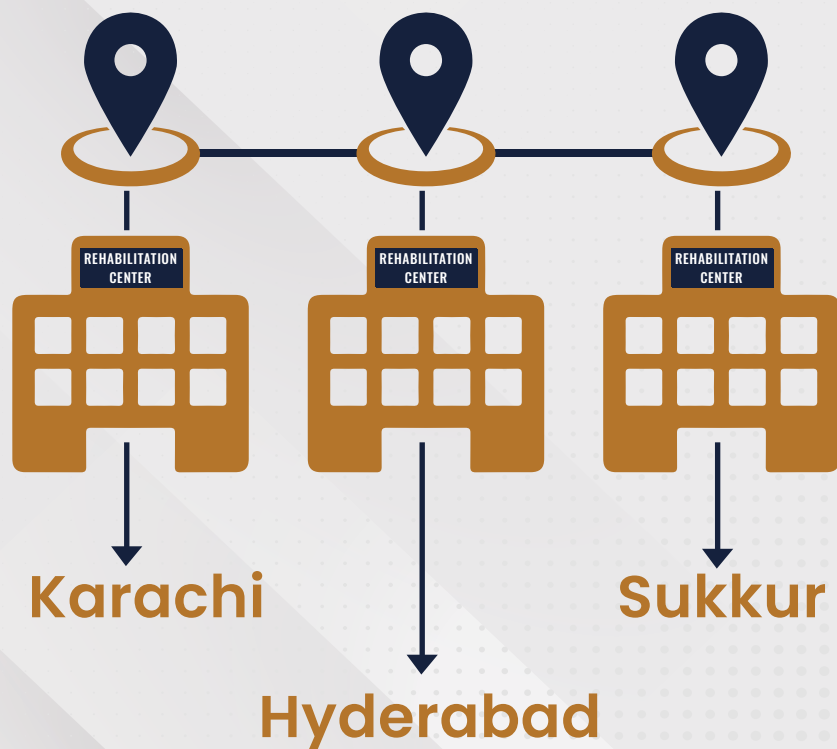
c) Anti-Narcotics Policy 2019 focuses on increased recreational facilities for youth to reduce drug demand. Recreational facilities are proven to be effective in managing stress, anxiety and depression. There are limited sports facilities available within Youthful Offenders' Industrial School currently – this area should be explored to provide healthy engagement to juveniles in prisons.

- A referral mechanism within YOIS should be put in place whereby juveniles imprisoned in drug related cases can be directed towards counselling/treatment depending on the severity of situation.



Post-release response

- Our findings suggest that juveniles who are drug users are more likely to be repeat offenders therefore, there is a need to develop treatment interventions post -release. A treatment framework should be developed in consultation with social welfare department, health department as well as drug treatment experts and NGOs to provide detoxification and counselling post -release.
- Anti-Narcotics Force operates Model Addiction Treatment & Rehabilitation Centers (MATRCs) in Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur. The Karachi facility has 205 beds with a 25-bed ward dedicated to Juveniles. This makes up for only 12% of the facility; there is a need to expand the ward dedicated to youth given the increased use of drugs among youth.



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