

DRUG ADDICTION AND SUICIDE AMONG YOUTH IN KASHMIR: ROLE OF PARENTING

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ABSTRACT

Drug Abuse and suicides are global issues and are not restricted to specific borders. Annually, the global mortality rate stands at approximately one million individuals. Among these fatalities, suicides account for approximately 700,000 deaths, while drug misuse is implicated in the demise of 300,000 individuals out of a population exceeding 30 million. The region of Kashmir, renowned for its breathtaking natural beauty, has experienced a notable surge in the prevalence of substance abuse and suicide rates during the past thirty years. According to current research findings, a notable proportion of 4.6% of the population residing in the region of Jammu and Kashmir engage in the consumption of opioid substances. and two-thirds of those under study had begun drug abuse practices throughout the developmental stage spanning from 11 to 20 years of age. Suicide, which ranks as the fourth most prevalent cause of mortality within the age group of 15 to 29 years on a global scale, has had a profound impact on about 6000 individuals in the region of Kashmir over the course of the past three decades. This research report contributes to the existing body of research on diverse parenting styles and their effects on children. The objective of this study is to ascertain the role of parenting and its subsequent impact on children, hence yielding societal benefits. This study aims to address a research gap by examining the impact of parenting on children, specifically in relation to the escalation of drug addiction and suicide rates. The data was obtained by administering a questionnaire to a sample of 100 participants, consisting of parents and youth, education professionals, a cohort

of individuals with substance abuse issues, and personnel from two distinct drug rehabilitation facilities.

Keywords: *Youth, Parenting, Drug abuse, Drug addiction, Suicide.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Youth form an integral part of every society. They are the backbone on which society, a state, and thus a country runs and progresses. Ensuring their well-being and proper development is a matter which cannot be ignored. Therefore, it is imperative to examine the various factors that influence the development of a child into a resilient and robust adolescent, equipped to confront adversities as they arise.

The Kashmiri youth is facing numerous challenges and amidst all this the aberration from following Islamic principles, by both parents and the growing children, makes steering it in the right direction a battle hard to win. There has been a colossal rise in the percentage of the population in the valley of Kashmir, especially youth, that is getting involved in harming themselves through drug addiction and suicides. This study tries to focus on the role of parents in the upbringing of children to help them develop a resilient character so that they are capable to face harsh challenges. Additionally, it endeavours to ascertain if the absence of the parental care and proper guidance may be attributed to the escalating prevalence of substance abuse and suicide rates among the youth population in Kashmir.

Islam acts as a guiding light in every aspect and relationship of our lives. This stands true for both parents and children. Parents need to be loving, caring, and responsible for the proper

upbringing of their children. The lack of proper parenting sometimes creates havoc in the life of children, and they evolve to be people with low self-esteem, low resilience to social evils, and low confidence level and strength to fight the challenges that life puts them through.

This study is a descriptive research study aimed at examining the potential role of parenting in mitigating the increasing prevalence of drug addiction and suicide rates. This study aims to examine the impact of the family, particularly parental influence, on individuals from early childhood through adolescence, building upon previous research undertaken by experts in this field. The examination of whether the cause of such behaviour can be attributed to the underlying factors inherent in the growth and development of a child has been undertaken.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review critically evaluates the existing body of literature related to the Kashmiri youth and the challenges faced by them, the role of parents and their impact in the holistic development of a child and the relation with the rising percentage of drug addiction and suicide.

Youth form the building blocks of society. If the youth are well-raised and developed, morally and spiritually sound, they will form a society that will thrive even in the face of tough challenges. The antithesis stands true as well. Youth who lack proper parental care will be vulnerable and concede to the weakest of challenges.

As mentioned in one of the hadiths of the Prophet (SAW), “A strong believer is better and more beloved in the sight of Allah than a weak believer, [however], there is good in [both types]”,

(Sahih Muslim, 2664). A psychologically and spiritually well-developed and strong generation is far better than a weak generation.

Kashmir has seen an increasing rate of drug addiction and suicide rates in the past three decades. There has been research done on the various aspects of challenges faced by the Kashmiri youth. The role of parents in molding the personality and hence leading to the overall condition of the youth has been thoroughly dealt with in this study. The above background forms the basis of the conceptual framework of this study, as depicted below:

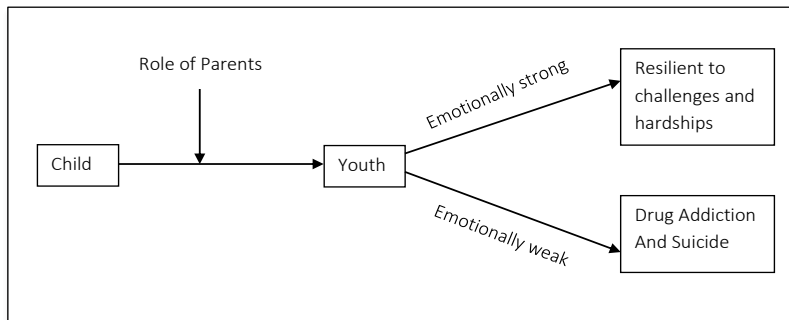


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of the Current Study

2.1 Kashmiri youth and the challenges faced

Faisal et al. (2021) have emphasized the important role played by the youth (aged 15-24) in the development of society. Rather as per them society can be judged by the extent of attention it pays to its youth. They reiterate it by saying, "we cannot always

build the future of our youth, but we can build our youth for the future".

In their study of Kashmiri youth and the challenges faced by Ola & Singh (2016) have focused on their resilience in them and suggested some steps to enhance the same. Different models of resilience and various interventions by psychologists that can be used with the youth to develop resilience have been given. Most of these suggestions focus on developing an optimistic approach and are morally uplifting.

A comprehensive study of the effects of conflicts on the socio-psychic development of Kashmiri youth and its impact on society has been done by Naqshbandi & Amin (2013). They have revealed in their study that the conflict has led to the depression of youth leading them to drug addiction and anti-social activities. Some solutions have also been suggested by the above-mentioned authors, most of them being political and a couple of them covering the educational and moral aspects of the youth.

Var et al. (2011) have done a cross-sectional survey of youth in Kashmir but the study is limited to psychosocial challenges concerning adolescence. A comparison of urban and rural as well as gender-based comparisons has been made. There is no relation given to the overall challenges and the resulting extreme behaviours. As mentioned by the authors, the study was done based on three districts only and the result cannot be generalized.

2.2 Impact of Parenting

In an article published by IfraParvaiz (2021), Dr. Yasir Ahmad Rather, Consultant Psychiatrist, and Associate Professor at the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS) GMC

Srinagar believes that suicide, like any other illness, could be prevented through proper intervention. He urged parents as well as teachers to take it seriously and try to fix it before it turns into an epidemic.

Intending to identify the impact of parenting styles on the behaviour of school-going children, Niyaz et al. (2020) have conducted a study explaining the different styles of parenting and how it impacts the growth and behaviour of school-going children. They have concluded that there is a deep association between parenting styles and the behavioural problems of children. However as mentioned by the authors themselves, this study has its limitations as its findings are limited to a child's behavioural problems concerning only parenting style and do not examine other factors like parent's attachment, empathy, stress, etc.

Rusli (2020) in his research on social conflicts in Indonesia, brings up the importance of family and relates all the social conflicts to the weakness in character. If people involved in a social conflict are strong in their character and can handle their emotions maturely, they will be more resilient and won't be readily enraged. This would prevent a lot of bloody conflicts. Character education and development, he affirms, takes place first in the family, then the environment and school.

Hussain et al. (2019) studied the relationship between parental negligence and child aggressiveness. They concluded that "the influence of unfavourable parental attitudes upon personality development of a child in a way that as children grow older, anti-social behaviour in the form of aggression, lying, stealing, swearing becomes common. Parental negligence, improper parenting, and enforcement of parents lead to aggressiveness in a child. Neglectful parenting means dismissing the children's

emotions and opinions." As per them, the parenting approach and hence the child-parent relationship has changed drastically since the advent of the modern era which includes aspects like the processes of globalization, modernization, industrialization, migration, social media, and education.

2.3 Drug addiction and Suicide in Kashmir

As per the Merriam-webster dictionary, Suicide is “the act or an instance of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally”. Considerable research has been done on suicides proving that suicide attempts are due to various reasons. A few of these are socio-economic disturbance, socio-political disturbance, psychosocial disturbances, depression, mental illness, etc. Also, encountering various types of conflict, disaster, violence, abuse, or loss and a sense of isolation are remarkably related to suicidal behavior (World Health Organization, 2021).

There is a very slight difference between drug abuse and drug addiction. Drug abuse can be associated with mere inordinate use of medication or the usage of unlawful substances. Though not everyone involved in drug abuse becomes a drug addict, drug abuse is the initial stage of drug addiction and as per reported figures, a lot of drug abusers end up being drug addicts (Condron, 2019).

Drug addiction is defined as “a complex neurobiological disease that requires integrated treatment of the mind, body, and spirit. It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain – they change its structure and how it works” (Fuller, 2019).

In February 2019, a survey was conducted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), of which 600,000 people, i.e., 4.6 percent of the total population of Jammu and Kashmir use opioid drugs, 80 percent of these drug addicts use

heroin and morphine. In a different survey conducted by the Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience (IMHANS) based in Srinagar, in a drug-de-addiction center in Srinagar, two-thirds of patients in the study had begun substance abuse between the age group of 11 and 20 years (Ahmad, 2021).

As per the National Human Rights Commission, India, a media report mentioned that 20,000 people attempted suicide in the last 14 years, in the Kashmir valley. About 3000 of them died and most of them were in the age group of 16-25 years. As per the data collocated by the National Crime Records Bureau, the state has filed a total of 5,943 cases during the last three decades (IfraParvaiz, 2021).

Dr. Yasir Ahmad Rather, a Consultant Psychiatrist and Associate Professor at the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS) GMC Srinagar, while being worried about the abrupt increase in the suicide rates in Kashmir said, "If we go back to a few decades, the suicide rate in Kashmir was as low as 0.5 per lakh population- at par with Kuwait's 0.1/ 1 lakh population-and which is considered to be the lowest in the whole world" (IfraParvaiz, 2021).

Nisa (2019) in her study attributes Psychache and hopelessness as major causes of suicide ideation as well as suicide. Once a person fails to endure the psychological pain anymore, he sees death as the only way out of the agony he is in. Hopelessness is seen as an additional factor in conceding to suicides. Most cases of suicide attempts or suicides have reported having a sense of hopelessness in them. She concludes her study by stating that youth must be educated about the importance of self as well as given an in-depth understanding of the consequences of suicidal attempts as well as suicides. Not only the youth but the parents, teachers, and other important members of society

must be educated well in this aspect to support the youth and enlighten them as well as handle the situations conscientiously when it occurs.

Bhat & Imtiaz (2017) have done a study on the population affected by drug abuse and addiction in Kashmir. The authors, in their journal about drug addiction in Kashmir, have categorized drug addiction along with other psychiatric problems like Depression, OCT, PTSD, etc. The study gives statistics on drug addicts and the various drugs used by the addicts. The authors have quoted in their study that, "A large amount of the literature suggests that enhancing a victim's social support and inculcating in him or her some positive behaviours can help him get rid of this menace. Drug Addicts often feel isolated and sense of alienation, so providing them with certain kind of social and moral support help them and make them more empowered to get over this problem." They concluded that the police department must stop the illegal trafficking and sale of drugs and the victim's social support needs enhancement.

Drug addiction and suicide rates are inflating in the valley of Kashmir. The locals have faced a lot of challenges for decades. Lack of proper development, investments from the government, lack of appropriate, systemized, and ongoing educational system, and unemployment are just a few, to begin with. These challenges created disturbances and led to several unwanted consequences. In the seam of these challenges, and being the core of socio-political and socio-economic changes, the Kashmiri youth is stonewalled. Their instability and lack of resilience caused by different reasons has resulted in mental, physical, and social disruption (Dar, 2016).

In a cross-sectional study of patients, who had attempted suicides, done by Shoib et al. (2012) for a period of 2 years in SMHS Govt. Medical College-associated hospital, Srinagar, the authors concluded that the majority of the patients examined were suffering from psychiatric illness, which was predominantly depression. They also suggested that "suicide attempts must be carefully evaluated in subjects with previous psychiatric disorders, previous suicide attempts, and a family history of psychiatric disorders."

2.4 Summary and Gap in the Existing Literature

As seen in the Literature Review, several studies have been conducted on a myriad of issues encountered by the Kashmiri youth, encompassing the ramifications of political and social upheaval as well as the influence of parenting. However, it is important to acknowledge that there are still limitations in our understanding of the issue. Specifically, there is a gap in research regarding the connection between the absence of parental care during childhood and adolescence, and the increasing occurrence of socially unacceptable behaviours among young individuals, such as drug abuse and suicide. Not enough attention has been given to addressing the imperative of steering the younger generation towards a trajectory of optimal growth and strong resilience, through the provision of parental affection and nurturing. The inquiry on the extent of effect exerted by these factors on the existing social concerns, as well as the implementation strategies required to improve the current situation, necessitates more exploration. A comprehensive investigation and detailed elucidation are necessary to address the underlying reasons and mechanisms.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive research approach to describe the role and impact of parenting concerning making a child resilient enough to face challenges and not succumb to drug addiction and /or suicide.

The research was conducted in the city of Srinagar, in the valley of Jammu and Kashmir. A sample size of 125 participants was selected, consisting of individuals of both male and female genders. Due to the predominant utilisation of online platforms for the distribution and retrieval of questionnaires, a total of fifteen replies were deemed incomplete and hence excluded from the analysis. Therefore, the real sample size was determined to be 91, as it represents the number of appropriate responses obtained through survey forms.

The study employed a cross-sectional design, utilising quantitative methodology to get the findings. A cross – sectional study was conducted as data was collected from all the respondents, during a particular time, rather than over an extended duration. The research was conducted by gathering data from participants mostly via the use of questionnaires.

Other than using the simple random technique for most of the sample population, other sampling techniques, namely convenience and purposive sampling, were administered to collect data. The age range of the participants encompassed individuals aged 15 to 70. The comprehensive profile of the participants is provided in the subsequent sections.

The respondents were students, parents, educators, and rehab patients and staff, with some other professionals who were mostly parents too.

Table 1. Demographic data of the respondents (N=91)

Specification	Category	Frequency, <i>n</i>	Percentage, %
Gender	Male	49	53.84
	Female	42	46.15
	Total	91	
Age	15-23	18	19.7
	24-32	22	24.1
	33-41	16	17.5
	42-51	17	18.6
	51 and above	6	6.59
	Total	91	
Social Identity	Parent	17	18.6
	Student	7	7.69
	Educationists/teachers/lecturer/professor	21	23
	Rehab patient	31	34
	Rehab staff	4	4.39
	Others	11	12.08
	Total	91	
Educational Institute	Secular	61	67

Religious	17	19
Undefined	13	14
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Total	91	

All the collected data were examined thoroughly to retrieve the answers to the research questions. In relation to the respondents participating in the online study, the questionnaire was made accessible on an online platform for a predetermined period of time. The duration was effectively communicated to the respondents, ensuring that their responses were obtained within an appropriate timeframe. To ensure the provision of valuable and comprehensive responses, certain components of the questionnaire were designated as mandatory, thereby discouraging respondents from leaving them unanswered.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire which was filled by participants online as well as offline, based on their availability and ease. Since quantitative in nature, the research analysis of the collected data was conducted using PSPPP computer software, specifically version 1.6.2, which is an open-source alternative to SPSS.

4.1 Validity and Reliability

The survey instrument was checked for its validity and reliability. The validity of the questionnaire in the present research was proven by the utilisation of face validation, content validation and construct validation approaches. The assessment of the questionnaire's component reliability was conducted through the utilisation of the Chronbach's Alpha

coefficient, thereby verifying the internal consistency of the items (Chron Bach Alpha > .9).

Table 2. Reliability statistics of the questionnaire used

Chronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.93	16

Factor Analysis, using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was done to identify the relevant items. The current research study employed the Rotated Component Matrix methodology in conjunction with the Varimax method, aiming to attain a factor loading of 0.5 or higher.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

Following the extraction of significant and relevant variables by Factor Analysis, a subsequent Descriptive Analysis was performed. The findings were derived by the computation of the arithmetic mean, which was subsequently analysed in accordance with a predetermined scale. The Likert scale was employed, consisting of five values ranging from 1 to 5. A rating of 1 indicated "Strongly Agree," while a rating of 5 indicated "Strongly Disagree."

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Role of Parents

Variable	N Valid	N Missing	Mean	Std. Dev	Variance	Min	Max
Role Of Parents	82	86	1.84	.70	.44	1.00	5.00

The Graph/ Histogram for the same is shown below:

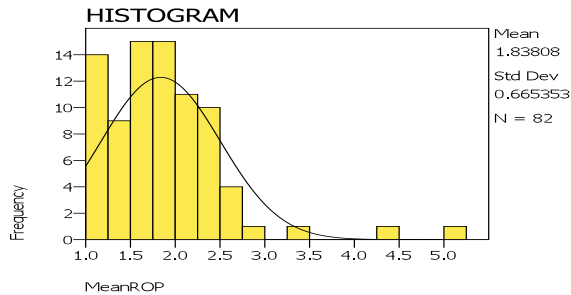


Figure 1. Histogram of Role of Parents (IV1)

Upon analysing the data presented it can be deduced that the mean value is 1.83, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.66. These readings lead to ascertaining of the hypotheses mentioning the role of parents with relation to the emotional development and stability of a child.

4.3 Analysis through Frequency Charts

In order to enhance the achievement of the study's aims and substantiate the hypotheses, pie charts and bar charts were employed to visually represent the frequency of pertinent replies obtained during the administration of the questionnaire.

4.3.1 Statement 1: Emotional instability and resulting behaviour

Individuals who exhibit emotional instability and vulnerability may engage in impulsive behaviours that have the potential to cause harm to themselves. The underlying cause of such behaviour might be attributed to a deficiency in internal fortitude and resilience when confronted with challenging situations. The behavior studied in this paper included drug addiction and suicide.

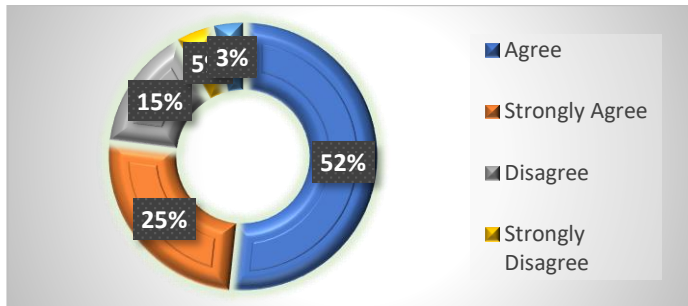


Figure 2. People who are emotionally unstable and weak can succumb to drug addiction

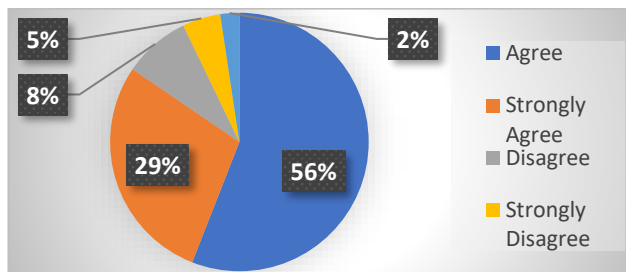


Figure 3. People who are emotionally unstable and weak can have suicidal behavior

According to the data presented in Figure 2, a majority of the respondents, specifically 52%, expressed agreement with the notion that emotional instability and fragility can contribute to an individual's susceptibility to drug addiction in difficult circumstances. Additionally, a significant proportion of the respondents, namely 25%, strongly agreed with this perspective. According to Figure 3, it is evident that 56% of the participants agree, while 29% strongly agree, that individuals experiencing emotional instability and fragility may be prone to

developing suicidal thoughts in the face of difficult circumstances.

4.3.2 Statement 2: Negligence Of Parents Can Lead to Drug Addiction And/Or Suicide

It is imperative for parents to exhibit mindfulness towards the emotional turmoil experienced by their children, particularly in times characterised by adversity and difficulty. In the event of parental negligence, it is likely that the child may experience a decline in resilience and succumb to substance abuse or maybe engage in self-harming behaviours such as suicidal attempts.

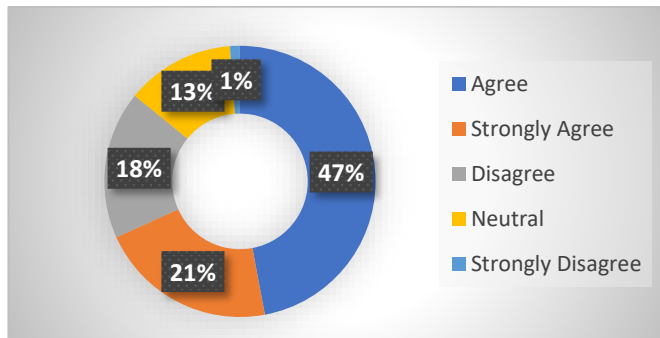


Figure 4. Negligence of parents can lead to drug addiction in children

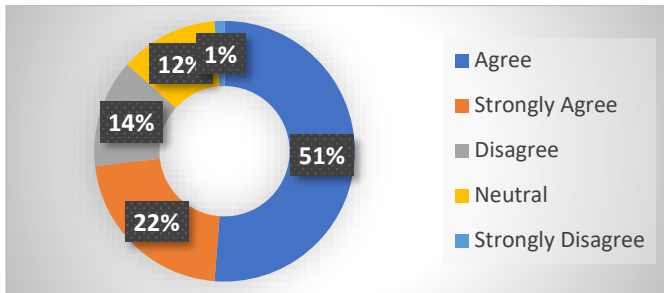


Figure 5. Negligence of parents can lead to suicidal behaviour in children

According to the data presented in Figure 4, it can be observed that a majority of the respondents, namely over 47%, expressed agreement with the notion that parental neglect of their child's emotional struggles can potentially contribute to the child's involvement in drug misuse. Additionally, a notable proportion of respondents, approximately 21.18%, strongly agreed with this perspective.

According to the data presented in Figure 5, a majority of the overall general population (51%) agrees, while a smaller percentage (22%) strongly agrees, that parental indifference towards their child's emotional struggle can contribute to the child's engagement in suicide ideation.

4.3.3 Statement 3: The role of parents cannot be underestimated in the upbringing of a child

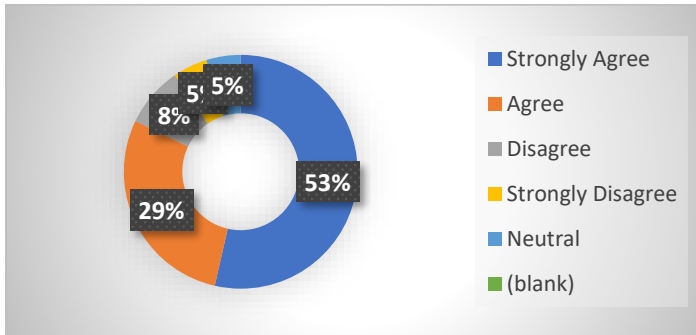


Figure 6. The role of parents cannot be underestimated in the upbringing of a child

According to the data presented in Figure 6, it can be observed that a majority of the respondents, namely over 53%, expressed agreement with the notion that the role of parents cannot be underestimated in the proper upbringing of their child. Additionally, a notable proportion of respondents, approximately 29% strongly agreed with this perspective. A small percentage of 5% however strongly disagree to this statement, while 5% were neutral about it.

4.3.4 Statement 4: Children growing up in a loving and caring environment develop better mentally

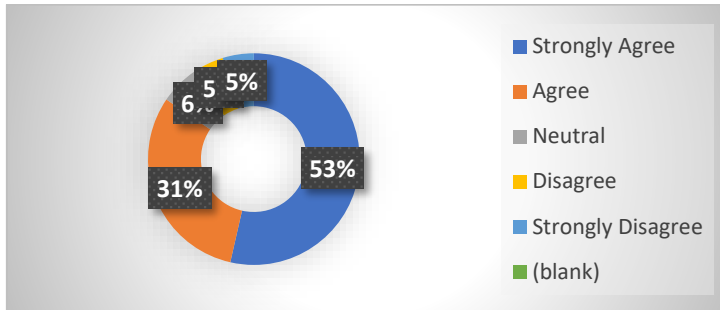


Figure 7. Children growing up in a loving and caring environment develop better mentally

According to the data presented in Figure 7, most of the overall general population (53%) strongly agrees, while 33% agrees, that children growing up in a loving and caring environment develop better emotionally.

4.4 Correlational Analysis

To further understand the relationship between the Independent Variables (IV), namely Role of Parents, and the two Dependent Variable (DV), namely Drug Addiction and Suicide, a bi-variate correlation analysis was performed This has been presented in the tables below:

Table 4. Correlation analysis between Role of Parents and Rate of Drug addiction

		Role of Parents	Rate of Drug Addiction
Role of Parents	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.703
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	91	82
Rate of Drug Addiction	Pearson Correlation	.703	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	82	91

Table 5. Correlation analysis between Rate of Suicides and negligence of Parents

		Role of Parents	Rate of Suicides
Role of Parents	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.706
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	91	82
Rate of Suicides	Pearson Correlation	.706	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	82	91

The correlation coefficients of 0.703 and 0.706 indicate a statistically significant, positive, and robust correlation between the Role of Parents and Rates of Drug Addiction and Suicides, respectively. The p-value is less than .000. The commonly accepted alpha level is set at .05, implying that the observed association is statistically significant and not merely a result of chance or other sampling errors. Therefore, the influence of

parents profoundly impacts the prevalence of substance abuse and suicidal tendencies.

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In order to reach to the results and findings of the study, various analysis techniques were utilized, encompassing descriptive analysis, frequency charts and correlational analysis.

The analysis has substantiated the significance of parental involvement in fostering emotional strength and resilience in children, underscoring the importance of this role. The failure of parents, particularly when their child is confronted with difficult circumstances such as adolescence or peer pressure, can result in the child developing emotional vulnerability. Children of this nature tend to have diminished resilience and a deficiency in internal fortitude as they mature. Based on the conducted analysis, it was determined that individuals who exhibit emotional instability and vulnerability may engage in impulsive behaviours that have the potential to cause harm to themselves. The subsequent inquiries posed to the participant yielded findings indicating that those who exhibit emotional instability and vulnerability may be more susceptible to developing substance addiction and/or experiencing suicidal thoughts when confronted with difficult and/or adverse circumstances. It also made clear that positive parenting plays a great role in the resilience development of a child, whilst negative and/or negligent parenting has detrimental effect on the emotional development and can lead to socially unacceptable behaviours.

To facilitate a more extensive investigation into the relationship between parental participation and the occurrence of substance misuse and suicidal tendencies, a correlation analysis was conducted. The results revealed a noteworthy and strong

correlation between the aforementioned variables, therefore indicating that parental influence plays a considerable role in the occurrence of substance misuse and suicidal inclinations. When parents exhibit concern and mindfulness towards their child's emotional, cognitive, interpersonal, and physical welfare, particularly during the period of adolescence marked by unique challenges, the child is more inclined to encounter heightened sensations of safety and resilience consequently facilitating their proficient handling of challenging situations. The individual in question would demonstrate heightened levels of resilience when confronted with obstacles, approaching them with unwavering determination instead of evading them or resorting to less efficacious coping strategies, such as substance abuse or engaging in suicidal actions.

The results are also in line with the conclusion drawn in previous studies conducted by Niyaz et al. (2020); Abdullayeva (2019); Hussain & Warr (2019); and Rusli (2020) which show a similar relationship and effect as has been proved between the different variables in this study.

6. CONCLUSION

This research gives insight into the prevalent and increasing issues in the youth, especially drug addiction and suicides, and tries to explore the relationship between the role of parents and children getting involved in such acts. The results of the study indicate that parents have a great role to play in developing the inner strength of a person, which in turn has a relation with the increasing rates of drug addiction and suicides.

A morally, mentally, and spiritually strong person will endure arduous situations with wisdom and patience and thus conquer them rather than getting defeated. A generation of such stalwarts can be produced by the perpetual efforts of parents

and society. Parents form the role models of a child, and it is under their care and protection that children grow into mature and considerate youth and form a civilized part of society.

Whether a youth is in a conflicted area or facing challenges of adolescence, unemployment, adversities, etc., if he is raised with proper care and love of parents, he will comparatively be more resilient and stable enough to compete with any kind of difficult situations that he faces rather than giving in and relying upon drugs and suicidal attempts.

The present findings and conclusions were exclusively derived from the tests and analyses conducted in this research; these also coincides with comparable findings documented in the existing literature. As per the existing literature, it is quite evident that parenting style affects the mindset of the child and either creates or relieves his stress.

Though prolific research has been done on the different challenges faced by Kashmiri youth, the need to bring the youth in the proper direction by focusing on their proper development, moral education, parental love, and care, educating them in an Islamic atmosphere, and making them strong in faith, whilst giving the required modern education, has not been addressed to the core. The relationship between socially unacceptable behavior of youth and these challenges has not been much considered. This gap needs to be filled in future research. Also, a longitudinal study can be done for a better understanding of the impact of parenting on the proper development of children. The future studies can extend the area and the number of respondents as well.

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