

Socio-Economic Factors that Influenced Drug Users to Commit Drug-Defined Offences: with special reference to Colombo District

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Abstract

Drug abuse is a major social problem and is further exacerbated by the fact that drug users commit drug-defined offenses. In this context, it is important to identify the factors that lead drug users to commit drug-related offenses. The research question was what the socio-economic factors that influenced drug users to commit drug-define offences are? The main objective of the study was to identify the socio-economic factors that influenced drug users to commit drug-define offences. Fifty drug users who had committed some kind of drug-define offences were included in the sample using the snowball sampling method. Survey method and case study method were adopted for the study. Primary data as well as secondary data were used and survey employed structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews. In the study sample, (n = 9, 18%) were female drug users and (n = 41, 82%) were males. Drug users represented in the study sample have committed drug possession (n = 37, 74%), drug sale (n = 12, 24%), drug trafficking (n = 10, 20%), drug distribution (n = 9, 18%) and illegal alcohol production (n = 1, 2%). The study found that drug use (n = 38, 76%), associating with friends who use drugs (n = 13, 26%), drug selling (n = 5, 10%), fellowship of persons who sell drugs (n = 4, 8%), carrying out drug selling by family members (n = 4, 8%), economic hardship (n = 3, 6%), associating with friends who are involved in drug trafficking (n = 3, 6%), drug trafficking (n = 3, 6%), husband's drug use (n = 3, 6%), drug selling by husband (n = 2, 4%), associating with criminal gang (n = 2, 4%), drug use by casual partner (n = 2, 4%), drug trafficking by casual partner (n = 2, 4%), drug trafficking by husband (n = 1, 2%) and a cousin brother involved in drug trafficking (n = 1, 2%) have been influenced drug users to commit drug-defined offences. Drug use (n = 32, 86%) had been an influencing factor for the majority of the individuals who committed drug possession offense. It can be concluded that drug use has the highest impact on drug-defined offenses. It can be further concluded that multiple socio-economic factors have been influenced drug users to commit drug-defined offences.

Keywords: Drug abuse; drug-defined offences; drug trafficking; socio-economic factors

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