A Study on Opium and Drugs in Namsai District, Arunachal Pradesh: With Special Reference to Emphum Village

Chow Nakunand Singkai¹, Biplab Tripathy² and Tanmoy Mondal³

- ¹Assistant Prof., Department of Geography, Arunachal University of Studies, Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA.
- ²Associate Prof., Department of Geography, Arunachal University of Studies, Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA.
- ³Assistant Prof., Department of Geography, Arunachal University of Studies, Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA.

¹Corresponding Author: chowsingkain@gmail.com



www.ijrah.com || Vol. 3 No. 6 (2023): November Issue

Date of Submission: 07-12-2023 Date of Acceptance: 13-12-2023 Date of Publication: 22-12-2023

ABSTRACT

The Namsai district is the land of multiple tribes" viz. Tai-Khamtis, Mishmis, Singphos and some other sub tribes which lie in the eastern parts of Arunachal Pradesh. In this remote and near China-Myanmar border, the district is facing a big problem of drugs for long period of time. Since a long, the poppy had associated with the life of the people due to some myths which is a prime cause of present of opium in this region. Opium is an alkaloid derivative of Papaver somniferum commonly known as poppy. The other derivatives of this plant are Heroin, Morphine, Codine and Papaverum, ganja. Derivatives like Morphine have long been used as medicine. Ages of male addicts are from 20 years onwards. Addiction cause varies. It is seen among youngsters mostly. Opium is sold as per tola, roughly equivalent to 10 grams. This paper attempts to explore the reasons responsible for drug addiction. The reasons are examined in relation to eight hypothetical factors, such as peer group, enjoyment, frustration/tension, sufficient leisure, and excess pocket money, imitation of family elders, easy availability and curiosity. Moreover, the remedial measures undertaken by the Drug De-addiction centres and their benefits among the addicts are also analyzed.

Keywords- Opium, Morphine, Namsai, Tola, Drug de-addiction centre.

I. INTRODUCTION

Opium is a drug, which is used by many people, is rising rapidly in India. The drug menace touches millions of lives in both developed and developing countries. It's most negative impact is concentrated amongst the vulnerable and marginalized in societies. Drug addiction threatens the health of well-being and ultimately the vitality and strength of communities.

Drug abuse in India is growing, cutting across a wide spectrum of society. Of Indian drug abuse, drug users are largely young and predominantly male. Itinerant populations are extremely susceptible to drug use. The number of women drug abusers is also increasing rapidly. Drugs and alcohol abuse is really a concern as it could result in many harmful effects. Nowadays, all the nations realized the complex inter linkage of

terrorism, crime, corruption and drug trafficking poses an unprecedented threat. In order to control the stemming problems, various measures oriented towards its mitigation. Proper education and guidance would enable youth to safeguard themselves against these dangerous behaviour patterns and follow healthy lifestyles. The Central Bureau of Narcotics has found opium cultivation in many parts of Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh as an important cash crop.

Arunachal Pradesh, one of the members of the NEC and is a vast stretch of land located on the lap of the Himalayas. Arunachal, the largest state in India's northeast, is encircled from three sides by China, Myanmar and Bhutan. It stretches from snow-capped mountains in the north to the plains of the Brahmaputra valley in the south. It is situated on the extreme northeastern tip of the union of India in trans- Himalayas region between the latitude 26° 28'N and 29°33'N and

Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities

ISSN (Online): 2583-1712

Volume-3 Issue-6 || November 2023 || PP. 175-182

https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.3.6.20

longitude 91°31′E and 97°30′E. Strategically, it holds an important position, as it shares its border with the Republic of China on its north, the state of Assam on its south, Myanmar on the east and the Royal kingdom of Bhutan on the west.

The Namsai district is the new name given to Lohit district on 26 January 2015. It is the home of following tribe's viz. Tai-Khamptis, Mishmis, Singphos and some other sub tribes. The total estimated population is more than 20,000 in around 60 villages under Namsai sub-division. Emphum is one of the villages among this district.

The main crop grown in the district is Rice, Maize, Ginger, Rape Mustard, and wheat etc. besides growing some other fruits like Pineapples, Oranges, Jackfruits, Palm, and banana etc. Tea plantation is also inchoate thereupon, which succour in eradicating poverty by generating stable incomes compared to other annual field crops. Opium is not only cultivated, but is also sold in the market to earn money.

Several plants, fruits and seeds have been used for hundreds of years in folk medicine, religious ceremonies and rituals all over the globe. When these are taken for a purpose other than medicinal use or in amounts frequency that impairs one's physical, physiological or psychological functions, it constitutes drug abuse.

The present study has conducted in the Emphum village, Namsai District of Arunachal Pradesh. It is the home of mainly Khampti and Singpho tribes. Their population is not so large but counted in census. Singphos and Mishmis were the main opium cultivators. Today they have been joined by other ethnic groups.

The main crops grown in the district are maize, rice, and wheat as per survey of India Map, 1998. Interestingly, cultivation of opium as a crop finds no mention in the survey. But old records show that opium has been cultivated in this for centuries. Opium is also being sold as an important cash crop in these areas.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The principal objectives of the present investigation were as follows:

- 1. To study the socio-economic condition of the people, and the available resources present on that region.
- 2. To determine the causes and impacts of opium addicts.
- 3. To analyze drug abuse with special reference to age variance among the people.
- 4. To generate awareness among the people about the ill effects of drugs.

1.2 Hypothesis

- 1. The socio-economic condition of Emphum village is poor.
- 2. There is lack of social services like health and education in the village of Emphum.
- 3. Communication is not provided.
- 4. Agriculture is the main source of their livelihood.

5. The main cause of the opium addiction is not because of its availability from primary sources.

II. METHODOLOGY

Observation and interview are the main method used for collecting data. The tools used for this purpose were questionnaires and interaction with village people. Ten households were surveyed in which all are found to be addicts. Generally seen 80% are addicts in the village. Male addicts are only found.

2.1 Data Recorded

- Patterns of opium cultivation
- Preparation of edible opium
- Opium addicts
- Collection of information through interaction among people of the village
- Problem of opium abuse

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For the compilation of this research, numbers of published and unpublished books and materials have been perused.

Rapid Assessment Survey of Drug Abuse in India by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India and UNIDCP, Regional office for South Asia (2002) highlight about the demographic characteristic of users, patterns, adverse health consequences, treatment, violence, types of intervention etc. in which the study was carried out in 14 urban sites of India.

Manual on the Design, Implementation and Management of Alcohol and Drug Programmes at the workplace (ILO-Geneva) discussed about the problem poses by alcohol and prevention strategies to mitigate it.

Feasibility study for Alternative Development of opium growing region, Arunachal Pradesh, in which a case study was undertaken in Lohit district. ILO: 2002 concern about the geo-environmental background of the district and proposed some alternative livelihood in opium growing areas of Lohit district. CBN – UNDCP"S survey of Lohit district, Arunachal Pradesh report focus about the problems of addiction amongst the Khamptis and Mishmis in the district.

Opium users describe experiencing a feeling of calm and well-being. Opium addicts in otherwise good physical and mental health whose drug needs are met are thought to experience no debilitating physiological effects from their addiction, although there is some evidence that immune function is compromised. However, their preoccupation with the drug and its acquisition can lead to malnutrition and general poor self-care and an increased risk of disease.

Volume-3 Issue-6 || November 2023 || PP. 175-182

https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.3.6.20

IV. GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF STUDY AREA (NAMSAI)

Namsai district is the youngest district of Arunachal Pradesh which was formed on November 25, 2014 after dividing Lohit district. The district is located in between latitude 27°30' to 27°55'N and longitude 95° 52' to 96° 20' E. Namsai is sharing border with Lohit and Changlang to the east; Assam to the west; Lohit and Assam to the North, and the south border adjoins Changlang district.

Namsai has a warm and temperate climate. According to Koppen-Geiger climate classification the district belongs in Cfa. The summers have much more rainfall compared to winter. The average annual temperature is 22.8 °C. Precipitation here averages 2728 mm. Maximum rainfall of 750-800 mm is recorded during July-August with a relative humidity of 80%. Maximum and minimum winter temperatures are 25° C and 10° C, respectively. During summer the temperature rises up to 35° C. The vegetation acquires the general characteristics of the tropical wet semi-evergreen forest of Himalayan mountain ecosystem.

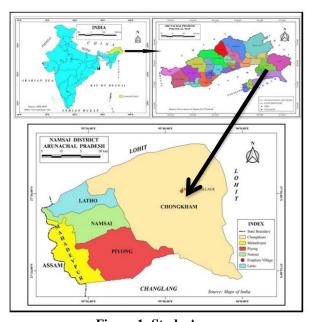


Figure 1: Study Area

V. EMPHUM VILLAGE: AN OVERVIEW

Emphum village, mostly dominated by Khamptis and some Singphos, is in southern portion of Lohit River in the Namsai district. These people were originally from Myanmar, who settled in the plains of Namsai district around 200 years ago. They are mostly Buddhists. This village is under Chongkham circle of the Hawai sub-division was approached from Tinsukia in Assam. Male population is more than females as per 2001 census.



Figure 2: Satellite Image of Emphum village

The people of this village belong to the indigenous faith. Celebration of their religious festivals like Sangken, poi pee maw, poi put waa, etc was observed. Most houses are made of wood, bamboo and thatch, intertwined with ropes. All the house-building materials are gathered from the nearby forests. Pigs, poultry, cows, goats and elephants are kept in their houses. Wet cultivation is practiced by them. Land is distributed among the families by the Gaon Bura and the Village Council. Crop yielding is average. Infrastructure facilities are not in sufficient amount. Opium is the Panacea for pain. In the villages of this district, medical facilities are hopelessly in adequate and out of date. All villages resort to herbal medicine and traditional medical practitioners are popular. Education is restricted to schools upto class 'V'. Aaganwadi centre is available for the children of poorest family in the village. Basic amenities like electricity and irrigation is good in the villages.

Men are the protagonists of earner in the family. Women are generally engaged in the weaving, knitting, cooking and other household petty, besides some are enlisted in government services. The preferred source of income of the village is agriculture, handicraft, farm animals and other activities. The main problems with the village economy are: Poor access to market, Drug abuse, Markets are not profitable, poor production of crop, Illiteracy etc.

5.1 Opium Cultivation, Extraction and Methods of Consumption

The drugs, which are commonly abused, are opium, cannabis and cocaine. Majority of these are obtained from flowering plants. Some are obtained from fungi.

Opium is an alkaloid derivative of Papaver somniferum commonly known as poppy. The other derivatives of this plant are Heroin, Morphine, Codine and Papaverum, ganja. Derivatives like Morphine have long been used as medicine. Though the medicinal properties of this plant cannot be totally ignored, the problem arises when the derivatives are abused as a drug, a panacea for all evils rendering the user slothful and dull and addicted. Morphine is a very effective sedative and painkiller, and is very useful in patients who have undergone surgery. Several plants, fruits and seeds having hallucinogenic properties have been used for hundreds of years in folk-medicine, religious ceremonies and rituals all over the globe. When these are taken for a purpose other than medicinal use or in amounts/frequency that impairs one's physical,

physiological or psychological functions, it constitutes drug abuse.

Ages of male addicts are from 20 years onwards. Addiction cause varies. It is seen among youngsters mostly. Opium is sold as per *tola*, roughly equivalent to 10 grams. Price ranges from Rs.100 and above. If not possible to pay money, addicts either exchange opium with something else but have to pay. Opium is very costly. The person selling opium if loses a little bit of opium means lose in business. Quality of opium also varies according to the quantity of opium smeared on the cloth. Good quality when opium smeared is more on the cloth.

People generally hesitated divulge information regarding poppy cultivation. The plantation area too shifts each year, probably due to the CBN"s policy of destroying such plantations. In fact, many reported that as the CBN team destroyed crops that were near the roads, they moved the cultivation to the inaccessible parts of the forests and mountains. The addicts, who did not grow the product claimed to procure it from other sources. There is a silent conspiracy about this activity. Addiction of alcohol is considered worse than opium addiction. Maltreatment of wives was the main reason why wives encouraged opium addiction among their husbands. Alcohol and opium are not consumed together. Apong is a popular drink offered to guests on all occasions with chicken or other vegetable curry. Addiction was of course the universal reason for cultivation besides a small portion being reserved for rituals and for medicinal use.

5.3 Cultivation and extraction process

Keeping in view of shade and fertility a patch of land is cleared for the sowing of the poppy plant in around late September and continues up to December. Its plantation needs a lot of weeding and caring. Therefore, planters keep themselves busy till captivating flowers of red, crimson and white adored the plants. Gradually flowers mature and shed its petals exposing a green capsules. Latex of matured capsules used for taking a white coloured sap with help of an indigenous tool and carefully wiped away in a piece of cloth. When Opium is smeared in a cloth is fully soaked then, dried naturally and thereafter usually stored in a bamboo Chunga in the safe custody of the individual. . The crop is harvested between the months of February and April. The cultivators themselves or other volunteers undertake the two operations of lancing and collection.

The villagers sometimes eat the poppy seed after the rest of the plant (husk, straw) is thrown away. Also the seeds are preserved for next year's cultivation and opium is extracted from the husk. This is done by boiling the husk. Seeds are sometimes sold to other addicts and brokers who use no other derivative of poppy or any other drugs. The addicts are aware of the legislations regarding opium but helpless because of their addicts and only pay lip service to the legislation.



Figure 3: Opium cultivated plants



Figure 4: Matured seeds and flower of opium plant

5.4 Methods of Opium Consumption

As oral consumption needs a minute to gulp down in the form of mixtures, its smoking pattern requires several indigenous tools and hour long processing. Two methods of consumption are found which are Pucca method and Kutcha method.



Figure 5: Materials required for opium consumption

In pucca method, according to requirement a piece of opium smeared cloth is taken and put in the boiling water preferably in a brass ladle. When stirred opium content is isolated and the rag is thrown out.

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https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.3.6.20



Figure 6: Opium smeared cloth and Opium content in boiling water

After more evaporation a blockish content in semi-solid form remains in the spoon which is again mixed with dried plantain leaves cut in the shape of thin thread and dried beforehand, with the help of a spatula.



Figure 7: Mixing of opium content with beforehand dried plaintain leaves

Now the final product which feels like gummy substance put in small lumps in smoking pipe (especially made of bamboo) and lit. Opium smoking is never a hasty affair. In order to get full satisfaction one must smoke it leisurely in between mugs of black tea without sugar and in the company of other addicts.



Figure 8: Small lumps of final product putting in smoking pipe made of bamboo and consuming it.

In kutcha method, a piece of opium smeared cloth is boiled in black tea without sugar and then consumed.

Pucca method, though a long process, is mostly used by the addicts to consume opium. Besides, sometimes, they also chewed raw opium. Pucca addicts are hardened users, as they require at least ten *tolas* a month.

5.4 Adolescence Addiction & its Problems

Adolescence means both a period and a process during which a child becomes mature in terms of his/her attitudes and beliefs for effective participation in society. It is accompanied by several biological and behavioural

changes. Thus, is a very vulnerable phase of mental and psychological development of an individual.

Curiosity, need for adventure and excitement, and experimentation, constitute common causes, which motivate youngsters towards drug and alcohol abuse. The perception among youth that it is cool or progressive to smoke, use drugs or alcohol, is also in a way a major cause for youth to start these habits. Television, movies, newspapers, internet, unstable or unsupportive family structures and peer pressure also help to promote this perception.

Because of the perceived benefits, drugs are frequently used repeatedly. With repeated use of drugs, the tolerance level of the receptors present in our body increases. Thus, the addictive potential of drugs and alcohol, pull the user into a vicious circle leading to abuse from which he may not be able to get out. In the absence of any guidance or counselling, the person gets addicted and becomes dependent on their use. Dependence leads to withdrawal syndrome, the patient to ignore all social norms in order to get sufficient funds to satiate his needs. This result in many social adjustment problems.

Opium addiction is a significant problem found in Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh. Lohit district has no medical treatment available for opium addiction. Moreover, the overall aim is to describe nature and extent of opium use and its adverse effects. Regarding the use and prevalence of opium amongst the Khamptis, the survey conducted revealed the following facts.

- 1. Earlier opium was used as a traditional medicine.
- 2. Nowadays it is used as an drug addictive.
- 3. It was advent in the society by the British.
- 4. Opium is now cultivated almost by all families.
- 5. Opium is not used as a social intoxicant.
- 6. It is sold privately by the cultivators, which is also a source of their livelihood.
- 7. Opium is neither a part of culture nor of life style, even it is not used in religious ceremonies.
- 8. It is observed that most of the addicts are middle age male.

The Khamptis believed that the British deliberately introduced opium as drugs. As the Khamptis were an aggressive group of people, the drug was used as a means to make them pliant and obedient. The majority of the people state that, opium was taken as a sedative for curing physical ailments. This is further established through the finding that the majority of the addicts took to the addiction in order to cure particular ailments that they are suffering from. Candidly, the problem was abetting during the inception of timber operation in the region. In which people sojourn in jungle for cutting trees and collecting timbers and use to take opium as a medicine, thereby to protect against adverse environmental condition. At present the number of addicts in the society is increasing because the younger has started taking too. On the premise of which, the

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https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.3.6.20

problem stemming from opium is also increasing, which is usually ascribe to three problems i.e.

VI. IMPACT OF OPIUM

6.1 Social Problems

There are myriad of social problem posed by the opium, which is a major threat to the Khampti people and hinder their development. People held responsible mainly to the administration and partly to the society for increasing number of drug addicts and illicit growing of poppy plant in the region. Addicts implicate to the police personnel, as they are also indulged in consuming, selling and illegal transition of opium, whereas law proscribes it. It is said that opium is supplied in tin and sachet in order to conceal from the public by the cloak of it.

On the other hand, the society, especially the women and students association persevered in their effort to eradicate it by organizing the de-addiction camp, programmed and intensifying social mobilization. It is said that a community's strength lies in the capacity to solve its problems as they arise. In pursuit of "drug free society" it needs the cooperation of the addicts without which it is impossible to eradicate.

The main social harms and problems caused by the opium addiction, as stated by the people are listed below:-

- 1. It evokes a number of thieves, treacheries, crimes and violence in the society.
- 2. It straggled the societies in the path of development hampering development of society in terms of culture and tradition.
- 3. It steers the society towards darkness and ultimately shatter the society.
- 4. It transgresses the principles and spirits of the society.
- 5. It destroyed the emotional intelligence of the people because of which social disharmony sprouts.
- 6. It creates a male marriage squeeze because the males are the predominant addict's vis-à-vis the females because of which many women eloped with other tribe and caste.
- 7. It increase the number of drug related accidents and deaths.
- 8. Addicts become burden for all, society in general, cause of mental and financial distress to his entire family and friends.
- 9. It set a bad example for posterity.
- 10. It stigmatizes the community as a drugs addicted, which is indelible.

6.2 Economic Problems

The main economic problems caused by the opium addiction are family economic problem. Besides there are many other related problem occurring due to addiction in general and addicts in particular. There is economic loss owing to opium abuse, which are collating based on survey conducted, such as loss due to increase in expenditure on opium, tea, fire woods, and opium

including time spent and others. Generally, their expenditure and daily time spend on opium parlors depends upon the level of addiction.

The major economic problems poses by opium addiction are:

- 1. It curtailed the family expenditure, which ascribed to family economic problem.
- 2. It degraded the socio economic status of the society.
- 3. It incurred lose of time and money.
- 4. It engenders poverty and penury.
- 5. It leads the addicts to sell off their properties to consume opium.
- 6. It causes drain of wealth by the exo-drug peddlers.
- 7. It causes mortgage of land and properties.
- 8. It costs lose of productivity, absenteeism, business and jobs.
- 9. Addicts put strain and stress on families.
- 10. It causes an increase in unemployables.

6.3 Health Problems

It is confirming that opium cause poor health status to users and problems for family and society. Invariably, all the users have also assent that they contrite themselves of being addicted. As per the findings, their condition of health is normal. Actually they believe that opium is the drug of their good health, without it they become non-healthy. But they can be brought back to full health and productivity, especially if they get help at an early stage. It is surprising to note that, the addicts supplicate for detoxification in order to resume endues one's health and personality.

Opium and its various constituents exert effects upon the body ranging from analgesia, or insensitivity to pain, to narcosis, or depressed physiological activity leading to stupor. Opium users describe experiencing a feeling of calm and well-being. Opium addicts in otherwise good physical and mental health whose drug needs are met are thought to experience no debilitating physiological effects from their addiction, although there is some evidence that immune function is compromised. However, their preoccupation with the drug and its acquisition can lead to malnutrition and general poor self-care and an increased risk of disease.

Another misuse of drugs is what certain sportsperson do to enhance their performance. They misuse in sports to increase muscle strength and bulk to promote aggressiveness and as a result increase athletic performance.

Many users reported the following adverse health consequences:

- 1. Chronic bronchitis
- 2. Withdrawal syndrome, depression, fatigue, aggressive behaviour
- 3. Breathing problem
- 4. Liver damage (cirrhosis)
- 5. Coughing on most days
- 6. Chronic chest infection
- 7. TB, lung cancer, jaundice, dysentery
- 8. Insomnia (want of sleep), Kleptomania (stealing

Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities

ISSN (Online): 2583-1712

Volume-3 Issue-6 || November 2023 || PP. 175-182

https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.3.6.20

mania), and

9. It makes one lethargic.

6.4 Institutional Intervention

The findings clearly indicate the need to create awareness about the harmful effects of opiate abuse. Of increasing concern is the escalation of anti-social activities in various settings. Considerably, these issues have been very well ventilated. And realizing, the need, institutional intervention has been initiated to intercept the problems.

As per the survey, all are aware about the current policies regarding opiate abuse in the areas. As people realized the harm effects of drug abuse and alcoholism, local youths, public leaders, students and women associations are focusing on approaches to prevent and combat it and they committed to eradicate it completely from the society. Therein, social mobilization has been intensified and punishment awarded to the users and drug peddlers. Recently, a mission, 'operation clean society' was launched to free Lohit and Changlang districts from the drug abuses by holding de-addiction camp at the sensitive places. It is reported that, almost 75% of local youths in Namsai, Bordumsa, Miao and Chowkham are prone to addiction. At present, the situation is under stabilizing, which ensued after implementing intervention strategies.

The addicts pass strictures on the public in which they stated that, pro tem enforcement of laws and mitigation measures provided by them has indirectly caused increase of opium price. In reality, it ascribed the lack of constant Endeavour on the part of service providers. According to the addicts, the main limitations of de-addiction programmes are:-

- 1. Inadequate after care facilities
- 2. Inadequate training and skills of service providers
- 3. Low level of funding by government
- 4. Lack of trustworthy
- 5. Lack of medicine
- 6. Lack of constant efforts
- 7. Shortening duration of de-addiction camp

Inspite of these barriers some social organization viz. TKSCWomen Welfare Association (Namsai); Women Welfare Association (Wakro); Mahila Mandal Samity (Chowkham); ATKSSU; APPSU; Arunachal Pali Vidyapeeth are constantly tried to prophylactic the chronic problem by providing various measures.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research neither intends to popularize nor to encourage anything towards opium. Tai-Khampti is mainly inhabitant of Lohit and Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. They profess Theravada Buddhist of Hinayana sects. Agriculture is the main sources of income of the people. Therein, tea plantation is also seems to be flourishing. There found the prevalence of opium in the society.

Opium and its various constituents exert effects upon the body ranging from analgesia, or insensitivity to pain, to narcosis, or depressed physiological activity leading to stupor. Opium users describe experiencing a feeling of calm and well-being. Opium addicts in otherwise good physical and mental health whose drug needs are met are thought to experience no debilitating physiological effects from their addiction, although there is some evidence that immune function is compromised. However, their preoccupation with the drug and its acquisition can lead to malnutrition and general poor self-care and an increased risk of disease.

Though opium is a medicine it is a dangerous drug as well. Undoubtedly, when taken in mild dose under strict medical supervision it may be fit the taker; otherwise it creates a suicidal effect. Moreover, at the pleasure of a single soul, a whole family and the society at large suffer. Besides draining one's economy it makes a man less productive, thus making him a liability for the nation. Youths are the predominant addicts in the societies. By knowing the gravity of the problems of opium abuse, institutional intervention has been ensuring. The main problems possessed are social, economic and health problems. However if the ongoing problem is not controlled then it will steer the society towards destruction. Therefore, it needs to focus the problem as a serious and great hamper in the development of the society. In addition, it has to identify the constraints in meeting the needs of the people. Sufficient motivation, post camp monitoring and public awareness may be initiated on priority basis to combat this heavenly demon (opium).

- 1. Improvement in their existing socio-economic conditions.
- 2. Providing general awareness amongst the people regarding government extension programmes and providing avenues for marketing of goods.
- 3. Training, a major input must be there. Availability of medicines.
- 4. More and more evolvement of youth clubs, women's groups, health agencies, implementing governmental programmes.
- 5. Better utilization of lands to improve agriculture and provide a viable alternative to opium by introducing other cash crops.
- 6. Occasional training with respect to different crafts to facilitate development.
- 7. De-addiction facilities could go a long way in controlling addiction.

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Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities

ISSN (Online): 2583-1712

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