

An Empirical Study on the Methods of Drug Peddling Among Young Adults in Central and West Chennai City

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Abstract

This research paper examines the dynamics of drug peddling among young adults in Central and West Chennai city. This quantitative study mainly focuses on the age distribution, regional disparities, and accessibility of drugs, and implications for intervention strategies. This article explores various influencing factors which eventually contribute to the peddling of drug among the young adults and indulging in illicit activities. By adopting evidence-based interventions and fostering collaboration between policymakers, and law enforcement agencies, we can work towards mitigating the adverse effects of drug peddling and creating a safer environment for young adults in Chennai.

Keywords: Drug peddling, Transportation, Financial benefits, Modus operandi.

1. Introduction

The illicit trade of drugs, colloquially known as drug peddling, remains a pervasive and multifaceted issue globally, with far-reaching consequences for individuals, communities, and societies at large. Defined as the illegal sale, distribution, or trafficking of controlled substances, drug peddling represents a complex nexus of social, economic, and public health challenges that demand urgent attention and comprehensive solutions. Across the world, drug peddling thrives in environments characterized by socioeconomic disparities, limited access to education and health care, and the influence of organized crime networks. Individuals grappling with poverty and unemployment often find themselves drawn into the lucrative but perilous world of drug peddling as a means of economic survival. Moreover, the prevalence of drug peddling is perpetuated by a lack of awareness about the risks associated with substance abuse, coupled with the ready availability of illicit drugs facilitated by well-established trafficking networks. The detrimental effects of drug peddling extend far beyond the realm of individual health and well-being. Understanding the global scope of drug peddling is essential for developing effective strategies to address this complex and multifaceted issue. By recognizing the interconnectedness of drug markets and the diverse challenges they pose, policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and communities can work together to mitigate the harms associated with drug peddling on a global scale. The proliferation of drug peddling among young adults represents a formidable challenge to public health and safety in contemporary urban environments. In Central and West Chennai, the emergence of illicit drug markets

has become increasingly pronounced, with young adults actively involved in the distribution and sale of narcotics. Understanding the methods and strategies employed in drug peddling is paramount to devising effective interventions to mitigate its adverse effects on individuals and communities alike. Drug peddling encompasses the illicit activities involved in the sale, distribution, or trafficking of controlled substances, including but not limited to narcotics, hallucinogens, stimulants, and prescription drugs. It involves the unauthorized exchange of these substances for monetary gain or other valuables. Drug peddling typically operates within underground or clandestine networks, which may range from small-scale street-level dealers to large-scale organized crime syndicates.

The process of drug peddling often begins with the acquisition of illicit drugs from manufacturers, suppliers, or traffickers. These substances are then distributed through various channels, including street-level sales, online platforms, or smuggling operations. Peddlers may employ tactics such as hiding drugs in concealed compartments, using couriers for transportation, or leveraging digital communication tools for anonymous transactions. Drug peddling has profound social, economic, and health-related consequences. It fuels substance abuse and addiction, leading to negative impacts on individual health and well-being. Additionally, drug peddling contributes to criminal activity, including violence, theft, and organized crime. It undermines public safety and security, erodes community cohesion, and poses significant public health risks, such as the spread of infectious diseases and overdose deaths.

2. Review of Literature

Nimona Shaka, and Neville Selhore et al. (2019) A qualitative study on need of structural interventions for linking people who inject drugs with antiretroviral treatment states that Individuals who infuse drugs (PWIDs) are exceedingly defenseless to HIV disease, and existing mediations have not successfully connected them to antiretroviral treatment (Craftsmanship). A consider conducted in-depth interviews with 31 HIV-infected PWIDs found that individual obstructions, such as dissent of HIV status, fatalistic demeanor, and transportation troubles, deterred them from looking for out a interface to care (LTC). Choices such as social systems, sedate vendors, or portable wellbeing units were considered. The think about concluded that PWIDs confront different obstructions to LTC, and basic mediations (SIs) are required for LTC. Methodologies such as narrating, portable wellbeing units, and social systems are proposed for instruction and LTC. Existing intercessions have not viably diminished HIV predominance and connected to Craftsmanship care, and unused SI mediations are required for LTC.

Windle, James, et al. (2020). The article on vulnerable children and young people involvement in county lines during drug dealing discusses the challenges of safeguarding children and young people from out-of-town dealers (OTD), which is described as county lines, particularly under-resourced frontline practitioners who can experience some difficulties in identifying the vulnerability among young people caught up in county lines.

The article concluded that young people are indulging in county lines and being exploited by gangs due to being disempowered by circumstances like minimal income, financial instability, nowhere to live, and no friends or family. The author also believes that further research can explore both the bigger data pertaining to arrest, victimization, and further solutions and participation.

Del Rocio Valdivia, Fatima, et al. (2021), the study of the drug trafficking region in northern Mexico is an analysis of racism and dispossession. The study explores the relationship between drug trafficking and the historical structures of racial gender dominance in Mexico. The study argues that people in the Tauhumara region experience a kind of sovereignty that enacts racialization, colonialism, and contrasting

power relations. Some people are influenced by the ideology of the region, which leads them to engage in drug trafficking. Some racial masculine hegemonic models are driving forces in the decision to join the drug trafficking armed forces. The article elucidates and sheds light on the relationship between colonialism, race, power, gender, and drug trafficking in Mexico.

Olanrewaju, Maranatha Morenike, et al. (2022) The study on social media comments on Nigeria's NDLEA war against drug abuse and propensity to reduce peddling concluded by advocating the need for social media control of explicit content that shows the usage of hard drugs. The study is done by using social media like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Social media is used nowadays to market harmful goods and behaviors that target youth and teenagers. Drug peddlers market their goods on social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. The study elucidated by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency found that Nigerians who work on Facebook approve and appreciate methods employed by NDLEA. NDLEA shares suggestions from their studies on social media platforms and encourages those platforms to take action against drug marketing through online media platforms.

Onyejelam, Timothy Eke Ledirchikwu et al. (2023). The study of the portrayal of drug-related crimes among teenagers in Nollywood movies focuses on and critically analyzes how drug-related crimes were portrayed among teenagers and how they were depicted in the movie, as well as how those drug-related crimes glamorize in cinematic media. The study concluded that Nollywood movies play a crucial role in shaping society's perception of drug-related crimes among teenagers. The study observed that Nigerian movies can be a useful tool in educating teenagers about the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of making the right decisions.

Edino - ubong E. (2023) the study on socio economic context of entry on Exit from retail drug dealing. Exploring the Narratives of Nigerian dealers, Focuses on economic decline, poor livelihood and unemployment opportunities influence entry into retail drug distribution. The Data Collected with 31 male retail drug dealers with the Age group of 26–45 years in Nigeria and Snowball Sampling Technique used in This Study. The Study concluded that Socio economic Condition is the foremost reason to enter and as well as exit from drug trade and, poor livelihood conditions and limited Opportunities for legitimate unemployment also a reason behind drug trading by youngsters in Nigeria.

3. Methodology

3.1 Aim:

The study aims to examine and analyse drug peddling among young adults in Central and West Chennai city, delve into the intricate mechanisms of drug peddling among young adults through a rigorous empirical investigation.

3.2 Problem Statement:

- Drug peddling among young adults in Central and West Chennai poses a significant threat to public health, community well-being, and social stability. Despite efforts to combat illicit drug trade, the prevalence and impact of this phenomenon continue to escalate, adversely affecting individuals, families, and neighbourhoods across the region.
- The lack of comprehensive understanding of the dynamics, motivations, and contributing factors driving drug peddling among young adults exacerbates the challenge of developing effective intervention strategies and policy responses to address this pressing issue. This problem statement succinctly outlines the significance of the issue, the gaps in current understanding, and the rationale for conducting empirical research to address this problem.

- The project research attempts to identify the peddling of drug substances among young adults and how those (operations) peddling happens in Central and West Chennai city.

3.3 Objective

- Examine and analyse the methods of drug peddling among young adults by conducting a comprehensive assessment.
- To analyse easy accessibility of drug substances and through which counter measures can be drawn in common.
- To diagnose specific reasons and underlying motivations driving young adults to engage in drug peddling like peer group influence, sub-culture status, economic needs.
- To understand the transportation, distribution networks and mode of operation used by young adults in peddling of drug substances.
- To identify types of drug substances which are peddled more in Central and West Chennai.

3.4 Sampling and Sampling Techniques

The study samples young adults aged 18-24 from Central and West Chennai cities, including Maduravoyal, Egmore, and Arumbakkam, and Ambattur, Avadi, Kallikuppam, Thirumullaivoyal, and Padi. The snowball sampling technique is used, a non-probability sampling method, to identify drug peddling groups and individuals, as it is challenging to identify.

A pilot study was conducted to explore the impact of drug peddling on young adults. Snowball sampling was employed to reach out to hard-to-reach populations, such as drug peddling participants. The process involved identifying a small number of participants who met inclusion criteria and gradually expanding the sample. This approach allowed for diverse perspectives and experiences, but may lead to sample homogeneity if participants referred individuals with similar backgrounds. The pilot study was conducted before the main study, ensuring diversity in demographics and experiences. A total of 50 participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques, allowing for flexibility and depth in data collection. However, the study may face social desirability bias or reluctance to disclose sensitive information, necessitating rapport-building and trust-building strategies.

The research tool includes:

One and one interview schedule

Section: 01 – Personal details

Section: 02 – Family and socio economic background

Section: 03 – Personal habits and relationships

Section: 04 – Accessibility and circulation

Section: 05 – Peddling and guidance

3.5 Reliability Statistics

Reliability statistics in SPSS are commonly used to assess the internal consistency or reliability of a scale or measure, particularly in questionnaire-based research. Cronbach's alpha is commonly used for assessing internal consistency reliability. The most commonly reported statistic is Cronbach's alpha, which ranges from 0 to 1. Higher values indicate greater internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's alpha values above 0.60 are generally considered acceptable for research purposes, although the acceptable threshold may vary depending on the context and the nature of the scale. The generated Cronbach's alpha for the study reads as 0.628 which states the reliability.

3.6 Data Analysis

The study utilized SPSS for quantitative data analysis, including descriptive statistics and percentages.

Data cleaning was done by importing data, checking for missing values and inconsistencies. Variable recoding was done to facilitate analysis. The analysis plan was outlining specific analyses based on research questions and objectives. The results were interpreted to discuss their relevance to the study.

4. Results and Discussions

- Procuring drugs by the help of their friends is the common outcome through analysis. 72% of young adults says that they get easy access to drug substances in which procuring drug substances from peer group is 52% and by local area members 32% and through local shops is 8%.
- Peddling of drug substances among young adults is very common as they have high number of peer group influence. Hence, drug substances are peddled widely inside the college premises. It is evident that drugs are procured only by the means of peddling, without which the inhaling substances like cannabis cannot be procured by young adults.
- Peddling of drug substances enumerated more in local areas in day time (74%) while comparing to night time (26%).
- According to this study, the age category of 50 respondents ranges from 18 to 24 years in which the age span of **18 to 20 years consists more respondents** and also respondents of 22 to 24 years are working adults among the 50 of them.
- As per the researcher's view, the category of **22 to 24 years of young adults involves more in peddling** whose vast consumers are young adults of 18 to 20 years of age.
- 82%(41) of young adults are using drug substances like powdered cannabis, inhaling drug substances, cool lip, acid patches, drug tablets and injections, among the 82% of young adults **74% of them buying drug substances for exchange of money.**
- Powder substances, Tablets and Injections are procured by 40% of respondents for rupees 500 to 700. While 34% of respondents procure it for rupees 300 to 500. 8% of respondents spend rupees 800 to 1000 or more at times. Of these rupees **300 to 500 is reasonable hence, powdered substances are procured higher when compared to other substances.** As tablets and injections are prescribed by physicians, peddlers find it difficult to procure such substances without concerned prescription and also these costs higher when compared to powdered substances.
- These types of substances are available broadly in Central and West Chennai city. As per the analysis, 52% of respondents procures the drugs inside Chennai through local transports including railways and buses. 22% of respondents procure drugs from outside Chennai city.
- In certain areas there are particular group and head, guiding adolescents in drug peddling, such as 44% of respondents admits that a particular gang is working in their area with an head member.
- The head members gains political background and hold a lower post in the party. This factor allows the young adults influenced by them to peddle drugs recklessly and they have a good knowledge on both laws and the loop holes. Among the 50 respondents, 48% of them claimed that the head member does not have any political background while 36% of them claims that they have political background.

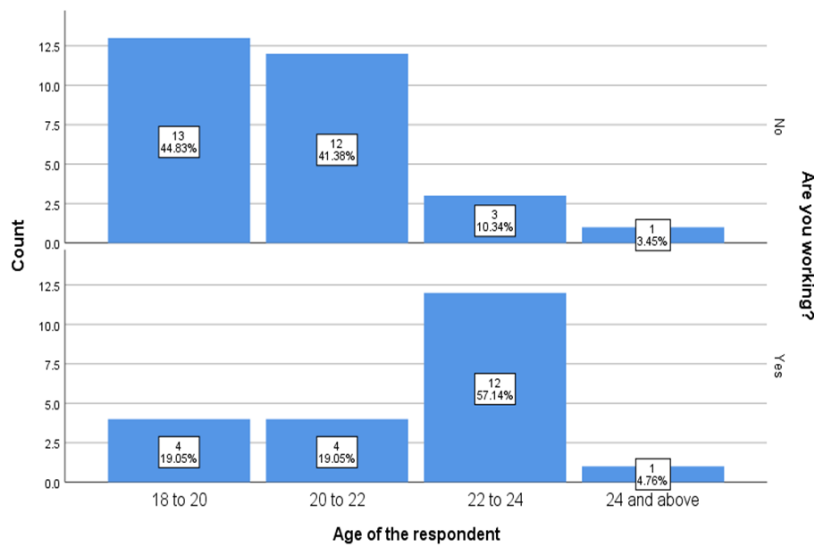


Figure 4.1: Age of the respondents

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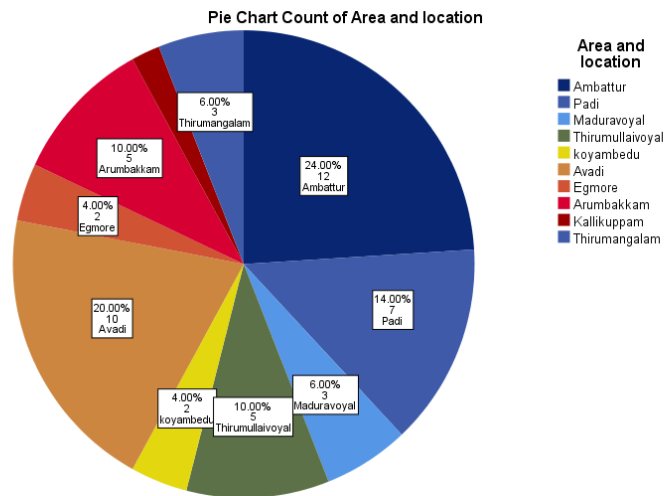


Figure 4.2: Area and location

According to the aforementioned figure of interpreted result, the respondents are more from Ambattur region reading 24% and least in Kallikuppam.

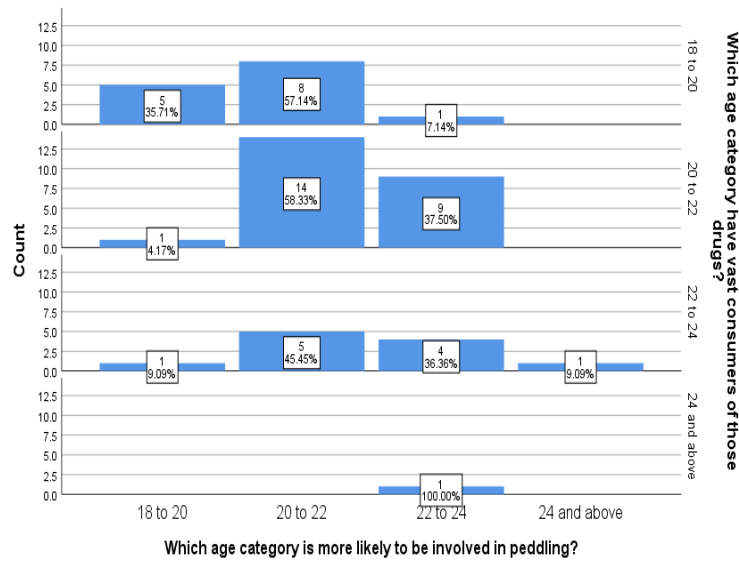


Figure 4.3 : Age category of consumers and peddlers

The age category of 20 to 22 years are more likely to be involved in peddling as well as the most consumers. While 24 and above age category people peddle but does not consume. The category of 18 to 20 years comparatively peddle and consume less.

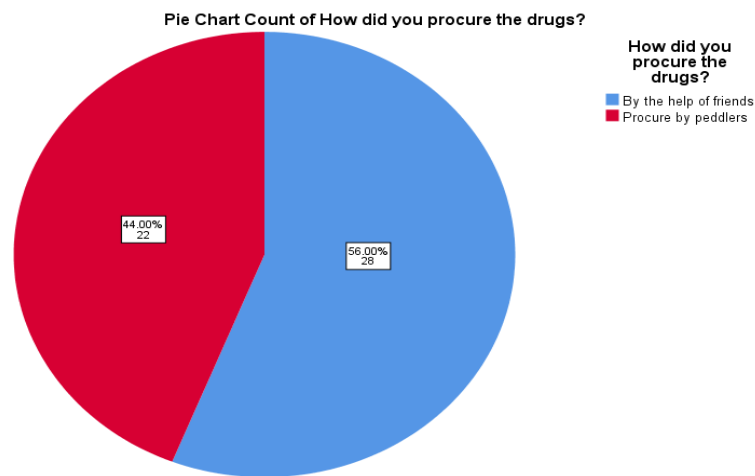
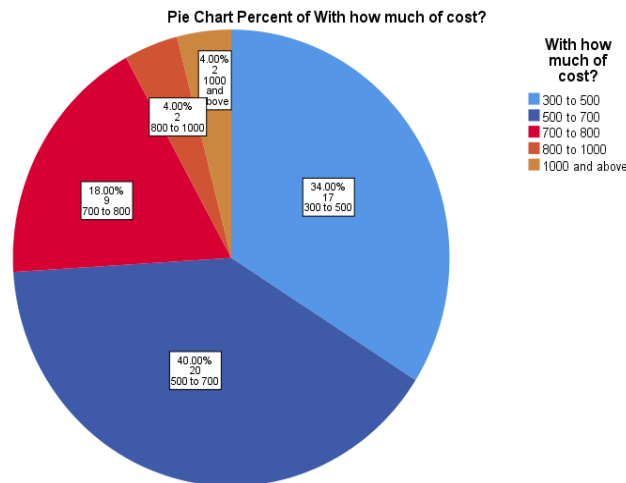


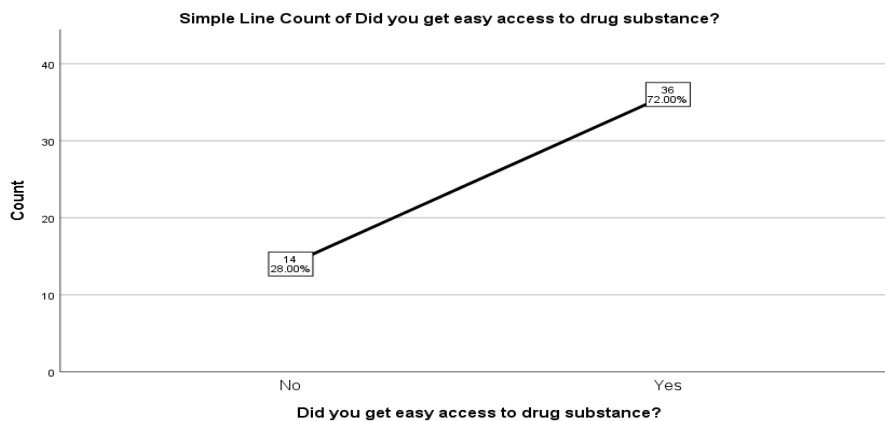
Figure 4.4: Procuring of drugs by respondents

The accessibility of drug substances in Chennai city is quite easy hence, procuring drugs does not pose difficult among young adults. The illustration reads that 56% of respondents procuring drugs by the help of their friends with or without money transactions and 44% of respondents procure drugs by peddlers with monetary transactions.



4. 5: Cost of drug substances

The degree of variance of drug substances procured by the young adults in Chennai city is quite vast. For instance, powder substance, Tablets and Injections in which 40% of respondents procure it for rupees 500 to 700. While 34% of respondents procure it for rupees 300 to 500. 8% of respondents spend rupees 800 to 1000 or more at times. Of these rupees 300 to 500 is reasonable hence, powdered substances are procured higher when compared to other substances. As tablets and injections are prescribed by physicians, peddlers find it difficult to procure such substances without concern prescription and also these costs higher when compared to powdered substances.



4.6: Accessibility of drugs

Chennai is a metropolitan city which has various organizations for both educational and working professionals, Young Adults from other states resides here in various executive boards. These young adults procure drugs from their hometown like Andhra Pradesh and Hyderabad over here most frequently. Here, 72% of respondents confesses, they get easy access to drug substances and 28% of respondents finds it difficult to access for the same.

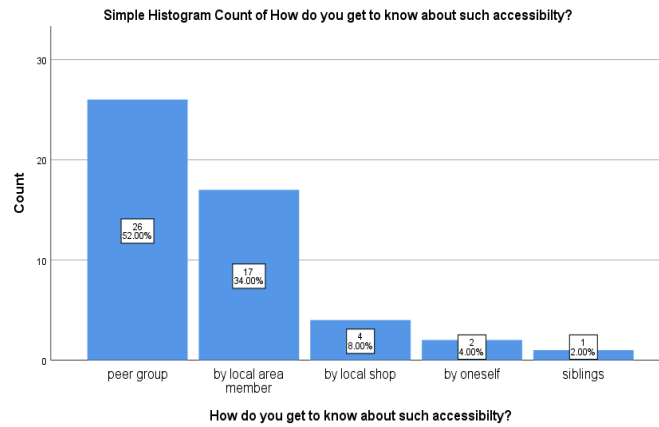


Figure 4.7: knowledge of accessibility

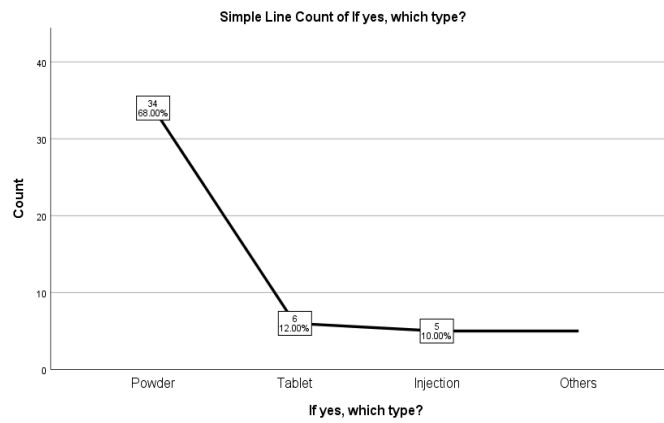


Figure 4.8: Type of the substance

As communication plays a major role in the illegal activities, it is the only means of drug transaction between the peddlers and the consumers. Peer groups takes a major part in the influence of drug peddling among individuals which reads 52% according to the study. It is also simplified as 34% of the respondents get accessible to the drug substances by the local area members. The local shop, self-accessibility, siblings shares a minor role.

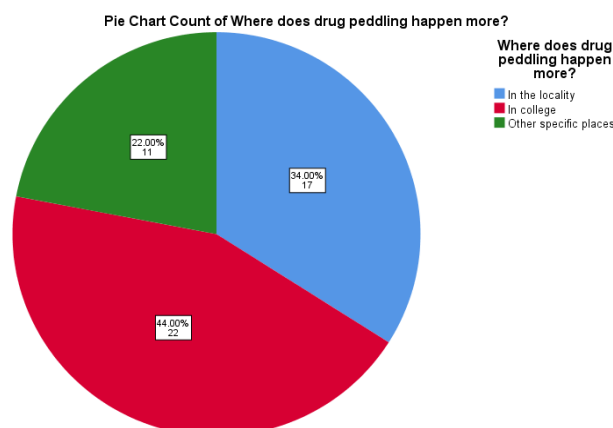


Figure 4.9: places where peddling happen

As aforementioned, Peer group creates a major impact in the drug influence among young adults. The educational institutions act as a source of accumulation for the young individuals, as the habit of drug procuring is learnt from the peer groups. Hence, among 50 respondents 44% of them admits that drugs are peddled inside the college premises due to lack of disciplinary inspections and implications by the institutional managements in Chennai. The chances of usage of drug substances before the class hours is quite threatening and some minor tobacco products are consumed during class hours.

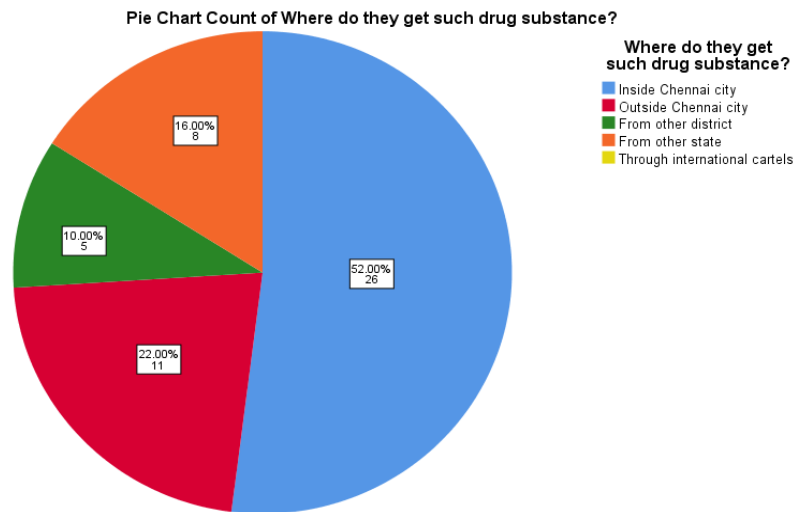


Figure 4.10: Accessibility of substances

These types of substances are available broadly in Central and West Chennai city. As per the analysis, 52% of respondents procure the drugs in Central and West Chennai city through local transports including railways and buses. 22% of the respondents procure drugs from outside Chennai city.

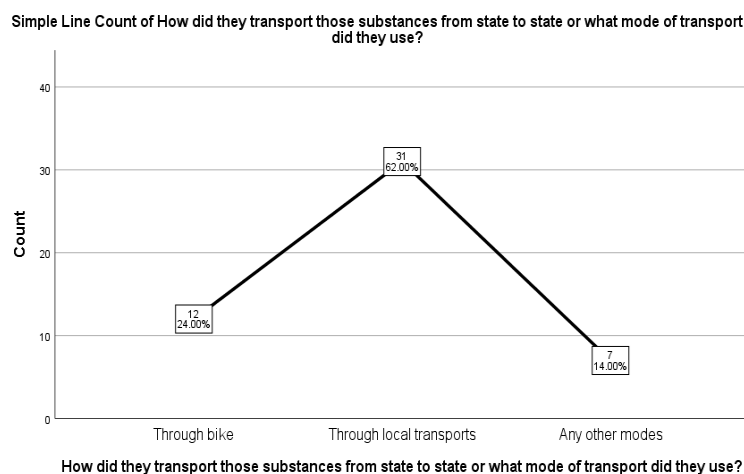


Figure 4.11: Transportation of substances

The transportation of drug substances are en-routed through Southeast part of India gets illicit drug substances through the porous and free borders in between **Andhra Pradesh** and **Tamil Nadu**. The young adults may procure drugs form Andhra Pradesh and secure the substance under the petrol tank of their motorcycles and also trafficking substance by Indian railways.

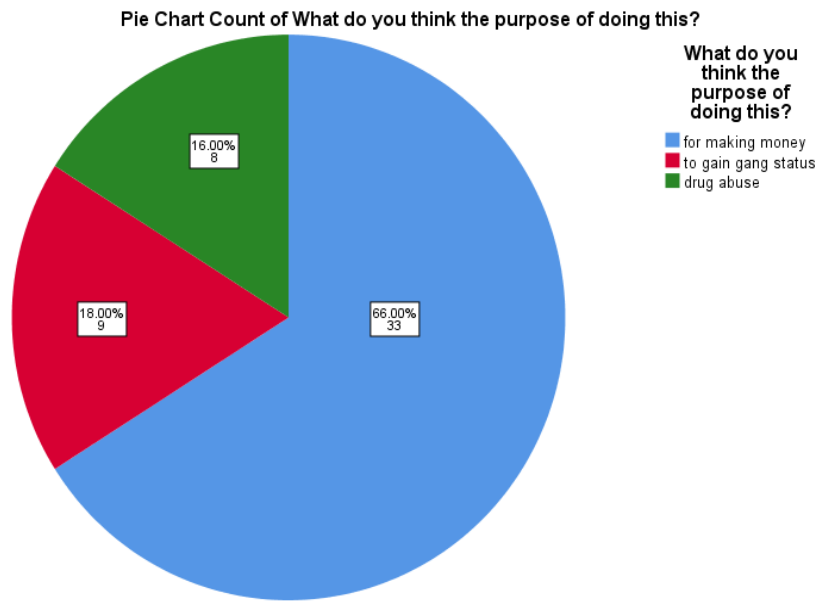


Figure 4.12: Purpose of peddling

In the materialistic world, everything is done for the monetary purposes. Among 50 respondents 66% of their perspective for the purpose of indulging in peddling are for making money. 18% of their perspective are to gain gang status among the gang works among them. 16% of them have the perspective of peddling is drug abuse.

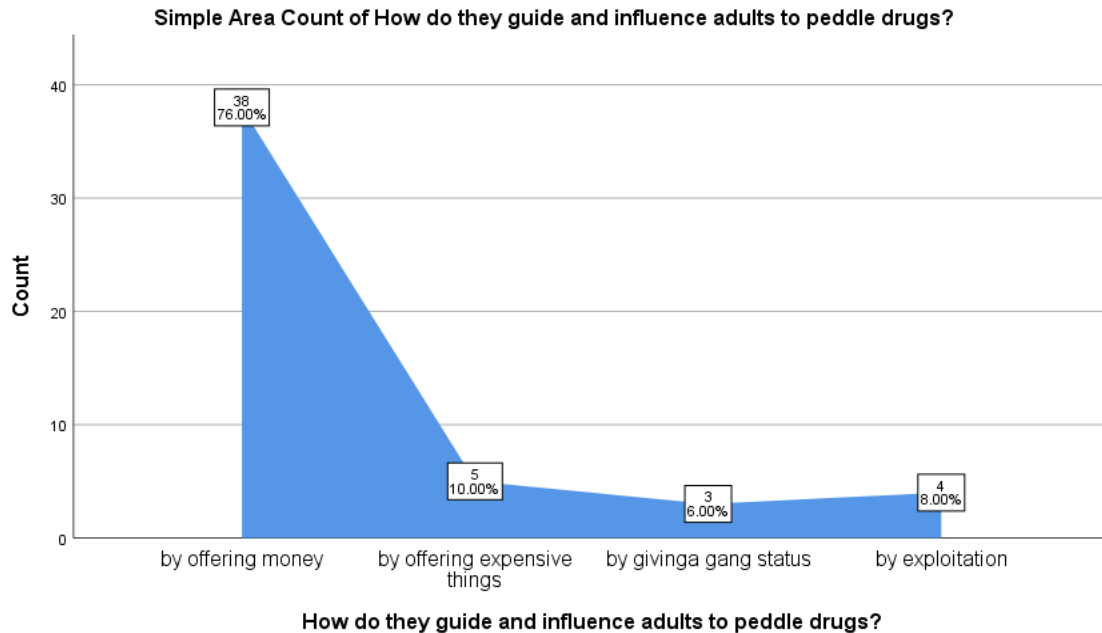


Figure 4.13: Guidance and influence

There are certain gang works held among peddlers. There are position among the gang members and they guide and influence adults to peddle drugs. By the study, 76% respondents have the perspective of drug peddling is influenced by offering money to the young adults. Offering expensive things, giving gang status and by exploitation also play a major role in influencing young adults in peddling.

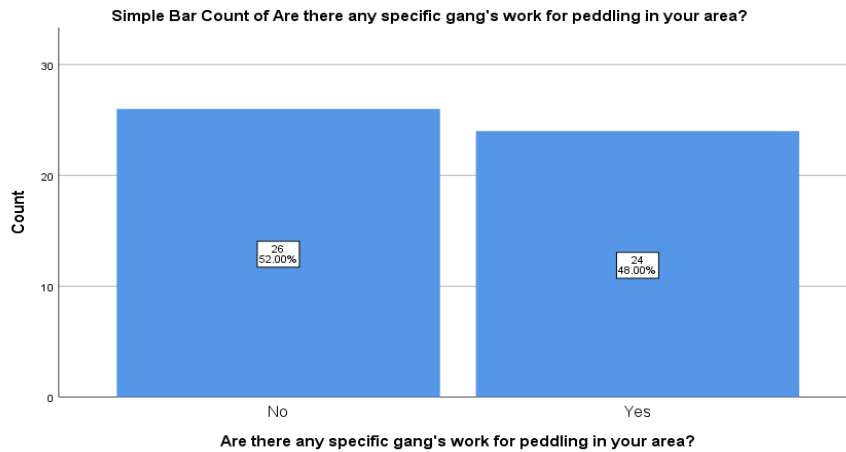
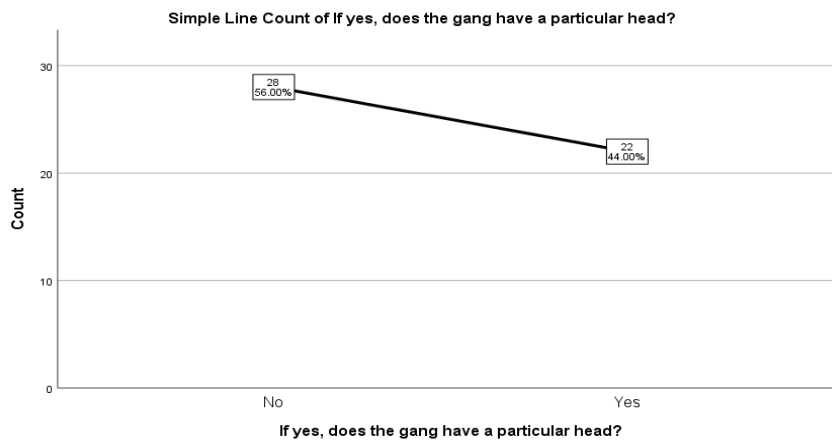


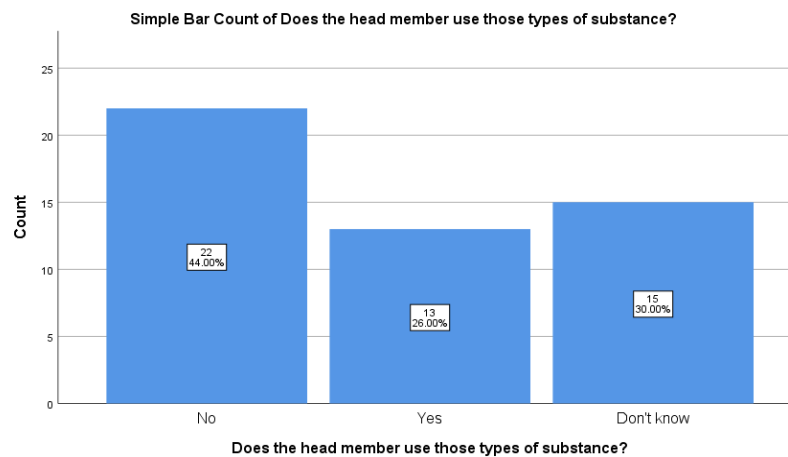
Figure 4.14: Gang work for peddling

Among 50 respondents 48% of respondents admits that a specific gang is working in their local areas in peddling drug substances to young adults and 52% of respondents admits that there are no such specific gangs work upon peddling activities. But, they guide young adults in accessing such drug substances.



4.15: Particular head of a gang

In certain areas there are particular groups and heads, who are guiding adolescents in drug peddling, where 48% of respondent mentions that a particular gang is working in their area with a head member.



4.16: substances use by head member

Through this study, the researcher finds a controversial fact that among 50 respondents 44% of them admits that the head member who involves in peddling activities with the gang members in their localities does not consume those substances peddled by their own gang. On the other hand, 26% of the respondents admits that the head member also consumes those drug substances peddled by their own group.

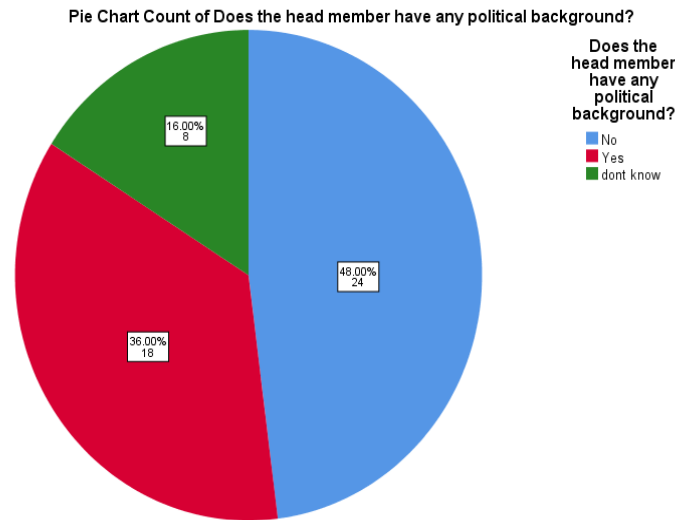


Figure 4.17: about head member political background

The head members gain political background and hold a lower post in the party. This factor allows the young adults influenced by them to peddle drugs recklessly and they have a good knowledge on both laws and the loop holes. Among the 50 respondents, 48% of them claimed that the head member does not have any political background while 36% of them claims that they have political background.

5. Summary and Conclusion

In urban centers like Chennai, the phenomenon of peddling, or the informal selling of goods or services, represents a vital aspect of the local economy. Within this context, young adults often play a significant role in utilizing various methods to peddle goods and sell it to consumers. Understanding the dynamics of peddling among young adults is crucial for several reasons.

Despite its significance, there is a paucity of empirical research specifically focusing on the methods of peddling employed by young adults in Chennai City. Existing studies often overlook the unique experiences and perspectives of this demographic, this research seeks to fill this gap by conducting an empirical study on the methods of peddling utilized by young adults in West and Central Chennai City. By employing quantitative analysis techniques with SPSS software, the study aims to provide insights into the drug peddling among young adults in Central and West Chennai city, delve into the intricate mechanisms of drug peddling among young adults through a rigorous empirical investigation.

5.1 Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from the research are mentioned below from the findings of the present research paper.

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the intricate dynamics of drug peddling among young adults in West and Central Chennai. The findings underscore the prevalence of this issue, with a significant portion of respondents engaged in peddling and consumption of illicit substances. The age distribution reveals a

higher involvement of working adults aged 22 to 24 in peddling, while younger age groups, particularly those aged 18 to 20, constitute the primary consumers.

Regional disparities are evident, with Ambattur emerging as a hotspot for drug-related activities. Accessibility to drugs remains a pressing concern, facilitated by peer networks and lax enforcement measures in educational institutions. Moreover, the influx of young adults from other states contributes to the easy procurement of substances from external sources.

The study highlights the role of peer influence and local area networks in perpetuating drug peddling. Additionally, the presence of specific gangs involved in these activities underscores the organized nature of the trade. Despite these challenges, a notable portion of respondents expresses difficulty in accessing drugs, suggesting potential avenues for intervention.

Effective strategies to address drug peddling must encompass targeted interventions tailored to the unique needs of different age groups and regions. Strengthening enforcement measures within educational institutions, enhancing community outreach programs, and fostering collaboration between law enforcement agencies and local communities are critical steps in combating this multifaceted issue.

Furthermore, efforts to address the underlying socio-economic factors driving drug peddling, such as unemployment and economic deprivation, are essential for long-term prevention. By leveraging evidence-based interventions and fostering a multi-sectoral approach involving policymakers, law enforcement agencies, community stakeholders, and educational institutions, we can work towards creating a safer and healthier environment for young adults in Chennai.

5.2 Limitations

- Among 50 young adults, 82% of them are using various drug substances, also some adults among them involve in peddling activities. Although they involve in peddling, they are not concluding or exposing themselves as they are a part of it.
- This study does not conclude a particular modus operandi that is followed by them in common; it varies from area to area.
- Section 20 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985 deals with the offences related to not only consumption but also cultivation, possession, use, sale, purchase, import, and export, transporting and warehousing of cannabis. It is a punishable offense and it leads to rigorous imprisonment of up to 10 years with fine upto 1 lakh rupees. Most of the young adults are not aware that possession of drug substances is a crime. So their deterrence on peddling is null. Hence, we are not able to conclude that they did this only due to peer group influence but are also not aware of such legislations and act.

5.3 Recommendations

- The study shows that out of 50 respondents, 78% of them are using alcohol and cigarettes and 82% of them are using drugs, which indicates high numbers of young adults are familiar with drug substances. Unawareness of future consequences is a major contributing factor. Proper awareness and education especially among young adults is necessary to reduce the usage of those substances by them.
- Among 50 respondents 44% of them reveal that peddling of drug substances happens more inside college premises and 50% of them are accepting that they are consuming those substances inside the classroom. Proper vigilance of every college management should ensure drug free campuses and implementation of espionage may help in the decrease of usage of drug substances and peddling inside the campus is recommended.

- Most of the young adults accepts that accessibility of drug substances is more and hence they can use whenever in need. Once a peddling happens inside an area or college campus without any hindrances, the usage also increases. Here, the problem is not with the young adults who are using it but, with the peddlers who supply. Hence the police department should keep an eye on peddlers and when the peddling stops it reciprocates the usage.
- As the constraints of samples is only up to 50 young adults in this study, which does not include children and adults does not provide a confirmatory and should be treated with caution. Further research could examine the differences between peddling among various age group.

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