

### Programme Report

#### Central University of Punjab, Bathinda successfully organised two days National seminar on “Socio-Legal & Other Challenges for Prevention of Drug Abuse in India: Existing Approaches & Agenda of Reforms”

7<sup>th</sup> February 2020, Bathinda: Central University of Punjab successfully organised a two-day national seminar on the “Socio-Legal & Other Challenges for Prevention of Drug Abuse in India: Existing Approaches & Agenda of Reforms” scheduled on 6-7 February 2020 at its city campus. CUPB conducted this National Seminar in collaboration with National Institute of Social Defense (NISD), New Delhi. The seminar was basically to bring Academicians, research scholars, social workers, and organizations on a common platform to find out the possible approaches and ways to prevent drug abuse by way of making a working agenda of reforms. The Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker of the inaugural session were Prof R.K. Kohli, Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, and Dr Satish Thapar, Senior Consultant – Psychiatrist, Max Super Specialty Hospital, Bathinda. Valedictory Session of the Seminar was graced by Mr Jupinder Singh, Special Correspondent Punjab Bureau, The Tribune Chandigarh and Prof. Amit Ludri, Department of Law, Kurukshetra University, on 7th February. Around 158 faculty and research scholars representing 7 states from 15 Universities took part in this Seminar.

The programme commenced with the Welcome address by Prof Tarun Arora, Associate Dean Student Welfare. He mentioned that the aim of this Seminar is basically to bring Academicians, research scholars, social workers, and organizations on a common platform to find out the possible approaches and ways to prevent drug abuse by way of making a working agenda of reforms. Dr Deepak Chauhan, Programme Convener, HoD Dept. of Law, gave a brief introduction about Seminar theme. He stated, this national seminar will be having six technical sessions, wherein about 150 participants from various States, deliberate the ideas on the approaches of working agenda of reforms to curb the problem of drug abuse. Technical sessions in the seminar will be chaired by worthy personalities from the field of Medical Science, Health and Research, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Physical Education, Law, Social work, and Economics.

Prof P Ramarao, Dean Academic Affairs, informed that as per recent report named “Magnitude of Substance use in India 2019”, issued by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, around 16 crore persons i.e. 14.6 % of Indian Population in between 10 to 75 years Age Group consume Alcohol, which is a matter of concern. The more threatening fact is that out of 16 crore persons who consume alcohol, around 5.7 crore persons are problem users & 2.9 crore persons are dependent users. He also highlighted that as per the above report, 3.1 Crore people use Cannabis (Bhang, Charas, Ganja etc) and 2.3 Crore persons consume Opioid (Opium, Heroin, Pharmaceutical Opioids etc). He said we need to treat this problem as a disease rather than a social problem, and consider a drug addict as a patient and take him to de-addiction centres for needful treatment.

In his keynote address, Dr Satish Thapar mentioned that the magnitude of this problem is acute. He emphasized that we need to look at human development factors like poverty, peer pressure, family culture, stress etc, which are the main cause of this problem. He asserted, that good family environment, aggression control, teach people how to say No, Discussion about this problem, & Social awareness about the harmful impact of these substances can be effective preventive measures to deal with this problem. He said, the main problem nowadays is the penetration of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) like Cannabis, Cocaine, LSD, ecstasy etc, and the other names of these NPS are Synthetic Drugs, Party Pills, Herbal Ecstasy etc. He informed that in the last few years, almost 50 % of deaths of drug addicts occur due to over consumption of NPS. He added, parents can need to be cautious & discuss with their child, if they find child showcase - secretive behaviour, disturbed sleep, blood marks on their body or clothes. He concluded his talk, with a message that drug de-addiction is a long process, but we need to stay with and encourage the patient who wants to leave drugs.

Vice-Chancellor Prof R.K. Kohli mentioned that addiction of any kind is bad. He added habits are easy to make but hard to break. He said we need to look into the social, economic, & their environmental factors of drug addicts patients to identify the root cause of this problem. He stated that will-power is the biggest medicine for get rid of bad habits. He mentioned that this National Seminar will be helpful to discover new approaches and to set an agenda of reforms to deal with this problem.



Figure 1 Dr Satish Thapar addressing the gathering (Left), and VC Prof RK Kohli felicitating the guest speaker

During the Valedictory Session, Dr Deepak K Chauhan, Programme Convener, & HoD Dept. of Law, presented Programme Report. He informed that total six technical sessions were conducted wherein participants presented 58 paper presenters & deliberated the ideas on the approaches of working agenda of reforms to curb the problem of drug abuse. Technical sessions in the seminar were chaired by worthy personalities from the field of Medical Science, Health and Research, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Physical Education, Law, Social work, and Economics.

Mr. Jupinder Singh, Special Correspondent Punjab Bureau, The Tribune Chandigarh mentioned that media is constantly highlighting the issue of drug abuse in our society. He said that close to 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the youngsters get indulged into drug addiction under peer pressure and their average spending per day range from 50 to 1500/-. He added, a single drug addict not only affects his family but also becomes a burden on his society. He asserted that this problem can be resolved by spreading awareness among youngsters about the harmful effect of Tobacco, Liquor and New Psychoactive Substances. While addressing the gathering, Prof. Amit Ludri, Department of Law, Kurukshetra University, mentioned that legal aspect need to reviewed to eradicate all illegal drugs and NPS from our society. He asserted that parents should spend quality time with their children and encourage them to take part in sports and physical activities in their leisure time.

Prof Anjana Munshi, Dean Research appreciated organizing team for successfully executing this National Seminar. She mentioned that we need to work together with interdisciplinary research & collaborations to find effective solutions to deal with this problem. Towards, the end, Dr Pushpinder Singh & Dr Puneet Pathak thanked everyone for making this programme a success.



Figure 2 Prof Amrit Ludri (Left), Sh Jupinder Singh (Centre) addressing the Gathering, and Guest Speaker awarding Certificates to Participants (Right).