CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Drug addiction in the recent decades has become a concern of every individual, community and nation. Mankind no doubt has been using and abusing drugs right from very beginning, but in the present century drug addiction has emerged as a cancer and has brought within its fold almost all the segments of the society. The technological revolution has brought about sweeping changes throughout the world and has reduced the entire world to a global village. Knowledge explosion and technological revolution, on one hand, has brought an overall development and bestowed on humanity all the comforts, but on the other hand, it has engulfed mankind in confusion and chaos and has made youth to resort to drugs (Uddin 1997).

Human behaviour cannot be isolated from the social, cultural and environmental reality surrounding it. While objective reality is related to the processes of production, subjectivity is the experience of individuals that shapes their world views and lifestyles. Both these realities form the basis for social action.

Earlier, society was self-regulating and did not need precise rules for effective drug control. Drug consumption was carried out openly, legitimised by cultural norms and restricted by traditional demand (Molly 2001). In any society, social change is continuous and internal conflict is outwardly expressed in nonconformist dress, hair style, pattern of living and drug habit. The drug abuse and drug addiction is one of the old maladies which the mankind has faced and is facing from time immemorial. The overall socio-economic development of the world at large has brought a number of evils. The drug abuse is one of the such evils.
The drug abuse and drug addiction is a relative term and has been tolerated by almost all the countries, but the degree of tolerance varies from community to community, religion to religion, region to region, drug to drug and from time to time. The question, whether drug use is a social problem or not, depends not so much on nature of drug consumption but frequently on how the consumption is perceived, particularly by certain moral entrepreneurs within the group who look unfavourable on the consumption of the drugs and therefore, call for social actions (Wills 1974).

The drug abuse has a long political, social, economic, medical and religious background and from time to time has been influenced by all these considerations. The economic considerations promoting drug trade also have resulted in political conflicts and on many occasions it ended in a war between the conflicting countries.

The surrounding environment, particularly geographical location of a country or place, has an important role in the drug cultivation, drug production, drug smuggling, drug abuse and drug addiction. The areas in and around Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent are known for production of the drugs. The industrialised towns throughout the world are prone to drug abuse.

The problem of drug abuse and drug addiction gained the attention of the world community and number of treaties were adopted to deal with the alarming situation created by the drug epidemic. The drug abuse or drug addiction in most of the cases results in drug dependence and a sort of urge or craving for more and more drugs is created. The number of the drug addicts throughout the world is in the upward direction and has thereby posed a great threat to the humanity. The drug dependence has multifarious ramifications which can hardly be measured by a naked eye and its
far-reaching consequential effect is in almost every sphere of the addict's life (Duncan 1985).

It was only during the second half of the 20th century that the world had to face drug invasion. Though this unprecedented invasion was fairly widespread, its intensity was not the same everywhere. America was one of the earliest countries to be engulfed by the drug epidemic. As in Europe and elsewhere, so in America also the youth had become fairly disenchanted and disillusioned with the hypocratic norms of contemporary society. The single largest factor for drug invasion at the global level was the Vietnam War. The American youth could never understand and appreciate why a war was waged against Vietnam? Why innocent people in Vietnam were massacred? Why they were forced to compulsorily join the armed forces by their government to become a party to the massive massacre in Vietnam? They preferred deserting and abandoning such a decadent society than joining the forces of massacre. They rather became ‘flower children’, the hippies, with their own norms of freedom from all shackles, hypocratic norms, double standards and unfounded restrictions. The growing permissive ethos of society pushed them to lead a nomadic adventurous life full of sex and drugs. They developed their own culture - ‘the hippie culture’ having their own philosophy of life. The American soldiers in Vietnam, cut off from their family, friends and the community by thousands of miles, depended on drugs for recreation. And even when back home they could not become their own normal self and continued with drugs and sex. Nothing could link them back to their people and society. They tottered the whole globe in search of their own dreamland and, in the process, spread the drugs; not only the old conventional ones but also the new found hard ones to all corners of the world (Modi 1997).
The magnitude of drug addiction throughout the world has shown upward trend and the addiction wave is spreading fast. The rate of addiction is very high in some of the countries, particularly those which are nearer to the drug producing belts. The abuse of heroin and other hard drugs has reached to epidemic proportion in a number of countries. In India heroin addiction has shown steady increase from 1981 and before that heroin abuse was almost insignificant in the country. In Pakistan the heroin abuse has increased and the extent of increase has been on a very higher side. Till early, 1985, heroin addiction in Sri Lanka was not a problem but it is now one of the major problem in the country. In China, the drug abuse is under control, but hard drugs are attracting Chinese youth. Japan in the recent years has witnessed a boom of the stimulants. Heroin abuse in Hongkong, Malaysia and Singapore showed a tendency to stabilize, still the magnitude of the problem is great. The abuse of heroin and other drugs is posing a serious problem in Thailand and Singapore (Uddin 1997).

The drug abuse particularly the abuse of hard drugs in the countries examined, was in the beginning confined to the big cities only. In the recent years, it has spread to the rural areas as well. The abuse of other drugs is also on increase. In most of the cities a multiple drug culture has developed. The recidivism is a common phenomena in almost all the countries. It is commonly recognised that recidivism is one of the most serious, persistent and difficult problem in the treatment of the heroin abusers. It is also widely acknowledged that the problem of recidivism is closely linked with the problem of integrating the client into non-drug using segments of his or her own community. The drug dependence among the youth has become a general problem and in most of the cases it has precipitated in the form of criminality.
It is difficult for any country to have the actual assessment of magnitude of the drug addiction, as the population of the addicts is on increase. Almost all the countries of the world are infected by drug abuse. However, the rate of the addiction and magnitude varies from country to country and in the same country from place to place and time to time.

It is obvious that one of the legacies of the social upheavals of 1960’s is that psycho-active drugs have become part of the mainstream of the developing and developed countries. The schools, colleges, homes and communities cannot remain free from the drug abuse. The drugs are in great demand and the supply is plentiful. Social norms have changed and the drugs are not only available, but are everywhere.

The youth throughout the world constitute a majority of the addict population and represent all the segments of the society. The elderly people have been found abusing soft drugs while the trend among the youth is towards hard drugs. The religion of the addict has nothing to do with the addiction or pattern of abuse but addiction by and large is a male activity.

The drug effects vary from person to person depending upon the nature of the drug and the personality of the addict. The drugs have a number of actions and these actions may be pleasant or unpleasant depending upon various factors. The drugs rob the youth of their precious time, stamina and health. They interrupt critical learning process at time, stamina and health. They interrupt critical learning process, at time for ever. Teenagers who use drugs are unlikely to withdraw and increasingly develop a sort of dependency (Uddin 1997).

The drug related offences have their implications at international level and the nature of penal policy regarding control of drug abuse in one country has definite impact so far as the problem in the neighbouring and other countries is concerned. The impact is vice-versa also. Therefore, the
laws of a country directed to control the abuse of narcotic and psychotropic substances cannot be taken in isolation but are to be taken in totality in the light of identical laws of other countries. The loopholes or variations, if any, in the drug laws are likely to be exploited by those with criminal intentions.

The size of drug using population is increasing in every country and every time new drugs and new patterns of drug abuse emerge. The modus-operandi of the drug related crimes particularly that of trafficking change with the changing demand of the drugs. The traffickers also try their best to reap maximum possible benefits from the loopholes of the existing laws. This mainly resulted in the current deep concern with drug abuse and drug trafficking and promoted a wide range of actions at national, regional and global level.

At the present, innumerate problems are created by drug addiction. There are various social, economic, political, psychological, environmental problems relating to drug addiction. The social implications of drug abuse are most ominous for developing country like Thailand which is still struggling to overcome its basic problem of poverty and disease.

The development in every sector of life is essential for the growth of the society. In the recent decades besides development in almost every sector, we have also witnessed rapid urbanisation, industrialisation and commercialisation. The development no doubt brings prosperity but at the same time such prosperity is not without tension, curiosity and pressure. The development has some negative aspects also. The urban life which as compared to rural life provides many facilities to the individuals, but it also gives birth to many difficulties. The moral values in the urban society are very weak and almost every individual is in a strong grip of the materialistic considerations. The urban life deteriorates day by day and
attracts the youth towards various social evils including drugs. The effects of drug addiction are most acutely felt by middle class nuclear families and by a large number of people who live in the congested slum areas. It has been also found that such a development may be reflected in an increasing crime rates, rising number of alcohol and drug related problems and deteriorating social structure.

Moreover, with the development, the people by and large have become materialistic and every one is looking for an escape from the ups and downs of every day life. The youth in an attempt to make the things other than they are, take drugs. The teens are turning to take drugs to escape the tension, the hassles of home, school and even the pressure that comes from psychological changes within them. The stresses on the adolescent who is coping with anger, sexuality and new identity lead to drugs which offer an alternative.

The damage which the drug addiction causes to the family in particular and the society in general cannot be underestimated. It results in the disruption of the family and it becomes very difficult to maintain social relations with the relatives and neighbours. The drug abuser in order to procure the drugs by hook and crook may commit property offences or any other offence. The loss to the society in terms of law and order is also on the higher side.

The youth in present era of knowledge explosion try to compete at each and every level, but they are disgusted and disappointed, when they find that they have become the victims of inequality, discrimination, corruption and high handedness. The individual achievements and merits are ignored in the corrupt and materialistic oriented society. It is unpalatable and all this creates tension among the youth. There are no doubt some frontiers a person can individually identify and challenge, but
such frontiers are largely determined by externals. Further, the rate of both technological and social change is such that the past has become largely irrelevant and the future unpredictable. The inevitable result is a need to dropout to take a holiday at least to escape temporarily from all the tension and in order to achieve this purpose to take some available drugs. Drugs to the young persons promise many things, mainly opportunities to belong to a group and to obtain freedom from tension and anxiety. It has been rightly pointed out that schools today are more than buildings in which students wrestle with puzzling equations and complicated historical concepts. The schools have also become market places where drug pushers profit from illicit sales of drugs and the students share drugs with their friends. The parents and broken family, the peer groups, the mass media, and the religion too, are viable factors contributing to an increase in drug abuse.

The parents invariably being in the constant touch with their children have a very vital role in shaping the behaviour of their children and monitor their attitudes. Parents of the drug abusers/addicts should be educated as to how to tackle the problem of drug abuse. The difficulties and aspirations of the youth should be given due recognition and the parents should take keen interest in the problems of their children and help them to come out of such problems without resorting to other escape routes. The parents can nip the evil in the bud and can set the example to their children by themselves remaining away from the influence of the drug (Halaevalu 2001).

The peer group pressure has a very vital role in keeping the youth away from the drug abuse. The major deterrent to drug abuse is peer pressure and social disapproval. The residents of a locality, where drug abuse is on increase, should take it as their moral responsibility to prevent the drug abuse in their locality and they should extend every possible
assistance and co-operation to the law enforcement agencies in this endeavour.

The mass media has equally a vital role to play and can be used to promote the educational package concerning awareness programmes highlighting the evils of drug abuse. The media and other sources of information should highlight the ill effects of the drug abuse so that the prospective drug abusers remain away from the drugs and the addicts should themselves initiate the process of de-addiction and friends and neighbours should help the addicts in this process.

The historical perspective of the drug abuse makes it obvious that there is a strong association between the drug abuse and some of the so-called religious beliefs and rituals. A religion does not encourage use of drugs and if the religion is followed in its true spirit then there is every possibility that people will remain away from the drugs. The prohibition on alcohol, imposed under Islamic Law, has been extended by analogy to drugs. This inference is based on the fact that drugs have the same effect on human mind as alcohol and produce the same public harm. Religion and ethnic origin seemed to play a positive role in keeping youth away from drugs. Jewish students and students with no religion were among the most frequent users of drugs and on the other hand Roman Catholics were among the least frequent drug users (Stein 1986).

Thailand is one of many countries with such problems. Narcotic drugs are spreading among the youth. This certainly becomes a social problem and is one of the factors leading to crimes. AIDS, prostitution, unemployment and dropouts. The victims who are addicted to narcotic drugs can work less efficiently, which in turn affects the development of a country as a whole. According to a statistical figure the number of the
addicts in Thailand who were taken for therapy in 1982 were 31,482 and 58,073 in 1987. Most recently, narcotic drugs have spread among young children and teenager groups aged between 11-25 years of age amounting to 28% of all addicts. Out of this percentage, 1.6% are students studying in educational institutions (Department of Physical Education 1994).

Thailand Development and Research Institute (TDRI), budgeted by the United States, surveyed the number of addicts in Thailand in 1993 and found that the number was 1,267,590 ; 21.73 persons out of every 1,000 population. The spread of narcotic drug varied according to geographic region : substance- smelling was most taken in the northeast region, amphetamines and heroin in central region, marijuana in north and south region. Out of the total number of addicts, 71,666 were children from educational institutes (Office of the Narcotics Control Board 1995). The Ministry of the Education estimated that by 1997 the number of children involving narcotic will increase to 300,000. Most of these young people take amphetamines and substance – smelling; the former having spread very quickly and widely. Up to the present time the drugs have spread out in all dimensions; production, selling and spreading. The quantity sold nationwide has increased dramatically. The consumer base has been expanded from the labour groups to the young and youth, inside and outside various educational institutes.

According to the Ministry of Education, the number of students in primary, secondary, vocational and higher secondary level is 1.27% of those who take drugs. It was also observed that most of the addicts are from poverty stricken rural areas, mostly from northeast region.

The problem of narcotic drug tends to increase even though the Thai government has put much emphasis and preventive measures. It has made several laws to prevent the use of drugs. The legal approach, one can easily
carrying out assignments of the board (Office of the Narcotics Control Board 1995).

The present government has a strong policy to fight drug abuse and trafficking. Therefore, narcotic problem have been designated as one of the first priorities to be implemented urgently (Therdsteerasukdi 1987).

The guidelines include the following elements:

1. Encourage government and non-government agencies to take part in narcotics control, as well as seek cooperation from abroad to support narcotic central problems.
2. Accelerate narcotic preventions within the community with the emphasis on youth groups and parent groups.
3. Expedite enforcement activities of all agencies concerned by putting the emphasis on the development of intelligence systems and on the arrest of narcotic financiers, big time operators and street pushers.
4. Facilitate the eradication of opium poppy cultivation problems in the target areas by using development measures together with suppression measures.
5. Promote the treatment of drug addicts so that they can return to a normal life in society.
6. Study the review legislative measures to facilitate narcotic control.
7. Extend the narcotic control activities to the target areas. These activities should be well balanced in all three aspects i.e. narcotic prevention, narcotic law enforcement and treatment for drug addicts.
8. Promote research and development of new technology to support the implementation of narcotic control programmes.

It can be said that the present narcotics cultivation control programmes were implemented at the initiation of the King. The programmes emphasised welfare services and development for hill tribes by promoting the cultivation of cash crops and improving their standard of living.
guess, will not bring the desired effect in reduction of demand for drugs, but rather increases illegal trafficking and criminal activities and alienation of drug users from the society. In many countries the military has been given the lead role in drug repression. In Thailand, too, the border security force and military units posted on Burma border have been mandated to control drug.

Thailand’s legal history shows that Thailand is one of the earliest nations of the world to have introduced regulatory provisions on drug abuse. More than 600 years ago during the reign of King Rama Tibodi-I of the Ayuthya period, when Criminal Behaviour Law was promulgated whereby drug addiction was made punishable. The drug addiction in Thailand began when Chinese were made to introduce opium in their country and after Chinese Revolution, most of the counter revolutionary fled to Thailand thereby adding to the Thai addict population. The drug addiction in Thailand has spread in magnitude and new hard drugs emerged. Morphine and cocaine became popular in Thailand consequently new laws were enacted to deal with the situation (Pisawat 1980).

Drug addiction in Thailand right from 1950 has been regarded as a significant public health problem by the authorities. Opium abuse persists and heroin addiction is spreading. Heroin abuse is prevalent both in rural and urban areas. In 1958 Thailand proclaimed the abolition of opium smoking and selling throughout the kingdom by 1959. All opium-smoking utensils were seized and burned. The Narcotics Control Act was promulgated in 1976. As a result the Narcotics Control Board and its Office were set up. The Office of the Narcotic Control Board (ONCB) is an agency under the office of the Prime Minister acting as the central coordinating body for narcotics prevention and suppression, as well as for
The preventive Education Division, Office of the Narcotics Control Board, is responsible for the work with a number of target groups such as parent groups, out of the school youth groups, and community groups.

Thailand believes that the country has sufficient facilities to treat the addicts. However, one of the difficulties is that many of the addicts are not prepared to come to the centres for treatment. Those who cannot afford to purchase the necessary supplies of narcotics have no option but to seek help from the centres, but those who have sufficient money can continue to purchase their narcotics and will not generally come to the centres. It is believed that about 70 per cents of those treated at the centres return to the use of drugs. Some of the participants felt too much exposure was being given in preventive programmes to drug abuse and they felt that this could arouse greater interest in drugs and could lead to experimentation particularly by the young people. While society changes rapidly because of the discoveries and development of science and technological innovations, many people in the rural cannot adapt themselves to such social change. As a result, a great deal of social problems arise. The use of narcotic drug is one of the most important problems, which has been there for a long time and which has increased tremendously. It has caused many problems such as crime, prostitution, AIDS and so on.

The problem of drug addict is gradually spreading in the rural, particularly in developing communities. The problem of great concern as these drug are becoming more and more popular among the youth of both poor and rich. It has affected the nation’s stability, peace, morality of the people and economy, as well as the youth who are the strength of nation. Looking at conditions, the present investigator wishes to study the problems, the effects and the factors affecting the consumption of narcotic
drugs of youth in rural areas in the northeast region of Thailand which is the poorest region of the country.