

Substance and Drug Abuse: An Analysis of Elements in Two Punjabi Pop Songs

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Abstract

Drug is one of the biggest problems in the world. Many countries are struggling with this problem. Teenagers are getting addicted to cocaine, weed, heroine and other drugs. Drugs, directly or indirectly, cause 11.8 million deaths per year. The drug is not only causing deaths but is also a reason for poverty and crimes. Drug consumption in Sub-Saharan Africa is higher than in other countries. Drug consumption in India is also increasing. The film industry also somehow promotes drug use as they are directly in contact with viewers. In Punjabi songs, drug, gun, alcohol etc. are given a lot of space. In this study, two Punjabi Songs Puff Puff Pass by Sultan and Weed by Karan Aujla. These songs are selected through purposive sampling. All these songs are released after 2015 and they have lots of references and multiple mentions about different drugs. These songs are highly viewed on YouTube. Puff Puff Pass has 75 lakh views in only 2 months. Karan Aujla got 1.5 crore views in his song. The lyrics of these songs along with the visuals used in the songs will be analysed. For the analysis, the Hypodermic needle theory will be used to show the effect of these songs on viewers and society.



Keywords: Drug, drug abuse, Punjabi songs, weed, smoking

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Introduction:

Substance abuse or drug abuse is using drugs for other than medical use. Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs (WHO, n.d.). These can produce a 'mind-altering' effect in the users. This mind-altering effect is getting calmness or happiness through these drugs. The substance which is legal and consumed as a drug is not intended for such use. For example, the drug given to people who have problem sleeping is also used by drug addicts. If one uses these substances in a very small

amount, it won't cause anything, so an excessive amount is consumed to produce mind alteration. The medical substance which can be used as a drug are given only with doctor's prescription in most of the countries (Kaur & Gulati, 2007).

Drug abuse is a major problem in the world. Most of the countries are suffering from this. Illicit drug usage is an issue for public health. It not only harms individuals but also families of drug users and society. Drug causes the death of about 11.8 million per year. Drug users are having *Human Immunodeficiency Virus* (United Nations Office on Drugs, 2022). Drugs like cannabis increase mental disorders like psychotic disorders (Degenhardt & Hall, 2012). Substance abuse is a big problem during pregnancy as it increases health risks. In all combinations of drugs, preterm birth, foetal growth restriction, foetal morbidity and placental abruption risks are high (Pinto et al., 2010). There are lots of health issues related with different kind of drugs but the drug usage is also a problem for society because it increases the rate of crime, disease, tension, poverty and decreases the peace and security (UNDCP, 1995). The illicit drug use causes the illicit trade of drugs and the trade is responsible for the growth of international crime, and human trafficking, and also slows down economic and social development. This impacts the marginalized sections of the world more impact fully as well as other sections also (UNODC, 2012). The impact of drug or substance abuse is very harsh for everyone.

Drug and substance abuse is a major problem in India. The main and most frequently used drugs in India are those produced in the country like Cannabis and heroine. The different products of cannabis like charas, bhang or ganja are highly used. The use of drugs also increased in India because it has a certain degree of religious holiness as a result of its connection to some Hindu deities (Ahmad et al., 2009). The Indian children who live in streets are involved in drug and substance abuse because of their situation as they are in streets because of family or society (N. Sharma & Joshi, 2013). Tobacco, alcohol, and cannabis abuse is very common among slum of Indore but sedatives and hypnotics, cocaine and solvent abuse has also been found. Pan masala chewing is very popular across the country (Ghulam et al., 2016). The drug is a big issue across the country but the state of Punjab is highly in the clutch of drugs. Youths are destroying themselves by substance abuse. Since every third person in Punjab is addicted to drugs other than alcohol and cigarettes, the issue of drug misuse among young people is a big worry. The widespread usage of heroin and intravenous drug addiction was the other notable observations (B. Sharma et al., 2017).

The films have always had an impact on society. They are very influential and decide the lifestyle and culture of society (Muhsin Ibrahim, 2018). In a work on the portrayal of drugs in rap videos, researchers found that youngsters related positively to drugs and substance use in such music videos. They established that this positive association was in fact, significant in nature and was accompanied by a positive association with aggressive behaviour too (Chen et al., 2015). Russell et al. found in their paper that even a one-time exposure to such content can leave long-term impact on youngsters who start establishing a positive relation to the activities of smoking or drug abuse in the long run stating that if a music video is relatable or establishes a connectedness factor, i.e., if the youth find it similar to their life (Russell et al., 2017). In another thematic content analysis of YouTube music videos, researchers found three themes: Sexualised imagery or lyrics objectifying women's image, lifestyle and sociability, and overtly

encouraging excessive drinking and drunkenness with zero consequences. Since all of them were portrayed in a positive light, the researchers found YouTube music videos promote positive associations with alcohol (Cranwell et al., 2017).

The existing literature has also analysed how positive associations with substance abuse and drug abuse in such music videos are also encouraged by alcohol companies through brand integration and promotion of music events (*Bacardi NH7 WEEKENDER*, n.d.). This paper looks into a new pocket of knowledge which is the portrayal and glorification of substance abuse in Punjabi music videos. Punjab has 18 districts in the list of Most Affected Districts in India chosen for “*Nasha Mukh Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21)*” which highlights the graveness of the drug problem in the state (Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, 2020). With local music stars in the state promoting and glorifying substance abuse, there is a lack of literature on how the content of such music videos are playing a vital role in promoting the drug abuse culture in the state and how interventions can be crucial in creating effective control interventions in the state.

Methodology:

Two Punjabi Songs Puff Puff Pass by Sultan and Weed by Karan Aujla. These songs are selected through purposive sampling. Both songs are released after 2015 and have a good number of views. *Puff Puff Pass* has 75 lakh views in only 2 months. Karan Aujla’s *Weed* got 1.5 crore views in his song. The songs will be analysed on two fronts; lyrics and visuals.

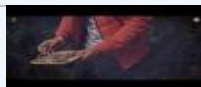
Findings:

Puff Puff Pass

The first song is Puff Puff Pass by Sultan. The song was released in 3rd of April 2022. In this short time, the song crossed the mark of 75 lakh views. The song is 4 minutes 45 seconds long and in the whole song, there are multiple visuals of smoking weed along with guns can be seen. The actors can be seen smoking weed, in lots of scenes with smoke coming out from mouths and many scenes of weed in the hand of characters.

The song starts with a man coughing after consuming weed. The drugs and scenes related to drug and substance abuse were identified frame by frame in the song. 42.25 seconds of the song i.e. 15 % song covers scenes and shots related to different drugs. Some frames from such shots and scenes are shown in table 1.

Table 1 Scene-wise detail of song Puff Puff Pass

S. no.	Element	Beginning	End	Scenes	Percentage coverage
01	Joint	0:00:04,4	0:00:07,7		1.06
02	Joint	0:00:04,5	0:00:07,6		1.02

03	Joint	0:00:18,3	0:00:19,5		0.37
04	Joint	0:00:22,4	0:00:23,6		0.36
05	Smoke	0:00:27,8	0:00:31,0		1.03
06	Joint	0:00:39,2	0:00:41,3		0.68
07	Joint	0:00:54,5	0:00:56,6		0.66
08	Joint	0:01:40,6	0:01:42,9		0.75
09	Joint	0:01:47,2	0:01:49,5		0.74
10	Joint	0:02:27,3	0:02:29,1		0.59
11	Joint	0:02:32,6	0:02:34,5		0.61
12	Joint	0:02:36,3	0:02:37,9		0.54
13	Liquor	0:03:00,4	0:03:03,2		0.87
14	Liquor	0:03:04,2	0:03:15,1		3.53
15	Joint	0:03:33,6	0:03:34,8		0.39
16	Liquor	0:03:36,1	0:03:38,3		0.71
17	Joint	0:03:47,0	0:03:48,7		0.54
18	Smoke	0:03:47,0	0:03:48,7		0.54

The slang and the title of the song *Puff Puff Pass* means the passing of weed. Everyone will take the drag and pass it on. The phrase is used 41 times in the whole lyrics. Further, the song goes like *kam hoye bypass*, which means now they are high after taking weed. The feeling after consuming is like living in heaven. They establish this by *swarga de joothe mainu laa lain de*. *Main tagda sharabi khali kitte maikhane*, is a self-glorification as a drunkard. Further, they are singing that they are with their best friends and they have passed their enemies. They are not in hurry to go anywhere so they want to consume weed and they are feeling like they are in

heaven or some outer space. There is no one unknown or new with them so they can consume drug freely. Similarly, there are other phrases like *feem te or bhang bina nasha na koi rass, mainu goriyaan hatha de naal paper bana de, puff khichde mahol saara kill ho gaya* are all related to drug consumption and drug glorification.

Weed

This song is by Karan Aujla and is 3 minutes and 33 seconds long. The song was uploaded on 8th of June 2017 on YouTube. The song has more than 1.5 Crore views. Same like the previous song there are different scenes and shots related to weed and marijuana. Scenes with smoke can also be seen in the song. 21.88 % of the song has visuals related to drug and substance abuse. 46.65 seconds of the song deals with drug abuse-related frames. The scenes from the song is mentioned in table 2.

Table 2 Scene-wise detail of song Weed

S. no.	Elements	Beginning	End	Scenes	Percentage coverage
01	Joint	0:00:24,4	0:00:29,4		2.32
02	Marijuana	0:00:33,2	0:00:33,7		0.23
03	Smoke	0:00:36,7	0:00:37,6		0.41
04	Marijuana	0:00:44,1	0:00:47,1		1.42
05	Smoke	0:00:47,4	0:00:48,5		0.52
06	Smoke	0:00:53,8	0:00:55,6		0.88
07	Joint	0:00:57,7	0:00:59,6		0.89
08	Joint	0:01:10,2	0:01:13,4		1.47
09	Joint	05	0:01:20,8		0.86

10	Smoke	0:01:19,0	0:01:20,8		0.86
11	Marijuana	0:01:22,5	0:01:23,6		0.48
12	Marijuana	0:01:27,3	0:01:28,2		0.43
13	Smoke	0:01:35,6	0:01:36,9		0.59
14	Smoke	0:01:39,7	0:01:41,6		0.86
15	Smoke	0:01:44,7	0:01:46,9		1.04
16	Smoke	0:01:48,4	0:01:53,2		2.21
17	Marijuana	0:01:52,2	0:01:53,2		0.47
18	Joint	0:02:07,5	0:02:08,6		0.52
19	Smoke	0:02:15,2	0:02:16,6		0.66
20	Joint	0:02:20,4	0:02:21,5		0.50
21	Marijuana	0:02:23,9	0:02:25,2		0.60
22	Joint	0:02:33,6	0:02:36,0		1.12
23	Smoke	0:02:53,5	0:02:55,6		0.97
24	Marijuana	0:02:55,7	0:02:56,8		0.53

25	Smoke	0:03:09,4	0:03:11,7		1.04
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The title *Weed* itself explains everything about the song. In the beginning of the song, the lyrics goes like *Lao bi hogi roll hogi, Lighter taan baa*. This means that the singer is asking for weed to smoke and asking his friend to pick up the lighter. *Loki kehnde weed buri ae, Main kehna teri deed buri ae* means that people say that weed is bad but actor says that those people who dislike weed are bad. While taking weed, the seed is left out which is also mentioned in the song through the words *Eho bas ik cheej buri ae Jarhi booti na seed buri ae* and they say that only the seed is bad not the weed. Friendship with cigarette is established through *Soote de nal pa layi yaari*. The weed they are consuming is grown in their home and they don't buy it from some dealer; this is in the next line-*Dealar ton nai chakhde jundi ghar de thalle grow va hundi*. In the song, the lines *trust nahi azma ke dekhlo, Yaari kidhre paake dekhlo* asks others to try weed if they don't believe in them.

Discussion:

Both the songs, glorification of drugs can be clearly seen. The lyrics as well as the visuals are promoting and glorifying drug, alcohol and smoking. Through the results by the analysis of these songs, it can be said that the music industry and especially these kinds of songs are trivializing drugs and are making them very common. Phrases like *We stay high* have multiple occurrence and is enough to establish the glory and fun of weed. The songs are not identifying weed, marijuana, cigarette or liquor as a problem. The visuals are also doing the same. The visuals of both songs have lots of smoking and dragging of weed. Apart from these, liquor and marijuana can also be seen multiple times. The songs are shot on a bar or secluded places where one can freely consume drugs and alcohol. With these, the songs are trying to make drug abuse a common thing which has no bad outcomes or don't worry about health or anything just enjoy and live in the moment after taking the drug. Drug is shown as a help for mental peace when they use phrases like *Peaceful aa rakhdi babeyo*. The phrase says that – “the drugs keep us peaceful”.

The internet is highly growing in India and so is the internet users. We are moving from 4G to 5G. currently there are about 625 million active internet users which is expected to reach 900 million by 2025 (KANTAR, 2021). The internet gave the power to search and watch anything with fingertips only. With the increase of internet users, digital media literacy is highly needed otherwise this number of internet users can be very problematic. The digital media literacy is “The acquired ability to understand, access, evaluate, and analyse types and avenues of information created online or with available software and hardware to communicate and participate in civic life as competent media consumer, contributor, and creator of media in the online community” (Chilsen, 2015). Digital media literacy is very helpful. The theories of mass communication like the hypodermic needle theory explain the effect of such visuals. The viewers are not aware of the drastic situation after they had become addicted. When the singer

is asking to try first the drug, the viewer will be easily get influenced. Once the trivialization is done and the drugs are linked with social status and lifestyle which can be clearly seen in these songs, then viewers will be more easily get attracted to the drug and substance abuse. Drug are such a big problem in the state and at the same time, the music industry in the local language is promoting it. The popularity of these songs and similar visuals are high hence they can affect more people.

Conclusion:

The film and music industry, most of the time, are playing a big role in the promotion of the societal evil of drugs. The industry has trivialized drug and substance abuse like street food. The state of Punjab is in the clutch of drug problems and songs like these are not helping in the situation. The songs have lakhs of followers and in this digital age, they are reaching youths, teens, females, etc. even in the rural sections of the country. The drug is a huge problem for every government; in Punjab, it is a bigger problem for the Indian government. Punjabi songs are playing a vital role in the promotion of drugs. We need to look in this direction otherwise it will slip of from our hands. Digital media literacy become very important in this situation and can play a vital role.

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