

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE ISSUE OF YOUTH DRUG ABUSE IN GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA: PROBLEM SOLVING STYLES AND APPROACHES

Landysh A. Gizyatova¹

Increasing level of drug abuse among young Russians explains the actuality of the problem under investigation and requires the development and implementation of productive prevention techniques. Therefore evaluation of positive experience of other countries seems to be of great value. The purpose of the study is to analyze the evolution of the phenomenon of youth drug addiction and scientific approaches to its understanding in Russia and Great Britain at different periods of history. The research follows a complex approach exploring historical, social and cultural realities that lie in the root of the problem. The major peaks of the youth drug abuse were identified. Works of home and British scholars scientifically justified the national drug policies. Comparative analysis of narcotization process in Russia and Great Britain has revealed similarities in the way the phenomenon transformed into a pressing social problem and positive British prevention experience in terms of its possible installation into the Russian educational system. The results could be used in further studies of drug abuse both in home and foreign pedagogy; in the course of drug abuse prevention among students.

Keywords: youth ; narcotization ; prevention ; drug policy.

INTRODUCTION

The prevention and control of drug abuse have become one of the major priorities for many countries today due to harmful social and health consequences of addiction both for the individual and society. One of the characteristic features of the current process of narcotization is its steady “rejuvenation”. Age of first drug experience is about 11-14 years in Russia (Yentina, 2001) and 11-15 years in Britain (Fuller, 2005). Some researchers believe that drug use among young people in Britain is stabilizing (Shiner and Newburn, 1996; Balding, 2000); others point out its continuing growth (Wright, 1995; Mckeganey *et al.*, 2004; Lukacher *et al.*, 1990).

The problem of substance use is not new in the history of mankind. During the history of Russia and Great Britain researchers differently understood the nature of addiction, response of authorities was also controversial. That fact could explain the diversity of existed approaches to drug control. The scope of research covers the 19th - early 21st centuries, as the first scientific papers devoted to drug addiction began to appear in the 19th century, and in these two centuries phenomenon of drug abuse transformed from merely medical problem into an urgent social question all over the world.

¹ Lecturer of the Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies, Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Kazan, Russia, *E-mail: lgizyato@kpfu.ru*

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Due to the complexity of the subject of research, the study employs a comprehensive approach that combines components of systematic, historical and sociological approaches.

The use of systematic approach allowed, firstly, to analyze narcotization process as a complex, multi-level phenomenon which includes such elements as drug users, narcotization factors, authorities, prevention; secondly, to reveal relationships between them.

The use of historical approach made it possible to trace the evolution of youth drug abuse and define the major historical events and factors that caused its rises at particular historic periods. The research is based on the principle of objectivity regardless of the author's personal preferences.

Application of some elements of sociological analysis let us consider narcotism in the context of large-scale social events, such as youth subculture. Drug addicts were classified into social categories depending on what time in history it was. Authorities' responses to the situation were emphasized.

Besides, general scientific methods were used, such as the method of analysis and synthesis of scientific literature; the comparative method, that allowed to draw parallels between the development of youth narcotization process in Russia and Britain in order to illustrate similarities and differences. The key concepts of scholarly works in the field of drug control and prevention made the theoretical foundation of research.

RESULTS

Historical background of narcotization in Russia

Published in the late 19th century, the works of Russian ethnographers contained documented evidence of drug use among population of Russian Turkestan and the Far East due to the traditions and way of life, including children. Later drugs spread among the Russian population of the Far Eastern regions as a result of an active colonial policy of Russia on the eastern borders and the migration of people from the border areas of China. Unreasonable medical use of narcotic substances and literary works containing ideas of drugs attraction and mystique contributed to further dissemination.

Historical background of narcotization in Great Britain

The British Empire's opium trade with China, participation in opium wars and free sale of opiates on the territory of the country itself appeared to be factors of society's following narcotization. Poor living standards of the working class, together with lack of access to qualified medicine turned opium into a popular means of self-medication (Berridge *et al.* 1981). Children were also given opium containing

substances as a sedative. This practice often resulted in high levels of infant mortality (Parsinen, 1983).

Many English writers and poets of the Romantic period were also committed to the use of illegal substances (Abrams, 1970).

The first epidemic of youth drug abuse in Russia and policy of control

The dramatic changes in life of Russian state in the first two decades of the 20th century (World War I, the 1917 Revolution, Civil War) resulted in an upsurge of drug use among young people. In response to the situation, medical men increased efforts in scientific research of narcotism. There were attempts to classify substances, to define the underlying reasons of narcotization and to explain the nature of addiction. These studies concluded greater involvement of farmers, working class and young people into the process. Youth narcotism of this period should be considered in close connection with homelessness, more precisely as its consequence. Surveys of the homeless children revealed a high percentage of cocaine addicts among them (Dubrovin, 1928; Gernet, 2013). Being under the influence of drug, they were indifferent to cold, hunger, poverty and poor living conditions. It might be evidence in favour of social causes of drug abuse (Zabugin, 1928).

In order to improve the living conditions of homeless children and stabilize the situation authorities took the following successful steps: the establishment of the child protection council and the commission on improving the lives of children; the foundation of police child protection powers; the development of mechanisms of social adaptation; support in employment and training. Government policy aimed at eradication of homelessness and addiction proved the efficiency.

The key methods of drug education in the 1920s were brochures and films, presenting the subject information; lectures and case studies with improvised trials of drug addicts. Narcotism outbreak of the 1920s could be regarded as the first wave of youth drug abuse in Russia.

The beginnings of drug control in Britain

The first British studies of drugs came in the 18th century were also medical in nature. Opiates use wasn't seen as a pressing problem. But the attitudes changed in the middle of the 19th century when a negative perception of drug use began to form in professional circles. A number of reasons such as low-skilled or non-professional pharmacists and, as a result, cases of drug overdose; counterfeiting and drugs availability changed the society's orientation. Class tensions in the period of industrialization resulted in 1860 in an active campaign against the use of opium by working class and their children. The argument went that it caused a high mortality rate among infants (Berridge *et al.*, 1981). In the 1850 - 60s first drug prevention measures were taken by Public Health Association including lectures

and thematic literature both aimed at providing useful information on the harmful consequences of opium use and improving educational practices of children in families of workers. The emphasis made on the working class as the main consumer of opium diverted the attention from a broader understanding of the social and economic causes of drug addiction. The legislative control of opiates and their use was first introduced in 1868 when the Pharmacy Act was adopted. The document restricted free sale of opiates.

The number of opiate users in the early 20th century was rather small. In these circumstances of stabilization the 1926 Rolleston Act was passed granting the doctors to prescribe regular doses of drugs (including morphine, heroine) to certain addicted patients. It was seen as treatment, rather than stimulation. The Act predetermined further liberal policy of Britain in relation to drugs also known in history as the “British system” (Bennet, 1998).

The 1930 - 60s. Stabilization in Russia and the heroine crisis in Britain

Until the 1950s, the study of drug addiction in Russia has been suspended as the theme was forbidden. Besides, the political, social and economic realities of that time slowed narconization rate down. Since the 1950s, studies of drug addiction were conducted in medical and legal aspects. The period in Russian history known as Khryshchev Thaw was marked by an increase in the number of drug addicts and associated crimes. In response, the state tightened legislation by adopting regulations providing penalties for selling, storage, transportation and consumption of drugs. But, addiction as a social problem was denied in the Soviet Union. Mainstream ideology preferred to explain it as individual cases of abuse.

In Britain in the 1930 – 1950s a small number of addicts consisted of patients who had become dependent on opium or morphine in the course of medical treatment and men of medical professions whose addiction was caused by easy access to drugs. But the situation changed in the late 1940s with an increase in the number of heroin addicts. These years in British history are characterized by the rise of corruption and strict state control over the consumer market, which provided social and economical basis for distribution of drugs (Ostapenko, Prokopov 2012). In addition, amphetamines and LSD became popular in the middle of the 1960s. The key distinctive features of that period were the rejuvenation of addicts and use of banned substances for pleasure. The Government in 1968 was forced to restrict the doctors’ autonomy to prescribe heroine to addicts. Only doctors licensed by the Home Office were enables to do that. Besides, first centers for the rehabilitation and treatment of addicts appeared and notification system for drug users was introduced.

The 1970s – present day. The continuing growth of drug use

The following decades paved the way for a future peak of youth drug abuse in Russia. Under the influence of Western culture various informal youth movements

like rock culture, punks with their own stereotypes of group behavior and subculture emerged. The true scale of narcotism in Soviet Union was first empirically studied in the 1970s (Gabiani, 1992) and was a threat. In the 1980s, drug use, its causes and consequences became a subject of study not only for doctors and lawyers, but also for sociologists, pedagogues and psychologists.

After the collapse of the country in the 1990s, Russia has seen another boom of youth narcotism that is still continuing. The causes of this could be found in changing social and economic conditions in post-soviet society: its sharp stratification; high crime rates together with liberalization of legislation. But, most important, young generation and society in general lost the moral values of life. A system of youth centers and organizations was destroyed, or its commercialization occurred, making it difficult for many young people to express themselves or occupy their spare time.

The subsequent increase in the number of drug users in Great Britain in the 1970 - 80s questioned the efficiency of the medical approach to the problem of drug abuse, still prevalent in the country. The medical approach began to lose its sole power in 1985, when the law "Tackling Drugs Misuse" was adopted. The document toughened penalties for possession and distribution of drugs and marked the emergence of a new model of national drug policy based on the mix of medical and penal approaches (Bennett, 1998).

Drug education programs

High rates of youth narcotism prove that the employment of only medical or penal approach to the problem, that largely deal with the after-effects of drug abuse, is not productive. Some more approaches aimed at primary prevention of addiction can be singled out both in Russia and Great Britain: informational, educational and preventive ones. British programs of primary prevention developed in the framework of an educational approach ("Drug wise drug education for students", "High profile youth work curriculum about drugs", "Youth Awareness Programme", "Healthy lifestyle") help students to acquire healthy lifestyle skills as an integral part of their overall well-being, as well as skills of "independent decision-making in the cultural, social, economic and political spheres" (Fakhrutdinova, 2010) in order to develop self-defense mechanisms.

The efforts to apply foreign experience to our educational system, with all national and cultural peculiarities taken into account, are in the formative stage. The US drug prevention experience is more widespread. Therefore, it seems relevant to examine the positive practices of other foreign countries, particularly Great Britain, with the aim of installing the best techniques and ideas into our reality.

DISCUSSIONS

Addiction is an interdisciplinary phenomenon what explains a great deal of studies devoted to the issue in various branches of science. Adverse effects of drugs on all

systems of young organism and the possible mental causes of drug abuse are described in the works of D.S. Futer (1925), V.G. Dubrovin (1928), A.M. Rapoport (1926), F. Zabugin (1928), G.Ya. Lukacher (1990), N.V. Makshantseva (1990), V.A. Chudnovsky (1990), I.N. Pyatnitskaya (2008), F.E. Anstie (1864), C.A. McBride (1910), D.J. Nutt (2010), L.A. King (2010), L.D. Phillips (2010). Ye.G. Gasanov (1998) defines the phenomenon of drug addiction as a special kind of drug crime. T. Bennett (1998) focuses on the cause-and-effect relationships of drug addiction and criminal offenses. A.A. Gabiani (1992) concludes that youth narcotism has social character and causes; the primary prevention is the most effective way of prevention of drug addiction. Ya.I. Gilinsky (1997) analyses addiction as a form of deviant behavior. Works of V. Berridge (1981), G. Edwards (1981), B. Inglis (1975), T. Parsinen (1983) are devoted to the analysis of historical and social preconditions for narcotization of British society, changes in the system of public health. Sociological studies of J.D. Wright (1995), E. Fuller (2005), J. Balding (2000) reflect the dynamics and rate of development of youth drug use in modern Britain.

These studies have formed the theoretical basis of our research. The novelty lies in comparative analysis of the evolution of youth narcotization phenomenon in Britain and Russia with the identification of its similarities and differences through the scope of historical transformations in the countries.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of approaches to the problem of youth drug abuse and its control in Russia and Great Britain revealed the following:

1. Drug addiction, originally emerged as a merely medical problem, gradually transformed into a pressing social problem, affecting mostly young people.
2. In spite of the chronological differences in the stages of youth narcotization in Russia and Britain, the premise behind the process was the socio-economic situation in society.
3. The harder the drug situation was in the countries, the stricter was the response of authorities to the problem.
4. Researches of home and British scholars served as a scientific justification for introduction of full-scale legislative control of illicit substances and development of national drug policy.
5. Youth is understood as a risk group for drug abuse and that leads to the implementation of prevention programs in the educational system.
6. Throughout the history the British drug policy was a kind of balance between medical and penal ways of regulation of the drug situation. It was more liberal in nature than Russian drug policy which also has undergone evolution, but kept to more restrictive framework.

Recommendations

The results could be of use in home and foreign pedagogy in further research of the issue of drug prevention among young people; in extending the content of a course on drug prevention among students.

Acknowledgments

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

References

- Abrams, M.H. (1970). *The milk of paradise: the effect of opium visions on the works of DeQuincey, Crabbe, Francis Thompson, and Coleridge*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Anstie, F.E. (1864). *Stimulants and Narcotics*. London: Macmillan.
- Balding, J. (2000). *Young people and illegal drugs in 2000*. Exeter: Schools Health Education Unit.
- Bennet, T. (1998). The British experience with heroine regulation, *Law and contemporary problems*, 51: 299-314.
- Berridge, V., Edwards, G. (1981). *Opium and the people: opiate use in nineteenth-century England*. London: A.Lane.
- Dubrovin, V.G. (1928). The clinical manifestations of childhood cocaineism, *Problems of narcology*, 2: 66-75.
- Fakhrutdinova, A.V. (2010). Theoretical and methodological components of modern civic education: a comparative analysis, *Psychology and Pedagogy: methods and problems*, 12-1: 169-174.
- Fuller, E. (2016). Drug use, smoking and drinking among young people in England in 2005, a survey carried out for The Information Centre for health and social care. Retrieved 01.31.16 from: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB00301/drug-smok-drin-youn-peop-eng-2005-rep2.pdf>.
- Futer, D.S. (1925). About drug-addicted children, *Moscow medical journal*, 10: 59-63.
- Gabiani, A.A. (1992). Who are the drug users? *Sociological studies*, 2: 78-83.
- Gasarov, Ye.G. (1998). *Legal and criminological problems of drug related crimes control (Antinarcotism)*. Odessa: Cadet.
- Gernet, M.N. (2013). Socio-economic factors of juvenile delinquency in Moscow. *Delinquent children (235-263)*. Moscow: book on demand.
- Gilinskiy, Ya.I. (1997). Sociology of deviant behavior and social control, *World of Russia*, 1: 163-184.
- Inglis, B. (1975). *The forbidden game: a social history of drugs*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Lukacher, G.Ya, Makshantseva, N.V., Chudnovsky, V.A. (1990). Intoxicating substances among adolescents, *Sociological studies*, 4: 61-70.
- McBride, C.A. (1910). *Modern treatment of alcoholism and drug narcotism*. N.Y: Rebman.
- McKeganey, N., McIntosh, J., MacDonald, F., Gannon, M., Gilvarry, E., McArdle, P., McCarthy, S. (2004). Preteen children and illegal drugs, *Drugs education, prevention and policy*, 11(4): 315-327.

- Nutt, D.J, King, L.A, Phillips, L.D. (2016). Drug harms in the UK: a multicriteria decision analysis. Retrieved February 2, 2016 from: http://www.sg.unimaas.nl/_old/oudelezingen/dddsd.pdf.
- Ostapenko, G.S, Prokopov, A.Y. (2012). Major trends of social and economic development of the country. The contemporary history of the UK. XX - the beginning of XXI century. (229-235). Moscow: INFRA-M.
- Parsinen, Terry M. (1983). Secret passions, secret remedies: narcotic drugs in British society, 1820-1930. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Pyatnitskaya, I.N. (2008). General and private narcology: a guide for physicians. Moscow: Medicine. 640p.
- Rapoport A.M. (1926). Cocainism and crime, Moscow medical journal, 1: 46-55.
- Shiner M., and Newburn T. (1996). Young people, drugs and peer education: an evaluation of the Youth Awareness Programme. Drugs Prevention Initiative Paper. Paper B, 13. London: HMSO Books.
- Wright, J.D. (1995). Knowledge and experience of young people aged 14-15 regarding drug misuse, 1969-1994. British medical journal, 310: 20-24.
- Yentina, E.G. (2001). II Materials of Congress on Child Psychiatry. (72-73). Moscow: Rosinex.
- Zabugin, F. (1928). Evaluation of drug-addicted children's personality by methods of Rassolimo, Binet and Kelly, Problems of narcology, 2: 59-65.