



The Drug Trade in Sri Lanka

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Imposing capital punishment and implementing it for drug offenders is the hot news in Sri Lanka. The decision to implement the decision of the Judiciary is due to several reasons. Few of them are:

1. Increase in violence, murders, and gang rapes for adults and children
2. Using drug trade as a lucrative business to quickly become rich
3. No professional qualifications are needed to get a job that brings in much revenue though Drug trade.
4. Use it as a mode to finance the political parties. In some areas such as Deriniyagala in Sabragamuwa province. Drug business was used by mafia gang to control the Noori tea estate in that area. It has resulted in several Tamil estate youths joining the mafia gang and sentenced to death for the murder of the experienced 71-year-old Noori Tea estate superintendent
5. The drug trade is an attractive business in the Coastal areas in the south where rich tourist spends a large sum of money in hotels.
6. In the North, there is an allegation that a political party in link with the Navy in charge of island import drugs from Kerala and Tamil Nadu as these places were not too far from the islands around Jaffna peninsula
7. There are accusations that Police and Army do not take much attention in eradicating drug abuse in Jaffna. Some social media say that Southern Sri Lanka has the intention of the deteriorating the disciplined culture of Northern and Eastern Tamil speaking people. One time the focus Jaffna youth was on education, and government jobs but it gradually changed after the independence due to standardization policy in education by the SLFP government.

8. In the past, local coconut and Palmyra toddy and Arrack such as Gal Oya. 7-year-old Arrack. The beehive was sold in government authorized taverns controlled by Excise department was used as a drink for relaxation. But it has changed to taking drugs by Jaffna youth. They do not understand the long-term impact on their nervous system resulting in various diseases.
9. Sufficient money is needed to buy expensive drugs. Unemployed youth do not have that money. Since money flows into the Northern province from the expatriate population living abroad, the standard of living of people mainly youth has increased. They travel in expensive two-wheelers replacing Raleigh bicycle. They engage themselves in drug offenses and in committing violence by forming groups such as AAVA.
10. The gang-rape and murder of school student from Pungudutivu was linked to Drug, the inflow of money from foreign countries such as Switzerland, vengeance, and lust
11. Down southern Sri Lanka, there are several cases of rape and killing of children such as Saya from Gampaha area and serial killing in Ratnapura area. The youth intoxicated by drug lose their balance, do not control themselves and hence look for children or women of any age to satisfy their sexual appetite. It is a pity that it happens in a Buddhist country like Sri Lanka.
12. In many South Asian countries such as Malaysia, Burma, Philippines, Thailand Singapore traffic offense meets with capital punishment. Some of these countries are Buddhist countries. Only in Sri Lanka where most of the majority of the population are Buddhists, the capital punishment given by judiciary in many cases were not implemented after 1976 due to Political reasons A typical example is the gang murder by Army soldiers of the student 16-year-old A. level stoutened Miss Krishanthi Kumaraswamy. The four convicts are happily living enjoying good food and entertainment in the Jail. Now the government has opened its eyes after sleeping for four decades to implement the verdict on a selective basis which is again liked with Politics. For every action, there is an equal, and opposite reaction so says karma and Newton's third law of motion. Hence implementing Capital punishment in Sri Lanka is objected to by certain

countries where the punishment does not exist. It is a country's decision and no other country should have a say in it. It amounts to aiding and abating drug-related offenses in a developing country.

13. The main reason for a drug offense is the high COL and economy of the country. The poorer the economy of the country quicker the increase in drug trafficking and offenses.
14. In Sri Lanka drugs are produced locally. The local drink Kassipu is banned. There are plants such as cannabis, and Ganja grew in mainly forest areas down south and Eastern province where there are jungles.
15. The drug trade is the main source of income for Afghanistan and Latin American countries. Growing Poppies was encouraged by the Taliban in Afghanistan to get foreign exchange for their rebel movement. Even Al Quiada patronized it. Growing Ganja plant is well encouraged in Kerala These plants never grow in desert areas like Saudi, Oman, Libya UAE, but drugs are illegally brought into those countries which are economically strong. The district laws exist in those countries against drug offenders.
16. In southern Sri Lanka, Buddhist Vihara is well respected by the rural masses. The services of the priests from Viharas should be used to educate the masses against drug offense.
17. Increase the quality of life and stand of living. It will reduce drug-related offenses.
18. Strict control over tourists is vital in tourist areas to prevent the sale of drugs in the southern coastal belt. The outcome of it is that young children in these areas are used for sex by tourist resulting in AID disease in some cases
19. Appointing commissions and spending large of money by establishing a Drug Control Board, are of no use unless the organization functions without political involvement.
20. Exchanging information with Interpol is another method where more attention could be paid to bring strict control over the illegal import of drugs
21. Here are some excerpts from UN report about the use of Drug in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka does not cultivate opium. There is the illicit cultivation of cannabis. Seizure figures demonstrate that the number of arrests and court cases has both increased in the recent past.

- The single most significant drug problem is the trafficking of heroin from India for local consumption.
- Sri Lanka serves as a transshipment hub for heroin trafficked into the country mainly from Indian locations.
- Long-standing violence and political tension have diminished the ability of law enforcement to address drug trafficking concerns adequately.
- It is estimated that there are currently about 45,000 regular users of heroin and about 600,000 users of cannabis in Sri Lanka. It is further estimated that between 1–2 % of heroin users are IDUs.
- Sri Lanka is a low HIV-prevalence country. There appears to be little IDU in the country. National authorities are making efforts to ensure that this situation remains the case.
- There are rising levels of crime caused by army deserters and other criminal gangs (even before the anticipated formal demobilization of some troops which may only worsen the situation).
- With the ongoing peace process, there is a risk that individuals with few skills to maintain a sustainable livelihood other than in a military or paramilitary setting may become involved in drug use or trafficking or other criminal activities.

Cannabis is the only drug that is grown illicitly in the country. It occurs mostly in the dry zones of the country in the Eastern and the Southern provinces. The estimated land

area under cannabis cultivation is 500 hectares. The estimated number of cannabis users in the country was 600,000. The quantity of cannabis seized island-wide was 73,774 kg, and the number of cases in 2003 was 9,556, of which 3% involved women. The number of cases of cannabis-related arrests had increased by 29% in 2003 compared with the number reported in 2002. The prevalence of cannabis-related arrests is put at 50 per 100,000 population. Anecdotal, but undocumented, evidence supports the view that cannabis (hashish) is smuggled into Sri Lanka from Pakistan. But details regarding quantities or destinations of these consignments are unavailable. 39 There is no information on the situation in areas under the control of the LTTE.

As the last comment in this article, many Hindus have heard about the Drink Soma drug-related drink in Vedic time. Rig Veda speaks about Soma in several of its verses. They say that it was grown during Indus Valley Civilization period in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The name Samanathar for Lord Siva is related to this name. The drink was used by Indran and Agni to stimulate energy so says Hindu epics. Hence Drug is nothing new to this world. It only uses to develop the economy of the country, for the growth of Political party and rebellions, etc.
