



A member of a small group of drug addicts injects his mate with drugs.

Drug addicts roam around DMCH

IMRUL HASAN

Drug addicts roam in front of the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) and adjacent areas and take drugs openly under the noses of the law-enforcers.

Nearly 40 to 50 drug addicts in small groups are found taking drugs such as heroine, morphine and marijuana in the areas every day.

Most of the addicts are from low-income groups -- rickshaw and van pullers, bus and truck drivers, grocers, labourers, floating people and slum dwellers. A section of students also take drugs in front of the hospital.

Rickshawpuller Mukhter Hossain regularly comes to the DMCH areas to take drugs because he thinks it is a safer place. "When I used to work in a garage, my friends offered me hemp. Now I can't leave without it," said Mukhter who hails from Comilla.

"These people are usually found taking

drugs from afternoon to midnight," said a shopkeeper in the area. "They take different types of drugs like heroine, morphine, opium, cocaine, marijuana and hemp," he added.

Another drug addict Mamun Mia said when he is in need of money he collects papers and other thrown-away materials from roadsides and sell them to buy drugs. Even sometimes he waylays pedestrians and snatches money and other valuables.

Locals alleged that police never go for action to oust the drug addicts from the spot but the police said they do not know about the addicts.

"It is our duty to maintain law and order inside the DMCH. I have been on duty here for the last one month but I did not find any drug addict in this area," said Abul Hossain, the official of a temporary police camp at DMCH.

The DMCH authorities are also reluctant to take notice of the drug addicts who are sometimes found lying on the ground after taking heroin.

"It is not our duty to handle the matter of drug addiction if it takes place outside the boundary of DMCH. It is the responsibility of the police department," said Brigadier General Sarker MAMatin, the director of DMCH.

Sources said several drug addicts sell blood to the Blood Bank of DMCH, but the officials of the Blood Bank denied strongly.

A large number of drug addicts collect used syringes from dustbins near DMCH for reusing them. Thus they are infected with blood-transmitted diseases.

"Drugs pollute their blood. When this blood is transfused to other person, the diseases are also transmitted," said Dr Shah Habibur Rahman of Department of Medicine, DMCH.

When asked about the sources of drugs, drug addict Mohammad Hai said he buys drugs from different drug dens and slums including Agargaon's BNP Basti.

Unease at Willes Little Flower School

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

A disgruntled group of guardians recently tried to vandalise the newly constructed administration building of Willes Little Flower School.

The incident on April 6, brought to light internal bickering among the school's authority and involvement of parents and guardians in school politics.

"They wanted to reinstate ex-principal Salma Rahman," said Mohsena Khan, principal of the school. But other guardians stood by her, claimed Mohsena. They also reportedly foiled the protesting group's bid to close down the school.

Tension still prevails in the school's premises with a contingent of police deployed to tackle any untoward incident.

Sources said the guardians who were in favour of the previous management committee of the school were trying to put pressure on the present ad-hoc committee to step down.

"Their intention is to regain administrative positions in the school management committee and continue with their corrupt activities which had been going on for the last seven and a half years," said Sabbir Ahmed, guardian representative and member of the ad-hoc committee.

He alleged that the members of the previous committee had embezzled over Taka 50 lakh through various projects.

"They showed the bills of materials to be two or three times higher than the actual amount," said Ahmed. Three cases filed against the previous committee for financial irregularities are awaiting verdict.

According to sources, an investigation undertaken by the Education Ministry on the school had cited corruption of the management committee as the reason for

the deterioration of academic atmosphere and the overall reputation of the institution in its report published on October 23, 2003.

Following the report, the then headmaster of the school Shah Alam was suspended but other members of the management committee were spared.

A member of the past committee on condition of anonymity said that Jainal Abedin Liton and Syed Glib were the two main perpetrators of the corruption scandal.

Liton was the vice-chairman of the management committee. Some guardians said that he used to receive around Taka two lakh every month from coaching centres near the school.

Teachers of the school own these coaching centres and they lured the

students into getting admitted there.

"Each centre wanted to keep Liton happy and paid him a lump sum amount at the end of each month," said a guardian adding that these coaching centres leaked question papers even before the final examinations. Authorities also alleged that a large sum of money was misappropriated during the construction of the new administrative building.

"A bill of over Taka 50 lakh was submitted for computer network training and a software project, tender for which was never scheduled," said Sabbir Ahmed. Under the project, the former committee bought 28 computers only, said sources.

During their term, the past committee recruited around 100 teachers in exchange of one to 1.5

lakh Taka from each, alleged guardians.

Liton however, denied all the allegations. "If the complaints were true, they would have managed to show concrete evidences," he said.

The ad-hoc committee was formed on February 26 following a court order. The past committee had been in charge for over two terms, each term being of three years. "Even though an election was scheduled during the end of the second term, the committee managed to bend the rules in their favour," said a member of the ad-hoc committee.

The ad-hoc committee will be in charge for three months during which they must hold a fair election.



Police officers deployed at Willes Little Flower School wait in watch to tackle any untoward incidents.

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