



ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE: STIGMA ON INDIAN SOCIETY

Dr. Deoman S. Umbarkar

Department of Sociology, Late Vasanttrao Kolhatkar Art's College, Rohana

ABSTRACT

Alcoholism refers to heavy and unmediated drinking. People suffering from alcoholism drink excessively without any form of control or discipline.

Alcoholism can also be defined as an addiction to alcohol. It is a habit that is dangerous to the health of an individual and often leads to negative social impacts as well as health complications. Depression is a mental illness that is caused by various factors such as the loss of a loved one, the lack of self-esteem, unhappiness, despair, and dejection. A person who is depressed finds life an unbearable burden and to overcome all the unpleasant thoughts, finds comfort in alcohol. Unfortunately, alcohol is a depressant and as much as the person taking it may achieve that temporary high, once the effect wears off, the depression sets in and this time much worse than before. It, therefore, becomes a habit as the affected person continuously drinks to stay high and keep away the bad memories and thoughts. Mental Stress can be caused by anxiety, tension, worry, excessive workload or trauma. When your desk is full of pending work, coupled with the need to balance family and work life, mental stress may set in. Anxiety, worry, or tension caused by unsolved issues may also lead to mental stress. To cope with the pressure, one might find alcohol an attractive solution. People who find it difficult to strike a balance between their professional and personal lives may become alcoholics as the pressure becomes too much bear. The same may happen in a situation of marital strife that leads to mental stress. The affected spouse or spouses may turn to alcoholism to cope with the ensuing stress.

KEY WORDS- *strategy, efforts, suggestions, eradication, problems etc*

INTRODUCTION

Some people start off as social drinkers then eventually become alcoholics. The habit of taking a few drinks after work or during the weekend may turn into an alcohol addiction especially for a person who does not have the ability to regulate his or her drinking. Taking alcohol for pleasure can create a social life pattern that results in alcoholism.

There are people who work as wine-tasters. They taste wine and write reviews based on texture, smell, and the actual taste of the product. It is a job that may turn into an alcohol addiction if left unchecked. Individuals in such areas of work may develop compulsive habits and end up as alcoholics.

Young people are the most affected with peer influence. The need to fit in can often lead to the development of bad social habits such as alcoholism. The constant parties and weekend rendezvous are basically characterized with a lot of boozing and other illicit substances. Bad peer influence is one of the leading causes of alcohol and substance abuse among young people. The group mentality is an ideal foundation for social vices and bad habits that may affect an individual for much of his or her adult life.

Risk Factors / Effects

1. Mental disorder: Alcoholism affects the functioning of the brain and can lead to memory loss and psychological problems. A person can become disoriented all the time and may have trouble remembering events. Since alcohol is categorized as a depressant, it may amplify mental disorders such as depression

and stress. A depressed alcoholic can develop suicidal tendencies more so when the effects of alcohol wear off.

2. Health impact: Alcohol abuse has several negative impacts. People addicted to alcohol, especially the hard liquor, prefer drinking over food. They may become frail and of poor health as a result of poor eating habits. This opens the door for diseases and a host of infections. Excessive drinking can also cause liver cirrhosis which is a common killer health condition among alcoholics. Gout disease is also frequently found in people who take too much beer and red meat. Since judgment is usually impaired when one is drunk, poor decision-making can lead to risky sexual behaviour and thus sexually transmitted diseases and infections.

3. Abuse: Alcoholism leads to alcohol abuse. A person with a compulsive drinking habit will keep on drinking even when he or she is inebriated. To such people, there is never a point when alcohol becomes too much. Alcohol abuse can lead to alcohol poisoning when there is too much liquor in the body system.

4. Wastage of money: Alcoholics will prioritize drinking over other important life decisions. An alcoholic can spend a lot of money on liquor at the expense of feeding the family or making serious investment decisions. The need to get high and the desire to taste alcohol dents one financially because it is a habit that requires money for sustenance. Poor judgment when an individual is drunk can also lead to bad financial decisions. A person can buy an item that he or she does not need and thereby cause wastage of money.

5. Low self-esteem: Alcohol addiction can lead to low self-esteem. An addict may believe that he or she is not good enough because of the perceptions that the society has about people



who abuse alcohol and other substances. It can lead to the inability to pursue dreams or take advantage of existing opportunities due to the low self-esteem.

6. Unfulfilled career: A person addicted to alcohol may never truly realize his or her potential career-wise. Alcoholism kills motivation and affects job performance leading to career stagnation. An alcoholic cannot be trusted with the management of an organization and may often be overlooked when promotion opportunities arise.

Drug Abuse and Addiction in India

Drug abuse refers to the habit of regular intake of illegal drugs characterized by mis-use of drugs. There is a thin-line of difference between drug abuse and addiction. In case of drug abuse, the person may or may not be addicted to these harmful drugs. However, in case of drug addiction, the person is severely addicted to these drugs. Thus, drug abuse may often lead to drug addiction.

Drug abuse and addiction is one of the great evils of our time. It has become a serious problem in India. Young and old alike everywhere are addicted to drugs. It has resulted in increased crime, tension, disease, horror and lack of peace and security.

The cities have attracted large number of youth who come in search of employment. Such people live a lonely and isolated life and become anti-social. They fall into evil company and get addicted.

The children who are deprived of the loving care and affection, and do not get right type of education are prone to be addicted to drugs.

Causes: In India drug abuse has become wide-spread and a cause of concern for the people and the government. The major causes of drug abuse and addiction are given below:

1. It is to be noted that despair very often drives many to drug addiction. Students who remain far away from parents and guardians and live in hostels and messes become victims of addiction.
2. Their keeping contact with bad company pushes them to be addicts. There is no proper direction, no goal or objective before young men and women to move forward and reach.
3. Our education is such that it does not prepare students to fit into life. Coming out of the schools and colleges, they find that they have no future, no prospects in life.

Remedial measures: Parents, teachers, educationists and governments should think how best to improve education, so that it brings a full development of the personality and teaches the essence of life and the art of decent living.

1. Moral instructions should form a part of teaching.
2. Mass media and voluntary organizations should do their best in the field and highlight the dangers of drug addiction.
3. The various drugs are capturing the market and holding young and old alike in their grip.

4. The Anti-Narcotic Squads and Drug Enforcement Agencies should work in a more vigilant manner to prevent drug trafficking and trade.

Conclusion

The radio, television and newspapers must come in with vigorous campaigns against drug abuse and addiction. Legislation alone cannot put an end to the evil practice.

An increased social awareness is the key to the solution of this problem. People are to realize that drugs are killers and rare to be killed. They must learn to say 'No' to drugs and save their families from ruin. Persuasion, and not compulsion, can bring good results.

Alcoholism can be prevented by discouraging drinking. The government and relevant stakeholders can carry out awareness campaigns to educate the society on the dangers of alcohol addiction. The campaign can be done on social media, print media, and television so that it can reach the target audience. Drinking while driving should also be prohibited. This can be made effective by having traffic checkpoints to arrest drivers who are intoxicated.

Taking alcohol does not treat depression. If anything, it only makes it worse. Psychiatrist treatment and not alcohol is the solution for depression. Depression treatment centres would, therefore, serve as a good treatment mechanism for those suffering from depression. It would reduce the number of people seeking comfort in the bottle for their depressing thoughts. Many people in the society do not really understand that depression is a mental disorder. Having treatment centres and creating awareness would destigmatize it and get help to those in meeting. People addicted to alcohol can get professional help and kick the bad habit. Rehabilitation centres are ideal places for detoxification. An addict will be accorded treatment and given the necessary support to overcome alcoholism. The body undergoes detoxification and is then tuned to function without alcohol in the system. Rehab is usually a good treatment option for those that are too far gone that even the intervention of friends and family members cannot get them to overcome the habit. An individual may be directed to attend a rehabilitation centre by a court of law, employer, or in other cases forcibly taken to the centres by concerned friends and relatives.

The overview of taking drugs can be dangerous not only because of the physical impact they can have on your body but they can also limit your ability to set limits. Be aware of your environment and realize when you are in danger. Addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite harmful consequences. It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain. Drug abuse has changed its structure and works. These brain changes can be long lasting and lead to the harmful behaviours seen in people who abuse drugs. Addiction is a lot like other diseases, such as heart disease. Both disrupt the normal, healthy functioning of the underlying organ, have serious harmful consequences, and are preventable and treatable, but if left untreated, can last a lifetime. Mind-altering drugs interact with naturally occurring chemicals in the brain



that are used to send messages throughout the central nervous system, brain and body. Central nervous system depressant drugs a sedative, leaving individuals feeling relaxed and loose. All of these drugs disrupt natural brain chemistry. Most act on the brain's natural of reward system and interfere with the normal production, transmission, and absorption dopamine.

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