

Significant Social Determinants of Substance Abuse among School Students: A Study with Special Reference to Idukki District, Kerala

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Abstract

Substance abuse is a one of the major problems faced by the state of Kerala, which has various harmful consequences to the individual, to his or her immediate environment and the society as a whole. The problem is affected to the adolescents by leading to various risk behaviours such as early sexual activity, violence, academic failure, truancy, school dropout, delinquency etc. The present study aims on the Social Determinants of Substance Abuse among School Students in Idukki district. The examined determinants are peer pressure, class room frustration, family conflicts, availability, role modelling, celebrations, advanced technologies, financial capabilities and advertising and promotion with their socio demo graphic factors. Responses were elicited from them using a self-structured questionnaire to test major dimensions that guided the study. The study used 60 users of substances; aged between 13-17 years was selected through convenient sampling method. The result was found that most of the users are in the age group of 15 (41.67%) years. The identified social determinants are seen in the life of substance abused school students that are influenced either directly or indirectly. The study proposed various suggestions and social work application for the grass root level prevention of substance abuse among school students.

Keywords: Peer pressure, Class room frustration, Family conflicts, Availability, Role modelling, Celebrations, Advanced technologies, Financial capabilities and Advertising and Promotion

Introduction

Kerala is blessed with so many natural and human resources such as natural beauty, literacy rate, land of Ayurveda etc. The same state has an opposite negative side of an increasing rate of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances cases. A study was revealed by The Week magazine regarding the alarming rate of substance abuse in Kerala. As the Magazine discloses, there were 9,242 NDPS cases were registered in 2017 and 7573 cases were registered in 2018 (George, 2018). Out of the cases registered, 7,802 people were arrested for drug trafficking and related offenses in the state. The excise commissioner of Kerala reported that over 1000 crore worth substances were seized by the excise department in the year 2018 and considering the number of cases nationwide Kerala bagged the second rank among the states in India (The New Indian Express, 2019).

It was collected by the researchers the number of inpatients who have sought the treatment from the five de-addiction centres in idukki district in the years 2017 and 2018. As the statistics revealed that there were 1703 persons after 18 years old and 40 students who are below 18 years old have undergone through treatment for substance abuse in the year 2017. In 2018 there were 1638 persons after 18 years old and 57 students below 18 years old have undergone through the treatment for substance abuse. As the statistics revealed that Narcotic and psychotropic substance cases are increasing than the alcohol related cases. There were 37 Narcotic and Psychotropic substance cases were registered in 2017 and 73 cases in 2018 under Peermade excise range office Idukki, whereas 70 alcohols related cases in 2017 and only 9 cases were registered under the same office. Out of above mentioned record of cases more than 70% of the cases were reported between the ages of 18-25, who are in the age period of college students. Deepika and Mathruboomi, the two prominent Malayalam Newspapers in Kerala have reported 97 Narcotic and Psychotropic substance cases in Idukki district from 2018 September to 2019 January.

It is not just enough to acknowledge the fact that a problem exist but also find out the means and methods of knowing the root cause and eradication of such problems. This paper is relevant for knowing the psycho-social determinants of substance abuse among school students. The findings obtained from this study will advance our knowledge about the prevalence and determinants of substance abuse would help to understand and create awareness about what adolescence are experiencing and as well as involving themselves in it, at school level and to provide specific suggestion for parents, teachers and government to address and eradicate the problem effectively and safeguard the future generation.

Research Methodology

The study focused on both high school and higher secondary students of Peermade panchayat between the age group of 13 to 17 years. Peermade panchayat is a hill station in the heart of Idukki district and it is also a tourist destination with spectacular waterfalls, pine forest and open grass lands. The core aim of the study is to know the prevalence and social determinants of substance abuse among the school students who are the future generation. As part of ethical consideration, the researcher pursued the official permission from the school authorities and later obtained the informed consent of the students for the study. In this research the researcher used both the quantitative research approach and descriptive research design. The researcher used probability sampling and simple random sampling techniques for collecting data. Both structured interview schedule and self-made questionnaire were used as tools for collecting the data. Initially the researcher reached to the problem from the information collected through filing RTI, newspapers reports, books and online published journals. First of all, the researcher found out the students who are under substance abuse or have some relationship with substance abuse by using a self-made questionnaire and selected 60 samples through lottery method. The self-made questionnaire has divided into different social determinants such as peer pressure, class room frustration, family conflicts, availability, role modelling, celebrations, advanced technologies, financial capabilities and advertising and promotion (Sahu, 2009).

Socio – Demographic Details of the Respondents

No	Subject	Frequencies and Percentage (N= 60)
1.	Age of the Respondent	13 Year Old: 10 (16.67%) 14 Years Old: 5 (8.33%) 15 Years Old: 25 (41.67%) 16 Years Old: 12 (20%) 17 Years Old: 8 (13.33%)
2.	Domicile	Estate Quarters: 28 (46.67%) Rented House : 18 (30%) Own House : 14 (23.33%)
3.	Father's Occupation	Cooli: 45 (75%) Others: 15 (25%)
4.	Mother's Occupation	Cooli: 46 (76.67%) Government Job: 8 (13.33%) Others: 6 (10%)
5.	Religion	Hindu: 24 (40%) Christians: 23 (38.33%) Muslims: 13 (21.67%)
6.	Category	General – 17 (28.33%) SC: 10 (16.67%) ST: 12 (20%) OBC: 14 (23.33%) Others: 7 (11.67%)
7.	Economic Condition	APL: 16 (26.67%) Antiodaya: 9 (15%) BPL: 35 (58.33%)
8.	Education of Father	Below 10: 53 (88.33%) Plus Two: 7 (11.67%)
9.	Education of Mother	Below 10: 48 (80%) Plus Two: 8 (13.33%) Degree: 4 (6.67%)

The age of the respondents was between thirteen and seventeen. Among the age of the respondents 41.67 % are the under the age group of 15 and 13.33% are the age group of 17 year. 46.67% are living in owned house at the same time 30% are living in the rented house. More than 75% of the fathers and mothers are getting their daily income from cooli. More children are from the category of general and less are other than SC, ST and OBC category. Among the 58.33% of the respondents are below poverty line and 26.67% are above poverty line. Only 15% are only in the condition of the Antiodaya. 88.33% of the fathers and 80% of the respondents' mothers are having the education qualification of below SSLC. Only a few percentages of parents pursued higher secondary education and above.

Significant Social Determinants of Substance Abuse among School Students

Substance abuse is a problem that invades the global community in general, because it damages the human society. It is a non-adaptive model of drug use, which results in adverse problems and consequences and includes a set of cognitive, behavioural, and psychological symptoms (Nahvizadeh, 2014). The world health organization has done a global school-based student health survey and found out the risk factors among school students across the world are the use of alcohol and illicit drugs (World Health Organization, 2010). Following are the determinants of substance abuse among school students identified through the study.

Peer Pressure

Companions or friends have a strong influence in the decision making and life overall of the students, because they face an intense pressure from their peers. A study done by Columbia University found that a child is six times more likely to have an alcoholic drink if they have friends who drink. The risky behaviour of the students has an application to substance abuse among them. When they are encouraged by some of the alcohol users even the peers there is a higher possibility of experiencing the dangerous substances (Nova Recovery Center, 2016).

Table No 1

Negation of any Unjust Favour to the Friends by the Respondent

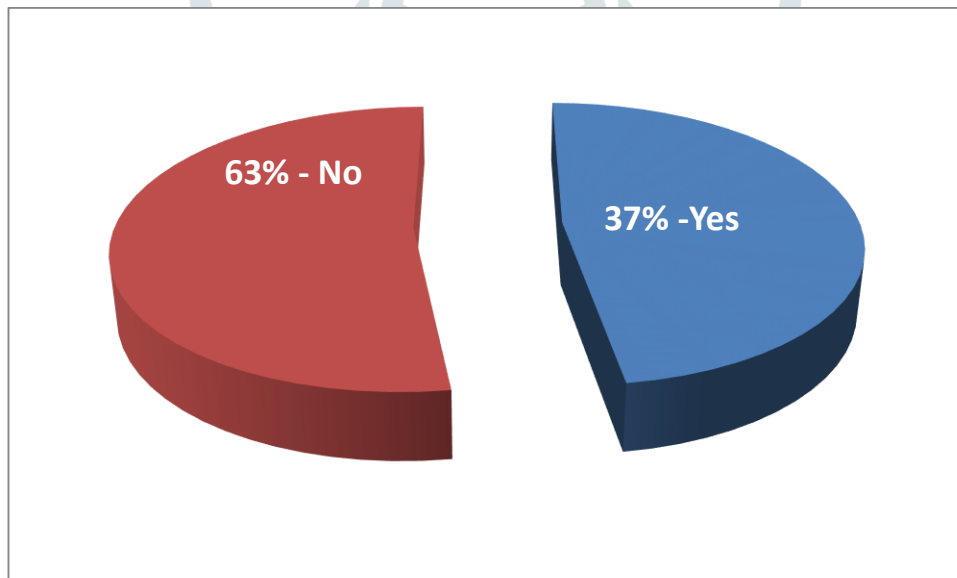
	Negation of any Unjust Favour to the Friends by the Respondent			Total
	Yes	No	Sometimes	
Substance Abuse of the Respondent	12(20%)	39(65%)	9(15%)	60(100%)
Total	12(20%)	39(65%)	9(15%)	60(100%)

The above table reveals the fact that 65% of the respondents are very much attached to their friends because even if their friends ask an unjust favour for them the above mentioned respondents are not willing to negate their friends' request. Only 20% of the respondents said that they will negate the request of their friends and 15% of the respondents are not sure about their responds. In the case of last group there is a fifty-fifty chance of negation and not negating the request of any unjust favour. In comparison with the study of the Nova centre, mentioned above the 65% of the respondents are under the strong influence of their friends and they can even mislead by the friends.

Class room Frustration

Frustration is a common emotional response to opposition related to anger and disappointment; it arises from the perceived resistance to the fulfilment of individual will. All human beings find him in a state of confusion with all the paths ahead blocked. With repeated failure he reaches a state or condition of tension and the individual is said to be frustrated. To relieve the state of frustration the individual tend to show adjustments which may be simple or extremely complicated. He will take some other way to avoid frustration and it will be leading to alcohol and drug use in the school age itself. Frustration may result from a variety of causes. The causes differ from person to person and from time to time for the same person. Sometimes the most familiar environment like home and school can create frustration in individuals. Frustration is especially experienced during adolescence. Frustration creates a state of tension and anxiety which is unpleasant for the children. Hence the individual seeks to relieve tension by making appropriate changes in himself or in his environment. Frustration is present at all stages of development. It occurs especially at periods when new developmental tasks appear. (Vengal., 2014).

Graph 1
Classroom Frustration of children and Substance Abuse



As per the above graph 37% of the respondents agreed that they are undergoing or have undergone through classroom frustration and 63% of the respondents have not experienced classroom frustration. Classroom frustration may be due to lack of suitable, rich and motivating environment, which may inspire and stimulate the learning experience. The study mentioned above reported that, in order to make adjustment to the frustration people may tend to depend upon alcohol and other harmful substances.

Celebrity Role Modelling

Film stars, sports stars, pop celebrities etc. make smoking and drinking alcohol very attractive in different ways. The people especially the adolescents who are in front of above mentioned celebrities may have an affiliation towards those activities of celebrities. If those activities are positive or negative the

adolescents will be influenced and that has a connection with the substance abuse of school students (Jiloha, 2009).

Table No 2
Celebrity Role Modelling of the Respondents

Substance Abuse		Celebrity Role Modelling		Total
		Yes	No	
Economic Condition	APL	5(8.33%)	11(18.33%)	16 (26.67%)
	BPL	28(46.66%)	7(11.67%)	35 (58.33%)
	Antiodaya	7(11.67%)	2(3.33%)	9 (15%)
Total		40(66.67%)	20(33.33%)	60(100%)

$\chi^2 - 13.65$ $df-1$ $P \text{ value}- 0.05$

The above table pointed out that there is an association between economic condition and celebrity role modelling of the respondents. The chi square value is 15.65 and the P value is 0.05 at the degree of freedom 2. The study mostly consists of the respondents from the BPL families. In the above table 46% out of 58.33% of total respondents from the families below poverty line and 11.67% out of 15 of total respondents from the Antiodaya family agreed that they are highly in touch with the celebrity role modelling whereas only 8.33% out of 26.67% of the respondents from the above average families agreed the same. Altogether, 66.67% of the respondents admitted their attachment towards the celebrity role modelling and 33.33% respondents are not in touch with celebrity role modelling. In India both BPL and Antiodaya families come under below poverty line and the total percentage of the respondents who agreed their affiliation to celebrity modelling is 58.33% out of 66.67%.

Availability

One of the contributory factors of substance abuse is availability. When accessibility of drugs is easy, chances of people trying out and consequently being addicted to drugs is increased. In order to obtain large amount of money, drug syndicates are always make them available and when a group of addicted are emerged, then the business will proceed smoothly. So it is the need of drug syndicates to make the harmful drugs available to the community (Tam, 2012).

Table No 3

Domicile of the Respondent and Availability

Substance Abuse		Availability		Total
		Yes	No	
Domicile	Estate Quarters	21(35%)	7(11.67%)	28 (46.67%)
	Rented House	14(23.33%)	4(6.67%)	18 (30%)
	Own House	11(18.33%)	3(5%)	14 (23.33%)
Total		46(76.67%)	14(23.33%)	60(100%)

$\chi^2 - 20.00$ $df-2$ P value- **0.10**

The table discloses that there is an association between the domicile and the availability of the respondents. Out of the 60 respondents 28 from the estate quarters, 18 from rented house and 11 from own house. 35% out of 46.67% of the respondents who live in the estate quarters pointed out that there is an availability of harmful substances in their domicile. 23.33% out of 30% who live in the rented house and 18.33% out of 23.33% of the respondents agreed the same. Altogether when 76.67% of the respondents reveal the availability of the substances in their domiciles, only 23.33% of the respondents were not known regarding the availability of the same.

Advanced Technologies

Modern technologies provide the opportunities to the humanity for an easier communication of interaction. In the case of substance abuse, modern communication has increased the possibilities of selling drugs easily even among the school students. With a single click on the computer or on the mobile any type of illicit drug is available at the door step of either the first-time substance user or a chronic drug abuser. Using World Wide Web even a student can get to learn about any drug in the world (Tam, Contributory Factors of Drug Abuse and the Accessibility of Drugs, 2012).

Table No 4

Searching the Details of Harmful Substances in Internet

	Searched the Details of Harmful Substances in Internet		Total
	Yes	No	
Substance Abuse of the Respondent	42(70%)	18(30%)	60(100%)

According to the above the above table, 70% of the respondents have searched in the internet either through mobile or computer the details of the harmful substances. Only 30% of the respondents are away from the same. It supports the above mentioned study that, modern technologies created the possibilities of searching and selling of the harmful substances.

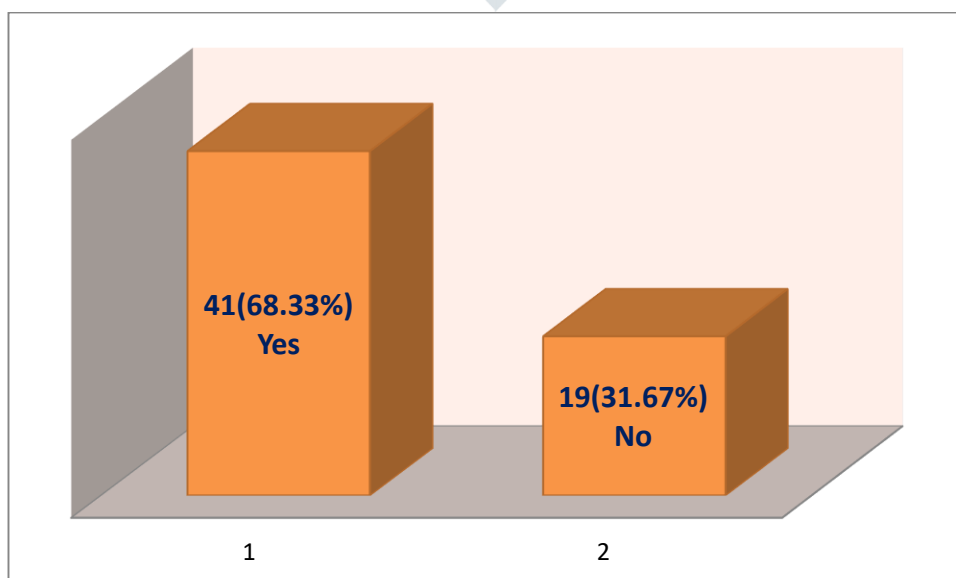
Family Conflict

There is a relationship between family involvement in the life of children and their use and misuse of harmful substances. Quality of parenting has been found to interact with variables such as psychological well-being, life stress, and social support in predicting general antisocial behaviour as well as substance use and misuse (Yoshikawa, 1994). Many interventions have been based on the idea that the family plays an important part in socialising children to adjust to the demands and opportunities of the social environment. Inappropriate socialisation occurs within the family, a range of delinquent behaviours may develop, and studies have found that early antisocial behaviour is a strong predictor of later substance misuse (Gittelman R, 1985).

There are many findings of statistically significant associations between drug and alcohol use and particular relational processes within the family. Questions remain, for example, as to whether conflict with parents increases the likelihood that a young person will misuse substances, or whether those who do use substances have other behaviours, which result in greater levels of conflict in the family. Social factors that affect early development within the family, such as chaotic home environment, ineffective parenting and lack of mutual attachment have been shown to be crucially important indicators of risk (NIDA, 1997). According to Velleman and colleagues have argued that there are seven areas in which the family context could influence the child's substance use behaviour: family relations versus structure, family cohesion, family communication, parental modelling of behaviour, family management, parental supervision and parent/ peer influences (Velleman R, 1997).

Graph No 2

Regular Conflict in Family



It was identified by the above graph that, 68% of the respondents indicated the regular conflict in their family and 31.67% of the respondents have the opposite opinion. There are different earlier studies specified the relationship between substance abuse and family dynamics. As per the above mentioned review, the chaotic home environment, ineffective parenting and lack of mutual attachment between parents are certain critical factors for an effective grown up of the children.

Financial Capability of the Students

The present scenario that adds to the accessibility of drug these days is the young generations' financial ability. This large amount of money, which is not necessary for a secondary or high school student, further increases the ease of teenagers in gaining illegal drugs. (Lee SI, Halimatul SAH, 2012).

Table 5
Spending Money for Buying Substances

Spending Money for Buying Substances	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	23	38.34%
No	37	61.66%
Total	60	100%

It is pinpointed by the respondents regarding spending money for buying substances which is collected through various occasional engagements such as catering jobs, cooli, part time jobs in shops etc. As per the above table, there are 38.34% of the respondents expressed their experience of spending money for buying substances. 61.66% of the respondents spotted their unwillingness to spend money for buying substances.

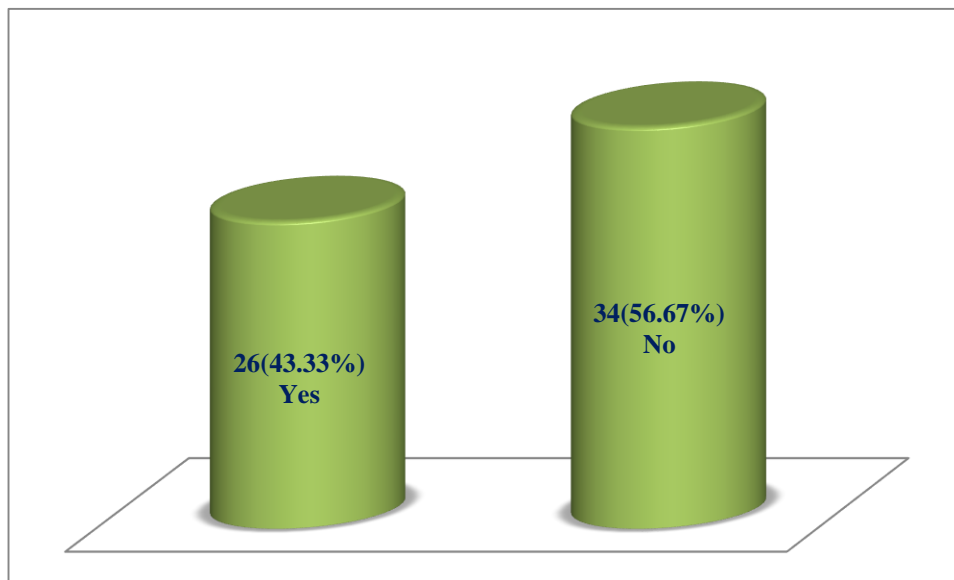
Family Celebrations

In 2011 the journal named 'The Guardian' reported that, children who regularly see their parents' drink are twice as likely to binge on alcohol themselves. Youths who are left unsupervised are also more likely to drink, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation report found. "Both what parents say and how they behave have a strong impact on their teenagers' drinking, drinking regularly and drinking to excess." (Association, 2011).

Drugs and alcohol are part of celebration in the modern society and it became a prestigious issue for many of the families. When those practices continue, children may learn from the parents and their friends to use the available drugs in their environment. The modern celebrations are included with verity of drugs and alcohol and the children who are included in such celebrations have the curiosity to use and enjoy it.

Graph 3

Using Alcohol in the Family Celebrations of the Respondents



43.33% of the respondents are at the risk because they have identified the role of alcohol in the celebrations of their family. As the above mentioned review, there is more probability to binge on alcoholism by the children who regularly see their parents involved in drinking alcohol. 56.67% of the respondents said that there is no involvement of alcohol in their family celebrations.

Advertising and Promotion

The supply of alcohol, including its production, marketing, and retail sale can play a significant role in alcohol and drug consumption (Holder, 2000). Alcohol and tobacco are the most heavily promoted product categories in the world. Annual advertising and promotion costs are estimated at \$3.6 billion for the tobacco industry and \$2.0 billion for the alcohol industry (Federal Trade Commission, 1983). These costs are tax deductible. Although the tobacco and alcoholic beverage industries deny that they promote to young people, researches document that cigarette and alcohol advertising and promotional campaigns are especially appealing and attractive to teenagers and children (Warner, 1986). The companies make use of celebrities for the promotion of beverages and cigarettes. Thus more and more adolescents are being attracted to drugs and alcohol with the help of advertisement through audio-visual and print media.

Table No 6

Unfollowing the Celebrity by the Respondent, if he is a part of any Drug Advertisement

Unfollow, Celebrities If they are a Part of Drug Advertisement	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	15%
No	45	85%
Total	20	100.0

The influence of the advertisement is very much evident in the display of above table where 85% of the respondents expressed that they will not unfollow the celebrities and only 15% of the respondents disclosed their willingness to unfollow the celebrities, if they are a part of any harmful substance.

Social Work Application

Substance abuse is a growing problem across the world which is very difficult to detect because many a time the persons involved in it may not like to reveal and stay away from the use of it. There are three levels of prevention of substance abuse; they are primary, secondary and tertiary level prevention.

Suggestions

- The collaborative work among different government departments such as health, education, excise and police need to be co-ordinated in the district level. The regular monthly meeting of the above mentioned department heads need to be convened for evaluating cases registered in each month and make a common strategy to confront the issue of substance abuse. The designed models need to be proceeded to the grass root level such as among teachers and parents for primary prevention of substance abuse among school children.
- Early bio-psycho screening of the students for identifying the biological and psychological problems and to provide effective treatment for the same
- Regular and effective awareness creation among parents and teachers for the primary prevention of substance abuse
- Systematic and productive training for the school teachers to confront the problem of substance abuse professionally

Conclusion

The problem of substance abuse among school students has studied by identifying the determinants of the same. Using the simple random sampling, following determinants were identified as the reasons for the problem such as peer pressure, classroom frustration, celebrity role modelling, availability, advanced technologies, family conflict, financial capability of the students, family celebrations and advertising and promotion. The primary, secondary and tertiary level of prevention is applicable to address the problem. The collaborative work of the government departments, school authorities, regular awareness creation for parents, teachers and students and systematic training would be preferable to reduce the problem. Thereby a generation with good mind, body and spirit can be generated.

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