



THE ROLE OF DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES IN RETARDING THE MENTAL GROWTH

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ABSTRACT

As there is a famous proverb which goes like this ‘Extremeness of anything is always harmful’ as if we consider any medicine which is prescribed by a doctor to his patient in certain doses or quantity and if the patient consume more than is prescribed then it is possible that he will not get cured for which he consulted the doctor or even in worst case scenario might meetup any other health related issue. So, the same goes with the use of drugs and psychotropic substances as these are used for medicinal purposes but the youth as well as mid aged persons not knowing its repercussions make these drugs in use without any prescription making their and their family’s life suffer. As they get momentary pleasure but after when that pleasure fades away the person finds himself in a state of addiction. Further the addiction is not as such its part but there are other elements as well which are responsible for it as it can be genetic or under some sort of pressure or stress that one can look upon such drugs as a life saver for them. As before being habitual of something one would have been in touch of that for a longer period and that is applicable in both positive as well as negative ways, as there is a famous saying that is Rome was not built in a day so in similar sense the habit of anything can’t be adopted in one day as it requires a certain time period.

So in this article the main focus will be on the role that drugs and other sort of substances play in attacking the mental as well as the physical health of a person which not only make the person unable to understand the nature of anything but in severe cases it can lead to taking somebody’s or his own life on trivial matters but for them it could a bigger issue. Further the problems related to neurology, psychology etc., will also be dealt and also dealing with the legal aspect of such substances and the steps that are taken by different organization, Government, NGO etc. and further to come up with some reasonable solutions to get rid of drug abuse.

KEY WORDS

Drugs, selaginella blyopteris, Psychotropic substance, Possession, neurology, psychology, Mental Disorder, Cultivation, Neurons, Transmission, Reflex, illicit Trafficking, Consumption, Trade, Rehabilitation

INTRODUCTION

India is considered to be a House of many medicinal plants and in this regard there is an instance in Valmiki Ramayana and that is when Meghanada uses brahmashira arrow to make Laxman unconscious in the battle and after when Laxmana becomes unconscious then Hanuman on the advice of Sushena went in search of 'sangeevani booti' and which in recent time is located in the foothills of Uttarakhand near Dronagiri village and also a scientific name is given to this booti as 'Selaginella blyopteris' and basically it is used to treat people which are in coma as an inhaler. Further the scope of medicinal plants is much wide and due to this a proper set of rules are required as regard to its plantation as well as usage. Further in regard to plantation of any drug permission is required as in case of opium plantation the license is necessary and in India there are three states where the opium poppy is planted and these are Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. [1]

Further the excessive or over usage of such drugs may lead to mental health problems such as hallucination, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety, depression, Alzheimer, Parkinson's disease etc. and further in most of the cases it is observed by neurologists and psychiatrist that the main issue is that after any sort of intoxication the functioning of the brain as well as physical activity of a person undergo a major change as the person who seems to be silent suddenly becomes aggressive and that change can be observed by any prudent person. Although people take medicines like Alprax having alprazolam as its salt which is an Anti-depressant drug which is used for mind relaxation but after relying over such medicines they become habitual whenever they feel low and so such medicines are not given to anyone without doctor's prescription. Although being the center for spirituality, India ranks 126th in the World Happiness Index according to the report of 2023, so this gives a message that it does not matter in which environment you are, if your inner environment is healthy then howsoever the outer environment is, it cannot easily affect it.

BACKGROUND

The term drug is basically derived from French word 'drogue' which means any dry herb or any source taken from plant. Further the word Drug can be defined as any sort of substance which is consumed to feel relaxed and to relieve pain and which hampers the person mentally as well as physically. In simple terms drug is a substance which is used to cure certain disease when taken in prescribed manner but if taken unreasonably then it can ruin the mental as well as physical state of the person. Further the psychotropic substances are those which makes changes in cognitive functioning of the person like changes in mood which results into mood swing disorder etc. these substances basically change the functioning of the nervous system and which further influences the certain chemicals in brain. Further as such earlier there was no who actually opted any drug policy which indeed India adopted and it was the first developing country to do so and the purpose behind doing such was public welfare as to make drugs available for individual with low income. As the Government of India was against the Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs (1961) then later it was decided that India shall be given an extra period of 25 years to cultivate cannabis and make it available for medical as well as research purposes only. In this regard International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is observed on June 26th every year and the motive behind is to make the people aware about the drug abuse and to give advice to them as not to be victims of drugs and to quit them to adopt a healthy life as in ancient scriptures as well there are 6 types of vikara that is kama, krodha, lobha, madh, moha and matsarya and it also says that where there any vikara resides there is no space for prosperity, peace and good health.

Drug is that kind of a substance which easily gets dissolved in blood but its overdose leads to many mental as well as physical issues. Particularly in respect of mind, brain is considered as the most complex mechanism as it consists of billions of cells which are known as neurons and each such neuron act as a transmitter as it transfers information from neurons to the brain as for example if we touch any hot vessel suddenly then the cells will transmit the information to the brain and what the brain does in reaction to it is that it will remove hand quickly from that vessel and this sudden reaction of brain is called reflex action. [2]

According to the National Survey conducted by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in the year 2004 and 2018 in a specified age bracket and is regarding to the substance so consumed as well as the population so involved and it as follows; [3]

Serial no.	Name of the substance	Survey conducted in the year 2004	Survey conducted in the year 2018
		Age Group (12-60 years)	Age Group (10-75 years)
1.	Opioids	0.7%	2.1%
2.	Alcohol	21%	14.6%
3.	Cannabis	3%	2.83%

Further another survey was conducted as regard to the users of such substances and the estimation are as follows;

Serial no.	Name of the substance	Users (Age Group 10-17 years)	Users (Age Group 18-75 years)
1.	Hallucinogens	2,00,000	11,01,000
2.	Cocaine	2,00,000	9,40,000
3.	Amphetamines type stimulants (ATS)	4,00,000	15,47,000
4.	Inhalants	30,00,000	51,25,000
5.	Opioids	40,00,000	1,86,44,000
6.	Alcohol	30,00,000	15,01,16,000
7.	Cannabis	20,00,000	2,90,18,000

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND INTERNATIONAL COVNENTIONS

Basically, World Health Organization (WHO) is the sole body which is required to examine medical as well as scientific substances and whose assessment shall be treated as determinative and further the role of WHO in this regard is to examine and determine the effect that the psychotropic substances are causing on health of public at large. Further there are legal authorities which enforces the drug regulation and these are such as;

- 1) Narcotic Control Bureau
- 2) Narcotics Control Division
- 3) Central Bureau of Narcotics
- 4) Other Agencies such as Central Bureau of Investigation and other investigating agencies so appointed in this regard by the appropriate Government.

In India before the year of 1985 there was no such legislative rules regarding drugs and other related substances but later Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 was passed to deal with the major issues regarding drug abuse, cultivation, possession, export & import, trade, trafficking, consumption etc. Further several amendments made the act to provide stringent punishment, as in case of possessing drugs in small quantity the punishment is 6 months with rigorous imprisonment or fine of Rs 10,000 or both. Such changes are made to make the society aware and to set an example by providing stringent punishment and in regard of using such substances for commercial purposes then the punishment is 10-20 years of rigorous imprisonment or fine of Rs 2,00,000 or both. Also, chapter II of the Act of 1985 provides provision relating to the wellness of the addicted person and provides direction for sending them to rehabilitation centers. [4]

Further there are international conventions as well which are held to resolve the issues relating to drug abuse and its trafficking and these are as follows; [5]

HAGUE CONVENTION, 1912

In this convention a commission was made to legalize narcotic drugs and to establish a national legislative council which is known as International Opium Convention as this was the convention which was signed in Hague in 1912. Further the purpose behind such convention was that the contracting state should control the manufacturing, sale, importing, selling, export of cocaine and other related drugs.

SINGLE CONVENTION ON NARCOTIC DRUG, 1961

In this convention the major focus was on the prohibition of production as well as sale of specific drug other than those which have been licensed for medical or other research purposes. Also, the convention give emphasis on prohibiting the use of psychotropic substances such as MDMA (3,4-MethyleneDioxy-MethamohetAmine), LSD (LySergic acid Diethylamide) and other like substances which are subject to illicit drugs trafficking. This convention particularly give emphasis on making the use if such drugs only for medical purposes and India has also adopted this convention as its preamble further states that such drugs may be given in a limited quantity and only for the purpose of giving relief from pain.

CONVENTION ON PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES,1971

This convention basically focuses on having the control over the psychotropic substances such as benzodiazepines, amphetamine, stimulants etc. and convention was signed in Vienna on 21st February, 1971. Further the convention make it clear that the use of psychotropic substances has been permitted only for manufacturing of non-psychotropic substances with a strict guideline that those psychotropic substances should not be subject to any kind of abuse further.

UNITED NATION CONVENTION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES, 1988

This convention basically dealt to provide a proper legal framework regarding drugs and also focused on devoting more attention towards incidence of drugs abuse with the change in society and its impact majorly on the youth that is the future generation and hence the law should impose heavy penalty and rigorous punishment in regard to the supply of illicit drugs. Further the reason for such convention was basically the rise of illicit drug and its trade related activities.

CAMPAIGNS REGARDING DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

SAY NO TO DRUGS [6]

The drug abuse is the major issue nowadays and in this regard the Government is actively working upon it to make the individuals so involved aware of the side effect as well as the repercussions which the consumer of such substances might face in future. So as it said that precaution is better than cure and in this regard there are many rehabilitation centers which are working in transforming people by changing their lifestyle and environment and also setting a fixed time for physical activities as it is proven that if one will exercise daily and with a healthy diet can fight with any disease more than any normal person.

Further an article by The Times Of India dealt with the rise of drug abuse by the children and in that article Dr Vivek Vishal, a psychiatrist, said that in treatment of such addictions there involves clinical procedures, counselling, medication etc. and he also added that kids of 18 years use substances like whiteners, thinners etc. and this results in inculcating addiction to their nature which if used continuously may lead to drug addiction as well. The campaign regarding say no to drugs was basically launched in the state of Kerala by the chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Also, he said to open more than 14 rehabilitation centers in the state which will work in transforming the lives of those persons who have destroyed themselves after being in the custody of drugs.

ADDICTION FREE AMRIT KAAL [7]

The campaign was launched on the occasion of World Tobacco Day which is observed on 31st may,2023, by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and it focus on promoting a healthier and drug

free nation. Further the campaign basically tries to curb the activities of tobacco consumption as well as drug addiction among the youth of the country. Further it tries to spread awareness through movies as motion pictures tries to create a better impact rather through any other medium and they are also trying to spread these Information through over-the-top (OTT) platforms as well, also this can be seen in the beginning of any movie when the victims of such drug abuse share their pain that they are dealing with and it is a lesson for others that how these pleasure enhancing substances may result into pain enhancer.

NASHA UKT BHARAT ABHIYAAN [8]

In the year of 2020, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched to address the issue of drug abuse among the youth of the country. Further there is a huge group of volunteers which include Anganwadi women, Asha workers and other which helped the abhiyaan to reach at the grass root level and also educational institutions conducted seminars for the students to teach them about the abhiyaan and in this movement the social media tools were effectively used to spread the awareness world wide and it has reached many and to collect the data based upon the ground reality they also made an app regarding this which is also available on play store.

Further there are several campaigns that are there which basically tries spread the awareness regarding the repercussion of using drugs and to live a healthy life it is necessary to quit drugs right away and in case anyone is not able to leave those by themselves then there are many rehab centers which help persons to come out from such addiction.

THE ART OF LIVING CAMPAIGN

Further there are several organizations which work for the society to make it a better place to live and in similar way the art of living organization made an effort in this regard and which was also guided by sri sri ravi Shankar in the state of Tamil Nadu and organized a walk for a cause event and the cause for which the whole event was organized was about the rising of drug abuse and to make all aware about the hazardous effects of drug consumption and through this event effort were made to educate volunteers and others about dealing with drug abuse and its solutions and how to deal with the person who is a drug addict.

CATCH THEM YOUNG CAMPAIGN

This campaign is basically launched by the Delhi Government which focused on the root cause of the problem of Drug abuse and they mainly targeted the youth especially students also in this regard the deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, said to levy heavy penalty on those who found consuming alcohol in public places and also the campaign serve to teach the students the art of saying no if anyone offer them to consume Alcohol, drug and related substances, further which will serve the students to share their opinion through sessions that are organized by the Government because the basic reason behind youth to get into such activity is that they did not find anyone when they are in need and that's why they seek another option drug which results into worst option later.

MY UTTRAKHAND, ADDICTION FREE UTTRAKHAND

Under the aegis of the national campaign MY INDIA, ADDICTION FREE INDIA, Uttarakhand CM Trivendra singh rawat with the Brahma Kumari spiritual university inaugurated the campaign which focused on the consumption on tobacco by the youth and children as well and to deal with the issue by properly teaching them about its effects on health and how to cope up with it. Also as Brahma Kumari organization is to make the world healthy, peaceful and in this regard they too took a step forward after understanding the requirement of the youth and not only this much, this organization further promote meditation in terms of raj yoga and they also provide 7 days free class to understand the concept of raj yoga by this they are making a change in the society and they are continuously working to make India a golden bird again. The BK organization has changed lives of many people by making them realize the importance of the their life.

RIGHT TO MENTAL HEALTH UNDER THE AEGIS OF ARTICLE 21

Article 21 provides for right to life and personal liberty which gives emphasis on the human rights that is the basic rights which everyone must be entitled to and hence it further provide right to health as its indestructible part as no one can survive without proper health which is the basic requirement to be able to enjoy any other right which article 21 serves, Indeed one can even achieve liberation with the human body itself for which Gautam buddha is the example. Further health can be understood into two forms that is physical form (Healthy body, good immunity etc.) and mental form (stable and sound mind) and hence physical form is handicap if the mental part is not in symmetry with it and hence right to mental health is Fundamental right and by this the constitution as well tries to eradicate the long going stigma and which serves for spreading awareness and hope it to be recognized as a disease which is although curable and not to relate it with any devilish spirit which was the reason for discrimination and that is because the illetracy and for that there are many psychiatric Hospitals are established and there are Government asylums as well which servies the issue and there is no space for shame as it is a disease which develops due different factors rather the focus must be to eradicate such evil customs and by accepting these mental disorders and supporting the patient that all it wants.

PATH FORWARD

The use of drugs and psychotropic substances is the major issue of the society at large and to deal with such kind of an issue it is necessary first of all to understand the basic requirements and its elements involved which make the person to take drugs as a support, so now taking an hypothetical situation, say x is a child whose mother passed away when he was 12 years old then his father did another marriage with an intent that she will take care of his child but she used to scold him and which inculcated a hesitation in him and as the time passed he was also started to get bullied in the school as , (now consider the mental trauma he is going through as in this he would have been given much support and confidence, but he didn't got anything), further he got so annoyed that he used to lock himself in a room making himself isolated, then one day he got 2 boys who belong to the same locality where x lives and they told x that he should try a cigarette and from there the journey of his addiction started and at last at the age of 55 year he was sent to a rehab center, as after some gap he again started to take drugs as he lost his job and was going through other mental stress.

In this case in the initial stage lack of parenting is the major issue to make the child indulge in addiction and if his father only took care of him or share some words with him or even asked him whether he was happy or not or is he going through any problem then it might be possible that the situation would have been different. Further it also can be observed that when in life any problem occurred for the first time and at that point if anyone support the person, he gets confidence to face it boldly but when he does not get any help then he might use drug to get himself relaxed but that step taken will remain with him as and when any problem may occur he will use any substance to get himself relaxed as after using such substances his mind got so weak that it can't handle any situation in life without external support and he will be more prone towards anxiety and depression.

So majorly in case of child, parents should know about the company their child is in and also with having space for trust between them and taking some time for their children from their hectic schedule and must do exchange of words in terms of opinion and must handle every child delicately as they gets more easily manipulated and in case of adult the work which communication and time can do nothing can replace it as the person under any type of addiction only requires mental support with proper medication and counselling and they merely want someone by their side.

CONCLUSION

There can be many aspects through which one may get indulge in drug consumption which one doesn't understand at that time but later the condition becomes so bad that he later on finds himself in the state of addiction but there are many ways to get cured by this addiction as well but to find its solution it is better to not make this situation at all, as it is said that prevention is better than cure so if one prevent himself from indulging such activities then it is good but there are situations as talking on practical grounds that a man becomes so

devastated that he doesn't find any solution to move forward then he indulges in such activities to divert his mind because after consumption of any drug the situation will remain intact but it just changes the behaviour of the person for a moment and relaxes his mind and that's why there is a high percentage of consumer of such drugs or sleeping pills as by consuming that the person's brain neurons and nervous system slows down making the speed of information and ideas even much slower but that is very much harmful as a brain created thousands of ideas in a second without thinking of those ideas and hindering or interrupting the natural process will obviously have its own repercussions.

There are many Government or Non-Government movements/campaigns which are launched for providing awareness and for the betterment of addicted persons. Further there are many NGO's as well as rehab centers working in the direction of providing assistance to the addicted persons from making their life transform and to quit every substance which he used to consume earlier and in this regard there are many conventions as well and the whole concept of drug and other like substances are dealt under many legislations such as Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. Further whether the person shall quit drugs or not it will be decided by his will to leave it and in that no one can do anything but only can try as there are cases where a person who consumed 4 to 5 different types of drugs make promise to not consume it further and that's why all the game is of mind if one can think, he can do and if he can do then the work is already accomplished. As different organizations are taking steps ahead in making India free from drug addiction by preventive such activities through making awareness through different ways that is by organizing seminars, sessions and such other activities to make the children, youth and others who are falling in the well of drug addiction or such other addiction save themselves and these organizations has really helped many families to combat the disease of drug addiction and they even run rehab centers for those who can't afford hefty fees of other centers and this is a kind of support that is required to change the society and it also act as a motivation for all those who are capable of helping such families as donation is a kind of service that a person can do towards its nation and its growth.

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