

Drug Abuse and Addiction in India

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Introduction

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 addition.
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.

Methods of psychotherapy for treatment

Methods of psychotherapy may be grouped under three heads.

In the **first group** we have the various forms of surface treatment such as suggestion, moral encouragement and persuasion and hypnosis. During the hypnotic state the patient is given a suggestion that he will not drink, that he will dislike drinking and that he will avoid alcohol and often obeys these suggestions on recovering from the hypnotic state. But these methods do not have any effect on the basic problems and difficulties of the patient which have led to alcohol addiction.

The **second group** of therapeutic methods consists of substitute emotions. Many rakes have turned a corner after coming in contact with religious and social reformers who gave them a new outlet for the expression of their emotions. Religious conversation, seeking joy choosing social service to the needy and the poor or joining social and political missions have deeply affected the personality of many alcohol addicts and induced them to seek satisfaction in activities other than drinking. A movement called Alcoholics Anonymous has gained considerable popularity and its programme and approach is fundamentally different from routine temperance societies.

The **third group** of psychotherapeutic methods aims at laying bare the root cause of drinking. People take to alcohol because it provides means of adjustment to stressful emotional and personal problems. Psychological treatment will bring out the real nature of such conflicts and difficulties, to strengthen the personality of the patient, to resolve conflicts and meet difficulties in a realistic manner and thus to get rid of them. Once the patient is made to understand what the complexion of his conflicts is and how they can best be resolved he will not resort to such artificial means of adjustment such as the use of alcohol.

Solutions

Alcoholism is a disease that has a solution. These are some of the ways in which alcohol addiction can be treated or prevented:

1. Discourage drinking: 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.

2. Depression treatment centres: 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 need.

3. Detoxification: 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.

We have been experiencing an alarming increase of drug abuse among the youngsters in recent years. Every now and then we read in the newspapers that teens are being held for consuming drugs and most of them are usually aged between 17-20. But the main question arises that why the Indian society is experiencing such a dilemma where more of the teenagers and youths are involved in unethical and unproductive activities like substance or drug abuse.

The youths are topping the charts for the wrong reasons this time around. Recently many college-going boys and girls were hauled up by the police involved in the case of drug consumption in a rave party. The alarming rate of drug abuse has always been a problem and especially the increase of drug abuse among youngsters has had detrimental effects on the society.

WHAT LEADS TO DRUG ADDICTION

Sheer pressure of studies on students might be one of the few cases which results in substance abuse among the youngsters. The educational system nowadays is very competitive and lacks flexibility with lakhs of students appearing for few thousand seats. Again there is always a parental burden which adds to the pressure of making it big academically.

Personal and family problems also leads to drug abuse among youngsters who fail to cope up with the ever-growing family and personal problems. Workplace pressure and issues with the colleagues results in workplace deviance which later results in detrimental effects on the individual.

The adolescence situation is often the cause of such unproductive activities. The friend's circle in which a young individual stays also influences his/her activities. A boy/girl who has a company of friends who are into drugs and alcohol tends to repeat the same; an attempt to be an active member of the peer group which often results in addiction of the same leading to many unproductive activities in future of the youngsters.

It might begin with experimenting. A friend or your loved one's must have tried it once out of curiosity because of friends or just to cope up with a problem. In the early stages, one might really find it helpful to erase some problems or make one's life better, which leads to more and more consumption of drugs. But as addiction reaches a step further, it becomes more of a need rather than just a problem solver.

EFFECTS

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COMMON SYMPTONS

Although there are different types of drugs, but the effects and the symptoms are more or less the same, irrespective of the kind of drug consumed. Some of the common signs which indicates that an individual is engaged with the process of drug abuse.

- Neglecting responsibilities at workplace, school, colleges or at home like skipping your tuition classes, low performance academically and staying away or alone for most of the time.
- It results in indifferences in relationships of an individual such as fights with your family members or your partner, losing a good old friend etc.
- Change in behavioral attitude such as not being the same person when being with friends or family or partner.
- Losing temper easily and getting into nasty things for petty issues.
- Frequently getting into fights, accidents and illegal activities.
- Lack of motivation, feeling lethargic.
- Anxiety and Irritation.
- Sudden Loss of appetite and weight. Loss of sleep patterns.

PHYSICAL SYMPTONS

Some of the most noticeable symptoms of drugs abuse are those that effect the body's inner working for example your body tolerance to a drug occurs when a drug is abused for long enough that increased quantities or strengths are required to achieve the previous effects. this desire for a more intense high achieved through these means, is extremely dangerous and can easily lead to overdose .

The diminishing effects set in after the first time, and the user constantly tries to replicate the first high he or she gets from the drugs by taking increasing amounts. This is extremely dangerous and can quickly lead to overdose.

Change in appearance can be additional clues to possible drug use and may include:

- Blood sheet or glazed eyes
- Dilated or constricted pupils
- Abrupt weight change
- Bruises ,infections, or other physical signs at the drug entrance site on the body

Disruption to normal brain functioning changes in personality, and heart and organ can be signs of long term drug abuse

BEHAVIORAL SYMPTOMS

Drug abuse negatively affects a person' behaviour and habits as he or she become more dependent on the drug. The drug itself can alter the brain ability to focus and form coherent thoughts, depending on the substance.

- Increased aggression or irritability.
- Changes in attitude/personality.
- Lethargy.
- Depression

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