

DRUG ABUSE: A FATAL PROBLEM IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The epidemic of substance abuse of the people has assumed alarming dimensions in India. Consumption of different substances has been existence in India for many sanctuaries, traced to year 2000 B.C. Cannabis, heroin and Indian produced pharmaceutical drugs are the most frequently abused drugs in India. Drug abuse is described as the self-administration of a drug for non-medical reasons. A social problem is a reality of every society and drug abuse problem is one of the major problems in India. The process of industrialization, urbanization, migration and globalization have led to the loosening of the traditional methods of social value and control rendering an individual and people vulnerable to the stress and strain of modern life and tempted towards drugs. 26 June is observed as the “International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking” by United Nation (UN) every year to raise awareness of the major problems of illicit drugs to society.

Keywords: *Drug abuse, Cannabis, Heroin, Illicit trafficking, Illicit drugs.*

INTRODUCTION

Since the prehistoric period people were aware of use of drugs to lesson pain. Nowadays drug use and abuse is a very serious social and fatal public health problem. This is due to the widespread drug consumption in various sectors of the population. Problems of drug addiction are not only in India but it's a global phenomenon affecting every sphere of the society. The problems of drug usually alluded to illegal drugs such as heroin, tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, propoxyphene, whitener etc. Alcohol and tobacco are considered as the gateway to the use of substances. Our country is caught in the various circle of drug abuse and number of drug addicts is increasing day by day. Today there is no part of the world that is free from the curse of trafficking and

drug addiction. Millions of drug addiction is reported worldwide and the addicts are living miserable lives between life and death (Kulsudjarit, K. 2004). In India change in cultural values, increase in economic stress and weaken family supportive bonds are leading to initiation into drug abuse. About 190 million people all over the world consume one drug or the other (Miller, W.R. Sanchez, V.C. 1993). Drug or substance abuse has been recognized as a public health problem across the globe (Degenhard, L. Chu, W.T. et, al, 2008). Owing to the multiple aspects of the drug abuse such as the magnitude, the range of consequences, the type of substance consumed the psychological correlates, and the impact on the health care delivery system. It is a problem of great public health significance (Babor and Cactano, R. 2006). Furthermore, the problem of drug abuse has been typically associated with adolescent and individuals in the economic productive age-group that indirectly cast a significant impact on the quality of life of the individuals and on the economic growth of the country (Kertesz, S.G. Khodneva, Y. Richman, J. et. Al. 2012). The public health concern of drug abuse does not recognize any boundaries and affects all the persons irrespective of their socio-economic status or their belongings from a developed or developing country (UNODC, 2013). Consumption of different substances has been in existence in India for many centuries, earliest reference to alcohol traced to year 2000 B.C. (Chopra, R.N. Chopra, I.C. 1965). Drug abuse is becoming a big problem in our country especially in the states like Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Western Rajasthan. Punjab and Manipur are in the top of the list (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2015). Mizoram, Punjab and Manipur are among the states where people are most vulnerable to drug abuse because of their proximity to porous international borders and international drug trafficking zones such as the “Golden Triangle”, Myanmar, Thailand and Laos and “Golden Crescent”, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Since 1988, on June 26 every year has been observed as the International Day against Drug abuse and illicit trafficking which is a United Nations initiation to raise awareness among the masses against drug abuse and illegal drug

dealing. The day is chosen to commemorate Lin Zou's dismantling of the opium trade in Humen, Guangdong before the first opium war in China.

CONCEPT AND DEFINITION

A drug is any biological substance synthetic or non-synthetic that is taken primarily for non-dietary needs. It is usually synthesized outside an organism but introduced into an organism to produce its action. The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 1993, refers to "drug" as any substance that affects the physical or mental functioning of a living organism, especially one used for treatment or prevention of an ailment or disease; or a stimulant or narcotic taken otherwise than medicinally, especially one that is addictive, or subject to legal restriction. Drug abuse is a process of misuse of drug through various way, addicts are using substances which is easily available like cough syrups, pain killer, ointment, glue, colophony, paints, gasoline, cleaning fluids, alcohol, tobacco, etc. Substances abuse is a "harmful" use of any "substance" for mood altering purposes. Midlines medical encyclopedia defines drug abuse as "the use of illicit drugs or the abuse of prescription or over the counter drugs for purposes other than those for which they are indicated or in a manner or in quantities other than directed". The World Health organization (WHO) defined substances used as "the harmful or hazardous of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs". It is persistent or sporadic drug use inconsistent with or unrelated to acceptable medical practice. Webster's Dictionary, 1987 refers to "drug" as a substance use as or in medicine, a chemical substance used to alter the state of the body or mind; a narcotic substance especially, one which includes addiction, such as opium. Identified as a disease in 1956 by the World Health organization (WHO) and the American Psychiatric Association, "drug abuse is illicit consumption of any naturally occurring or pharmaceutical substances for the purpose of changing way, in which a person feels, think and behaves without understanding or taking into consideration the damaging physical and mental side effects that are caused (Mahanta, P. 2011). Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines

"drug addict", means person who cannot stop taking harmful drugs. The term "drug" means not only medicine, but fatal narcotics with various specifications having evil effects on mind, heart and body calls of addicts. Under section (b) of drugs and cosmetics act 1940 of the Indian Law drugs is defined as all medicines for internal or external use of human beings or animals and all substances intended to be used for or in the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of any disease or disorder in human beings or animals, including preparations applied on human body for the purpose of repelling insects like mosquitoes.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the paper is to analyze the various kinds of drugs, its symptoms and effects on human, trends in Indian society and to discuss some measures to combat the drug abuse which has become a big problem in all the states of the country.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is qualitative in nature and based on secondary data which has been collected from various publications, reports, journals, websites and information collected from available sources.

KINDS OF DRUGS AND ITS EFFECTS ON HEALTH

- ALCOHOL

People consume alcohol to socialize celebrate and relax. Once alcohol is addicted it leads to neglect of responsibilities, disrupts the person's ability to meet commitments and encounter legal problems.

- AYAHUASCA

A hallucinogenic tea made in the Amazon from a DMT plant (*Psychotriaviridis*) along with another vine (*Banisteriopsiscaapi*) that contains an MAO inhibitor preventing the natural breakdown of DMT in the digestive system, thereby by enhancing serotonergic activity. It was used historically in Amazonian's religious and healing rituals. Its effects are increase heart rate and blood pressure nausea, burning sensation in the stomach and increase skin sensibility.

- **CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM DEPRESSANTS**

Medication that slows down brain activity which makes useful for treating anxiety and sleep. Possible health effects are drowsiness, slurred speech, poor concentration, confusion dizziness, problems with movements and memory, lowered blood pressure, slowed breathing.

- **COCAINE**

A powerful addictive stimulant drug made from the leaves of the coca plant native to South America. One is addicted to cocaine they are likely to suffer from loss of sense of smell, nose bleedings, nasal troubles and swallowing from snorting, infection and death of vowel tissue from decreased blood flow, poor nutrition and weight loss and lung damage.

- **GHB**

A depressant approved for use in the treatment of narcolepsy, a disorder that causes daytime "sleep attacks". The effects of this depressant include euphoria, nausea, vomiting, confusion, memory loss and unconsciousness, slowed rate of breathing, lower body temperature, seizures, coma and death.

- **HEROIN**

An opioid drug made from morphine, a natural substance extracted from the seed pod of various opium poppy plants. It is usually injected, smoked or snorted. Its effects include collapsed veins, abscesses, infection of the lining and valves in the heart, constipation and swelling in the stomach, liver and kidney diseases.

- **INHALANTS**

Solvents, aerosols and gases found in household products such as spray paints, markers, glues and cleaning fluids also nitrate for example amyl nitrate which are prescribed for medication for chest pain. These inhalants are inhaled through mouth and nose. The effects of these inhalants include liver and kidney damage, bone marrow damage, brain damage from lack of oxygen that can cause problems with thinking movements, vision and hearing.

- **KETAMINE**

A dissociative drug used as an anesthetic in veterinary practice. Dissociative drugs are hallucinogens that cause the user to feel detached from reality. It is usually injected, snorted, smoked, added to tobacco or marijuana or swallowed. Ulcer and pain in the bladder, kidney problems, stomach pain, depression and poor memory are some effects.

- **KHAT**

Khat also called "Cot", a shrub *Catha edulis* found in East Africa and Southern Arabia; contains the psychoactive chemicals cathinone and cathine. Around 20 million people in the world have used khat for centuries as part of cultural tradition and for its stimulant like effects. Usually chewed, brewed as tea. Its side effect includes gastrointestinal disorder such as constipation, ulcer and stomach inflammation and increased risk of heart attack.

- **KRATOM**

A tropical deciduous tree native to South-East Asia with leaves that contain many compounds including mitragynine, a psychotropic opiod. Kratom is consumed for mood-lifting effects and pain relief and as an aphrodisiac. It is chewed eaten as food and occasionally smoked. Major effects of it includes anorexia, weight loss, insomnia, skin darkening, dry mouth, frequent urination, constipation, hallucination with long term use at high doses in some users.

- **LSD**

A hallucinogen manufactured from lysergic acid, which is formed in ergot, a fungus that grows on rye and other grain usually swallowed, absorbed through mouth tissue papers. Its health effects are frightening flashback, persisting perception disorder, ongoing visual disturbances, disorganized thinking, paranoia and mood swings.

- **MARIJUANA (Cannabis)**

Marijuana is made from the hemp plant (*Cannabis Sativa*). The main psychoactive mind-altering chemical in marijuana delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol. It is smoked, eaten, brewed as tea. It caused slowed reaction, problems of memory, anxiety, mental health problems, chronic cough and frequent respiratory infections.

- **MDMA (Eestasy/Molly)**

A synthetic, psychoactive drug that has similarities to both the stimulant amphetamine and the hallucinogen mescaline. MDMA is an abbreviation of the scientific name 3, 4-methyllevedioxy-methamphetamine. It is usually swallowed or snorted, health effects includes long lasting confusion, depression, problems with attention, memory and sleep, increased anxiety, impulsiveness, less interest in sex.

- **MESCALINE (Peyote)**

A hallucinogen found in disk shape "buttons" in the crown of several cacti, including peyote. It is swallowed or chewed or soaked in water and drunk. Healths effects include enhance perception and feeling, hallucination, euphoria, anxiety, increased body temperature, blood pressure, sweating, problems with movement.

- **METHAMPHETAMINE, DEXTROMETHORPHAN, LOPERAMIDE**

Methamphetamine, is an extremely addictive stimulant. Loperamide is an anti diarrheal that can cause euphoria when taken in higher doses. Health effects are kidney failure, pupil dilation, fainting, dizziness, delusions, weight loss, dental problems and skin sores from scratching.

- **TOBACCO**

A plant grown for its leaves, which are dried and fermented before use. It is smoked, snorted, chewed and vaporized. Long term users have great risk of cancer, lung cancer, oral cancer when chewed, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, heart disease, leukemia, cataracts, pneumonia (<http://www.drugabuse.gov.com>).

CAUSES OF DRUG ABUSE IN INDIA

- Psychological pleasure.
- Depression and stress.
- To forget and avoid physical pain.
- Falling into bad company.
- Lack of one's will power and stand.
- Illiteracy.
- Lack of communication between child and parents and ignorance by parents (Drug Abuse Causes, 2017).
- Poor economic conditions.

- Easily available in the international boundaries (ShekharSaxena, 2003).
- Unusual lifestyle, found in sex-workers and stress children (<http://alcoholrehab.comdrug-addiction-reasons-for-substance-abuse>).
- Non conscience about health.
- Improper vigilance of government authority.
- Lack of drug relief.
- Removing tension and satisfying curiosity.
- Improving sleep.
- Deeping self-understanding.

SOME COMMON SIGNS OF DRUG ADDICTION

- Changing friends frequently.
- Spending a lot of time alone.
- Losing interest in favorite things.
- Not taking cares of selves, talking fast, saying things they don't make sense.
- Being really seed and tired.
- Eating less or more than usual.
- Being always in bad mood.
- Quickly changing between feeling bad and feeling good.
- Sleeping at strange hours.
- Missing important appointment.
- Having problems in personal and family relationship.
- Having problems at work, school, college, etc.
- Monetary problems.
- Bloodshot and glassy eyes.
- Running nose and content sniffles.

SOME COMMON EFFECTS OF DRUG ABUSE

- ✓ Lack of appetite and ignorance to education.
- ✓ Ignorance by family, poor upbringing of children.
- ✓ Social stigma and suicide attempt.
- ✓ Monetary loss and violent behaviors.
- ✓ Poor mental and physical health and domestic violence.
- ✓ Decreasing productivity of work and loneliness.

- ✓ Loss of social status and negligence towards children and elderly people.
- ✓ Causes diseases like cancer and probable arrest and consequent court trials and arrest.
- ✓ Loss of professional life and increase in crime rate.

STATUTORY PROVISIONS IN INDIA

The Indian Legislature is constantly trying to eliminate the problem of misuse of drugs by making the law to achieve the goals of international treaties and conventions under which the India is a signatory country. The International and Conventions are as follows (MSJE, 2015).

- Conventions on Narcotic Drugs, 1961.
- Conventions on Psychotropic Substances, 1971.
- Convention against Illegal Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.
- Transitional Crime Convention, 2000.
- A mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, India and United States in October, 2001.
- Azad India Foundation, 2010.

Indian Parliament has enacted two Central Acts.

- The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act, 1985.
- The prevention of illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act, 1988.

MEASURES TO CURB DRUG ABUSE

- Identify the socio cultural and psychological determinants that may determine the use of illicit drugs (Bashirian, S. Hardarnia, et al, 2012).
- Creating awareness about drug abuse and their adverse consequences through aid of appropriate mass media tools (WHO, 2011 Phillip, J. 2013).
- Delivering customized information suitable to the target audience in a culturally sensitive manner (Botvin, G.J. Griffin, K.W. 2007).
- Developing family prevention program in the form of multi-dimensional family therapy and individual cognitive behavioral

therapy. (Liddle, HA, 1999, Row, CL, 2012).

- Enabling community to address the issues of substance abuse through training programs. (Pringle, J.L. Kowalahuk, A. et, al, 2012).
- Promoting free education and implementing innovative strategies to minimize the rate of school drop-outs (Ganffin K. Fridell, M et, al 2013).
- Inculcating self confidence in the school, employing nurses in schools to safeguard the students, facilitating community and school prevention campaigns' (NIDA, 2010)
- Sanitizing clinicians to identify patients at risk for nonprescription drug abuse (Conca, J Worthen D.R. 2012)
- Strengthened preclinical assessment to predict substances abuse liability (Marusich, J.A., Blough B.E et, al 2013).
- Encourage exercise as a potential treatment for drug abuse (Lenox, R.D. Stern Quist, M.A. Paredis A, 2013).
- Developing a standardized strategy to monitor response to treatment and building mechanisms for tracking and monitoring prescription drug abuse.
- Improving data collection on drug overdose facilities and capacity building for the tools and methods desired for toxicological screening.
- Involving stakeholders including the pharmacists to work together as a team (WHO, 2014)
- Fostering linkage between local, national and international agencies in the field of development, organization, monitoring and evaluation of treatment and other services (WHO, 2014).
- Formulating strategies in collaboration with international agencies to monitor the sale of over the counter drugs and thorough internet (Davis, GG, 2012)
- Enforcing stricter penalties for individuals who are involved in the trade of illicit drug (WHO, 2011, Park, K.2009).
- Advocating timely and complete management of drug abuse victims (Chen, I. C. Hung, D. Z. Deng, J. F. et, al. 2012).

CONCLUSION

The epidemic of substance abuse and dependence in India is becoming a health crisis. In India drug abuse is a big problem and creates poverty, unemployment and irresponsibility towards family and society. Changing cultural values, increasing economic stress, dwindling supportive bonds are leading to initiation into substance; use which in increasing the physical and mental illness. Need of the hour is to have a strong political will to combat drug abuse, high level of community awareness about the adverse consequences of drug abuse, adequate strategies, strict legislative laws, outstretched counseling on substance abuse, better screening tools, better follow up services and provide better resources in the exacerbation of the problem and say “NO TO DRUGS”.

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