

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND ITS CORRELATION WITH DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUTH: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

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Abstract:

Drug addiction is recognized as a chronic mental health disorder. It involves substances that induce intoxication, leading to dependence when consumed repeatedly. Various intoxicants are prevalent in society, such as alcoholic beverages like whiskey, rum, and beer, which are socially accepted. Besides these, illegal drugs like cannabis, heroin, cocaine, and more are widely used. Even prescription medications meant for sleep, anxiety, or stress are misused as intoxicants. Tobacco products like cigarettes and chewing tobacco also fall under this category. The problem of substance abuse is not confined to India but is a significant public health issue globally, affecting both developed and developing countries. This addiction is spreading like an epidemic among the youth, leading to a rise in crime and violence worldwide. To address this issue, the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is observed every year on June 26th, aimed at raising awareness, especially among the youth, about the dangers of drug use.

Key Words: Socioeconomic status, Youth drug abuse, , social, trafficking.

Introduction: In contemporary times, drug abuse has emerged as a major challenge, particularly affecting the youth. A significant portion of the younger population has fallen into this trap, jeopardizing their lives by consuming intoxicating substances. These substances provide temporary euphoria, but as the effect wears off, individuals crave more, leading to addiction in a short period. Drugs are clandestinely distributed in schools and colleges, destroying the futures of young people who quickly become addicted and find it difficult to quit, even if they wish to. This addiction not only depletes their finances but also leads to a complete personal downfall. Currently, these substances are being covertly supplied in various states across the country, further exacerbating the problem.

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking:

Every year on June 26th, the world observes the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. This day is dedicated to raising global awareness about the severe issue of drug abuse and the illegal drug trade. It provides an opportunity for governments, organizations, and individuals to unite in promoting drug prevention, education, and treatment programs, while also enhancing international cooperation to combat drug trafficking.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) plays a pivotal role in organizing activities for this day, highlighting the need to address drug-related issues from both public health and law enforcement perspectives. Through various campaigns, events, and educational initiatives, the day aims to showcase the devastating impact of drug abuse on

individuals, families, and communities worldwide, while advocating for effective strategies to combat this problem.

On this day, a variety of activities such as seminars, workshops, exhibitions, and outreach programs are organized to promote awareness and encourage action at local, national, and international levels. Additionally, the day serves as a platform for sharing information, best practices, and resources to support efforts in preventing drug abuse, providing treatment and rehabilitation services, and dismantling drug trafficking networks.

The United Nations Assembly first marked the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in 1987. According to the World Drug Report 2017, released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, around a quarter of a billion people worldwide used drugs at least once in 2015. Among these, approximately 29.5 million people, or 0.6% of the global adult population, suffered from substance use disorders, including drug addiction.

National Anti-Drug Day

In India, National Anti-Drug Day is observed every year on October 2nd. The primary goal of this day is to ensure that India remains drug-free and to preserve the nation's talent. The consumption of drugs is one of the most harmful practices in our society, impacting not only the individual but also society at large. It diminishes rational thinking and leads individuals to prioritize substance abuse over their career, family, friends, and civic responsibilities.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, along with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, plays an active role in India's national programs related to the prevention of drug addiction, substance abuse, and anti-trafficking. These ministries work on policies and de-addiction initiatives aimed at reducing the demand for alcohol and drugs within the country.

Alcohol consumption a significant concern in India:

Alcohol consumption in India is a growing concern, with significant social, health, and economic implications. Although alcohol has been part of Indian culture for centuries, its use has increased significantly in recent years, especially among younger populations and in urban areas.

Several factors contribute to this rise in alcohol consumption:

1. **Family Background Influence:** Family environment and parental behavior play a critical role in shaping attitudes towards alcohol use.
2. **Religious Influence:** Different religious beliefs and practices can either discourage or tacitly allow alcohol consumption, impacting individual choices.
3. **Changing Lifestyles:** Rapid urbanization, economic growth, and the Westernization of culture have altered lifestyles and social norms, leading to greater acceptance and use of alcohol.

4. **Marketing and Advertising:** Aggressive marketing strategies by alcohol companies, coupled with the easy availability of alcoholic beverages, have fueled the rise in alcohol consumption.
5. **Stress and Social Pressures:** The pressures of modern life, including stressful work environments, peer pressure, and societal expectations, often drive individuals to seek relaxation or escape through alcohol.
6. **Cultural Factors:** Traditionally, alcohol has been used in social and religious contexts in India. However, there has been a shift toward its recreational use, which has led to increased consumption.
7. **Economic Factors:** Economic changes, particularly rising disposable incomes among the middle class and urban populations, have made alcohol more affordable. Additionally, economic development and urbanization have contributed to lifestyle changes that promote increased alcohol use.

Despite efforts to curb alcohol abuse, India faces significant challenges, including inadequate enforcement of regulations, cultural acceptance of alcohol, and limited access to treatment services. Addressing the rising burden of alcohol consumption in India requires a coordinated effort involving government agencies, healthcare providers, civil society, and the private sector.

Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective interventions and policies to manage alcohol consumption and reduce its associated harms in India. Public health initiatives, regulatory measures, community-based interventions, and awareness campaigns can all contribute to promoting responsible drinking and minimizing alcohol-related harm in the country.

Other factors contribute to this trend:

1. **Changing lifestyles:** Rapid urbanization, economic growth, and Westernization of culture have led to changes in lifestyle and social norms, including increased acceptance and consumption of alcohol.
2. **Marketing and advertising:** Aggressive marketing and advertising campaigns by alcohol companies, coupled with easy accessibility of alcoholic beverages, have contributed to increased consumption.
3. **Stress and social pressures:** Stressful lifestyles, peer pressure, and societal expectations often drive individuals to seek solace or relaxation through alcohol consumption.
4. **Cultural factors:** While alcohol has been traditionally used in social and religious contexts in India, there has been a shift towards its recreational consumption, leading to increased consumption levels.
5. **Economic Factors:** Economic factors play a significant role in alcohol consumption. Rising disposable incomes, particularly among the middle class and urban populations, have led to increased affordability of alcoholic beverages. Economic

development and urbanization also contribute to changes in lifestyle and consumption habits.

Despite efforts to address alcohol abuse, India faces challenges such as inadequate enforcement of regulations, cultural acceptance of alcohol consumption, and limited access to treatment services. A concerted effort involving government agencies, healthcare providers, civil society, and the private sector is essential to tackle the rising burden of alcohol consumption in India effectively

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Solutions to Overcome Alcohol Abuse and Challenges

Addressing the issue of alcohol abuse in India requires a multifaceted approach. Below are key strategies that can help mitigate the problem:

1. **Public Awareness and Education:** Implement comprehensive awareness campaigns to educate individuals, families, and communities about the dangers of alcohol abuse. These initiatives should highlight the health risks, social consequences, and legal ramifications associated with excessive alcohol consumption.
2. **Addressing Social Determinants of Health:** It is crucial to recognize and tackle the underlying social determinants that contribute to alcohol abuse, such as poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and mental health issues. Investing in social welfare programs, economic opportunities, affordable housing, and mental health services can help reduce the factors that drive individuals towards alcohol misuse.
3. **Training and Capacity Building:** Providing adequate training and capacity-building opportunities for healthcare professionals, law enforcement personnel, educators, and community leaders is essential. This training should cover techniques for screening and brief interventions, trauma-informed care, and cultural competency, enabling them to effectively address alcohol abuse and support those in need.
4. **Research and Evaluation:** Investing in research and evaluation is vital to understanding the effectiveness of various alcohol prevention and intervention strategies. This also helps in identifying emerging trends and challenges, which can inform evidence-based policymaking and program development.
5. **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Fostering collaboration and partnerships among government agencies, healthcare providers, community organizations, advocacy groups, and the private sector is key to coordinating efforts, sharing resources, and maximizing the impact of initiatives aimed at addressing alcohol abuse and its consequences.

Conclusion

The issue of alcohol consumption in India is influenced by a complex mix of cultural, social, economic, and regulatory factors. Although alcohol has long been a part of Indian culture, patterns of consumption have evolved significantly, particularly with the effects of urbanization, globalization, and changing lifestyles. Addressing these factors through targeted public health initiatives, regulations, and community interventions is crucial for reducing alcohol-related harm in the country.

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