

“A STUDY ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ITS ILL- EFFECTS AMONG YOUTH”

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Abstract

Today, there is no part of the world that is free from the curse of drug trafficking and drug addiction. The damage to the physical, psychological, moral and intellectual growth of the youth is very high due to drug usage. India too is caught in this vicious circle of drug abuse, and the numbers of drug addicts are increasing day by day. The epidemic of substance abuse in young generation has assumed alarming dimensions in India. India has braced itself to face the menace of drug trafficking both at the national and international levels also. With most drug users being in the productive age group of 18-35 years, the loss in terms of human potential is incalculable. The disintegration of the old joint family system, absence of parental love and care in modern families, decline of religious, moral and cultural values which are responsible for drug abuse The dependence on drugs influences the individual's wellbeing that is financial stability and health aspects as well as disturbs their family with emotional pain and also the entire society. Adolescent drug abuse is one of the major areas of concern in adolescent and young people's behavior and nation building. Hence, the present research paper is made an attempt to find out the substance abuse and its ill-effects among the youth in the selected area of Cuddalore District.

Key Words: Youth, Substance abuse, Drugs usage, Rehabilitation, Health problems, External support, Motivation.

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Background

The youth of a country are always the vital resources of that country. But today sadly it is being observed more and more that substance misuse in India among youth is very much on the increase. The stages of pre-adulthood and young adulthood situate the youth in conditions where substance abuse seems to be a convenient way out, or a 'cool' thing to do, rather than making them see the evil side of its usage. Today, there is no part of the world that is free from the curse of drug trafficking and drug addiction. Millions of drug addicts, all over the world, are leading miserable lives, between life and death. Substance abuse is a harmful use of any substance for mood-altering purposes. But the broad range of substance abuse in today's society is not that simple. With most drug users being in the productive age group of 18-35 years, the loss in terms of human potential is incalculable. The damage to the physical, psychological, moral and intellectual growth of the youth is very high.

June 26 is celebrated as International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking every year. It is an exercise undertaken by the world community to sensitize the people in general and the youth in particular, to the menace of drugs. The picture is grim if the world statistics on the drugs scenario is taken into account. With a turnover of around \$500 billions, it is the third largest business in the world, next to petroleum and arms trade. About 190 million people all over the world consume one drug or the other. Drug addiction causes immense human distress and the illegal production and distribution of drugs have spawned crime and violence worldwide. Adolescent's drug abuse is one of the major areas of concern in adolescent and young people's behavior.

Motivating Factors for Abuse

Today substance abuse among teenagers is a general concern globally. The pressure to do well in examinations, peer pressure, performance anxiety and changes in social equations are some of the factors that have assumed alarming proportions today and are playing vital roles in initiation of substance abuse among the youth. The disintegration of the old joint family system, absence of parental love and care in modern families due to working nature of the parents, decline of old religious, moral and cultural values and so forth prompt an increase in the quantity of drug addicts who take drugs to escape hard realities of their life. Peer pressure, desire to be popular,

poor parental control and simple accessibility of the substances makes a pre-adult to strive for drug misuse. Dependence on drugs influences the individual's wellbeing as well as disturbs their family and the entire society. Adolescents are the most defenceless populace to start consuming substances. It is usually seen that most of the adults begin taking substances especially tobacco in their youth or puberty. Therefore it is imperative to understand the different components which influence adolescents to consume tobacco and other related substances.

Legal Restrictions

Many substances, the line between use and abuse is not clear. Generally in these situations, only the individual himself can determine where use ends and abuse begins. The most abused of all drugs are “psychotropic drugs”, those that change the way a person thinks, feels and acts. Many such drugs are prescribed to relieve pain, to calm nervousness, or to aid sleep. Some, like alcohol and nicotine, are available in various forms for purchase without prescription. Others, including cannabis and cocaine, are prohibited under criminal law and can only be obtained illegally. Most of the countries have designed legislation to criminalize certain types of drug use. Hence from the legal view point, these drugs are often called “illegal drugs” because of unlicensed production, distribution, and possession. Even for simple possession, legal punishment can be quite severe. But, from the medical view point, those drugs got to be illegal because they are potentially addictive or can cause severe negative health effects; therefore, any use of illegal substances is dangerous and abusive. Illegal drugs are not the only substances that can be abused. Alcohol, prescription and over-the-counter medications, inhalants and solvents, and even coffee and cigarettes, can all be used to harmful excess.

Drug Abuse in India

India too is caught in this vicious circle of drug abuse, and the numbers of drug addicts are increasing day by day. It is estimated that, in India, by the time most boys reach the ninth grade, about 50 percent of them have tried at least one of the gateway drugs. The epidemic of substance abuse in young generation has assumed alarming dimensions in India. However, there is a wide regional variation across states in term of the incidence of the substance abuse. India has braced itself to face the menace of drug trafficking both at the national and international levels. Several measures involving innovative changes in enforcement, legal and judicial systems have been

brought into effect. The spread and entrenchment of drug abuse needs to be prevented from country to country, as the cost to the people, environment and economy will be colossal.

UN report also indicates that one million heroin addicts have been identified in India, and informally there are upwards of five million addicts. The World Bank also reports that it is a matter of great distress that India is the 3rd largest producer and consumer of tobacco in the world. Tobacco can be used as a part of both the means like smoking & non-smoking. As indicated by National Sample Survey of India around 5500 new clients are included regularly making 2 million clients taking substance consistently.

Cannabis, heroin, and Indian-produced pharmaceutical drugs are the most frequently abused drugs in India. Cannabis products, often called charas, bhang, or ganja, are abused throughout the country because it has attained some amount of religious sanctity because of its association with some Hindu deities. The International Narcotics Control Board in its 2002 report released in Vienna pointed out that in India persons addicted to opiates are shifting their drug of choice from opium to heroin. The pharmaceutical products containing narcotic drugs are also increasingly being abused.

Drug abuse has led to a detrimental impact on the society. It has led to increase in the crime rate. Addicts resort to crime to pay for their drugs. Drugs remove inhibition and impair judgment egging one on to commit offences. At the national level, drug abuse is intrinsically linked with racketeering, conspiracy, corruption, illegal money transfers, terrorism and violence threatening the very stability of governments. Women in India face greater problems from drug abuse. The consequences include domestic violence and infection with HIV, as well as the financial burden. Most of the domestic violence is directed against women and occurs in the context of demands for money to buy drugs. Apart from affecting the financial stability, addiction increases conflicts and causes untold emotional pain for every member of the family.

Literature Reviews

There are several studies which previously show the impact of substance abuse on adolescents and they are,

Nadeem, et al (2009) article focuses on the consequences of drug abuse on different aspects such as economic, social, and cultural. Apart from affecting the financial stability, addiction increases conflicts and causes untold emotional pain for every member of the family. The damage to the physical, psychological, moral and intellectual growth of the youth is very high. Women in India face greater problems from drug abuse. The consequences include domestic violence and infection with HIV, as well as the financial burden. India has braced itself to face the menace of drug trafficking both at the national and international levels.

Ashiq, et al (2016) observed that alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and cocaine were the substances used in order of preference which is alarming sign and has shown the introduction of more harmful substances among students. The problem of substance abuse among the young medical students should be taken more seriously as their own attitudes towards substances may have impact on their professional judgement. This may ruin their lives and along with it many other lives which they deal. Prevalence of substance abuse among medical college students was high. Students preferred alcohol products and tobacco most. Hostel students are more likely to be exposed to substance abuse.

Statement of the Problem

Youth are the ones who are most vulnerable and susceptible to substance abuse. More and more people have started having substance abuse at younger ages. The reasons are definitely varied but certain similar patterns also emerged. The college or institution setting is an ideal place for initiation into the drugs. The students are away from the watchful eyes of elders. They are young and want to try out any new thing. They are under pressure from friends to be like rest of the students. College students are at that phase of life when they start taking independent decisions. Youths are main focus of the selected study. The main intention for the selection of youth is logical convenience, but the fact that youths are fairly representative with respect to the question. The study will help to know the present status of substance abuse among the youth and find out preventive measures to minimize the level of substance abuse among them as well as to upgrade new methodologies and implement policies and set of norms to keep institutions as substance-free.

Focus of the Study

On the basis of above introduction and literature reviews, the researcher has intended to take up the study to throw light on the substance abuse among youth who enrolled in the Annamalai University Campus, Cuddalore District of Tamilnadu. The intention of selecting the research problem has to identify the attractive factors towards substances and ill-effects due to using substances in the study area. Hence, in order to find out the impact of substance abuse among youth, the researcher has made an attempt to analyse the trends of substance usage among young community and its causes and consequences. An empirical study has been conducted with the application of an appropriate objectives and methodological framework at the selected study area in Cuddalore District.

Objectives of the Study

The researcher has conducted the present study to find out the research problem with the following objectives that is, (i) To know the socio-economic condition of the respondents; (ii) To analyze the conditions that make drug taking attractive to the respondents; and (iii) To identify the ill-effects of substance abuse among the respondents.

Methodology

The researcher has adopted descriptive research design for the present study to describe the research problem more effectively. The Annamalai University Campus has been selected as a study area in the present research in order to collect the primary data. The selected Campus comes under Annamalainagar Special Panchayat, Parangipettai Block, Chidambaram Taluk in Cuddalore District of Tamilnadu. The researcher has adopted the non-portability sampling method, so that, he has selected the respondents by the application of convenience sampling procedure. The universe of this study is all the male students who enrolled in the on-campus programmes at various Departments in the Annamalai University. The researcher has conveniently selected fifty (50) students as the necessary respondents among the universe in order to collect the primary data in the study.

A structured interview schedule has been administrated by the researcher for the collection of primary data. The tool has been constructed keeping in view of the objectives of the study. It has

been finalized based on the pilot study and pretest that have been undertaken before the commencement of the data collection from the selected respondents. The interview schedule has been consisted of close-ended questions which have been divided into three major parts such as, socio-economic status, attractive factors for substance usage, and ill-effects after substance usage. A two-point and three-point rating scale have only been used to measure the opinion on their drug usage. After the data collection, the data have been classified, tabulated, and interpreted in terms of simple percentage calculations to know more about the results of the study. Only 50 students who enrolled in the Annamalai University have covered in the present study. Hence, the conclusion may not be generalized to other areas which are the scope and limitations of the study.

Major Findings

The data has been interpreted in a simplified manner, to highlight the impact of substance abuse on young community who enrolled in the Annamalai University campus.

Socio-Economic Status

Table No-1: Distribution of the Respondents by their Socio-Economic Status

N=50

Variable	Sub Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group	15-20 years	09	18
	20-25 years	37	74
	Above 25 years	04	08
Religion	Hindu	45	90
	Christian	03	06
	Muslim	02	04
Community	Backward Castes	20	40
	Most Backward Castes	10	20
	Scheduled Castes	15	30
	Scheduled Tribes	05	10
Family Status	Joint family	16	32
	Nuclear family	34	68

Occupation of the Father	Government sector	19	38
	Private sector	11	22
	Farmer	20	40
Monthly Family Income (Rs.)	Below 5000	02	04
	5000-10000	08	16
	10000-15000	14	28
	Above 15000	26	52

From the survey, the table-1 inferred that the three-fourth (74%) of the respondents come under the 20-25 years of age group and 18 per cent of them are in between 15-20 years. In respect of religion, the majority (90%) of the respondents belong to Hindu religion. In terms of community, nearly one-third (40%) of the respondents belong to Backward Castes and 30 per cent of the respondents belong to Scheduled castes. Most (68%) of the respondents live in nuclear family system. In respect of father's occupation, the notable strength (40%) of the respondent's fathers are farmers and 38 per cent of them have engaged in Government Sector. The rest (22%) of the respondent's fathers work in Private Sector. Regarding the family income, nearly half (52%) of the respondent's family income is more than Rs.15000 per month and 28 per cent of them are come under Rs.10000-15000 per month as their family income in the study.

Educational Status of the Respondents

Table No-2: Distribution of the Respondents by their Educational Status

N=50

Variable	Sub Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Educational Status	Graduate	19	38
	Post-Graduate	31	62
Academic Year	First year	5	10
	Second year	20	40
	Third year	10	20
	Fourth year	15	30

Based on the field data, the table-2 reported that the significant strength (62%) of the respondents study in Post Graduation Courses and the remaining 38 per cent of them do under Graduation

Courses. Regarding the academic year, most (40%) of the respondents study in second year and 30 per cent of them are in fourth year classes in the study.

Factors for Substance Usage

Table No-3: Distribution of the Respondents by Factors for Substance Usage

N=50

Variable	Sub Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age at First Initiation of Drug	10-15 years	01	02
	15-20 years	21	42
	20-25 years	27	54
	Above 25 years	01	02
Source of Initiation of Drug	Stranger	03	06
	Neighbour	03	06
	Friend	44	88
Mode of Taking Drugs	Injection	06	12
	Swallowing	10	20
	Drinking	34	68
Using the Types of Drugs	Ganja	08	16
	Alcohol	33	66
	Tablet	07	14
	Bhang	02	04
Consume the Drugs	Association with others	28	56
	Alone	22	44

On the basis of field investigation, the table-3 indicated that nearly half (54%) of the respondents have initiated into their first drug between the age of 20-25 years and it is heartening to note that the remaining half (42%) of them have started the drug usage under the age of 15-20 years. Most (88%) of the respondents have started into drug habit due to the pressure of their friends circle. In respect of mode of usage, nearly one-third (68%) of the respondents intake the drugs by drinking and 20 per cent of them take the drugs by swallowing. The remaining 12 per cent of the respondents take the drugs by injection. Regarding the types of drugs, the notable strength (66%) of the respondents take Alcohol types of drugs, 16 per cent of them take Ganja variety and 14 per

cent of them take Tablets. The remaining 2 per cent of the respondents take Bhang variety of drugs. In terms of consume the drugs, nearly two-fourth (56%) of the respondents consume the drugs by association with others who take the drugs and the remaining 44 per cent of them consume the drugs by alone always in the study.

Factors Motivated to become Drug User

Table No-4: Distribution of the Respondents by Factors Motivated to become Drug User

N=50

Variable	Sub Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Drug User in Family	Yes	16	32
	No	34	68
Factors which prompted to become Drug Usage	Family Conflict	02	04
	Peer Pressure	07	14
	Lack of affection by parents	02	04
	Unemployment	11	22
	Curiosity	12	24
	Disappointment in love	16	32

From the survey data, the table-4 noted that nearly two-third (68%) of the respondent's family members have not addicted by any form of drugs but at the same time the remaining 32 per cent of them have drug users in their family members. In respect of factors inducing drug usage, most (32%) of the respondents have become drug addict due to disappointment in love with opposite sex, 24 per cent of them have taken drugs due to their curiosity, 22 per cent of them have consumed drugs by unemployment, and 14 per cent of them have taken drugs due to peer pressure. The remaining 4 per cent of the respondents have consumed drugs by family conflict and due to lack of affection by parent respectively.

Spending Money for Drugs

Table No-5: Distribution of the Respondents by Spending Money for Drugs

N=50

Variable	Sub Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Spending Money for Drugs per Week (Rs.)	Below 100	08	16
	100-300	25	50
	300-500	12	24
	Above 500	05	10
Source of Money for Drugs	From Parents	36	72
	From Friends	09	18
	By Stealing from Parents/Friends	05	10

Based on the field study, the table-5 explained that the half (50%) of the respondents spend Rs.100- 300 per week for using drugs, 24 per cent of them give Rs. 300-500 per week and 16 per cent of them spend less than Rs.100 per week for drugs. The remaining few (10%) of the respondents spend above Rs.500 per week for consuming drugs. Regarding sources of money, nearly one-third (72%) of the respondents get money from their parent only to purchase drugs, 18 per cent of them receive money from their friends and the remaining 10 per cent of the respondents get money by stealing from their parent and friends for drugs.

III-Effects after Substance Usage

Table No-6: Distribution of the Respondents by their III-Effects after Substance Usage

N=50

Variable	Sub Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree on Drug Addict	Yes	10	20
	No	40	80
Health Problems after Addiction	Mental problems	07	14
	Irritability	11	22
	Loss of appetites	15	30
	Loss of weight	06	12
	Increase of weakness	07	14
	Pain in heart	04	08
Major events in Life due to Drug Usage	Expelled from school or college	5	10
	New friends circle established	19	38

	Disappointment in life	13	26
	Quarrel in the family	10	20
	Attempted to committ suicide	3	6

From the field investigation, the table-6 inferred that the notable strength (80%) of the respondents have not agreed that they are drug addicts and the remaining 20% of them have agreed about themselves. Regarding health problems, most (30%) of the respondents suffered by loss of appetites due to drug addiction, 22 per cent of them have irritability always, 14 per cent of them are under somewhat mental problems and also increase of weakness of the body respectively, and 12 per cent of the respondents have affected by loss of weight due to drug usage. In terms of events in life, nearly one-third (38%) of the respondents have established their friends circle due to drug usage, 26 per cent of them have disappointed in their healthy life, 20 per cent of them have always quarrelled in the family, and 10 per cent of them have expelled from school at their early ages. The remaining 6 per cent of the respondents have attempted to committ suicide due to restlessness by the drug addiction in the study.

Attempt to Stop Drug Usage

Table No-7: Distribution of the Respondents by their Attempt to Stop Drug Usage

N=50

Variable	Sub Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Attempt to stop Drugs	Yes	26	52
	No	24	48
Helped in Getting De-Addiction Treatment	Parent	27	54
	Relatives	03	06
	Friends	17	34
	Neighbours	03	06
Monetary Help for Treatment	Parent	50	100
Admitted in the Rehabilitation Centre	Once	35	70
	Twice	08	16
	Thrice	07	14
Expectation of Support	Psychological Support	38	76
	Financial Support	04	08
	Social Support	08	16

On the basis of survey analysis, the table-7 denoted that the half (52%) of the respondents have attempted to stop intake of drug usage and the remaining half (48%) of them have never tried to give up the drugs in their life. Regarding de-addiction treatment, nearly half (54%) of the respondents have helped by their parent for de-addiction treatment, 34 per cent of them have helped by their friends for treatment. The remaining 6 per cent of the respondents have helped by their relatives and also neighbours for their treatment respectively. All (100%) the respondents have financed by parent only for their de-addiction related treatment in the study. From the survey, it is noted that two-third (70%) of the respondents have admitted once in the rehabilitation centre for the purpose of de-addiction treatment, 16 per cent of them have admitted twice for rehabilitation treatment. The remaining 14 per cent of the respondents have admitted thrice in the rehabilitation centre. In respect of expectation of support, the three-fourth (76%) of the respondents need psychological support from others to give up the drug habit, and 16 per cent of them need social support for de-addiction. The remaining 8 per cent of the respondents need financial support to give up the drugs in the study.

CONCLUSIONS

Drug abuse is a complex phenomenon, which has various social, cultural, biological, geographical, historical and economic aspects. The processes of industrialization, urbanization and migration have led to loosening of the traditional methods of social control rendering an individual vulnerable to the stresses and strains of modern life. The fast changing social milieu, among other factors, is mainly contributing to the proliferation of drug abuse, both of traditional and of new psychoactive substances.

Based on the findings of the present study, the researcher found out the logical conclusions that the youth have more taken the drugs. The ages between 20-25 years have commonly involved in substance abuse. Most of the Post graduation students have consumed drugs as per study. But mostly their family income is more than Rs.15000 per month. The youth have initiated to drugs due to peer pressure. The youth get money by insulting from their parents as they are not getting jobs or earning money yet. Alcohol and Tobacco are the most common substance which abused by the youth. The youth or students have not agreed that they are drug addict. Parent have taken care of their children and they have been financed for their de-addiction related treatments. The

youths have expected a psychological support to give up the drugs as per the study. There is a need for the government enforcement agencies, the non-governmental philanthropic agencies, and others to collaborate and supplement each other's efforts for a solution to the problem of drug addiction through education and legal actions.

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