



A STUDY ON ADOLESCENT DRUG ABUSE IN INDIA

Dr. Sangani Malleshwar¹ and Sangani Sushma²

¹Assistant Professor, Kakatiya University Warangal.

²Kakatiya University Warangal.



ABSTRACT :

Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological human development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to adulthood. It offers opportunities for growth in competence, autonomy, self-esteem and intimacy. However, it also carries great risks. Drug abuse is one of them all among adolescents. The risk factors for drug abuse by adolescents may be biological predisposition to drug abuse, personality traits that reflect a lack of social bonding, a low socio-economic status of family, family bonding, family relationship and parental guidance and care, a history of being abused or neglected, low emotional or psychiatric problems, stress and inadequate coping skills and social support, association with drug-using peers, rejection by peers due to poor communication skills, poor academic skills, failure in school, a history of anti-social behavior and delinquency. As the path to drug abuse is too complex, simple solutions to this problem are unlikely to be effective.

KEYWORDS : Adolescents, Risk factors, Peer, Drug abuse, Preventive strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a crucial period for the beginning and experimentation with new things. The situation of drug abuse in adolescence is becoming a global health problem and is reaching at alarming position in India. Therefore, the researches substance abuse have also been receiving attention in developing countries like India because of changing trends in the prevalence of substance use and the rising magnitude of the problem. When the adolescents first experiment with drugs, people perceive that it has much adverse effects over their life and if continuous it may become necessity for user to feel normal. They may continue to take drugs even though it may cause tremendous problems for themselves. The drug abuse is an illness which can be characterized as destructive use of substance that causes many serious health related & social behavior problems. Psychological behavior changes associated with substance abuse may be mood disorder such as depression, anxiety, thought disorders such schizophrenia as well as personality disorder like antisocial personality traits. In adolescence it is a major problem defining the future of the youth in both developed in developing countries. Many studies have been conducted on adolescence drug abuse since long but very few studies are found in India and need to be focused. It was seen by many researchers & clinicians that substance use disorder during adolescence age share many similarities as well as differences when compared to other psychological disorders. There are many researches related to use & risk factors associated with drug abuse among adolescents but there are still many contradictions found in these researches. Even though a very few studies are available on this topic in India, but a review of available can define the causative factors and assess in planning other related studies as well as strategies.

Children are a valuable asset and pride, not only to their family but to the nation. Today's children are tomorrow's adults and builder of the nation. Substance abuse in children today is becoming a major

problem in India. Today children are experimenting with drugs quite early in life. World Health Organization estimated that globally, 25-90 percent of street children indulge in substance abuse. Hundred million children live and work on the streets of the cities of the world: 40 million in Latin America, 25-30 million in Asia, and 10 million in Africa. India alone is the home for the world's largest population of street children, estimated to be 18 million. The National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights estimated report said that 40-70 percent of India's (18 million) homeless children were exposed to some form of substance abuse. One in every five of India's drug addicts is a child.

Substance abuse (drug abuse), refers to a pattern of harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs ("Substance abuse", 2017). Earlier, substance abuse was considered to be a problem of street children, working children, and trafficked children, but, today it has become widespread among school going children who hail from different socioeconomic and educational status. The alarming fact that the age of beginning to consume or having the first taste of drugs is declining sharply, and no amount and type of stringent measures of familial, social, and state level look sufficient to check supply and availability drug and substance to children. As per one of the study, at the age of five years, many children reported that they were consuming drug. In India, around 5500 children start consuming tobacco products daily, and some as young as 10 years old. There are many varieties of drugs and substance available Rao, (2010) found that the most common substance consumed was nicotine, as cigarettes or "bidis" and "gutkha" and inhalant/volatile substance used in the form of sniffing of adhesive glue, petrol, gasoline, thinner, and spirit. The comprehensive list includes alcohol, Liquor, cocaine, Marijuana, Bhang, Ganja, Hashish etc.

In India, this epidemic prevalence of substance abuse in children has assumed alarming dimensions. It is changing cultures, increasing economic burden, encouraging poverty, ignorance, migration, and exploitation (child labor) which is further leading to initiation into substance abuse. The picture is grim if we look at the world trade and statistics on the drugs consumption scenario. With a turnover of around \$500 billion, 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. The magnitude of illegal trading and illicit trafficking is reflected by the statistics of 322 billion Dollars as per the World Medicine Report. The annual marketing of Afgan Opium is 61 billion Dollars. The world market for cocaine in Western Africa is around 85 million dollars. During the World Summit, in 2011, Ban Ki Moon, the General Secretary, UNO declared war against illicit drug trafficking to protect worlds' security. It has stressed to create the awareness in people about the deadly drug they destroy societies.

EXTENT AND DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE DRUG ABUSE

Adolescence Drug Abuse in India Drug abuse is one of the rising problem in most of the countries associated with various social and economic factors. In general, adolescence is a period of experimentation, exploration and a search for self and risk taking. By the age of adolescence, youth in India have been exposed to various stresses like changing roles in the family and community, new responsibilities and competitions in the fields of education and employment. They also have seen their first experiments to many drugs, especially to those which are easily available to them like glues and other inhalants, tobacco, cannabis and alcohol. In some cases, where social and peer pressures are often difficult to resist, youth often fall in addictions. The street children, child laborers, those family histories of drug abuse and other emotional and behavioral problems are at particularly higher risk.

FAMILY INFLUENCES ON SUBSTANCE ABUSING CHILDREN

Parents and families have the greatest and lasting impact on children's learning and development. If a child is raised safely, securely he develops good habits and pursues a good and healthy lifestyle. If not, a child may get tempted or dragged in some or the other bad habits and indulge in substance abuse is one of them. Rossow, (2000) report suggested that families can have a powerful influence in shaping the attitudes,

values, and behavior of children, Conrad, Flay, & Hill (1992) found in their research that parents have a tremendous influence on their children and the children of smoking parents are twice as likely to become smokers. Due to lack of appropriate care and nurturing, lack of family education, facing separation, homelessness, child of the divorced parent and no structure to a home life often children revert to substance abuse. Further, to ascertain the role of family, parents, and relatives, researchers like Prescott & Kendler, (1999) studied 231 people who were diagnosed with drug or alcohol addiction and compared them to 61 people who did not have an addiction. They also studied and compared the first-degree relatives (parents, siblings, or children) of those people and found that if a parent has a substance abuse, addiction, the child had an eight times greater chance of substance abuse among children. A Researcher reported from New Delhi that the presence of step parents and maltreatment of the child by family members was found significant risk factors and predictors of substance abuse. Further, it was reported that higher number (46.7 percent) of children substance abusing was found when both parents are abusers and the same impact (43.5 percent) prevailed when the only mother was a substance abuser. Similarly, if family members of street children use tobacco and alcohol those children are more prone to use drugs and other substances. Analyzing the results of the available researchers, it reveals that children who have parents, siblings or other family members who abuse alcohol or other substances are the easiest victims.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the extent and demographics of drug abuse among adolescents in India.
2. To find out the substances of abuse used by adolescents.
3. To understand the family influences on substance abusing children's.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study based on the secondary sources, the data collected books, journals, magazines, newspapers, internet etc.,

Substances of Abuse among Adolescents in India

TOBACCO

As tobacco is the more common substance of abuse among adolescents in India, Most of the Indian researches on drug abuse are based on tobacco abuse as compared to other substances. India is the third largest consumer and producer of tobacco in the world. A college based study by Bhojani et al 2009 in Bangalore reported that the ever use of tobacco was 15.7% whereas 5.3% were current tobacco users. Their mean age for initiation of tobacco consumption was 14.7(S.D.2.05) years. Tobacco is mostly smoked in the forms of bidi and cigarettes or using devices such as chillum, hooka etc. According to them adolescents and children are the prime focus of tobacco manufacturing and marketing industries. A survey by National Sample Survey Organization of the Indian Government showed that about 20 million children of age ranged from 10-14 years were estimated to be tobacco addicted. To this shocking figure, about 5500 new users are added every year. As per The Global Youth Survey (GYTS), 3.8 % children were smokers while 11.9% were using smokeless tobacco .

ALCOHOL

Studies showed that alcohol is also becoming one of the most prevalent substances of use in adolescents. A study on Andaman school students by Sinha et al 2006 showed that onset of regular use of alcohol in early adolescence is associated with the highest rate of alcohol consumption in adult life as compared to later onset of drinking. Alcohol is found to be drug of choice among youth which result in consequences of drinking too much, at too early an age and leads to public health problem due to underage drinking. In a National Household Survey carried out by Ray et al in 2004 on a representative male sample of 12-60 years ages, 21.8%(n=8,587) were found to be between 12 to 18 years. The prevalence of substance

use during this age group was 3% for cannabis and 0.1% for opiates. It was seen similar to 19-30 years' age group where use of alcohol and cannabis was 19.3% and 2.6% respectively.

MARIJUANA

Cannabis is the most commonly used prohibited substance. The intake of cannabis results in short term memory and learning, impaired ability to focus and poor coordination. It also results in increased heart rate, can affect lungs and may cause the risk of psychosis among vulnerable people. A population study has shown that about 3% of children and adolescents of ages ranged from 12 to 18 years abused cannabis and that of only 4% of the Adolescence Drug Abuse in India abusers go for treatment of these problems. Many other studies also indicate that cannabis is a common substance of abuse during adolescence such as school and college going students, street children and working adolescents.

OPIOIDS

Opioids are centrally stimulating at very low doses and sedative at high doses. Clinical symptoms related with opioid are Intoxication, Abuse and Addiction. Signs and symptoms of Opioid intoxication are analgesia, feelings of dysphoria, flashing of face, itchy skin, dry mouth, warmth feeling etc. Intravenous injection of an opioid can cause abdominal discomfort and sensation followed by sedation and dreaming. Severe intoxication may even cause death. Changes are also found in the types of opioid abuse over the years. A decrease in dependence on natural opioids and concomitant incline in the use of prescribed drugs has been found. A rapid rise in the number of buprenorphine and codeine containing cough syrup and dextropropoxyphene dependence have been seen in researches.

INHALANT USE

The increased use of inhalant substances can be seen especially among low socioeconomic group belonging adolescents. In his study Benegal et al, 1998 on street children, he found that the children start off with tobacco at the age of 10-11 years and after that they gradually move to inhalants as they grew older.

CONCLUSION

Drug abuse is a very common and major problem related to health and social issues which is associated with comorbidities and complications. The initiation of drug abuse at early adolescence result in continuation of drug to the adulthood. Therefore, preventive strategies are required to be planned and suggested for drug abuse. More studies on drug abuse are required to be done in India to see the current situations and to find out the solutions for this situation. As most of the studies are either done on small scale on school children or street children, this is the demand of the hour for the bright future of nation. Substance abuse among children is a matter of concern only in western countries, developed countries and flourishing countries, it is an important issue to be addressed across the globe. Especially in India, there is a need to conduct scientific and systematic researchers taking into consideration all the factors mentioned above in this paper related to child substance abuse and its relevant issues, including preferences, family, risk factors, socioeconomic status, genetic risk factors, environmental risk factors and preventive strategies of substance abuse and its complications, and their prevention strategies along with follow-up studies. If this issue is not timely addressed it will take the shape of the epidemic with it is severe socioeconomic and familial adverse consequences besides human resource depletion for the nation. It is dismaying to know that there are few studies available on substance abuse among children in India and mostly.

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