

## **Society holds the Solution to Addiction as Society is the Main Cause of Addiction**

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### **Abstract**

*The youth in the contemporary times, despite living with many advancements in this supersonic age is plagued with many malaises, the biggest of which is the Drug Addiction. The situation has worsened to such an extent that the result not only alarms but shocks us as we see school dropouts, deaths of a million of young boys and girls between the age groups of 13-25 years, which is a matter of serious concern both in the national and the international arena.*

- ✓ *My paper highlights the malady of 'Adolescent Drug Abuse', its genesis, its sources and expanse in our society which traps these young minds to walk on these forbidden tracks.*
- ✓ *I would in detail, grove upon the reasons born out of the 'disturbed familial bonds' of the society that lead the youth to walk astray.*
- ✓ *Serious implications of this deadly addiction would be discussed at length*
- ✓ *This will be done through a series of CASE STUDIES that I undertook during my internship / coursework which has left an indelible mark on my conscience which I would like to share in this paper.*
- ✓ *This paper would also focus on effectively bringing out the solutions to drug addiction from the same 'society' that is responsible for its genesis.*

*Keywords: Drug addiction, Substance abuse, Drug trafficking, Consumption, Alcoholism, Mental Disorders, Peer Pressure*

### **Introduction**

Addiction is the state of being enslaved to a habit or practice or to something that is psychologically or physically habit forming to such an extent that its cessation causes severe trauma. It is a long term inability to moderate or cease intake even though it is causing psychological and physical harm because that activity or intake was pleasurable and / or valuable.

Some researchers talk of two types of addictions such as : Substance Addictions such as alcoholism, drug abuse and smoking and the Process Addictions such as gambling, eating, shopping, smart phone, video games, computer and internet and sexual activities etc

Out of this Drug Addiction is the most well known and harmful addictions

Drug addiction may be defined as an inability of a person to stop using the drugs inspite of his best efforts and numerous attempts. When a person starts taking any drug without prescription of the doctor or in more quantity than prescribed by doctor or continues taking the drugs for a longer period than prescribed by the doctor, he starts moving towards addiction. In addition to the drugs prescribed by the doctors commonly used drugs and drug types which

includes narcotics, depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens and cannabis, in other words opium, morphine, heroine, marijuana, bhang, hashish, LSD, khat, codeine, chemicals like tobacco, steroids or any such material. The symptoms of drug addiction are:

1 The drug user has developed a drug tolerance, needing to consume increasingly greater quantities to experience the desired effects.

2 Drug use is continued inspite of the harm caused to the drug user and lives of those around the user.

3The drug user experiences the withdrawal symptoms when he does not get the drug when he demands.

Drug addiction as a term is not defined in the “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders”(DSM).The DSM uses the term Drug Dependence and Drug Abuse. Both these are considered as Substance Use Disorders. WHO has defined Drug Abuse as a state of periodic, chronic intoxication detrimental to the individual and to the society by repeated consumption of drugs either natural or synthetic.

In the past drug addiction was viewed as stemming from an individual’s moral failing and weakness of willpower. But with the advancement of scientific research, **biological theories of addiction as a “brain disease” are now widely accepted**; however, this point of view is **still controversial**. Many prefer to characterize it as a condition that requires continued management, rather than a disease, as it promotes the idea that addiction can be managed through behavioral changes and that the individual is ultimately in control of the condition.

The disease model is supported by the changes that occur in the brain as a result of continued substance use. Through a process of adaptation, the brain attempts to adapt to the presence of a substance in effort to function normally. The disease model asserts that while initial choice to use the substance may have been voluntary, **over time behavioral choice is lessened as these neurobiological changes occur**.

Not only do these changes modify one’s initial response to a substance, they regulate:

- The development of craving.
- The distress associated with periods of abstinence (which is a key factor in relapse).

**Whether or not we look at addiction as a “disease,” we can clearly see that changes in the brain do occur that promote continued use** -- both due to the rewarding feelings that the substance can initiate in the brain and also due to avoidance of withdrawal symptoms that present when dependence develops.

Undoubtedly drug addiction has been emerged as a great socioeconomic and health problem worldwide and it is time that the society and Government must look into the causes, prevention and solution to this Global issue.

### **Case Studies**

Every child is born in a different social set up, grows up in an equally different milieu, has his own psychological preferences. Some easily come under societal pressure, some children ignore it and assign the utmost preference to friend’s company. But at large it is the society

including family, friends and other factors arising out of the child's interaction with world he exists in.

I intend to proceed with my point of views with the help of the following case studies.

### **Case 1**

In the year 2009, **ABC** was a student of class 11 who came on transfer from some other school and was not able to adjust in the new environment. Being sensitive he fell into bad company that lured him into the racket of drugs. With the help of good friends, he was brought back to school somehow, and with a few counselling sessions, he agreed upon coming to the school. He appeared in the Board examination of class XII and left the school, but after the exams was again trapped by the same group of boys. On 3<sup>rd</sup> of May the same year, I received a shocking news that Suraj met with an accident in the condition of heavy drugs. He died on the spot.

### **Case 2**

In the year 2017, a thin, frail, shy boy joined class 11 in the stream of Humanities. Most of the boys in the class bullied him for being undergrown and weak. **DEF** was one such boy. He could not breathe without his friends. But he was very sensitive. He used to brood hours together on what a friend casually commented. As a growing adult, he had pimples on his face, which he always covered with a handkerchief. I often told him to take away his handkerchief away from his face but he refused doing so. Slowly he enveloped himself from the people around him. Someone suggested him to join a gym, for making an impressive physical appearance. At home front too, things were not fine. His father was posted at the borders and his homely mother could not understand the upheavals and the dilemmas he was going through. Someone, somewhere introduced him to drugs in miniature dose through the protein supplements that he took after joining the gym. And from there started the tale of his downfall. Belonging to a lower middle-class income group, he found it difficult to procure drugs. Absenteeism from the school for many days together became a routine until the class teacher reported me of his short attendance. Arguments with the mother and staying away from home became a regular feature. He fell into the habit of selling phones, first his, then that of his mother, purchasing new ones. Stealing money from parents account became a regular feature, until the mother realized of his blunders. Exchange of heated arguments, violence became a regular feature at home. The son was not ready to see his mother's face and left home during the school holidays. The condition aggravated to such an extent that the boy was not ready to write the Board examination for his class 12.

I with my team of teachers brought both the mother and the child together first, counselled them both saying that the differences are just because they loved each other. Thus, showing them the hope, and requesting the mother to deal with him with patience, we somehow brought him to agree to write the exams. Thus, step by step he was brought back to track. Teachers at my school worked hard with him. He was a bright boy, covered up with the syllabus, came out of the trap with care and attention both at home and the school. Meetings both at the school and at their home taking the child into confidence brought a change in him. Today **DEF** is in the final year of his graduation doing successfully in all fronts.

Timely attention and concern saved a young boy from deluging into the world of drugs.

### **Case 3**

**HIJ** was a boy whom I met in the Hospital while doing my internship. There was no part of his body that had been left uninjected with the syringes of the dosage of drugs. He too did not open up soon. I got very unpleasant replies from him when I started my interaction with him. But slowly he opened and I realized, here too, the family and the society at large turned out to be the culprit. He had a step mother with whom he had frequent confrontations. To avoid all this his father sent him to Chandigarh to take coaching in which he was not interested. It was while staying alone that he got trapped into the drug racket. When I enquired from where he procured money to purchase it, he said that in the beginning it was the pocket money but later on it was given free when he took other new persons to them. He is still under observation in the de-addiction centre.

### **Causes of Drug Addiction**

#### **a) Genetic**

There are multiple ways in which genes may result in variation in vulnerability to addiction. According to NIH (2010), genes account for approximately 50% of an individual's risk of becoming addicted.

Three attributes influence an individual's disposition to engage in a specific behavior:

- Capability – the physical or psychological capacity to engage in behavior.
- Motivation - the mental process that guide behavior, both automatic (e.g. euphoria after ingesting cocaine) and reflective (e.g. attitude that marijuana is harmless).
- Opportunity - environmental factors that either promote or constrain behavior.  
Includes:
  - The physical environment (e.g. ease of access to a substance).
  - Social factors, such as peer attitudes
  - Although substance use at any age can progress to addiction, onset of use is highly predictive.
  - Adolescents are quite vulnerable as their brains are still developed.

#### **b) Environment**

- Childhood Experience

If a person has suffered from some traumatic experience (e.g. emotional, physical or sexual abuse) can trigger addiction when people seek comfort or an escape from pain of past experience.

### **c) Broken Families**

There is a strong nexus between the drug and the torn family life. It has been found that broken family structure often forces one to resort to drugs. This is because a person faced with such situation chooses drugs for its euphoric or mind-altering effect to escape from immediate situation. This escapism in turn compels the user to go back to the drugs to avoid the trouble and it eventually leads to addiction.

### **d) Stress Relief**

Some people use it to get relief from stress or help them cope with certain situations and feelings. Feeling of not belonging as a result of race, gender or ethnicity can cause people to turn to addictive substance for relief. Thus, addiction and myth of stress relief associated with it makes a vicious cycle.

### **e) Exposure to Drugs**

Sometimes exposure to drugs in the family or the locality for the school makes one a drug addicts. Usually children of a drunkard also become drink-addict. The early exposure to drugs immensely contributes to make them drug addict. Their innocent and immature mind is not able to understand the negative impact on their future. When they get mature to understand the negative impact on them, they are not able to come out of it.

### **f) Peer Pressure**

No drug user starts using drugs with an intention to be addicted, infact most of them begin in adolescent age with experimentation with prescription drugs, cigarettes and alcohol and under peer group pressure so as to be accepted in the group. A certain amount of risk taking is a normal feature for adolescent development. The desire to try new things and become more independent is healthy but it may sometimes increase the tendency of teens to experiment with drugs and they are caught in the trap of addiction.

### **g) Loneliness**

Students who remain far-away from parents and guardians and live in hostels and messes become victims of addiction. Even in families where both the parents are working and the child is alone at home most of the time are the soft targets for drug peddlers. Sometimes such youngsters come in contact with bad company which pushes them to be addicts. There is no proper direction, goals objective and vision to move forward and hence they are trapped very easily.

### **h) Education System**

The Education system of today does not prepare the students to fit into life. After spending years in the school and colleges when they come out, they feel they have no future and no prospects, not only this no training of life skills is being imparted in schools and colleges, so they are not able to face the challenges of life and find an escape mechanism of drugs.

### **i)Mental Health**

Most common in people with mental health issues like depression, anxiety, OCD, psychosis, they use addictive substances or activities to help them feel better but in fact opposite happen.

### **j) Pressure and Cutthroat Competition**

Undue pressure of parents and society to stand out and make a mark without understanding the capabilities of the youth also puts the adolescents into this trap.

### **k) No Support**

Society is really not interested to provide any support to drug addicts. Society just regards them as dangerous and unpredictable. Even if a drug addict wants to come out of it social stigma will not let it happen.

### **l)Role of Media**

The message given by celebrities in various programs and advertisements lures the youngsters to copy them to become heroes without realizing the effects on their future.

### **m)Easy Availability**

The youth has become the target of major drug peddlers. These peddlers sell drugs and package them as symbols of revolution and freshness but have no regard for the consequences of their actions. The youth that takes to drugs are more likely to commit suicide because of the harmful effects of the drugs they are taking. Misinformation about drugs is another reason for these deaths as the addict or user may take the drugs in wrong doses, which can then lead to a fatality.

### **N) No Control Mechanism**

There is no control mechanism to check unrestricted production of the drugs and their sale in the open market. The present licensing and control system is a big failure and destroying the youth of today.

## **Solutions to the Problem of Drug Abuse**

Hence undoubtedly drug addiction is majorly a socially constructed problem and can be prevented and cured by the society only. Unless serious measures are taken now the major chunk of today's youth will be severally compromised. The problem of drug abuse may be addressed by the society in the following two ways:

### **a)Prevention**

Prevention is a positive process It is a process which builds into children resistance to abusing drugs so that drug use never begins. Parents, teachers school and society can play a very important role

Parents are the best protection youngsters can have against drug abuse. The following are the ways in which parents can help their children to prevent drug abuse

- Be a role model for the child
- Insist on healthy lifestyle
- Spend time with children
- Open channels of communication-Parents who openly discuss with their children about drugs, their kids are less likely to abuse substances in their later life.
- Cut the electronics down a notch because excessive internet stimulation not only creates addictive tendencies in itself but also exposes young people to imagery and video content that glamorizes drug use.
- Get the kids involved in extra curricular activities
- Minimize the stress of child at home by not comparing with others and accepting the mistakes of the child
- Know the friends of the child and involve actively.
- Know the signs of a child's drug use and how to respond if a parent observes a child neglecting homework, decline in grades, losing interest in extracurricular activities change in friends, social groups, clothing, behavior the child is at risk and the parents must find out the reasons.
- Zero tolerance to drug abuse –Clear-cut family rules must be communicated to the child and parents must be firm on those rules.

#### **b) Role Of School And Teachers**

Value based moral education must be a part of the school teaching. Life skills to handle the situations must be inculcated in them. The skill of creative thinking ,critical thinking, problem solving must be taught to the students. Since in very early age moral values be inculcated in children, they should be taught to develop good hobbies to spend time happily and meaningfully in good company. They need to be taught to develop a useful and constructive work oriented daily routine in which they do manage some time for social activities. They should be made aware of the vices of addiction.

#### **c) Role of Society**

An awareness campaign can be launched time to time by the mass media and voluntary organizations to highlight the dangers of drug addiction. Police along with the society must keep a strict check on the supply of drugs.

There should be a community plan to prevent drug addiction. The community plan must include plans to evaluate the effectiveness of their preventive measures.

#### **d)Role of Government**

The constitutional provisions about prohibition of intoxicating drugs and drinks must be strictly enforced by all state government.

### **e)Role of Scientists**

Scientists have developed a broad range of programs that positively alter the balance between the risk and protective factors for drug use in families, schools and communities. Studies have shown that research based programs can significantly reduce early use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.

### **Treatment of Drug Addicts**

- The role of parents, teachers' counselors and doctors is very crucial. At any stage along the spectrum of drug use it is important to intervene and seek professional help. The earlier help is sought before a substance use disorder emerges the higher the probability is of easy reversal and fulfills a role of promise and potential. The parent must speak to a primary care physician to seek advice on the best possible care of the child.
- No social stigma should be labeled on the child
- All support should be extended to the child. Generally, parents and relatives start cursing the child which aggravates the problem.
- More rehabilitation centers should be opened.
- Early and prompt treatment should be provided. The services of counselors should be provided so that the chances of relapse are reduced.

### **Conclusion**

The drug abuse has come up as a very big social evil and if it is ignored many of youths will lose lives and a significant number are likely to grow up to become problem drug users. Although the problem is complex and large in magnitude, there is a substantial amount of evidence-based research available to physicians, community leaders and schools to implement interventions that can decrease adolescent substance abuse rate. The radio, television and newspapers must come in various campaigns against drug abuse and addiction.

An increased social awareness is the key to solution of this problem. People have 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, education and awareness can bring good results.

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