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# India's Silent Epidemic: Drug Addiction and the Struggle for Social Order

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### ABSTRACT:

Drug addiction has now become one of the most distressing social illnesses of our times, which is defined as uncontrolled use of drugs and drug taking to a level that impairs social and individual living and is often involved with high relapse rate. This threat is bigger than personal pain, it commands our social structures, it demands economic balance, and calls for national security. Drug scourge has taken a global shape to the extent that it finances terrorism, promotes underdevelopment of democratic institution and corrupts public officials. Global and local measures including legal regimes, treaties, and government policies – have been established to address the problem.

The Indian constitution under Article 47 makes provision for the banning of intoxicating drugs that are injurious to health. However, enforcement has been problematic notwithstanding these legal framework. Drugs range from genuinely beneficial medicines used to prevent or cure diseases, to everyday substances like caffeine or alcohol, to illegal substances like heroin and cannabis. Definitions differ among medical, pharmacological, and legal contexts.

Drug addiction is a complex phenomenon and has multiple contributing factors such as ready availability, peer pressure, urbanization, unemployment, media influence, faulty family relationships, and psychological conditions like anxiety, attention issues. Religious and traditional drug use also tends to normalize the use in some situations. Addiction to drugs brings with it serious repercussions, not just one or two but at several levels. For the individual it destroys their health, their mind, their connection to society and is inextricably linked to crime. At the family level, it causes emotional and financial stress, a breakdown in relationships, and democratic instability.

Keywords: Drug Addiction, NDPS Act, 1985, Article 47 (Indian Constitution), Religious Sanction, Psychotropic Substances.

### Introduction:

Drug addiction has emerged as one of the most burning social problems of the contemporary world. Drug addiction is a chronic disorder that make person loose self-control. The problem of the drug addiction has become a great menace in the recent years, posing a grave challenge before all those who want to see the well being of society and social solidarity being kept intact. Drug obsession is conceptualized as victimless crime.<sup>1</sup> The international community therefore has occupied steps by appointing commissions; establishing funds; adopting several legal instruments in the form of conventions; protocols and resolutions containing ideology and procedures to curb the menace of drug abuse and the crimes resulting from illegal trafficking.

The dimensions of drug trafficking have escalated to such a degree that security of state is endangered in many developing countries which are under its effect. Terrorists use the drugs trade to purchase arms and finance their revolutionary operations. The global drug menace relates illicit drugs which contribute to increase in international crime rate and huge exchange of money in different part of world. It is the most profitable business now a days. The inter-linkages of drug trafficking with corruption and terrorism are so strong that the three have supposed serious problem.<sup>2</sup>

In recent decades, drug abuse has become a national, community, and individual concern. Without a question, drug use and abuse have existed since the beginning of time, but in the current century, drug addiction has become a widespread problem that has affected practically every aspect of life. The world has undergone significant transformation as a result of the technology revolution, which has made the entire planet a global village. On the one

<sup>1</sup> Pardeep Singh, "Drug Addiction: Ethology and Legal Regime", Indian Bar Review, vol. xxxiv 9(1to4) 2007, The Bar Council Of India Trust, p.51

<sup>2</sup> Available at: [www.elearningilidellhi.org/](http://www.elearningilidellhi.org/) (Last visited on March 23, 2024).

hand, the technological revolution and explosion of knowledge have given humanity all the conveniences and contributed to its general progress, but on the other, they have caused confusion and misunderstanding.<sup>3</sup>

Humanity has always been looking for God in heaven and Doctors on earth to be the saviours of life. The medical practitioners of today depend much and almost completely upon the drugs, which are tool and mean to treat the people. However, now the drugs have actually become the tools in the hands of highly located industrialists and have become the means of profiteering. The actual efficacy of drugs, the maladministration and executive manoeuvring lead to one result that drugs are not means of survival but a tool of profiteering and experiments.<sup>4</sup>

The constitution of India has not only promised life and liberty but also seeks to provide the necessary primary health care and means to masses. The drugs must be considered to be of utmost standard but this is only in terms of written provisions. Not only the intoxicating drinks but also drugs, which are injurious to health, should be done away with. In *State of Maharashtra and others V. Nagpur Distillers*<sup>5</sup>, a two Judge Bench of the Supreme Court took a serious note of liquor addiction among the younger. Article 47<sup>6</sup> of the constitution, which prohibits alcohol, requires the state to at least gradually lower state consumption in order to accomplish the prohibition's goal within a constrained time frame. The court also noted that alcohol addiction is becoming more and more common among this nation's youth. Drinking alcohol has not only become popular, but it has also become an obsession for many young people. We certainly don't need "indolent nation." The court bemoaned why the states should support the unfettered sale in liquor in violation of Article 47 of the Indian Constitution. It is, in fact, something that is hard to appreciate. The state's utilization of the enormous wealth generated by this commerce to cover its financial obligations is the only justification for not adhering to Article 47's mandate.

### ***Definition of Drug:***

The term "drug" can mean many different things. The term "drug" can refer to commonplace compounds like caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol as well as medications with positive therapeutic effects like insulin, penicillin, and paracetamol. Illegal substances including cocaine, heroin, and cannabis are also considered drugs.<sup>7</sup>

"A psychoactive substance is any substance that people take to change either the way they feel, think, or behave," according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. This covers both manufactured and natural medications, as well as alcohol and tobacco.<sup>8</sup>

According to the definitions given above, the term "drug" has a variety of meanings. In pharmacology, it refers to any chemical agent, and in medicine, it refers to any substance that prevent or cure disease or improve physical or mental welfare.

### ***Drug Addiction:***

When someone has a drug addiction, they take drugs obsessively despite the possibility that they could hurt themselves if they stopped. Despite the fact that dependency is implied by addiction, dependence on a drug can exist independently of addiction. Individuals who use medications to treat illnesses and conditions that affect their functioning may see improvements in their health. Although they are not addicted, these people are dependent on the drug. If a person uses a substance compulsively and finds it difficult to stop, they are addicted rather than just dependent. The non-medical use of narcotic medications for euphoric or analgesic effects is technically referred to as drug addiction.<sup>9</sup>

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## **Causes of Drug Addiction:**

The major causes of drug addiction are summarized as follows under the different heads:

### **1) Easy Availability of Drugs**

The initial reason someone takes any drug is to see "what it's like." This phenomena could be referred to as "curiosity." Adolescents are more prone to drug usage because of their adventurous and risk-taking tendencies, according to Macdonald.<sup>10</sup> A person may either never use the substance again or continue using it frequently as a drug. However, the most important aspect is whether or not medications are readily available for continuous use.

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<sup>3</sup> Available at: [www.elearningilideldhi.org/](http://www.elearningilideldhi.org/) (Last visited on March 23, 2024)

<sup>4</sup> N. V. Paranjape, *Criminology and Penology*, (Allahabad: Central Law Publications, 2008) 193

<sup>5</sup> 2006(5) SCALE 77.

<sup>6</sup> Narinder kumar, *Constitutional Law of India*, (Faridabad: Allahabad Law Agency, 2018) 475.

<sup>7</sup> Available at: [www.bps.ac.uk/wh/pharmacology.html](http://www.bps.ac.uk/wh/pharmacology.html) (Last visited on March 23, 2024)

<sup>8</sup> Available at: [www.undcp.org/odccp/dmgdemandabuse.html](http://www.undcp.org/odccp/dmgdemandabuse.html)(Last visited on March 23, 2024)

<sup>9</sup> Bharatji Upadhyay, *The Drug Addicts: Problems and Solutions*, (Vijay Prakashan Mandir, 1994) 34.

<sup>10</sup> Id at 41

## 2) Religious Sanction to Drugs use

Cannabis use in India seems to be associated with religious celebrations such as Shivaratri, Krishna Astami, and Bhajan Sessions, among others. Indeed, sharing Bhang, a cannabis-based beverage, is a must for festivals like Holi. Our culture has always included sadhus taking a puff of ganja or charas and then yelling, "Bum Bohley, Jai BholeyNath." Some religious institutions have turned into drug users' preferred locations because they condone the use of illegal narcotics.<sup>11</sup>

## 3) Peer Group Influence

One important determinant of drug addiction is the peer group. Even someone who isn't normally interested in using drugs or alcohol may feel enticed to do so if everyone else in the group does. Drug use is conceptualized in terms of social factors interacting with individual elements within the social context, according to the social learning theory. In this case, drug addiction is a taught behavior, and peer groups are among the greatest places to learn specific behavioral patterns.<sup>12</sup>

## 4) Unemployment and Urbanization

Social values and social control mechanisms are disrupted when a rural agricultural civilization gives way to an urbanized industrial one. Across the nation, young people frequently move from rural to urban areas in pursuit of work, a better socioeconomic standing, or simply an education. These individuals are frequently unaccustomed to the pressures and tensions that come with this novel exposure. They are compelled to live a life of loneliness, deprivation, isolation, and hopelessness. They are inclined to turn to drugs and alcohol for comfort.<sup>13</sup>

## 5) Faulty Family Patterns

As a replacement for their time and care, wealthy parents frequently give their kids pricey games and recreational activities. Children like this have plenty of pocket money. They simply don't know how to spend their free time and money. When drugs are introduced to these kids, they quickly become ingrained. It can be too late by the time the parents notice the behavioral changes in their kids. Lack of time to care for children and address their emotional needs causes irresponsible behavior in kids from low-income homes as well.<sup>14</sup>

## 6) Influence of Movies and the Media

These days, alcohol has been glamorized in movies. When the hero is feeling down, he turns to alcohol. Drinking is another way the villain celebrates. These kids might not observe the family's drink culture; instead, they see it on screens, large and tiny, and people start drinking as a result of such uplifting depictions in media and films.<sup>15</sup>

## 7) Occupational Factor

People frequently utilize drugs or alcohol because their jobs and careers leave them totally worn out. Therefore, they turn to drink or other substances to resurrect their spirit and to get over their weariness or exhaustion.

## 8) Anxiety

Anxiety-prone people experience feelings of emotional weakness and inadequacy. They are impatient and too responsive. These people get a lot of inferiority complexes and turn to drugs in an attempt to succeed. They attempt to satisfy their pleasure desires right away in order to deal with becoming "independent adults." When someone's mentality is fragmented and they are unable to assume adult responsibilities, they start using drugs.<sup>16</sup>

## 9) Attention seeking behavior

In many instances, it has been discovered that drugs can take the place of the excessive attention that some young infants receive. For whatever reason, the youngsters feel insecure when this much attention is taken away. To get over their sense of insecurity, many turn to narcotics.

## 10) Habituation Caused by Drug Addict

Humans have a natural need to make friends whenever they engage in any delinquent behavior, especially when they are using drugs or other costly substances. He always tries to turn someone else become a drug addict because he wants to obtain it at the expense of others. Any time someone repeatedly

<sup>11</sup> Bhim Sain, *Drug Danger and Social Behaviour: New Challenges*, (New Delhi: Sharda Prakashan, 1988) 90.

<sup>12</sup> Rashmi Agrawal, *Drug Abuse: Socio - Psychological Perspectives and intervention strategies*, (New Delhi: Shipra Publication, 1995) 58

<sup>13</sup> Bhim Sain, *Drug Danger and Social Behaviour: New Challenges*, (New Delhi: Sharda Prakashan, 1988) 44.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Bhim Sain, *Drug Danger and Social Behaviour: New Challenges*, (New Delhi: Sharda Prakashan, 1988) 58.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Carson, Susan Mineka, James N. Butcher, *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*, (London: Pearson Education, 2000) 406.

engages in wrongdoing of any kind, it makes him very happy to see others engaging in the same behavior. Humans may have an innate propensity to defend their own immoral behavior. Many a time, it would thus induce addiction.<sup>17</sup>

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### **Effects of Drug Addiction:**

The addiction of drugs or alcohol not only affects the user physically but also disorganizes him from the society. The disorganization of addicts can be classified as following:

#### **Drug Addiction and individual Disorganization**

A healthy life organization is based on normal and healthy social relationship. Excess use of drugs or alcohol modifies this relationship, changes the reality of former social values and brings about highly individual attitude. The excessive drunker or drug abuser may for the sake of his home, family and business or profession may become a liar, scoundrel and may commit criminal acts. It is not only in case of an average man but even intelligent and well settled people under prolonged indulgence may disintegrate and ultimately end in complete individual disorganization.<sup>18</sup>

#### **Drug Addiction and Family Disorganization**

The problem of drug addiction and family organization are closely allied to that of personal disorganization. Alcoholism or drug addiction is also a motivating factor in many family tensions. In USA many divorces are granted on the ground of such addiction. It is generally said that addiction to drug has been a traditional enemy of love and marriages. Many habitual users' often feel that they have become completely disintegrated from the opposite sex. Tensions by over indulgence were mainly created by the guests. But today this friction has been greatly increased by increase of family drug users and family disorganization has increased due to consumption by women also.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Drug Addiction and Community Disorganizations**

The public halls where drinking along with other allied activation such as drugs, dance, prostitution, and gambling go on, bring community disorganization. The elements of privacy of clandestine drinking and drug consuming in an atmosphere conducive to other indulgence encourage to excessive drinking by keeping girls as entertainers, permission of gambling and such other entertainments are often a menace to public decency. Young girls are engaged to act as hostesses in order to stimulate the consumption of alcohol and drugs. Thus alcohol and drugs abusers in such process bring community disorganization in many ways.<sup>20</sup>

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### **Conclusion:**

Drug addiction stands today as one of the most critical and complex social problems of our time. It is not merely a health concern but a significant threat to individual well-being, social harmony, national security, and global stability. Characterized by compulsive drug-seeking behavior, physical dependency, and a high rate of relapse, drug addiction disrupts not only the life of the user but also deeply affects families, communities, and governance structures.

As explored in the preceding sections, the causes of drug addiction are deeply rooted in a combination of psychological, social, cultural, and economic factors. Easy availability of drugs, peer group influence, urban stress, faulty parenting, unemployment, anxiety, and even cultural practices contribute to the rapid spread of this problem. The increasing normalization of drug and alcohol consumption through media and entertainment further glamorizes and encourages this dangerous behavior, especially among the youth. Moreover, religious and traditional festivals in some regions of India provide a form of cultural sanction to certain forms of drug use, complicating enforcement and awareness efforts.

The consequences of drug addiction are devastating and far-reaching. On an individual level, addicts suffer from physical deterioration, mental illness, and a gradual breakdown of personal identity and relationships. At the family level, drug addiction often leads to emotional trauma, financial instability, and domestic conflict. Many families experience a complete breakdown in communication and trust. At the community level, drug use contributes to increased crime, public indecency, and the weakening of moral and social structures. Public spaces often turn into centers of illegal activities including drug trade, prostitution, and violence. Such disorganization not only affects the addict but also has a cascading impact on the wider society.

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<sup>17</sup> Bhim Sain, *Drug Danger and Social Behaviour: New Challenges*, (New Delhi: Sharda Prakashan, 1988) 54.

<sup>18</sup> K.L Bhatia, Jagmohan Singh, "Sociology of Drug Addicts: A Behavioural Study of Social Disorganization in quest for Re-socialization", *Journal of the Indian Law Institute*, Vol. 35, No. 4, (October-December 1993) 264.

<sup>19</sup> Available at: <http://wikipedia.org/wiki/drugaddiction> (Last visited on March 23, 2024).

<sup>20</sup> K.L Bhatia, Jagmohan Singh, "Sociology of Drug Addicts: A Behavioural Study of Social Disorganization in quest for Re-socialization", *Journal of the Indian Law Institute*, Vol. 35, No. 4, (October-December 1993) 265.

Legally, India has established a comprehensive framework to combat drug addiction and trafficking, including provisions under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, and the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. Moreover, the Indian Constitution, through Article 47, imposes a duty upon the state to raise the standard of living and improve public health, including working towards the prohibition of intoxicating substances.

In conclusion, drug addiction is not an isolated problem; it is a mirror reflecting the breakdown of various societal systems economic, legal, familial, and cultural. If left unaddressed, it will continue to erode the very fabric of our communities and endanger the prospects of future generations. The need of the hour is a committed, collaborative, and compassionate response that recognizes the human cost of addiction and works relentlessly to restore dignity, health, and hope to those affected.

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