

JOURNEY TO RECOVERY: UNDERSTANDING DRUG ADDICTION AND RECOVERY OF THE PEOPLE STAYING AT THE REHABILITATION CENTERS OF GUWAHATI, ASSAM

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Abstract

Drug addiction is a complex phenomenon characterized by a compulsive use of substances that affects the human mind and body. It is often affected by genetic, environmental, and psychological factors. However, it is not merely a moral failure, rather it is a chronic disorder and it requires a comprehensive understanding and compassionate response to recover. To maintain a healthy social context, it is important to eradicate social illnesses like drug addiction. The ethical degradation of any society is greatly affected by the serious social issues like drug addiction, alcoholism, juvenile delinquency and so on. Previous studies approached the topic from a macro perspective paying nominal attention to micro view of the issue. Hence in this study an attempt has been made to approach the subject from the victim's point of view staying at the rehabilitation center for their recovery. It is a qualitative research based on both primary and secondary data. This study focuses on understanding the reason for drug addiction and remedial measures provided to them by the concerned authorities. It is a study to discuss the different aspects related to drug addiction with special reference to a rehabilitation centre. The study also investigates the status of Govt policies to eradicate drug addiction. Thus, the study helps to know the causes and remedies of drug addiction, and the responses of competent authorities in this regard. The study found the maximum number of drug addicts are due to psychological and family environments. It is suggested to create a supportive environment for the speedy recovery of the drug addicts.

Keywords: Drug Addiction, Recovery, Rehabilitation, Treatment, Substance Abuse, Govt Policies

1. Introduction.

Addiction is often defined as the condition when a momentary pleasure or relief becomes a binding chain on an individual's life. It is the condition of being addicted to a particular substance or activity that is often considered harmful for both individuals and society. Drug addiction is one of such serious problems which is characterized by a compulsive and harmful use of abusive substances. These substances include both illicit drugs like heroin, cocaine etc. and legal but addictive substances like alcohol, prescribed medication etc. It seems that the initial decision to take drugs is voluntary for most of the people, but repeated drug use challenges an addicted person's self-control and thus the problem of compulsive abuse takes place. In a way, it is a fight within mind, body, recovering life and human relationships. The roots of addiction are often seen to be intertwined with multifaceted reasons like psychological condition, peer pressure, environmental pressure, genetic predisposition etc.

Considering the sensitivity, it is necessary to be empathetic while approaching to recover a victim. It is important to recognize their fight against such a serious illness by making them realize that it is not due to their weakness, rather it is interplay of psychological, biological, and environmental elements. To understand a journey of drug addiction and recovery, it is necessary to explore human resilience, struggle and hope. The recovery from this illness often depends on various factors, but the prime role is played by different centers providing rehabilitation facilities to these victims. These centers work as a last place of hope for those who fail to navigate their lives due to ill effects of addiction. The centers apply a holistic approach of healing and tailored programs designed to address the concerns of the victims. The journey through rehabilitation centers is a testament of courage, perseverance and commitment to break the chain of addiction. They play the role of recovering addicts with empathy, professional care, unwavering support and care. In this study a comprehensive approach has been applied to know both the reason and remedial measures of drug addiction. The battle against addiction is a complex task, not just of individuals but of families, communities and society as a whole. Rehabilitation centers work as a transformative mechanism that challenges stereotypes and calls for support, understanding to support a holistic approach to heal such social illness. In this study the possibility of growth and self-development of the drug addicts are reflected through the analysis of multiple rehabilitation centers. This helps in realizing the extent of possibilities available for self-discovery and unwavering capacity to change and growth. The study sheds light into different untold pages of drug addicts with special reference to these rehabilitation centers. Thus, in this study a journey from hardship to recovery of the drug addicts is depicted to appeal for our stand in solidarity with these unfortunate souls offering them the hand of support, rather than judgment.

1.1. Significance of the study:

Drug addiction, also called substance syndrome, is a complex but curable disorder. It is a lifestyle disease and in recent times it has become a universal social and public health issue. It is a growing problem in India and the world. The global problem of addiction and drug abuse is responsible for millions of deaths and even complex diseases like HIV. The reason to study drug addiction is due to its impacts on human health and society. Nowadays, in human society, especially in India, people are often encountered with the effects of drug abuse personally or by a close family member or friend or sometimes it might just be by someone that has a desire to learn about addiction. The study is beneficial for any society under the trap of any kind of harmful addiction. It assists to realize the need to go deeper into the issue to pave the way for efficient intervention and to create a strong support system for those who are suffering. Besides, it is a social issue that disturbs individual experiences and affects families, communities and broader social structure. By discussing such an issue we can make better policies and can foster social inclusion and a support system for the victims. This study aims to bridge the gap between our understanding of addiction and recovery. Thus the comprehensive study can serve as a foundation for further research, interventions and community engagement.

2. Review of literature:

Rao J.S. and Dr. M.A (2017), in their study, “*The Substance use, abuse and misuse and in India, International Journal of Medicine Research*”, stated that substance use patterns are notorious for their ability to change over time. Substance use among women and children are increasing causes of concern. The epidemic of substance abuse in the young generation has assumed alarming proportions in India. Changing cultural value and increasing economic stress leads to initiation into substance use. Cannabis, heroin and India produced pharmaceutical drugs are the most frequently abused drugs in India. Drug use, misuse and abuse due to the nature of the drug abuse, the personality of the individual and the addicts immediate environment. 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.

Kumar.V.et.al(2016), in their study, “*Prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and other drug abuse among school going male adolescents in Jammu, International Journal of Medicine and Public Health*”, stated that substance abuse has been commonly found among adolescents in India. A school based cross sectional study was conducted over a period of 1 year in rural area and Jammu city of district Jammu. It was found that a higher portion of rural adolescents was observed to have ever tried cigarette smoking. The majority of adolescents in both urban and rural areas were not consuming alcohol. More rural adolescents had used cannabis with the majority of them experimenting in early adolescence. High risk behaviour observed among adolescents necessitates an urgent need for scaling up of anti-tobacco and anti-alcohol measures to ensure healthier adulthood.

Nebhinani N. et.al (2013) in their study, “*Demographic and clinical profile of substance abusing women seeking treatment at a de addiction center in North India, Industrial Psychiatry Journal*”, stated that in the recent decades an increasing number of women have been seeking dedication services. This research aimed to study the demographic and clinical profile of women seeking de

addiction treatment. It was done by taking 100 women substance abusers seeking treatment at a de addiction center between September 1978 to December 2011. The commonest substance of abuse was found to be tobacco followed by opioids, alcohol, benzodiazepines. The common reasons for substance use were to alleviate frustration or stress, curiosity. Significant predictors identified were being non-Hindu and higher educational years for abstinent status at follow up.

B. Rajkumari and R. Indira (2014) in their study, “*Inhalant substance abuse among adolescents in Manipur, India, An upcoming Issue, International Journal of medicine and public health*”, aimed to study the prevalence and determinants of inhalant substance used amongst adolescents in Manipur. It was conducted among 1671 adolescents studying in 8th to 12th standard in schools of Imphal east district Manipur. In the research 186 users were found and the commonest substance abuse was glue/dendrite. Being male, belonging to a joint family and increase in age were found to have significantly higher risk of being a user, whereas higher level of parental education shows a protective effect. There must be an increased effort for prevention; treatment along with sensitization of parents and teachers is a distinct challenge for policy makers.

Singh J. and Gupta P.K. (2017) in their study, “*Drug Addiction, current trends and Management, The international journal of Indian psychology*”, stated that drug addiction has become a worldwide problem and the leading cause of death. The most common use of drugs in India is alcohol, followed by cannabis and opioids. Despite the fact that more men use drugs than women, the impact of drug use tends to be greater on women, because women lack access to care for drug dependence adolescent drug abuse is another major area of concern. This paper highlights the causes of drug abuse, treatment and prevention of drug abuse. Some risk and protective factors have also been identified which either make the individual more vulnerable or more resilient towards substance use. It can be treated with treatment medications and psychological treatment, prevention is a major goal in adolescents with programmes such as providing normative education and competence enhancement.

3. Research Questions

Following are the research questions of the study.

- (i) What are the causes behind drug addiction?
- (ii) What are the remedial measures taken by rehabilitation centers to deal with it?

4. Research Objectives

Following are the objectives of this study.

- (i) To study the causes of drug addiction.
- (ii) To study the effectiveness of the remedial treatments provided by the rehabilitation centers.

5. Research Methodology

This study is based on a qualitative method. Both primary and secondary data are collected. The relevant secondary data has been gathered from the e-academic papers, government records, archives and newspapers. The primary data has been collected by arranging interview schedules with both closed and open-ended questions in conducting interviews with the informants. For conducting the interview some of the rehabilitation centers from different parts of Guwahati have been approached.

6. Results & Discussions

6.1. Overview on the Drug addicts:

The demographic overview of the patients staying at rehabilitation centers shows the background of these victims concerned. Most of the patients in these centers stated that they use drugs to manage their anger and family issues. More than half of them used drugs in the early adolescence stage and the rest in the post adolescence stage. Some of them confirm that they use drugs to get rid of stress caused by career pressure, family burden, disorganized family conditions etc. Moreover some of them started using this for momentary pleasure. And after sudden stoppage of using the drugs the victims went through physical pain, withdrawal symptoms, mood swings and depression. The victims at different rehab centers use several kinds of drugs like heroin, marijuana, ganja, nitrogen tablets, brown sugar etc. Out of total patients counted, almost all are male, and a nominal case of female victims found in this regard. It proves that males are more prone to drug addiction or substance abuses. More than 90% of the patients belong to the economically rich family and very few belong to the middle class family, while the patients belonging to poor backgrounds have been found rare. High price of both the substances and rehab admission could be the reason behind this. It is worth mentioning that the maximum of the victims staying at the rehabs are educated with highly qualified degrees. For instance, the research found victims extending from higher secondary qualifications till IIT graduates.

From the above findings it is clear that the prime reasons for substance abuse are peer pressure, stresses of life, family conditions etc. It is to note that both the gender and socio-economic conditions of the abusers play a significant role in their decision to take drugs. The fact of finding educated victims shows how institutional learning is ineffective to mold these addicts. The institutions need to create awareness campaigns, and need to focus on strengthening the mental health of the students through launching different counseling courses to teach them different stress management techniques.

6.2. Outline on the Remedial Measures by the Rehabs:

In the patient's fight of mind, body and environment, the rehabs work as a site of hope where a victim begins a transformative journey. In this study, multiple patterns of rehabilitation centers seem to present extending from fair to good quality. The infrastructure of some rehab centers seems quite sufficient, though there is a possibility of upgrading them considering the speedy recovery of the victims. The centers provide different therapeutic treatment to the inmates. Besides

conventional treatment practice, some rehabilitation centers arrange a multi-disciplinary approach which includes some uncommon treatment practices like yoga, meditation, group sharing, family therapy, assignments etc. The therapies are provided by using a traditional approach known as the “twelve step approach”. In the center there is a provision of an aftercare facility in which the recovered people can offer volunteer services to cure others. The average period of treatment in almost all the rehabs found to be in between 90 to 120 days. The centers also provide some supplementary services to the patients. There are awareness camps, HIV prevention camps, one to one counseling programmes and group discussion. The centers seem to have some experienced psychologists and counselors who have experience of more than 10 years. However some rehabs were found to be mediocre and they regret that their centers suffer from financial problems. Also some of the rehabs confirm that they do not get enough support even from the police and authorities.

The remedy to such a serious illness demands both treatment and external support. Though the rehabs work as a treatment mechanism, the latter to be implemented by the family, friends and society as a whole. The effect of drug abuse has become a serious social issue nowadays. It has instances of breaking several potential lives, families and can bring threat to the social fabric. Hence a comprehensive effort consisting both treatment and societal support is needed to break this chain of destruction so future generations can be kept away from this hazardous element.

7. Suggestions

After going through the study it suggested that understanding the psychological, physiological and social aspects of the addiction requires a holistic overview of the issue. The rehab centers should pay attention in these aspects while dealing with the recovery of these patients. It is suggested to upgrade the facilities available in the rehab centers. The rehabs must create a healthy environment for the well-being of the patients and need to pay attention to their mental health along with the physical one. For creating healthy habits in the lives of the victims the rehabs should have provisions for self-development services like library facility, sports and symposium etc. Govt. authorities and NGOs can support in this regard. Parents have to play a crucial role in molding their child by alerting them about the ill effects of these substances at a proper age. They should create an open and liberal environment in the family to initiate discussion on such topics. It is suggested that parents should keep a congenial and harmonious environment in their families. The relationship between parents and children should be cordial and they must give enough time to their children.

The cooperation between inmates and counselors should be satisfactory. The doctors have to show greater care and should not ignore the side effects of drugs. Conscious and careful steps should be taken by the government for the welfare of the inmates. The government authorities like the department of social justice and empowerment, should focus on such issues and furthermore updated measures should be applied to curb this disorder as and when time demands. The authorities should be more responsible towards the problems and prospects associated with such serious issues. The physicians and counselors need to approach the subjects with proper care and

with a humanitarian mind inside. The study suggested further research to address the issue from a broader perspective so that more untold pages can be explored regarding the journey of drug addiction and recovery.

8. Conclusion:

Understanding drug addiction and the transformative journey of the individuals staying at the rehab centers, a tapestry of human struggle, resilience and hope have been noticed. Through this research, the lives indulged in drug addiction, their fight with the illness have been encountered but more importantly their will power to be recovered is to be appreciated. These are not merely a series of untold stories; rather they are the evidence of continuous human effort to be free from an addiction. The information gained from the study emphasizes a comprehensive approach to treat an addiction. It is to admit that treatment does not only imply a medical treatment, rather includes psychological, social and community support. The study teaches us to be compassionate, caring and to make resources accessible for those who are in the path of recovery. The story of every individual reminds us of the potentiality to transform and it is a duty of every citizen to ensure an environment which nurtures this potential. Hence, this journey of support and cooperation should not be ended until the victims are provided with a life of fulfillment, purpose and well-being.

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