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IMPACT OF ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE ON YOUTHS' PERSONALITY

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Impact of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse on Youths' Personality

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Abstract – Alcoholism, drug abuse and dependency are a global problem and almost every Country and society is concerned with it. This abuse has killed more people, sent more victims to hospital; generate more police arrest, broken up more marriages and homes. In India too alcohol is common among different sections, generally among the Poor (Mahadalils) and among the people of higher status. Atrocity on women is a corollary of alcoholism. Several cases of assault on women by the drunken husbands are reported every day in different corners of the country even causing death. Psychological and interpersonal factors play major role in developing dependency on alcohol. It has been found that there are some alcoholic personalities; such persons tend to be more emotionally immature. The present study confirms that introversion and neuroticism serve as major factors of alcoholism.

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing problem of drug abuse and dependence in our society has caused both public and scientific attention to be focused on it. In the past, abuse and dependence particular- in relation to alcohol and heroin were considered to be manifestation of "moral weakness". Until recently little progress was made towards the identification of caused factors or the development of effective methods of treatment. Although our present knowledge concerning alcohol and drug abuse and dependences is far from complete.

Alcohol, like many other drugs causes some relief from feelings of conflict and frustration. From this point of view, it is in many ways a most satisfactory tranquilizer. The potentially detrimental effects of alcoholism for the individual, his loved ones, and society are legion.

In relation to alcohol, Bengelsdorf (1970) has pointed out that "is abuse has killed more people, sent more victims to hospitals, generate more police arrests, broken up more marriages and homes and cost industry more money than has the abuse of heroin, amphetamines, barbiturates and marijuana combined".

Alcohol is the most common drug which is used in all over the world. It is available everywhere and adults can purchase very easily. It is legally permissible, where as other drugs like heroin, marijuana etc. are generally banned.

In the United State it has been reported that there are more than 100 million users of alcohol (The U. S. department of health, education and welfares (1974)

concluded that moderate consumption of alcohol is generally not harmful. No doubt, alcoholism is on the rise in United States. More than 2 lakhs of new cases are added each year and mostly they are teen-agers. Alcohol has caused nearly 50% of automobile accidents, murder, 40% of all assaults, 35% or more of all rapes and 30% of all suicides. The financial drain imposed on the economy by alcoholism is estimated to be over 25 billion dollars a year in United States (Levitt, 1974).

Unfortunately, the effects of alcohol are not always to benign or beneficial. According to the Japanese proverbs, "First the man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink and then the drink takes the man."

Medically it has been found that when alcohol content of the blood stream reaches 0.1% the individually is coordination, speech and vision are impaired and when it reaches 0.5% the entire neural balance is upset and above 0.55% it becomes lethal.

In India too alcohol is common among different sections-generally among the poor (Mahadalits) and among the people of higher status. Off and on social activists raise voices against alcoholism which has become a menace for the poor. They prepare it by themselves such as "Mahua", Toddy; etc.

Atrocities on women are a corollary of alcoholism. Several cases of assault on women by their drunken husbands are reported daily in our society. Alcoholics become so aggressive towards their love once's that sometimes they beat them or shoot them causing death.

Women organizations have taken the case of alcoholism very seriously and wives in a group chase their husbands out of their house and they are not allowed to enter in drunken mood. Sometimes they are being beaten by this group also.

The causes of alcoholism are generally identified by different researches such as genetic and biochemical factors, stress of life, socio-cultural factors and maladaptive behaviour also.

Research studies have shown that alcoholism does tend to run in families. In a study of 259 hospitalized alcoholic Winokur et al (1970) found that over 40% had alcoholic parents. In early study Roe. Burks and Millelmann (1945) followed the case-history of 36 children who had alcoholic parents. But the outcome was similar of a control group of 25 children having non- alcoholic parents.

Psychological and interpersonal factors play a major role in developing dependency on alcohol. It has been also found that there is some alcoholic personality: such persons tend to be more emotionally immature Winokur et al (1970). Pratt (1972) and McClelland et al (1972) have viewed heavy drinking by some young man as an attempt to prove their masculinity and achieve feelings of adequacy and competency.

Although the concept of a pro-alcoholic personality remains indefinite, alcoholics do tend to show a distinct cluster of personality traits. They have shown low stress-tolerance, a negative self-image and feelings of inadequacy, isolation and depression.

A number of investigators have pointed out that the typical alcoholic is discontented with his life situation and is unable or unwilling to tolerate tension and stress (AMA committee on alcoholism and drug dependence, 1969). In fact, Schaefer (1971) has concluded that alcoholism is a conditioned response to anxiety. The individual presumably finds in alcohol a means of presumably finds in alcohol a means of relieving anxiety, resentment, depression or other unpleasant feelings resulting from his stressful life-situation each time he drinks and experiences relief of tension, his drinking pattern is reinforced, eventually it becomes his habitual way of coping with stress.

Here, the common feature of alcoholics denotes a neurotic personality. Wikler and Rasor (1953) report that sexuality; hostility and aggression include neurosis in neurotic alcoholics.

Personality traits and problems work as risk-factors for alcoholism. In this regard several studies can be quoted which describe personality characteristics of alcoholism. With Respect to relationship between neurosis and alcoholic. Ausubel (1958) found that those individuals who have neurotic personality become alcoholics. They are motivated and have high desire for success but do lack self-esteem while facing continuous failure in achieving unrealistic goals. They

feel inadequacy, depression and anxiety due to lack of self-confidence. Laskowitz (1961) pointed out that self-esteem plays motivational role in alcoholism.

Halstead and Neal (1999) report that extroversion is lower in male alcoholics while Kaldegg (1975) did not find any difference on extroversion and introversion. Gossop and Kristjanson (1977) looked upon the tendency OD extroversion and introversion of convicted male and female alcoholics and found that both group (male and female) displays high tendency of extroversion.

Singh (1989) found that the alcoholics were introverted while non-alcoholics were more outgoing (extroverted). He also observed that the alcoholics were neurotic while non-alcoholics were stable in their personality characteristics.

In a recent study, Kumari, R. (2002) found that alcoholics bear more scores on neuroticism and psychoticism but less score on extroversion as compared to non-alcoholics.

PURPOSE AND HYPOTHESIS

The main purpose of this study was to assess the personality patterns of alcoholics. In order to achieve this purpose working hypothesis was formulated and scientific methodology was adopted. It was hypothesized that introverts and neurotics would have greater tendency toward alcoholism.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

This study was conducted on 50 alcoholics and 50 non-alcoholics, randomly selected from different sections of the society including persons coming from higher socio-economic groups and also from the lower strata of the population. Average age of both the groups was between 25-30 years.

First of all 150 alcoholic persons were spotted after thorough consultation with the members of the family living in the respective ward in the area of Katihar Municipal Corporation. Like-wise 150 non-alcoholics were also spotted from different sections of the population including BPL (Below Poverty Line) families and the families belonging to the high-income groups. Out of 150 members of each group only 50 persons were selected in random order representing all groups for example BPL families, middle-class families and high-income groups in both alcoholic and non-alcoholic groups.

After selecting sample of 50 subjects in each group, they were consulted individually at their convenience- Questionnaire was given to them and instructions were also briefed clearly and meaningfully. In case subjects who refused to cooperate were replaced by similar numbers in the particular group.

TOOLS

For the purpose of measuring personality pattern: Eysenck Personality questionnaire was used – This questionnaire was used by Eysenck (1964) but here it was an adapted in Hindi language by Prof. B. Dey of Patna university. It includes 57 items purported to measure extroversion-introversion, neuroticism and lying tendency. It has been found highly reliable, valid and popular.

RESULT

The present study deals with two major variables of alcoholism; neuroticism and introversion. It was hypothesized that introversion. It was hypothesized that introverts are more prone towards alcohol than extroverts. Following table reveals the true character of alcoholics: -

Table-A Comparison of mean Extroversion – Introversion score of Alcoholics and Non-Alcoholics.

TABLE – A

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	df	P-value
Alcoholics	50	12.22	3.78	10.06	98	.01
Non-Alcoholics	50	18.86	2.85			

Table-B Comparison of mean Neuroticism score of Alcoholics and Non-Alcoholics.

TABLE- B

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	df	P-value
Alcoholics	50	18.88	3.52	11.49	98	.01
Non-Alcoholics	50	11.41	3.12			

DISCUSSION

It is obvious from Table-A that alcoholics were more introvert than non-alcoholics. This may be due to self – centredness of introverts. The average score of alcoholic groups was 12.22 on the extroversion – introversion scale, whereas non – alcoholic group had the mean score of 18.63 on the scale. The differences between two groups are significant. It means that alcoholics were more introverts than the non-alcoholics.

Secondly, it was also hypothesized that persons having neurotic personality have a tendency to develop the habit of alcoholism. The table noted below clearly indicates that neuroticism play a vital role in developing the habit of alcoholism.

Result contained in Table-B makes it clear that alcoholic had significant higher neurotic tendency than those of non-alcoholics. The reason behind such findings may be that neurotics consider alcoholism as

a source of coping strategy for reducing stress and frustration.

CONCLUSION

The present study deals with the personality pattern of alcoholics. On the basis of previous studies, it was hypothesized that there is more incidence of alcoholism among introverts than the extroverts. Halstead and Neal (1999) have reported that extroverts were lower in male alcoholics. Singh (1989) also found that alcoholics were introverts while non-alcoholics were more outgoing (extrovert). It was also confirmed by Kumari, R. (2002). Similar finding was also reported in several studies both in India and outside.

The hypothesis related with introversion was also confirmed in the present study. Anxiety scale determines the degree of extroversion and introversion among individuals. Here, the average score of alcoholic groups on introversion was 12.22 differences was found highly significant.

Neuroticism is another major factor of alcoholism. Ausubel (1958) found that individual having neurotic personality develop the habit of alcoholism.

The present study was conducted on 30 alcoholics and 50 non-alcoholics subjects. It was found that alcoholics were higher in scale on neuroticism than the non-alcoholics group. The average score of alcoholics was 18.88 whereas for non-alcoholics it was 11.41. For measuring the score of neuroticism “Eysenck Anxiety Scale” was administered both subject groups. The test was Hindi adaptation developed by Dr. B. Dey.

As a result, it may be concluded that introversion and neuroticism serve as major factors of alcoholics. Kumari, R. (2002) had also found that, alcoholics bear more score on neuroticism and psychoticism but less score on extroversion as compared to non-alcoholics.

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