



## **TREATMENT APPROACHES FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE THROUGH SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION**

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### **Abstract**

*Substance abuse in India has become one of the biggest concerns of our country right now since it is affecting largely youth of our country. A report on substance abuse has been prepared and submitted to All India Medical Sciences in 2019 reported that 14.6% of the people between the age of 10 and 75 are alcohol user and about 2.8% use cannabis products. According to this report, there are about 8.5 lakhs substance abuser overall, nation reason behind economic burden, broken family, violence, illiteracy and psychological problems. Adolescent substance abuse is another major area of concern because more than half of the person's with substance use disorder are introduced to drugs before the age of 15 years. The effective treatment can help patients addicted to substances stop using, avoid relapse, and successfully recover their lives. Based on this research, key ideas have emerged that will be proved effective programme through social work intervention in prevention of substance abuse.*

**Keywords:** *Drug abuse, Treatment approach, social work*



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### **Introduction**

Substance addiction causes physical and mental side effects. Physical side effects include cravings and withdrawal symptoms, and mental side effects include increased stress and feelings of depression, anxiety or loneliness. The substance abuse began with the voluntary act of taking drugs, but over time taking the drug becomes compulsive. This is mostly due to the effects of long-term drug exposure on brain function. And in this case, most people need long term or repeated care to stop using completely and recover their lives. The risk of the substance abuse increase greatly during the times of transition. For an adult, a divorce or loss of job may lead to drug abuse; for a teenager, risky times include moving or changing schools<sup>1</sup>. It is also reported that teens are exposed to substances such as cigarettes and alcohol for the first time take greater risks. Using this age of alcoholic substance can disrupt brain function in areas critical to motivation, memory, learning, judgment, and behavior control.

<sup>1</sup> Krohn M.D., Lizotte, A.J., Perez C.M. (1997), *The Interrelationship between Substance use and precocious transitions to adult statuses*, *Journal of Health Social Behaviour*, 38 (1); 87-103  
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The first national survey on the extent, pattern and trend of drug abuse was sponsored by Government of India and conducted by the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime in the year 2000-2001 but report was published in 2004 did not give any state level estimates<sup>2</sup>.

It becomes the worldwide problem of unnatural death and fetal diseases. In recent years India is also seeing a rising trend in substance abuse. The Government realized to a new survey of fact finding report and conducted a National Survey on Extent and Pattern of Substance Use in India through the NDDTC of AIIMS, New Delhi during 2018 which provides data at the National level as well as at the State level.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India has found in its report that the most common use of drug in India is alcohol followed by cannabis and opiates<sup>3</sup>. The survey on use of drug indicated that prevalence of substance abuse among males in the general population is significant compare to women.

One exhibiting compulsive, chronic, physiological or psychological need for a habit forming substance, behavior or activity is considered addict.

The Webster's definition of addiction<sup>4</sup> is a "*compulsive need for and use of a habit forming substance characterized by tolerance and by well defined physiological symptoms upon withdrawal*". The treatment refers to '*the process that begins when psychoactive substance abusers come into contact with a health provider or any other community service and may continue through a succession of specific interventions until the highest attainable level of health and well being is reached*' (UNODC).

Multiple researches have led to advanced in evidence based behavioural therapy for substance abuse. The therapies have proved effective in treatment substance use disorders in addition to co-occurring mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

Survey found that a substantial number of people use psychoactive substances in India, and substance use exists in all the population groups, but adult men bear the brunt of substance use disorders. Report found that alcohol is the most common psychoactive substance used by Indians nearly about 14.6% of the population. In terms of absolute numbers, there are about 16 crore persons who consume alcohol in the country. Use of alcohol is considerable higher among men 27.3% as compare to women 1.6% respectively. States with the highest

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<sup>2</sup> UNODC- India Report 2000-2001

<sup>3</sup> AIIMS (2019), National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) report

<sup>4</sup> Webster's Dictionary, 1828

prevalence of alcohol use are Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Punjab, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa. Survey also found that after alcohol, Cannabis and Opioids are the next commonly used substances in India. About 2.8% of the population reported having used any cannabis product (i.e. Ganja and Charas). States with highest prevalence of cannabis use are Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh and Delhi. About 2.1% of people of country (lump-sum 2.26 crore) use Opioids which includes Opium or its by product such as *doda* and *phukki*, Heroin or Brown Sugar etc. North-east states are top most using these types of substances as per the report generated<sup>5</sup>. States with highest prevalence of cannabis use are Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh and Delhi.

About 2.1% of people of country (approx. 2.26 crore) use Opioids which includes Opium or its by product such as *doda* and *phukki*, Heroin or Brown Sugar etc. Northeast states are top most using these types of substances as per the report generated<sup>6</sup>.

Thus the institution's report makes it clear that the considerable population in India is affected by substance use disorders and is in need of urgent help. However reach of the national programmes for treatment of substance use disorders is grossly inadequate.

### **Problems of drug addiction**

As we know that the drug addiction is a multifaceted illness characterized by intense and, at times, uncontrollable drug passion, along with obsessive drug seeking and use that persist even in the face of overwhelming consequences.

National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) reported that there are several states of India which have rapidly gone up in last decade. Punjab, Delhi, Haryana, UP, MP. Manipur, Mizoram are some of the states that have a high prevalence of drug abuse and disorders.

US Department of Health<sup>7</sup> reported that there are several key methods which would be helpful for rehabilitative approaches of substance abusers, such as medication and behavioral therapy, especially when combined, are important elements of an overall therapeutic process that often begins with detoxification, followed by treatment and relapse prevention.

Substance abuser is not become only self-destructive but also affects family and friends. *Pure Murder*<sup>8</sup> defined that it is really important to include how families and friends are affected by

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<sup>5</sup> AIIMS (2019), National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) report

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> National Institute of Health (2009), Report of US Department of Health and Human Services, *Treatment Approaches for Drug Addiction*, September 2009, p.2

<sup>8</sup> Noreen, O'Donohue and Sue Richardson ed., *Pure Murder*, Trinity College, Dublin, p.6  
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a drug user. Families go through hell, through pure murder- seeing someone you loved, cared about, wasting away in front of your eyes, changing into a different person. It affects everybody living in the house. Beyond the harmful consequences for the person with the addiction, substance abuse can cause serious health problems for others in several ways such as negative effect of prenatal drug exposure on infants and children, negative effects of secondhand smoke and increases spread of infectious diseases.

High prevalence of inhalant use among children and adolescents is another important concern for India. It is the only category of substances where prevalence among children is more than the prevalence among adults. Many states of the country have a substantial population of children using inhalants and affected by inhalant use disorders. Among children, earlier research from India has shown that the street children are particularly vulnerable population or inhalant use<sup>9</sup>.

### **Treatment approaches**

The substance abuse treatment is projected to assist addicted individuals discontinue compulsive drug seeking. Treatment can happen in a multiplicity of settings, take many different forms, and last for different lengths of time. We also know that the substance abuse is typically a brain disorder characterized by occasional relapses, a short-term, one-time, and treatment is usually not sufficient, for many treatment is a long term process that involves multiple interventions and regular monitoring.

There are many options that have successful in treating drug addiction including behavioural counseling, medication, medical devices and applications used to treat withdrawal symptoms or deliver skills training, evaluation and treatment for co-occurring mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, long term follow-up to prevent relapse. A range of care with a tailored treatment programme and follow-up options can be crucial to success. NIDA explained that treatment should include both medical and mental health services as needed. Follow-up care may include community-or family based recovery support systems<sup>10</sup>. Effective treatment focuses on the genetic and environmental cause of addiction. It also treats the physical and mental side effects.

The substance abuse and addiction have so many dimensions and disrupt so many aspects of an individual's life, treatment is not simple. Most patients require long term or repeated

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<sup>9</sup> Dhawan et al (2015): Are we prepared to meet their treatment needs?, *Indian Journal of Psychology Med*, 37-282-7

<sup>10</sup> NIDA, *Treatment Approaches for Drug Addiction*, January 2019

period of concern to achieve the ultimate purpose of sustained self-denial and recovery of their lives. Effective treatment programs typically incorporate many components, each directed to a particular aspect of the illness and its consequences, addiction treatment must help the individual stop using drugs, maintain a drug-free lifestyle, and achieve productive functioning in the family, at work, and in society. It is also said that the addiction of drug is typically a chronic disease, people cannot simply stop using drugs for a few days and be cured<sup>11</sup>.

Generally, the goal of treatment is to return patients to productive functioning in the family, workplace, and community as well. According to the research that, tracks individuals in treatment over extended periods, most people who get into and remain in treatment stop using drugs, improve their occupational, social, and psychological functioning.

### **Social work intervention**

Rehabilitation of substance abusers is the central theme of the social work profession through intervention treatment of the individual. There are several professionals are working in this field since long back ago. There are also rehabilitation centres in our country that helping anyone who is suffering from addicted. These centres are providing treatment for substance abusers for a range of mental and behavioural problems including schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, depression, anger, anxiety and aggression especially in young generations. Professional social workers along with psychiatrist, psychologist and psychiatric nurses are working in collaborative methods.

Behavioural treatments help engage people in substance use disorder treatment, modifying their attitudes and behaviours related to drug use and increasing their life skills to handle stressful circumstances and environmental cues that may trigger intense craving for drugs and prompt another cycle of compulsive use. Behavioral therapies can also enhance the effectiveness of medications and help people remain in treatment longer<sup>12</sup>.

A social work method must be continuum of care that includes a customized treatment regimen addressing all aspects of an individual's life, including medical and mental health services and follow-up options via community, family based recovery support systems etc. these can be crucial to a person's success in achieving and maintaining a drug free lifestyle.

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<sup>11</sup> National Institute of Health (2009), Report of US Department of Health and Human Services, *Treatment Approaches for Drug Addiction*, September 2009, p.1

<sup>12</sup> National Institute of Drug Abuse, '*Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment-A Reseach-based Guide*' U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, p. 27

Social work intervention method is also providing for addiction recovery with a friendly approach along with effective treatment protocols, depending on the patients needs. It provides residential treatment, counseling family programmes outpatient treatment and more. Outpatient treatment varies in the types and intensity of services offered. Such treatment cost less than residential or inpatient treatment and often is more suitable for people with jobs or extensive social supports. It should be noted, however, that low intensity programs may offer little more than drug education. Other outpatient models, such as intensive day treatment, can be comparable to residential programme in services and effectiveness, depending on the individual patient's characteristics and needs. In many outpatient programs, group counseling can be a major component. Some outpatient programmes are also designed to treat patients with medical or other mental health problems in addition to their drug disorders.

Community level treatment interventions are an effective means of delivering interventions. Many people affected by the adverse consequences of substance abuse may have limited contact with existing organizations (UNODC 2003).

Social work intervention shows that there is a expectation in many communities that a range of treatment services should be accessible, regardless of age, gender, sexual preference, social and economic class of location.

Individual social work case study method of counseling not only focuses on reducing or stopping illicit substance use but it also addressed related areas of impaired functioning such as employment status, illegal activity, and family or social relations as well as the content and structure of the patient's recovery programme. Through its emphasis on short-term behavioral goals, individualized counseling helps the patient develop coping mechanism and tools to abstain from drug use and maintain abstinence. The other method of group counseling is for social reinforcement offered by peer discussion and to help promote drug free lifestyle<sup>13</sup>.

Early social work intervention is also a therapeutic approach that combines early detection of hazardous or harmful substance use and treatment patients. Treatment is provided before such time as patients might present of their own decision and in many case before they are aware that their substance use might cause problems. It is directed in particular at individuals who have not developed physical dependence or major psychosocial complications.

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<sup>13</sup> National Institute of Drug Abuse, '*Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment-A Reseach-based Guide*' U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.,p 36  
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A brief intervention is usually an interaction that can have a dramatic impact on the direction of a person's behavior. There's strong evidence that brief contacts do have an impact. The main components of a brief intervention are as a personalized assessment; feedback that is nonjudgmental; clear options for taking action, emphasizing goals that the person feels he can actually achieve; given in an overall empathic style. Intervention highlights the importance of understanding substance problems across a broad continuum. For many people, social work intervention may be all they need for a shift in perspective that puts them on a new path.

### **Conclusion**

This is come to conclusion on above discussions covering on effective treatment approaches for substance abuse. Social work intervention and counseling for addiction help individuals understand which cause addiction. It is also helpful for factors for relapse and develops tools for coping with stressful situation. Common techniques include cognitive behavioural therapy, motivational interviewing and dialectical behavioural therapy.

It should be based on psychological therapy in house treatment and detox therapy, individual counseling group counseling, yoga sessions and meditation sessions for alcohol and substance abuse holistic therapy counseling for motivating patients to enjoy life without any kind of substance abuse. There should be social work intervention not only rehabilitation of substance abuser but also who are addicted to food, porn, internet, pain and shopping.

Innovative methods are needed in order to reach populations most affected by substance abuse. A community based response involving local agencies and organizations, including outreach services are necessary components of a strategy that seeks to reach substance abusers who are not in contact with services to establishing an integrated network of community level services.

As we know that India has very limited resources for the rehabilitation of substance abuse. The social work intervention can be proving a tool of benefit to the treatment of the problems. The trained social workers, treatment approach is basically on an outpatient basis and also volunteer team operations without financial support. Social Workers encourage and assist clients in registering to the agencies which has possibility to change their lifestyle and also provide vocational training and assistance in finding a rehabilitative or job. There is also urgent need to formulate guidelines and action plan to counter the menace of substance abuse.

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