

Socio-Psychological Impacts of Alcohol Disorder: A Sociological Review

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Abstract

Nowadays, the society is facing severe social, economic, psychological, religious and all other problems that directly hinders the progress of the individual and the society as a whole. Alcoholism is one of the major problems that society today facing. The discussion of the problem of alcoholism leads to one thing that is fairly clear. Being a necessary social evil alcoholism as a subject matter of study is not as simple as it is often made out to be. It has a number of dimensions, each of which can be probed by a single separate discipline. Alcoholism has been an underlying cause of increase in violence, crime, mass deaths and a crisis in social relations. Why people in villages take to alcoholism is a question that needs to be probed further. Excessive drinking spoils the self, the family, community and society. The present paper discusses about the impacts of alcoholism on individual, family, community and societal wellbeing as a large and confined to various physical and mental disorder facing by alcohol addicts.

Keywords: Alcohol, Mental Disorder, Society, Family, Community

Introduction

Drinking of a wide - variety of alcohol beverages made of one substance or a combination of substances has been a very interesting and integral part of life of people from time immemorial. Drinking prevails in almost all known cultures. Reasons for drinking can differ from one culture to another and within a given culture from one person to another. There is some evidence to suggest that alcohol if taken in moderate quantity and with less frequency is good for health, it has lot of benefits to offer to persons. There is also evidence to show the excessive consumption of alcohol and drinking of illicit liquor is dangerous to health and hence it affects the productivity and person's behavior in day to day situations. It has adverse effects on the family; wife and children and in work situations. It is this aspect of alcohol drinking which has been a subject matter of serious concern. Naturally it received the attention of a large number of research studies.

The studies have revealed that treatment of alcoholics and their rehabilitation involves specialists from a number of disciplines especially,

psychiatry and medicine. The question that arises here is; how do some persons get addicted to alcohol while others escape this habit. This question necessitates the need to examine the whole gamut of social, cultural, personality and economic factors, which might be said to be responsible for persons getting addicted to alcoholism.

Lot of research material on alcoholism has accumulated. Bulk of this material pertains to alcoholism in western societies. In India the research material has so far confined to alcoholic behavior in urban societies. It is strange that there is acute paucity of research material on alcoholism in rural India in general and rural Karnataka in particular. In rural Karnataka preparation, distribution of alcohol and related products has been the monopoly of rich vested interests. Production of illicit liquor got penetrated into rural and tribal pockets and rural people often become the victims of the trade in illicit liquor. Time and again the nexus between local politicians and local officials has been condemned. Given the gullible nature of rural people alcoholism has been used by vested interests to gain control over the rural population. Huge profits have been made by selling spurious liquors; such practices have often resulted in mass deaths leading to social tensions. The government responds to these situations only

half-heartedly. Government washes off its hands by setting committees and commissions of enquiry. The entire episode is forgotten soon. The merry-go-round goes on like this. Viewed in this way alcoholism in rural India has become a great social evil. There have been a number of social activists and NGOs who have been fighting this social evil. In recent times women took up this issue collectively and staged protests against this evil in different parts of the state. Naturally they came in confrontation with local western interests. The latter employed paid hooligans to put down their fight. This issue is discussed in detail in one of the following chapters. Politically alcoholism has become the most explosive issue. Vote bank politics has only accentuated the problem.

Historically alcoholism has prevailed since antiquity. Alcoholic beverages have been used not only as stimulants but also as restoratives. In India the early Aryan settlers used 'Somaras' - Sura, a distilled spirit prepared from rice. It was a fermented beverage. Alcoholic beverages were produced in various ways. Pulastya an ancient sage mentioned twelve different kinds of liquor; they are Panasa – a liquor drawn from Jack fruit, Draksha – a grape liquor, Madhuka – Honey liquor, Karjura – date liquor, Tala – Palm liquor, Sikshava – cane liquor, Saira – long pepper liquor, Madhavika – Mahua liquor, Arishtha – Soap-berry liquor, Maireya or Rum, Navikelaja – Coconut liquor country liquor. Opium was introduced in India by the Muslim traders around 19th century AD.

During the Mughal period alcoholic beverages, opiates and hemp drugs were freely indulged in. during Akbar's time a beverage containing alcohol, opium, Indian hemp and Poppy capsules was drunk by the well-to-do classes. Country liquor was available in plenty, especially on festive occasions. Prohibition was in force from time to time. Aurangzeb a teetotaler issued strict orders to enforce prohibition. According to Fryer, a European traveler, 'Muslims did not drink in public, they consumed large quantities of alcohol in the privacy of their homes'. During Medieval period people took to drinking like fish taking to water. Hindu Rajas enjoyed drinks especially on festive occasions like holi, diwali and dashera. They were served by the 'dasis' in an atmosphere of dancing and music.

However, the masses generally remain free from the evil of drink and drugs. This is corroborated by Vasco-Da-Gama the foreign traveler, who visited India at that time.

During the British period consumption liquor increased, especially among the rich and low caste people. Restraint hitherto exercised by tradition, religion and social customs gave way to new social norms. People became increasingly free to use drugs and other alcohol related products. Demand created by drink habit was supported by trade interest and consequently production, sale, distribution of alcohol beverages became a large-scale industry. Drinking also received social acceptance. Drinks and alcohol beverages could be had in restaurants, clubs, refreshment rooms and even in the railway dining cars.

In the wake of industrialization and urbanization had led to increase in the size of working class in general and migrant labor in particular. Working class started drinking almost unrestrained. The worsening economic and living conditions on account of hustle and bustle of factory life. Dehumanizing conditions that followed provided further temptation for workers to take to drinking in a big way. They took to drinking to get relief from long hours of work and hard conditions prevailing at work situations. Drinking became an important part of the working class culture. Licensing of shops and setting up of shops in large numbers at all places provided easy access and increase in wages further aggravated the evil.

In post independent period, alcoholism became a huge business of the government. Government policy on prohibition is a bundle of contradictions. Arguments against its production and use have ranged from its negative impact on economic and social well being of alcoholics and their dependents. Governments have been not clear with regard to their policy on alcohol. At some time, the governments call for out right prohibition as a matter of state policy. At some other time, governments take up production sale and consumption of alcohol as if it is there only business. The liquor industry has been a money-spinner for the governments. The size of the organized liquor industry is around Forty-Five billion (inclusive of

excise duty) comprising Fifty-Six breweries and Twenty-Five Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL).

The major states accounting alcohol production are Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. Most of the breweries are located in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Punjab. The liquor segment also comprises the unorganized rupees Hundred billion country liquor. Country liquor an unbranded highly potent alcohol drink is produced by distilleries and sold through separate distribution channels. There is a thriving market for country liquor.

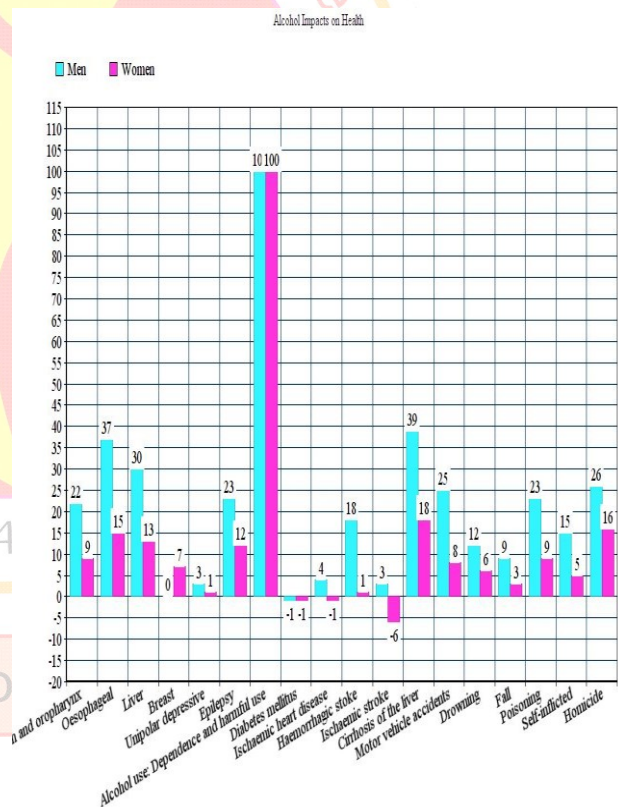
Impacts of Alcohol Disorder

Alcohol usage is routinized in both rural and urban India. As per NHP report, the alcohol usage is more among men which is reported 23% to 74% in comparison to 24% to 48% among women. About 10.6 million people having alcohol use disorder among 62.5 million which is recorded in 2005 report and study found that in the same year, about 20-30 % were hospitalized due to alcohol related problems.

	process of children and their schooling, adverse impact on marital relationship, unhealthy relationship between parents and children leads to familial disorder.
Community Disorder	At the community level, the alcohol disorder person loses his social entity which caused him to lose opportunities to survive within civic society.
Societal Disorder	Increasing number of alcohol disorder persons causing negative impacts on socio-economic wellbeing of the society as a whole may leads to chaotic image of present and future society.

Source: [Alcohol Use Disorder | National Health Portal Of India \(nhp.gov.in\)](http://Alcohol Use Disorder | National Health Portal Of India (nhp.gov.in))

Alcohol Impacts on Health (Both Men & Women)



Source: [Current State Of Alcohol Addiction In India - White Paper Research \(alphahealingcenter.in\)](http://Current State Of Alcohol Addiction In India - White Paper Research (alphahealingcenter.in))

The above graph clearly depicts the health disorder caused by abnormal alcohol consume. The present data shown the comparative health impact on men and women. With regards to mouth and oropharynx 22% men and 9% women suffering from it. 7% of women suffering from breast cancer, 3% men-1% women (epilepsy), with respect to alcohol

Impacts of Alcohol Disorder	
Mental Disorder	The daily usage of alcohol causing mental disorder among users which in turn causing other socio-economic disorders
Accidents	In 2010, about 1,34,000 people died in road accidents as per Alcohol & Drug Information Centre (AIDC) report, 336 persons dying daily and 40% of road traffic accidents due to alcohol. It is observed that majority of people who drink and drive come under age group of 20-50 years.
Crime	Alcohol usage has direct relation with crimes such domestic violence and other violent acts.
Suicide	The suicide committing level among alcohol user is 10-15% more in comparison to general population.
Psycho- Physical Disorder	Alcohol usage causing various disorders including antisocial personality disorder, mood disorder induced psychotic disorder, depression, anxiety and so on.
Familial Disorder	The first and foremost negative impacts of alcohol disorder is seen within family relationship which directly impact on socialization

use, dependence and harmful use 100% men and women suffering, 18% men-1% women (hemorrhagic stroke), 39% men-18% women (cirrhosis of the liver), 25% men-8% women (motor vehicle accidents), 12% men-6% women (drowning), 9% men-3% women (fall), 23% men-9% women (poisoning), 15% men-5% women (self-inflicted) and 26% men-16% women (homicide). From the above study it is clear that men are more affected by alcohol disorder in comparison to women. Women are less addicted to alcohol, due to various social, religious and cultural constraints imposed on women. Women who consumed alcohol are stigmatized in society and they are considered as deviant and liable for punishment as per customs, folkways and other social norms.

Conclusion

Alcoholism, being a necessary social evil has been a subject matter of a wide range of social sciences in general and medical science in particular. Given serious consequences of excessive consumption of alcoholism, a vast body of research material has accumulated. Bulk of research material on alcoholism pertains various dimensions of this phenomena namely nature of the problems, the extent to which it prevails, the causes and consequences and patterns of alcoholic behavior and the government excise policy to mention a few has hitherto confine to both rural and urban areas. The World Health Organization (WHO) referred ten pivotal areas through which the respective government shall intervene by the means of policy for reducing the adverse effects caused by alcohol disorder in society. This includes active and reasonable leadership, effective role of administrators involve in preventing the alcohol disorder, community activity, repressive rules related to drink and drive, checking of liquor availability, promotion of other beverages that helps the alcohol addicts to control their addiction, changes in price-mechanism, monitoring, inspecting and so on.

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