

## Drug Addiction Among College Students in Rajasthan

**\*Dr. Arun Kumar Chaturvedi**

*With the drug dependence spreading its stranglehold on every campus it is high time we opened clinics for the treatment of addicts and introduced follow-up services to prevent relapse.*

ONE OF THE MOST DISTURBING situations developing on the campuses in different parts of the country is that a large number of students are becoming slow and steady victims to the drug habit. This author had an opportunity to study the drug habits of students belonging in the educational institutions of Bharatpur, Karauli, Alwar, Beawar and Ajmer. An investigation was undertaken on a sample of 250 students, both male and female, of the degree and post-graduate classes, taken on a random sampling from five post-graduate colleges in Rajasthan. The students belonged to the three faculties of arts, science and commerce; 50 per cent belonged to the degree classes and the rest post-graduate classes.

Though the respondents belonged to the age-group of 18-33, 90 per cent of them were below 30 years of age. The intoxicants consumed by them included alcohol, tranquilisers, tobacco which included beedi and cigarette, ganja, charas, bhong and opium.

Eighty per cent of the respondents were Hindus and the rest Muslims, Sikhs and Christi About three-fourth of the respondents were children of parents who had a monthly income upto Rs. 1500/ and one-fourth of them had income beyond this amount.

The data was collected with great difficulty as the respondents were assured that the information gathered would be kept strictly confidential and used purely for research work. It was a real problems getting information from female students. Women investigators had to be engaged for this purpose.

The data revealed that about 70 per cent of the respondents had never used any drug while the remaining had some experience of drug use. Of the 30 per cent drug users, about half had casually taken it in the past but had left it. The remaining half have become habituated to drugs. This shows that about 15 per cent of the students examined have fallen into the spell of drugs. Of this 15 per cent, 9 per cent were taking drugs only occasionally and 6 per cent were addicts.

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**Follow the elders**

An interesting feature of the study was that male students had three times more experience of drugs than female, that arts students were more prone to drug than science and commerce students, and that of 70 per cent of the students involved in drug abuse belonged to post-graduate classes Muslim students had less liking for drugs compared to students of other religions. The students of higher income groups were more addicted than students belonging to the lower socio-economic strata. About 50 per cent of the drug users were born and brought up in drug families, when the elders used drugs, the young saw no harm in following their habit.

An interesting feature that emerged out of the study was that alcohol and tobacco were the most common intoxicants used by the students. This habit was popular among both the male and female students in equal measure. Alcohol was initially taken in the form of beer at parties and hotels or during excursions. Most of the male drug users used between 10 and 15 cigarettes every day. They spent most part of their pocket money on cigarette and about 75 per cent of the parents were unaware of what their wards were upto. The consumption of hemp was about half the consumption of tobacco and alcohol. It was used mostly on Holi and other festival occasions. Bhang was mostly used by male students. Tranquilisers and pain killers were less popular than bhang. They were mostly used because they provided relief from tension. To those who did not have any problems, they provided a sort of pleasure. Ganja, charas and opium were found to be least popular and the minority that consumed them was mostly male students. Most of the students admitted that they took drug out of curiosity, pleasure, fashion-consciousness or the influence of a friend.

**Clinics for Addicts**

It is high time that educational institutions organised, from time to time, suitable programmes to enlighten students about the hazards involved in drug addiction. Efforts should be made to detect the drug users and persuade them to break the habit. There is a great need for clinics for the treatment of addicts and these clinics should provide psychological treatment to drug users. Follow-up services are also required to prevent relapse, we also need to check the open supply of drug in the market. Steps taken on different fronts as suggested above may go a long way in destroying an evil which is slowly eating into the vitals of our social organism.

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