



# SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG YOUTHS AT GUWAHATI CITY, ASSAM (INDIA): MAJOR INSTIGATOR AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

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## ABSTRACT

Substance abuse especially amongst youth has been an issue of concern throughout the world. Rapid industrialization, urbanization and changing life styles have left the youth struggling for their survival; forcing many to seek refuge in the dark world of substance abuse. India too, is facing a similar situation that has attracted attention of policy makers and recent researcher in recent past.

**Objective:** The study is carried out with the objectives- a) to find out the pattern of substance abuse b) to find out the Major Instigators of Substance abuse among youths. c) To study the socio-demographic profile of the Substance abused youths

**Method:** Descriptive survey method was selected for the study. Purposive sampling was used for selection of sample for the study.

**Tools:** A self-structured questionnaire elicited information regarding socio-demographic profile of the respondent as well as details of substance abuse were prepared. A total of 100 substance abused youths were interviewed from three rehabilitation centers situated in Guwahati city.

**Result:** For fun and amusement was found to be the main instigator factor for drug abuse among youths. The substance abused youth was more in urban areas than rural areas. Alcohol and heroin was found to be main substance abused by the youths. Majority of drug abused youth in the age group of 18 to 21 years and their educational qualification predominantly Class XI – XII standard.

**Key words:** Substance, abuse and youth.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

Substance abuse is the use of a drug or other substance for a non-medical use with the aim of producing some type of mind altering effect in the user. This includes both the use of illegally produced substances, and the abuse of legal drugs, in a use for which the substance was not intended.<sup>19</sup>

The problem of substance abuse has become a global public health concern. In the wake of westernized, new device of recreation and pleasure seeking has emerged sweeping away many traditional form of enjoyment. Rapid industrialization, urbanization and changing life styles have left the youth struggling for their survival; forcing many to seek refuge in the dark world of substance abuse<sup>1</sup>. The desires for many sensory pleasures and its aggressive pursuit have led many a youth, both men and women to drugs of various hues and colours. India is no exception. The worst thing about drug abuse in India is that it is trapping young men and women who constitute the best human resource of the country<sup>2</sup> Substance abuse remains critical problems in most countries and is associated with several social and economic consequences. This assumes greater relevance in developing countries like India which is already burdened with inadequate health-care facilities (Tripathi B.M et al, 1999)<sup>17</sup> WHO estimates that globally 25 to 90 % of children and adolescents indulge in substance abuse (WHO, 1997)<sup>18</sup>.

Drug abuse is one of the top problems confronting the nation today especially among the youth. Incidences of drug abuse and related anti-social behavior have tremendously increased in recent years. This has become of matter of concern to the government, parents, teachers, non-governmental organization and all other relevant agencies.<sup>20</sup> It is prevalent than parents suspect. Drug abuse is not confined to young people in certain geographical areas or from particular socio-economic background. It affects the nation as whole both urban and rural areas. The problem cuts across class .It is not only in slum or low income areas where people are poor and unhappy but also families living under better conditions (rich and calmer) where children are better controlled. Alcohol, bhang and tobacco are increasingly being abused by school going children. Research and seizure statistics show it has a steady upward trend. Those between 16 to 30 years of age, a critical period in one's development are most affected.<sup>3</sup>

Drug abuse remains a critical problem in most countries and is associated with several social and economic consequences. This assumes greater relevance in developing countries like India which is already burdened with inadequate health-care facilities<sup>3</sup>. Drug addiction is also associated with a variety of social problems such as loss of employment, disordered family relationships and criminal activities<sup>3</sup>.

Statistics reveal that in India at least 25,426 people committed suicide due to substance and addiction related problems in the last ten years (2004-2013). This comes down to an average 2,542 suicides every year, 211 per month and 7 per day (National crime record bureau)

## 2.0 Materials & Methods:

The present study is carried out with the principal objectives such as a) To find out the pattern of substance abuse b) To find out the Major Instigators of Substance abuse among youths. c) To study the socio-demographic profile of the Substance abused youths

**2.1 Area of study:** For being the principal city of the entire northeastern India, Guwahati was chosen as the study area for the present work. Guwahati is located approximately along 26°11' N latitude and 91° 45' E longitude. The present study is carried out for the three reputed rehabilitation center Kripa Foundation, A to Z Foundation, Serenity respectively based in city

- **Kripa Foundation :** Kripa Foundation Started in the Year 1981 in Mumbai and started its Assam Center in April, 2006 in Guwahati. It is situated at Hatigarh Chariali, Guwahati-5. It has already treated more than 1000 addicts from various parts of Assam
- **A to Z Foundation :** A to Z Foundation (Nesha Mukto Kendro), a govt. registered organization is situated at Lal Ganesh, Near Jay Dutta Press, Guwahati -781034. The year of establishment of this organization is September 2011. It mainly works for drug addicts, alcoholics and mild psychological disorder.
- **Serenity :** Serenity, a govt. registered organization is situated at Beltola, Guwahati. The year of establishment of this organization

is February 2014. It also mainly works for drug addicts, alcoholics and mild psychological disorder.

**2.2 Research methodology:** The present study falls under the descriptive survey method. The present study was conducted on males of age group of 18-30 years who are under the treatment in different rehabilitation centers. Purposive sampling has been used for selection of the sample. A total of 100 drug abused youth were interviewed from the three rehabilitation centers.

**Tools of the study:** Questionnaire elicited information regarding socio-demographic profile of the respondent as well as the instigator factor of drug abused was prepared for collection of the necessary data.

**Delimitation of the study:** The study is delimited to drug abuse among youths who are under treatment in rehabilitation centers of Guwahati city only.

**3.0 Results & Discussions:**

The pattern of substance abuse among youth is presented in Table 1. The Results of various causes of substance abuse is shown in Table 2. The Socio-Demographic Profile of the Substance Abused Youth in terms of age, education, residential status, marital status, occupation and religion is shown in Table 3.

**3.1 Pattern of Substance Abuse**

The Table 1 revealed that that the predominant substance is alcohol among the various drugs. It has been reported during survey that most of the youth takes alcohol (49%) followed by Heroin (22%) and Polydrug (19%) shown in fig1. Similar result reported by Budhathoki et. al. and Best et al<sup>10,20</sup>

**3.2 Major Instigators of Substance:**

The results in Table 2 revealed that for Fun is the most reported reason (29%) for the use of substance. This has been followed by Peer influence (25%) and 23% of respondent reported that they had strong curiosity towards drugs use and this curiosity acted as a propagator for their drug use. Similar result reported by A Singh, R Ghulam et al, Anees Ahmad et al, Ganguli et al.<sup>12, 7, 11,13</sup>. Again 9% youths reported that they use substance for relief from stress (fig2). It has been observed that multi reasons are very negligible. The present study endorsed the findings of Hennigfield (1991), Dube et al (1978) and Budhathoki et al(2010) that influence of peers acted as major instigator factor<sup>14,15,16</sup>.

**3.3 Socio-demographic Profile**

**Age Pattern :** The table3 revealed that majority of Substance abused youth are in the age group of (18-21) and it appears 42 % and 25 % in the age group of 22 – 24 and 33 % in the age group of 25 – 30. Similar kind of results has been reported by Zulfikar Ali et al (1994)<sup>5</sup> and Aijaz Ahmad et al in Kashmir (2006)<sup>6</sup> Ahuja(1978)<sup>20</sup>, they also pointed out that the majority of drug abused youth in the age group of (17 – 21) and (11 – 20). The variation of age pattern is shown in fig 2.

**Education:** The Table 3 Shows that 39% of respondent having educational qualification in between XI-XII. It has been observed that drug abuse rate increases from middle school standard to Higher Secondary standard and then decreases as person attains higher educational status. The present study coincides with the study of R. Ghulam et al at Madhya Pradesh (1996)<sup>7</sup>. The graphical representation is shown in fig.3

**Residential Status:** The prevalence of drug abuse was higher among youths living in urban areas than rural areas. 92% of respondent were living in urban area whereas only 8% of the respondent were living in rural area. Verma et al (1977)<sup>8</sup>, Dube et al (1977)<sup>9</sup> and National Committee on drug addiction in India (1977)<sup>10</sup> have reported that curiosity in the urban population is an important factor.

**Marital Status:** The result of marital status (Table3) clearly shows that maximum married persons (77%) reported the use of drugs. Again 22% married youth used drugs while the divorce is only 1%.

**Occupation:** Unemployed youth have more inclination towards the use of drugs and it appears 26%. It has been observed that 25% of the respondents were in private sectors, 19% were businessman and 13% were self-employed. In comparison to other occupation Govt service

working youth has a fewer tendency for drug using. Again it has been reported that 8% of the respondents are students.

**Religion:** In the present study, Hindu respondent are predominantly high (82%) in comparison to Islam (12%), Christian (2%) and others (4%). The graphical representation is shown in Fig4. Similar result reported by Anees Ahmad et al at Aligarh, U.P (2009)<sup>11</sup>

**4.0 Conclusion:**

The present study concludes that majority of youths use substance for the sake of fun followed by peer pressure which they use as a source of entertainment to deviate their minds from the pressure of studies, unemployment, depression etc. Thus the problem of substance abuse is multi-dimensional and solution to the problem not only fall entirely within legal or health arenas. Government and policy makers should initiate the appropriate preventive measure against the substance abuse. It should be remembered that preventive is cheaper than cure a diseases. It is worth mentioning that family and community participation is must to control this problem of substance abuse.

**Table 1: Pattern of substances abused among youth**

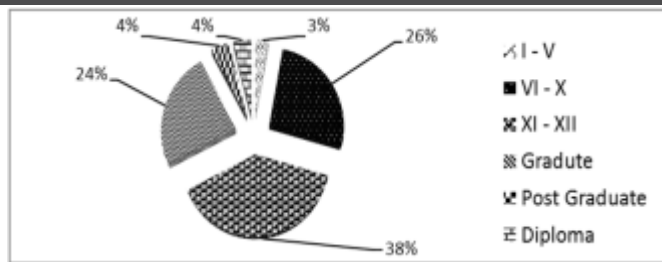
S/N	Drug	No of respondent N=100	% of Respondent
1	Alcohol	49	49
2	Heroin	22	22
3	Marijuana	2	2
4	Ganja	3	3
5	Inhalant	2	2
6	Polydrug	19	19
7	Cocaine	3	3

**Table 2: Various major of substances use**

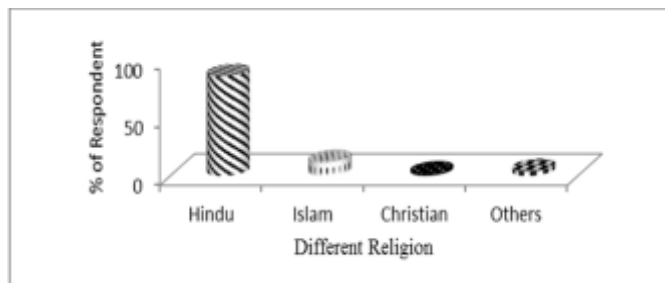
S/N	Various Causes	No of respondent N=100	% of Respondent
1	Relief from stress	9	9
2	No reason given	4	4
3	To keep awake at night to read	2	2
4	Curiosity	23	23
5	For fun	29	29
6	Peer influence	25	25
7	Relief from stress and Religious purpose	1	1
8	Relief from stress and Family/Peer influence	2	2
9	Curiosity and For fun	1	1
10	Curiosity and Family/Peer influence	2	2
11	For fun and Family/Peer influence	2	2
	Total	100	100

**Table 3 : Socio-Demographic Profile of Substance Abused youth**

S/N	Socio-Demographic Components	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	<b>Age Group (Years)</b>		
	18-21	42	42%
	22-24	25	25%
	25-30	33	33%
2	<b>Education</b>		
	I-V	3	3%
	VI-X	26	26%
	XI-XII	39	39%
	Graduate	24	24%
	Post Graduate	4	4%
	Diploma	4	4%
3	<b>Residential status</b>		
	Urban	92	92%
	rural	8	8%
4	<b>Marital status</b>		
	Unmarried	77	77%
	Married	22	22%
	Divorce	1	1%
5	<b>Various occupation</b>		
	Govt service	9	9%
	Private service	25	25%
	Business	19	19%
	Self employed	13	13%
	Unemployed	26	26%
	students	8	8%
6	<b>Religion</b>		
	Hindu	82	82%
	Islam	12	12%
	Christian	2	2%



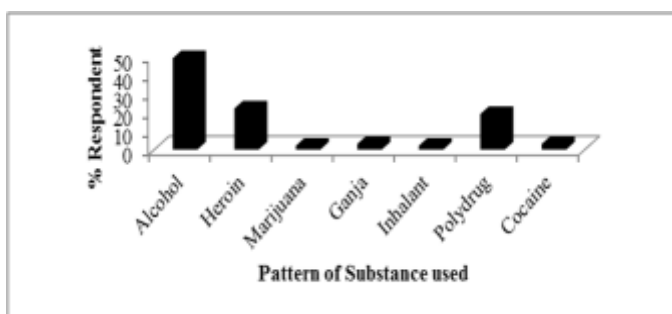
**Fig3: Educational Profile of Substance Abused Youth**



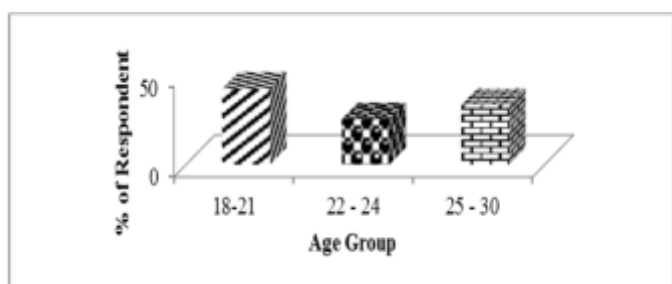
**Fig 4: Various religions of substance Abused Youth**

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**Fig1: Pattern of Substance Abused among youth**



**Fig 2: Variation of Age Pattern among Substance Abused Youth**

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