

DRUG ADDICTION

OR

THE INCREASING USE OF INTOXICANTS

The use of intoxicants is as old as civilization itself. In varying degrees, people in all parts of the world have been using intoxicants in one form or the other. In olden days, this use was confined to some happy or festive occasions only. But as time passed and life became more and more complex and busy, use of intoxicants went on increasing. With the progress of science, new varied types of intoxicating drinks and drugs were invented. Today, in addition to a very large number of existing drinks and organic intoxicants, several other new and strong intoxicants are readily available in the market.

Use of intoxicants and drugs is so common today that it has become a world-wide problem. Neither the poor developing countries, nor the rich affluent countries are free from this menace. The affluent societies have problems of broken homes, late night club life and absence of social controls. The poor countries, on the other hand, have different problems. The problems of food, clothing and shelter occupy their minds. Under the impact of these problems, the young boys and girls feel frustrated and broken. Most of them try to find consolation or relief in trying to escape from the harsh realities of the world by taking recourse to intoxicating drugs and drinks.

The situation is quite alarming. More and more young boys and girls are becoming addicts. A survey was recently conducted in some universities in India. The findings were staggering. Drug addiction is fast catching hold of young Indian boys and girls. It is mainly confined to big cities like Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Delhi and the universities and colleges of the country. Hostels for boys and girls are the homes of these drug addicts.

In India, the malady of the use of drugs has come from the West. It has now assumed serious proportions. Most of the students start taking drugs as a matter of fashion or out of craze for thrills. But once they start, they cannot stop their use. The market is flooded with drugs that induce different types of intoxication. Most of these drugs are required to be taken to produce sedation or tranquility under strict medical observation and care. They are meant to provide proper treatment of certain diseases of the mind. But young boys and girls start taking them without medical advice.

Most of those who start taking drugs are socially maladjusted people. Some of these are unemployed and frustrated while others have some other social or family problems. The government is duty bound to make a thorough study of the various pros and cons of the problem. Sale of drugs in the open market should be banned. The problem of unemployment should be tackled on priority basis. Guidance and counseling bureaus manned by experts should be opened in all universities in order to provide advice and guidance to the frustrated youth of the country. Various social and voluntary organizations should take steps to provide proper social security and a respectable living for all such people as feel socially insecure. Orphans, widows and broke homes should be looked after properly. The government should use all its advertising media to educate the people about the harmful effects of the intoxicating drugs. Expert medical aid should be made readily available to wean the addicts away from their malady. Moral education should be introduced in schools and colleges. Pornographic literature and sexy pictures should be banned. Hippies and foreign visitors who encourage the use of drugs and smuggle these drugs into the country should be put behind the bars.

All these steps can go a long way in saving the country from this menace of drug addiction. In India, the disease is still in a state of infancy. It would be proper to nip the evil in the bud. In case this is not done, the disease may take the form of epidemic and strike a death blow to the great cultural traditions of this country. We must see the writing on the wall and act before it is too late.