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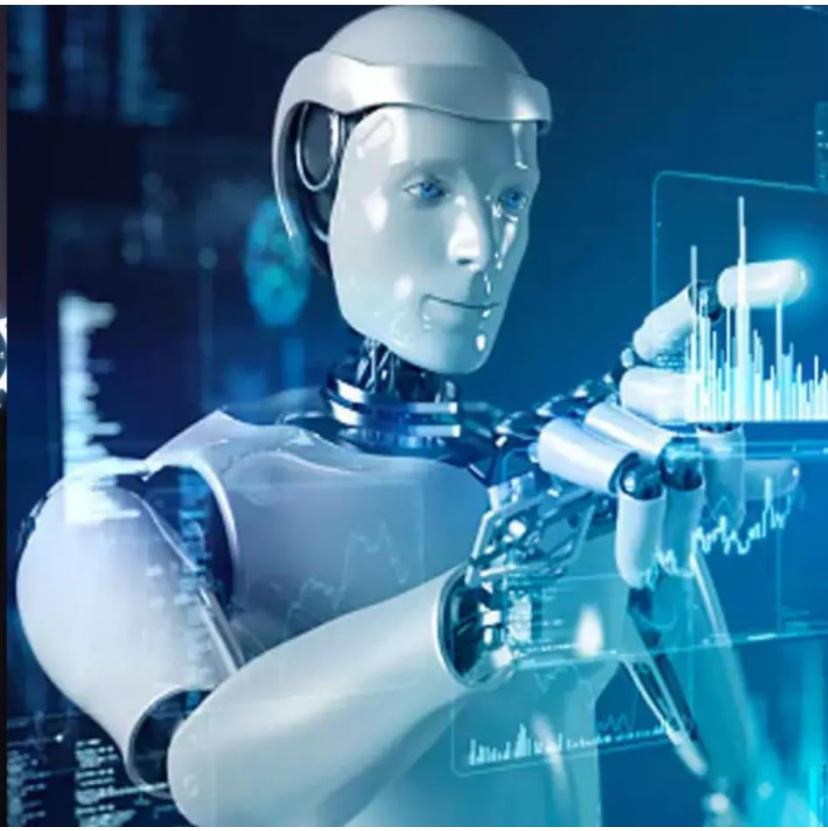
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Role of Youth in De-Addiction, Public Health and Development of India

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ABSTRACT: India is among those countries in the world where the large population of youth is an important cornerstone of the social, economic, scientific and cultural development of the nation. Youth are the symbol of energy, innovation, creativity and transformative potential of any nation. If the energy of youth is harnessed in education, research, skill development, sports, entrepreneurship and nation building, India can move rapidly towards its goal of becoming a developed nation. Conversely, the use of drugs and other addictive products can affect youth's physical health, mental balance, academic achievement, family relationships, and social responsibility.

The objective of the presented research article is to analyze the causes of drug problem among the youth, its health and social effects, the need for de-addiction and the role of drug-free youth power in building a developed India. In this, prevention measures based on public awareness, role of educational institutions, family support, community participation and scientific approach have been given prominence. The central idea of the article is that drug-free youth are not only healthy citizens but also the creators of a self-reliant, responsible and developed India.

KEYWORDS: de-addiction, youth power, developed India, public health, social awareness, skill development, nation building.

I. INTRODUCTION

India's youth power is one of the most important human assets of the country. The future of a nation depends not only on its natural wealth, economic resources or modern technology, but also on how healthy, educated, disciplined and responsible its citizens are. The youth accelerate social change through their energy, courage, imagination and innovative ideas. Therefore, giving right direction to the youth is necessary for the bright future of the nation.

At present, drug related problems are a significant challenge to public health and social development. Consumption of tobacco, alcohol and other psychoactive substances can affect a person's decision-making ability, physical health, mental performance and social life. During adolescence and young adulthood, peer pressure, stress, curiosity, misconceptions, and inadequate information about the possible side effects of drug abuse can lead some youth to engage in risky behavior.

It is not appropriate to consider the problem of addiction only as a personal weakness. There can be many factors behind this like social conditions, family environment, mental stress, availability of substances and access to health services. Therefore, its solution should also be multidimensional.

Building a developed India will be meaningful only when along with development, the health, education, social security and quality of life of the citizens also improves. In this context, “Every youth should be drug-free, this should be the identity of developed India” is not just an inspiring slogan, but a comprehensive resolution for healthy society and responsible nation building.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the presented research article are as follows –

1. To analyze the social, family, psychological and environmental causes of drug addiction problem among youth.
2. To understand the effects of addiction on physical health, mental performance, education, employment and family life.
3. To study the role of schools, colleges, universities and youth organizations in drug prevention.

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4. To encourage scientific approach, public awareness and community participation towards de-addiction.
5. To underline the contribution of healthy, skilled, disciplined and drug-free youth power in achieving the goal of developed India.
6. To present practical suggestions for the treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration of drug affected persons.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This article is of descriptive and analytical nature. In this the topic has been discussed on the basis of secondary sources.Major sources include schemes of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment of the Government of India, official documents related to the Drug Free India Campaign, substance-use surveys published by the National Drug Dependence Treatment Center (NDDTC) of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), and the United NationsIncludes reports from the Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).On the basis of these sources, thematic analysis of importance of drug prevention, youth health, social participation and de-addiction programs has been done. This article is not based on a primary field survey itself; Therefore, no imaginary survey results or self-collected data are presented in it.

IV. PROBLEM, NATURE AND PREVALENCE OF DRUG ADDICTION AMONG YOUTH:

Drug related problems are not limited to any one country, community or age group. These are global challenges related to public health, social security and economic development. According to UNODC's World Drug Report 2025, in the year 2023, about 316 million people worldwide consumed some intoxicant, excluding alcohol and tobacco. This figure was approximately 6 percent of the global population aged 15 to 64.

In India too, national level studies have been conducted to understand the nature of substance use and its effects. According to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the report of Magnitude of Substance Use in India survey conducted by NDDTC of AIIMS was published in the year 2019. The survey provided an assessment of the state of alcohol, cannabis, opioid and other substance use in the country.

It is important to understand that the use of a substance, its harmful use and the resulting dependence are different situations. Each person's circumstances and support needs may also be different. Therefore, the approach towards the problem of drug addiction should be scientific, sensitive and non-discriminatory.

Especially for adolescents and youth, it is important to provide information about the possible side effects of drug addiction, positive social environment and timely help. The purpose of prevention is not only to convey the message of staying away from drugs, but also to provide youth with opportunities to develop purpose, confidence, and positive relationships in their lives.

V. MAJOR CAUSES OF DRUG ADDICTION AMONG YOUTH

There is no single universal reason behind the onset of drug addiction among youth. Various social, psychological, and environmental conditions may combine to increase risk.

5.1 Peer pressure and social influence-

Peer group influence can be important during adolescence and young adulthood. Some youth may feel pressured to gain acceptance into the group, imitate others, or adopt risky behavior in an effort to appear more mature. In such a situation, decision making ability, confidence and correct information play an important role.

5.2 Mental stress and emotional difficulties-

Stress related to examinations, career, employment, family expectations, financial difficulties and personal relationships can affect some young people. If they do not receive emotional support and proper guidance, they may be attracted to unhealthy behaviors. Healthy lifestyle, counselling, communication and availability of mental health services as per need are important to deal with stress.

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5.3 Inadequate information about the ill effects of drug addiction-
Young people often underestimate the health risks of drug addiction. The portrayal of addiction as attractive or normal behavior in films, social media or the surrounding environment can also increase misconceptions. Scientific information and real-life examples can challenge these assumptions.

5.4 Family environment-
Family plays an important role in the development of an individual's behaviour, values and decision making ability. Lack of communication, constant conflict, neglect or normalized attitudes towards addiction in the family can increase the risk. In contrast, warm relationships, clear boundaries, and opportunities to communicate openly help youth make safe decisions.

5.5 Unemployment and lack of positive opportunities-
Limited access to education, skills development, sports, cultural activities and employment opportunities may increase feelings of hopelessness or social isolation among some young people. Therefore, it is necessary to link drug prevention to the expansion of meaningful activities and opportunities for the youth rather than just limiting it to awareness programs.

5.6 Availability and social acceptance of drugs-
Where drugs are readily available or their use is considered socially acceptable, prevention may be more challenging. Effective policy requires proper enforcement of laws, control of illicit supply, responsible social behavior and availability of treatment services.

VI. EFFECT OF ADDICTION ON PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Risks related to addiction vary depending on the type of substance, amount consumed, duration, age of the individual, and health status. Nevertheless, harmful use of many substances can affect physical health, mental functioning, and daily life.

Effects on physical health: Some substances can harm the heart, liver, lungs, digestive system and other organs. Tobacco use increases the risk of cancer, heart disease and respiratory diseases. Harmful consumption of alcohol is also linked to many serious health problems.

Mental health effects: Some substances may be associated with anxiety, mood changes, sleep problems, and impaired decision-making ability. The situation may be more complicated for people who are already experiencing mental health difficulties.

Memory and concentration: The brain continues to develop, especially during adolescence. Substance use at this stage may pose additional risks to learning, concentration, memory, and behavioral abilities.

Accident and safety risks: The ability to make decisions and react may be impaired under the influence of intoxication. This can increase the risk of road accidents, injuries and other unsafe conditions.

Thus, the aim of de-addiction is not only to stop the use of a substance, but also to protect the overall health, functionality and quality of life of the person.

VII. EFFECT OF DRUG ADDICTION ON EDUCATION, FAMILY AND SOCIAL LIFE

The impact of addiction is not limited to the individual consuming it, but can reach family, friends, educational institutions and the wider society.

7.1 Educational impact-
Concentration, regularity, discipline and continuous practice are the main bases of success in student life. Health problems, sleep disruptions, and changes in mental performance caused by intoxication can affect the quality of the study. This may result in lack of attendance, decline in academic performance, and hindrances in future plans.

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7.2 Effect on family relations-
Drug-related problems can increase financial pressure, distrust, lack of communication and tension in the family. Family members may also face emotional difficulties. Therefore, the family should understand the problem of the person affected by addiction and cooperate for help, treatment and positive change.

7.3 Social and economic impact-
Addiction-related health problems can increase treatment costs and affect ability to work. In some circumstances, problems of unemployment, economic instability and social isolation may also arise. Thus, drug prevention is important for individual welfare as well as social and economic development.

7.4 Perception of social stigma -
Humiliating people affected by addiction or isolating them from society can hinder the solution of the problem. Fear and shame may cause a person to avoid seeking help. Instead, priority should be given to sensitive communication, confidential counselling, therapy and rehabilitation.

VIII. RESOLVE FOR DRUG-FREE YOUTH AND DEVELOPED INDIA

The vision of a developed India is not limited to growth in GDP alone. It also includes quality education, scientific research, employment, health, social justice, technological innovation and improvement in the standard of living of the citizens. To achieve these goals, healthy and capable youth power is necessary.

8.1 Education and knowledge based economy-
Educated and healthy youth can better utilize their potential in science, technology, engineering, medicine, agriculture and other fields. A positive drug-free life approach helps in creating a conducive environment for regular studies, skill development and achieving long-term goals.

8.2 Self-reliance and employment-
To make India self-reliant, skilled human resources, entrepreneurship and productive workforce are required. By providing youth with vocational training, digital skills, self-employment and innovation opportunities, they can utilize their talents positively.

8.3 Science, Research and Innovation-
Research and scientific thinking have an important role in building a developed India. Healthy youth can contribute to research, new technologies, environmental protection and solving social problems. For this, it will be useful to encourage drug-free environment, laboratories, libraries, sports and innovation centers in educational institutions.

8.4 Social Responsibility and Leadership-
Youth can become effective agents of positive change in the society. They can inspire others by participating in public awareness campaigns, volunteering, community programs and de-addiction talks. In this way, drug-free youth can not only adopt a healthy life but also set an example for the society.

8.5 Citizen participation in nation building-
It is not enough to consider drug de-addiction as the sole responsibility of the government. Families, educational institutions, local administration, health services, social organizations and youth groups together can play an effective role in this direction. With collective efforts, an environment can be created in which healthy lifestyle, positive thinking and responsible behavior are encouraged.

IX. DRUG DE-ADDICTION INITIATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA), run by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, is a major initiative to prevent drug abuse and increase awareness about de-addiction in the country. This campaign was started on 15 August 2020 in 272 identified districts. From August 2023, it was expanded to all the districts of the country.

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The campaign strategy involves three major aspects—
1. Control of supply: Efforts to control the supply of illicit drugs through concerned agencies.
2.Demand reduction: Discouraging drug abuse through education, public awareness, community involvement and prevention programs.
3. Treatment and Rehabilitation: To provide assistance in counselling, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration to the persons affected by drug addiction.

X. ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN DE-ADDICTION:

Schools, colleges and universities are important centers of personality development of youth. De-addiction activities should be made a part of regular academic and co-curricular programs in these institutions. And the following work can be done-

10.1 Creation of drug free campus

Educational institutions should have clear rules regarding drug-free campus, awareness banners, notice boards and regular communication programs. It is an important responsibility of the institute to provide a safe and healthy environment to the students.

10.2 Lectures and Workshops:

Lectures on health effects of drug addiction and preventive measures can be organized by inviting expert doctors, psychologists, counselors and social workers. Programs based on scientific facts are helpful in protecting students from misconceptions and myths.

10.3 Essay, Poster, Debate and Street Play:

Creative activities can become an effective medium to connect the youth with the message of de-addiction. A sense of social responsibility can be developed in students through essay writing, poster competition, slogan writing, debates, quizzes and street plays.

10.4 Sports and cultural activities:

Sports, yoga, music, dance, literary activities and community service provide opportunities for positive engagement to the youth. These activities should not be seen merely as an alternative to addiction, but as a medium to encourage overall personality development and mental health.

10.5 Personal consultation and confidential assistance

Students should have the opportunity to contact a trusted counselor or trained health worker in educational institutions. If a student appears to have a drug-related problem, efforts should be made to direct the student to appropriate specialist help rather than publicly shaming him.

10.6 Active participation of students

De-addiction campaign can be linked to public participation through National Service Scheme (NSS), youth clubs, voluntary groups and other student organizations. Students can contribute to their community by providing accurate information, organizing awareness activities and encouraging positive behaviour.

XI. MULTI-PRONGED STRATEGY FOR DRUG PREVENTION

A permanent solution to the problem of drug addiction is possible only when prevention, treatment and rehabilitation efforts complement each other.

Major measures:
1. Correct information about the drug addict.
2.There should be open communication with the family on stress management and readiness to seek help, better decisions and health routine.
3. Emotional support and safe family environment.
4. Awareness campaign for drug-free educational campus.
5. To create understanding among students against drug addiction.

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6. Organizing community, youth clubs, sports, mass communication and voluntary activities.
7. Creating a conducive environment for prevention by following social and administrative rules, controlling illegal supplies and creating public awareness.
8. Appropriate counselling, medical treatment, rehabilitation and follow-up support.
9. Re-inclusion should be based on health improvement.

11.1 Awareness should be scientific and principled

Awareness programs should use scientific evidence instead of spreading fear or making unproven claims. Young people should be given clear information about the health risks associated with addiction, the social impacts and available support options.

11.2 Expansion of mental health services

Young people struggling with stress, anxiety, emotional difficulties and social isolation should receive timely support. It would be useful to develop counseling services in schools and colleges and link them to specialist health services when necessary.

11.3 Incentives for rehabilitation along with treatment

Drug dependence can be a health problem that requires professional treatment. Treatment should be selected by a qualified health professional. Family and society should also cooperate in the treatment process, so that the person can return to a healthy life.

11.4 There should be positive use of digital mediums.

The message can be delivered to youth through social media, digital posters, educational videos and online awareness materials. Digital content should be credible, age-appropriate and based on scientific facts.

11.5 Evaluating the success of programs

The success of de-addiction campaign should not be measured only by the number of programs organized. It should also be seen how much the students' knowledge improved, how much the knowledge of support services increased and how much facility was provided to the needy people in accessing treatment. Regular evaluation can improve future strategies.

XII. CONCLUSION

Analysis of available documents leads to the following conclusions:
1. The problem of drug addiction is a multidimensional challenge related to individual, family, social and public health.
2.Timely scientific information, positive social environment and appropriate guidance are important for prevention among youth.
3. It is important to understand the physical and mental effects of addiction as well as its effects on education, employment, family relationships and social participation.
4.Awareness programs alone are not enough; These should also be accompanied by counselling, treatment, rehabilitation and follow-up support.
5. Educational institutions can play an important role in making the de-addiction campaign effective.
6.Prevention initiatives can be made more effective by coordinated efforts of family, educational institutions, health services, administration and community.
7. Drug-free youth power can contribute to building a developed India through education, skill development, research, entrepreneurship and social leadership.
These findings are based on an analysis of the available literature. To confirm these at the local level, a preliminary field study involving students, teachers, parents and health experts could be conducted.

XIII. SUGGESTION

The following suggestions are presented for creating drug-free youth power:
* Regular de-addiction awareness programs should be organized in every school and college.
* Confidential and accessible counseling services should be made available to students.

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* Youth should be provided opportunities to participate in sports, yoga, art, science, skill development and community service.
* Parents and teachers should be made aware of the risks of addiction, early warning signs and ways to get help.
* Discrimination and abusive behavior towards people affected by drugs should be discouraged.
* Information about government de-addiction programs and available treatment services should be disseminated at the local level.
* Awareness campaigns should be run in rural and urban communities with the help of youth, voluntary organizations and local administration.
* The effectiveness of drug prevention programs should be evaluated using the scientific method.
* Researchers should be encouraged to conduct local studies related to the causes, prevention and rehabilitation of drug addiction among youth.

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